Just one word: Genocide as a category of practice in the 2015 Armenian Genocide commemorations in Istanbul.

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Abstract

Creating a static definition of the term ‘genocide,’ for both legal and scholarly applicability, has proved to be a tenuous endeavor for scholars in the field of genocide studies. This thesis, proposes to look at another related phenomenon, how the term ‘genocide’ is used in the realm of collective memory. This thesis proposes that while the concept of genocide is treated in most of the literature as a category of analysis, the term also has a life in the colloquial realm as a category of practice, and that its use is reflexive with perceived social relations and identities. Primarily, I will establish the issues present in debates over the term’s meaning. From there, I will establish the groundwork for looking at genocide for its emic qualities, and the symbolic power the word has in the vernacular. States have an interest in controlling the word’s use as its implications can be disastrous when the events it categorizes are aligned with a national founding myth. Finally, I will use the example of the centennial commemorations for the victims of the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul, Turkey. Conducting qualitative interviews and participant observation recorded an instance of the word’s utterance in a hostile market, exploring the dynamics of the utterance and how it is negotiated at the societal level as a site of contested memory.

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I would also like to acknowledge the bravery and tenacity of the individuals who continue the call for recognition in Turkey. This thesis will only be a tiny footnote in the unfortunately long story of genocide denial in recognition.

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Introduction

What is the power of the word 'genocide'? I will begin with a recent example of the importance of using this term over any of its colloquial synonyms[1]. During the centennial of the Armenian Genocide on April 24th, 2015, there was heavy pressure on the American Whitehouse to issue a statement which would explicitly use the word 'genocide.' One day prior to the centennial the Armenian Revolutionary Federation wrote, "If you cannot use the word 'Genocide' to appropriately mark the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, then, Mr. President, it is better that you do not issue a statement at all" (The Armenian Weekly 2015). On the date marking the horrific events the office of the President of the United States released a statement on the events describing them as the 20th century's first 'mass atrocity':

> Beginning in 1915, the Armenian people of the Ottoman Empire were deported, massacred, and marched to their deaths. Their culture and heritage in their ancient homeland were erased. Amid horrific violence that saw suffering on all sides, one and a half million Armenians perished… I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests. Peoples and nations grow stronger, and build a foundation for a more just and tolerant future, by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past. (Office of the President 2015).

As one participant at the centennial in Istanbul proclaimed, "he basically defined genocide without using the word"[2]. Despite the evocative language used in the release, Karen De Young of the Washington Post proclaimed the statement was yet another "bow to NATO ally Turkey" (De Young 2015). The Armenian National Council of America wrote, "His public retreat, under Turkish pressure, comes despite his own pledges to acknowledge this crime and our

[1] By colloquial synonyms, I mean words that we normally associate with genocide outside of stipulated legal definitions of the term. However, by the end of this thesis I hope to trouble both the attempt to stipulate a stable definition of 'genocide', and the practise of using other words to define an event as genocide.

[2] This was read during a break in the commemoration ceremonies, another participant followed up by saying the statement was tantamount to denial unless he used 'that word'

government's record, dating back more than half a century, of having recognized the Armenian Genocide as a clear case of genocide" (ANCA 2015). The comedian John Oliver remarked "to avoid upsetting (Turkey) he had to consult his diplomatic thesaurus" (Oliver 2015). This was but one example of how the term genocide has come to reach such strong symbolic importance as debates reverberate around the globe as to whether national governments overseas ought to recognize the genocide.

Despite the strong language used in the president's statement, the fact that the president chose not to use the label 'genocide' shows the symbolic importance of the word. Many commentators went so far as to say the Whitehouse statement furthers genocide denial, despite the fact that the statement agrees with all the empirical evidence that affirms the ferociousness of the event. Why is this one word so important?

'Genocide' is a much-evoked term since the Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin first coined it in 1944 (Lemkin 1944, 79). Despite being relatively new in our lexicon, the term has existed both as a legal and ethical charge to states and persons alike. However, the term's use is most often met with controversy, creating or exacerbating existing social cleavages. How do we properly categorize an event as genocide? Even as a legal concept the term has been rarely applied and even in apparently obvious cases the term has still met contestation such as in the *Akayesu* case the ICTR, or the Jelisić case at the ICTY (ICTR 1995; ICTY 1999; Berster 2014, 115). Outside of jurisprudence the category is applied even more in the public sphere with state actors dropping the G-word on numerous occasions. Examples range from Jean-Paul Sartre on the War in Vietnam (Sartre 1967), to Mahmoud Abbas on the 2014 Israeli air strikes in Gaza (Al Jazeera 2014), to the St. Jean Baptiste Society on English language presence in Quebec (St. Jean Baptiste Societe, 1982). An exhaustive list of events which have been declared genocide would

be an exercise in futility. Why do spokespeople, officials, activists, and public figures use the word genocide so often to describe an events? This thesis maintains that to explain utterances of 'genocide' we need to look at genocide as a category of practice, rather than trying to find a stable meaning for the term. This thesis will look at how its use, or lack of use, can be integral to fostering a positive national narrative, a narrative reinforced by states to maintain their status as legitimate institutions. Finally, I will look at the Armenian Genocide centennial commemorations in Istanbul Turkey as a case study for the power of the word on the linguistic market place.

My first chapter will look at how the concept of genocide was developed, and will expose some conceptual issues that remain prevalent within genocide studies. This is aimed at showing that legally and academically, there are still very tenuous issues as to what we can define as genocide. I begin by discussing the original definition of genocide as coined by Raphael Lemkin and its subsequent alterations and understandings. I then discuss Broad and Narrow understandings of the term which has deeply divided genocide studies. I then discuss Qualitative and Quantitative thresholds that are occasionally used to arbitrarily measure whether an event 'counts' as genocide. Finally, I will look at alternative terms that have been coined and argue that they often serve as an evasion from the category of genocide itself. This, I believe, will lead the reader to my next argument, which is that analysis of the word genocide can shift to see how the term is 'used'.

My second chapter proposes a scholarly move from looking at genocide as a category of analysis, to a category of practice. It is here that I would like to thank Rogers Brubaker for proposing the terminology for this endeavor. Future research ought to focus less at what the word genocide *means*, rather we should look at what the word genocide *does*; what sort of currency

does ‘genocide’ have on the symbolic market place and what makes its evocation so problematic? In looking at the word genocide as a category of practice, we can observe how the term is instrumentalized.

This instrumentalization will be the subject of the third chapter, where I will look at how ‘genocide’ plays a prominent role in national narrative and how states take measures to enforce this terminology. ‘Genocide’ carries with it such a moral gravitas that it almost must be addressed within national narrative whether it comes from outside or inside the state. More specifically, I will argue that the word genocide is a ‘site of memory' (Nora 1999). The evocation of the word generates contestation over the categorization of an event. How states, particularly those with a high level of ethnonationalism, grapple with the concept of genocide in their national narrative can be used to foster a collective memory that helps ‘build the nation’. This chapter will focus heavily on Turkish state denial of the Armenian Genocide to show the various ways that the term genocide can be employed within a national narrative.

My fourth chapter will introduce the case study of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul as a site of contested memory. I have chosen to exemplify the commemorations of the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul Turkey, a series of activities that openly challenged a state narrative of genocide denial. I will do this by exploring discourse leading up to the event to give context as to how the event would take place. I will then look at the spatial and temporal dimensions of the event in looking at their effectiveness in that space. I will look at counter events launched in response to this one. Finally, I will establish through my field notes and a series of qualitative interviews as well as reflexive participant observation how participants and outsiders perceived the events and the concept of genocide in looking at the historical memory of Turkey using critical frame theory. This case study will exemplify how the word

genocide can be used as a 'category of practice', as a speech act that reflects a changing social milieu, and challenges an existing status quo, while the project relies on a subjective approach to the commemoration for a large portion of the study, this allows the researcher to situate themselves into the experience of the commemorations participant. This project was not meant to obtain results to confirm a hypothesis, but to observe a phenomenon in practice.

I propose that when scholars use the term 'genocide' they ought to be aware of how this category of analysis is also a category of practice. Literature on the topic is severely lacking examination on how the word genocide is used and who uses it is. I will argue that the term is instrumental national memory in creating a 'site' regarding an event. This means states will have an interest in reinforcing a particular narrative regarding events. However, this imposed narrative can subsequently be contested in a variety of ways. The word genocide serves instrumental purposes outside of academia, it is a word of political import as well. To understand this phenomenon, I believe it is important to look at how the concept itself developed.

Chapter One: Genocide as a Category of analysis

This chapter will serve as a foundation to outline the theoretical debates surrounding how to conceptualize genocide. As a category of analysis there have been many issues surrounding how to make the term rigorous enough to be academically sound and analytical. I begin with addressing the original definition of genocide by Raphael Lemkin (1944). Secondly, I discuss the literature on the difficulty of translating genocide into law. Thirdly, I will look at the divergence between scholars who favour broad understandings of the phenomena and those who prefer narrow definitions. Fourthly, I will look at the qualitative and quantitative debates as to when an event meets the classificatory criteria of genocide. Fifthly, I will look at auxiliary words and understandings often evoked to describe such events. In this chapter, I will highlight many of the problems inherent in defining genocide, including the symbolic potency the term has subsequently developed. This chapter will show that scholars in genocide studies still have difficulty defining the object of their study, even 60 years since the Polish Jurist Raphael Lemkin coined the phrase.

1.1: Lemkin and the original definition of Genocide

Genocide is a temporally new concept (even if it describes an 'ancient crime'). The concept was developed by Raphael Lemkin in chapter nine of his main work *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944). Lemkin, as a legal scholar, had initially been concerned with the concept well before he named it. As a young law student Lemkin was fascinated by the events in Anatolia around 1915 later to be named the Armenian Genocide (Cooper 2006; Jacobs 2003). Lemkin wanted to give a new name to an "old practice, in its modern development" (Lemkin 1944, 79). The purpose of this new concept of genocide was to situate it within the greater framework of crimes against humanity: by "genocide," Lemkin meant the "destruction of a

nation or of an ethnic group" (Lemkin 1944, 79)[3]. However, it was qualified that this destruction did not necessarily need to be an extermination via mass murder, but rather incorporate strategies to debase the life of an ethnic or national group. Integral to Lemkin's understanding was a target group "Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group" (Lemkin 1944, 79). By stipulating that genocide is perpetrated against a group Lemkin created the *Mens Rea* of the crime. Subsequently, the understanding of motive and intent are hotly debated theoretically in the field of genocide studies.

Lemkin defined an *Actus Rea* for genocide as well. This occurs in two phases: "one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor" (Lemkin 1944, 79). Genocide could be committed against a population via targeting the *social, cultural, political, economic, religious,* and *moral* foundations of a people, along with the more familiar *physical* and *biological* methods of destroying a national group. According to Lemkin the crime of genocide is an attempt to systematically eliminate, either in physical or abstract terms, a group.

However, Lemkin's understanding of groups would come under scrutiny in the drafting of the UN convention on the Crime and Punishment of Genocide and within subsequent work in genocide studies. In the years since the term was first adopted, 'who' can be targeted by genocide has shifted. As Martin Shaw wrote, "the Genocide Convention (despite some real strengths) started a process of narrowing (Lemkin's) core ideas that many subsequent writers have unfortunately continued" (Shaw 2007, 4). This would include the eventual tailoring down of the

[3] This raises an interesting question as to whether these groups are subsequently essentialized by the genocide convention.

understanding of groups in the genocide, (Schabas 2005; Quigley 2007) as well as generating a schism between scholars who favoured broad or narrow understandings of the term genocide.

Lemkin's formulation of genocide, while being the original definition of the term, has its flaws: particularly if we are to analyze the sorts of groups that can be the victims of genocide as national and ethnic groups. These associations are often construed as being too narrow (Akhavan 2012; Berster 2014, 6; Kuper 1980). Lemkin's treatment of groups also appears to treat groups as static unit rather than subjective commitments. This is problematic as identity is rarely something immutable or unsusceptible to change. Identity and groups are fluid and a language that treats them as stable units has the tendency to leave us at a loss both in jurisprudence and in categorization (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Shaw 2007). It would be difficult to actually interpret which group ought to be, or ought not to be the victim of genocide. Therein also lies specificities as to what sort of actions would constitute the crime of genocide: is it only mass killing, or can it include forcible transfer and cultural destruction as well? This, amongst other problems proved difficult when the term was translated into the legal lexicon. Lemkin had hoped his new term would have significant potency as a legal concept: unfortunately the difficulty in translating this novel concept into law proved extremely onerous.

1.2: Translating Genocide into Law

I will identify three shortcomings in translating genocide into law, the first is the establishment of a motive element, and the second is the essentialization of groups, while the third is the gravitas implied by the term in the wake of the Holocaust. Adapting Lemkin's work into legal framework for the UN Genocide Convention proved difficult due to the lack of clarity within his definition. The speed by which 'genocide' had gone from being an existing concept to an international convention in the span of simply four years may have contributed to its various

and scattered understandings (Berster 2014, 6). One of the largest issues that would plague the convention was how to analyze motive. Berster noted:

> Installing a motive-requirement between genocidal intent and the genocidal acts pulls the unfortunate trick of combing the greatest disadvantage of motive-elements with the disuse of their greatest advantage. Leading into the enigmatic sphere of the formation of will, motive-elements in criminal law naturally come with the Achilles heel of being notoriously difficult to prove" (Berster 2014, 153).

The convention was particularly difficult to draft regarding intent, which is also its necessary component in international law. The intellectual issues could not only withstand the prevailing realpolitik of the Cold War. Akhavan notes that genocide, in order to be meaningful as a term, requires that one be able to discern a *Mens Rea*: "which refers to the hierarchy of culpable mental states such as *Dolus Eventualis, Dolus Generalis,* and *Dolus Specialis*" (Akhavan 2012, 44). However motive has often been a difficult task to prove (*see ICTY vs. Jelisic)* due the difficulty in showing the perpetrator had plans to destroy the groups as a whole.

William Schabas identifies that one of the foremost debates regarding the convention was which groups could claim protection under the genocide convention. Writing, "this is often reflected in frustration that the victims of a particular atrocity, that otherwise would respond to the terms of the Convention, do not neatly fit within the four categories[4]" (Schabas 2006, 117). Schabas points out that even looking at groups as stable units is an erroneous venture in genocide studies. The definition of genocide, one that had previously seemed initially clear and straight forward, turned out to be fraught with innuendos that made it exceptionally difficult to translate into a working international legal regime.

[4] Ethnical, Racial, National, Religious

The difficulty in translating genocide into law due to the terms moral gravitas compounded many of these issues. The problem with 'genocide' Payam Akhavan[5] claims is that, "its taxonomic prominence in moral discourse translates into greater gravity within the confines of international law. Is it possible that this "crime of crimes" is actually on equal footing with other serious international offenses such as war crimes and crimes against humanity" (Akhavan 2012, 11)? The colloquial understanding of genocide has led to it becoming a "coveted trophy in a consumer culture of grievance and suffering, alleged or real" (Akhavan 2012, 124). The gravitas the word acquired in the post-war context obscured its meaning and rendered it deeply problematic contended Akhavan. He writes of Lemkin,

> Although Lemkin reduced genocide to the cage of legal terminology, the crime seemingly escapes its taxonomy; the power of the word genocide overwhelms legal reasoning. Yet one is left asking whether this disregard of "positive" law is a cause for celebration or a corruption of jurisprudence for purposes that remain extraneous to the law. How does conferring or withholding the potent symbolism of genocide make a difference in confronting this evil (Akhavan 2012, 168)?

Akhavan locates two incidences of this in the ICTR case against Paul Akayesu, and the ICTY case against Goran Jelisić. In both cases the charge of genocide was defined loosely in order that prosecutors could make the charge. This makes the charge of genocide attractive to prosecutors due to its perceived hierarchy as the 'crime of crimes'.

Despite the Genocide Convention being, as Berster put it, "a catalyst for change and a major international treaty in its own right" (Berster 2014, 31), the document is far from legally sacrosanct. The trials and tribulations of realpolitik also played a role in which the colonial powers of the time insisted against the inclusion of cultural genocide. The Warsaw Pact states were virulently against the inclusion of political groups as protected groups within the

[5] His recent work *Translating Genocide into Law* (2012) is one of the most authoritative accounts on the problem of 'genocide's symbolic gravitas and the issues it poses to jurisprudence.

Convention (Kuper 1986, 26-27). While Schabas notes that the final definition of genocide has remained rather narrow, this was because the crime of genocide needed to remain specific in order to have utility as a legal term (Schabas 2006, 146). If a group was denied consideration, they could appeal to another category within the convention (Schabas 2006, 150). Nevertheless, it was recognized that actually determining which groups were 'eligible' targets of genocide posed both normative and logistical problems, as well as being a highly politicized debate. Genocide, from a legal point of view, is difficult to pin due to the reliance on motive. Outside the realm of jurisprudence, the term has been sociologically difficult to grasp. Analytic debates often occur over the scope of the category and what can be included within the definition of genocide.

1.3 Broad and Narrow Understandings of Genocide

There is a perceived spectrum by which scholars tend to find themselves between when defining genocide (*such as found in* Jones 2012, 1-33). On the one end there are those who define genocide broadly, and on the other are those who offer a narrow definition of the term. Those who define genocide narrowly often believe that, in order for the word to maintain its sanctity atop of the hierarchy of international crimes it must be narrowly defined. (Jones 2012, 20-21). Meanwhile, those who favour broad understandings of the term often worry that a narrow definition will do disservice to catastrophic events that intuitively ought to be included within the definition (Therault 2010, 483). The two schools of thought are often in conflict with one another, though I believe that the constant prevalence of this debate reinforces a dichotomy that is irreconcilable in the public discourse.

William Schabas made the argument that a narrow understanding of the term genocide is important, lest its scope be so broad that the term loses its meaning, and legal enforceability. Schabas noted that the stipulation of which groups could be potential targets for genocide has

been the subject of massive debate since the genocide convention was formulated in 1948 (Schabas 2009, 117). Schabas noted the growing popularity of the subjectivist approach towards genocide amongst scholars, "Perhaps its flaw is allowing, at least in theory, genocide to be committed against a group that does not have any real objective existence." (Schabas 2009, 128). Schabas, notes that such a position leads to a *reductio ad absurdum* in which all group destruction fits under the category thereby allowing almost all atrocities to be considered genocide, rendering the term categorically useless. Keeping a narrow understanding of what genocide is keeps the term "sacrosanct" in the marketplace of words.

A contrary opinion to this approach is a more recent work published by Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide* (2007). Shaw contends a broad understanding of groups ought to be employed. Shaw stipulated that genocide is the targeting of a group defined as civilians: genocide is a war against civilians. Shaw argued that this was in keeping with Lemkin's original definition of the term,

> In the international legal and political discussions of the 1940s, genocide began to lose two key elements of Lemkin's early formulations. One was its broad sociological meaning as social destruction, of a people and their way of life, and the second was the understanding of how genocide was related to war, he wrote "my argument is that these tendencies have been very unhelpful to the understanding of what genocide is, why it happens, and how it can be prevented (Shaw 2007, 33).

The subsequent narrowing of the term genocide had been an ongoing process since Raphael Lemkin had conceived of the concept, thus the definition of genocide has lost its original luster (Shaw 2007, 4). Shaw stipulated that groups are not static units: thus, essentiallizing them would be erroneous due to their malleability and frequently changing membership. Shaw argued that a less reductionist understanding of protected groups in the definition of genocide is preferable.

Often theorists will frame their definition of genocide over the target or the perpetrator of genocide. Irving Horowitz favoured the latter, arguing that genocide must be defined as the "state sanctioned liquidation against a collective group" (Horowitz 1980, 2). Horowitz claims above all else that the perpetrator of genocide can only be the state. Horowitz views genocide in much the same way as Michel Foucault (1972), Zigmunt Bauman (1989), and Mark Levine (2006)[6] as a modern 'state-building' project. Horowitz argued the essential distinction between massacres and genocide (the latter being modern, organized, and bureaucratic). He describes the difference as "death as unavoidable tragedy willed by providence and death as manufactured purification of society willed by people" (Horowitz 1980, 6). Horowitz dismisses attempts to link genocide with a sort of victimology as genocide requires victims to participate in their own destruction. (Horowitz 1980, 12). He also dismisses attempts to view genocide within the framework of extrajudicial killing as most genocides are legally sanctioned (Horowitz 1980, 13). The Natural History Approach is also dismissed as it is too descriptive, analytic. and genocide manifests differently in each context. Horowitz comes to the conclusion that the only way one can define genocide in its modern form is that it must be invariably linked to state apparatus (Horowitz 1980, 17). In this way, Horowitz holds the perpetrator, as opposed to the victims, defines the concept of genocide.

The state as perpetrator theory is taken a step further by Mark Levene who claims that the increased prevalence of genocide is a consequence of the rise of the nation-state. However, he favours a broad understanding of the term which holds it is a process by which persons are, "willed and empowered to deprive and deny other human beings…of their basic human dignity"

[6] Foucault claimed modern society "dreamed of genocide", while Bauman linked the Holocaust to modernity. Levine makes a similar claim that genocide is linked to the rise of the nation-state. These theorists, by and large, challenge the conventional primordialist theory of genocide.

(Levene 2006, 1). Levene's argument is probably one of the most abstract in the field, and it could encompass a huge wide range of actions as genocidal. Genocide is conceptualized by such academics as naturally endemic of the implementation of the nation state. The practice of purification is simply the logical conclusion for a nation-state to actualize (Levene 2006, 31). Michael Mann made a similar argument in *The Dark Side of Democracy*, that genocide occurs when newly democratizing states include discourses that prize homogeneity as essential to maintaining an ethnos, and when the majority attempts to cleanse the 'demos' in yearning for ethnic homogeneity (Mann 2005). There is no straight forward way to define or even explain genocide other than when the "collective agglomerations of human beings are not simply blamed for visible aspects of crisis but in which antagonisms, antipathies, and resentments directed by the dominant society toward them take on extreme forms" (Levene 2006, 91). Levene's work constitutes an extreme position on the intent scale dichotomy. Levene takes the theory of perpetrator identity to a smaller extent by not concretely defining the act, thus giving us an extraordinarily broad understanding of what genocide can be. As opposed to viewing genocide on the spectrum of narrow to broad understandings of the term, we can see some scholars work to create 'practical' thresholds of actions to try and determine whether events can be characterized as genocide.

1.4: Qualitative and Quantitative Thresholds.

Another area of contention within the literature revolves around the qualitative and quantitative size of the victims (Churchill 1983). Quantity issues, tend to focus on the amount of individuals who are killed, as well as the proportion of a group's total population. On the other hand, the quality of the crime is more specific to the *intent* or the *mens rea* of the perpetrators, in

that the crime must be motivated by the maniac fascination with eliminating a designated population.

Our starting point in this process might be a discussion of the phrase in Article 2 of the UN Convention that designates the destruction of a group "in whole, or in part". This would appear to designate that a group does not need to be fully destroyed for the crime of genocide to have occurred. Berster comments, "The convention would be a blunt instrument if it required the perpetrator to aim at the impossible. Therefore, the specific intent required need not be directed at 'the complete annihilation of a group from every corner of the globe' but only at the destruction of a fraction, or 'part', of the group" (Berster 2014, 148). However, the use of "in part" must be further stipulated for it is vague and unspecified exactly how large this 'part' ought to be. For instance, could the murder of one individual constitute genocide?

At least as far as International Criminal law is are concerned, the threshold of interpretation by international criminal courts is 1% of a total population according the ICTR and the ICTY (Berster 2012, 5). There is a recognized fear in this sort of calculus that a substantial number of individuals could perish and yet still fall short of the genocidal threshold, Berster writes,

> There needs to be a substantial subset of a target group…so even ten million isn't punishable if it's below 1% of the group. Nevertheless, such results, counterintuitive as they may seem, are inherent to the convention's group centered perspective and are unavoidable without altering the definition of genocide for protective purposes. (Berster 2014, 150)

One will eventually have to cope with the fact that all stipulations here will be arbitrary. Even if a large group of people are killed many jurists contend that for an event, in its scope, to be considered genocide it must meet this threshold.

Much like the arguments made in the section on narrow and broad understandings of genocide, the quality of a group is also subject of such disputes. For instance, some theorists argue that one will need extraordinarily specific understandings of what kinds of groups and how they can be killed (Katz 1994; Schabas 2006; and Bauer 1984). This means that we need to specify only certain groups are eligible to be victims of genocide. Some theorists have also made the argument that, when defining groups, one must keep their understanding broad in an attempt to ensure that events do not fall outside of an understanding of genocide when they logically ought to be within that category (Therault 2010; Shaw 2007; Levene 2006). The contention over who can be the victims of genocide is thorny, particular if one is to observe popular debates over events such as the Holodomor or the Holocaust.[7]

This has been a persistent legal issue since the formulation of the Genocide Convention and has been a consistently analyzed and criticized aspect of the definition. Shaw (2007) maintains that characterizing target groups ought to remain within a broad understanding; in this case, genocide ought to be defined as a mass targeting of *innocent* civilians (Shaw 2007, 154). In order to class a genocidal action one must allude that there is a prevailing idea of what the term means: "action informed by an intention to destroy social groups as such- is precisely a pure ideal-typical representation of the subjective meaning involved in a general class of actions" (Shaw 2007, 87). Shaw argues that genocidaires often have multiple goals when they are undertaking their pursuit and that we ought to treat this understanding as a "heuristic tool enabling us to grasp the complexity of real cases" (Shaw 2007, 88). The issue with the Genocide Convention is that it describes genocide in such a manner as to render it far too rigid, as it was

[7] This became a particularly thorny issue when The Canadian Museum of Human Rights was challenged by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress for dwarfing the Holodomor exhibit with the Holocaust exhibit. Dirk Moses contended this is an exemplary area to show why the 'genocide' label is so publically sensitive (Moses 2015).

never discussed whether this understanding of groups has good sociological meaning (Shaw 2007, 97). In this sense, Shaw shares much the same concern as Rogers Brubaker and Fredrick Cooper (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) when they voice their concern that the term 'groups' is specious, for no group is static with permanent boundaries. Shaw wants to save the definition of genocide from being tied down to this limited conception of what a group can be. He writes, "genocide is an attempt to destroy a group of people, regardless of how far groups defined by perpetrators correspond to real groups, intersubjectively recognized by their members, or objectively identified by observers" (Shaw 2007, 103- 104). In doing this, the understanding of groups would not be so limiting.

The problems inherent in stipulating the nature of protected groups in genocide legislation troubles the process of creating a stable meaning for the term genocide. Creating an arbitrary threshold seems necessary from a legal point of view, yet leads to some conclusions that others may find monstrous. Wide disagreement within the literature is found in determining exactly whom these groups are and what exactly makes them eligible to qualify as possible targets of genocide. Often, auxiliary terms and understandings of genocide are evoked in situations where the term genocide seems tenuous.

1.5: Alternate words and understandings

Theorists often resort to the development of alternative words to genocide such as 'holocaust' and 'ethnic cleansing' when the categorization of genocide is difficult. This approach may actually cause more problems then it solves. Consequently, it often has the adverse effect of minimizing public perception of an event. These new terms do not sharpen the definition of genocide, but can distort the issue of categorization even more. One of the first hurdles is the separate category of the term 'Holocaust'.

Some authors are very particular about the terms they use and aggressively defend them from appropriation unto other events. Steven Katz, in *The Holocaust in Historical Context* (1994) wrote that the Holocaust must be analyzed as a distinct historical event apart from other similar atrocities. Comparisons ought only be made to show its distinctiveness. Approaching the events from a comparative historical perspective, Katz concludes that the Holocaust represents a *novum* (Katz 1994, 24), it is an analytically distinct event in human history, writing,

> Any totalizing phenomenology of mass death and genocide that one might attempt to construct must properly value the concrete, particular historicity not only of the Sho'ah but also of all the other discrete events to which it might be compared. Each is what it is by virtue of what it is- to ignore, misrepresent, or minimize the differentia, the heterogeneity, between these realia is not to make available but rather to distort, to occlude, the very historical phenomenon one seeks to decipher. (Katz 1994, 581).

Katz argues that understanding genocide requires the variables of state collusion and intention to eliminate a defined group as the necessary preconditions for an event to fit within the category. The Holocaust, he claims, represents genocide in its purest sense. He qualifies that there are no ethical determinations to be arrived at from his mathematical evaluations, simply it should be shown that the Holocaust is its own category of event removed from others to which it may be compared (Katz 1994, 26). Katz's work is often seen as the polar extreme of Holocaust exceptionalism, though other historians have reached similar conclusions. For example, Irving Horowitz (1980) claimed that the Holocaust is a distinct phenomenon from genocide, though not beyond the pale of comparison (Horowitz 1985, 6). In many ways, these authors work towards creating a term with a singularity, the Holocaust was only 'one' event, the term becomes exclusive and coveted and comparison makes a mockery of the victims of the Final Solution.

Often this can translate into the unrecognition of other genocides by maintaining the Holocaust as a singularity. For instance, Israel has not recognized the Armenian Genocide

partially due to the efforts of the Turkish Government lobbies to encourage the uniqueness of the Shoah by attempting to recruit Israeli lobbies to encourage Armenian Genocide denial (Dost-Niyego 2015). The Israeli delegation to the Genocide Commemoration in Yerevan had explicit instructions not to use the term genocide (Hellner 2015). On April 30th, an article entitled, *Not recognizing the Armenian genocide is a triumph for common sense* appeared in the popular newspaper *Haaretz* by Benny Ziffer claimed, "there's a limit to how far nations can go in demanding that the world recognize them as victims of a holocaust, along the lines of the Jewish Shoah, without it being clear beyond any doubt that a holocaust of that kind actually occurred and in the same format" (Ziffer 2015). Israel remains, alongside the United States, one of the notable exceptions of a state that will not recognize the events of 1915 as genocide (Suny 2011, 27). The use of the Holocaust as the paradigmatic event, can also serve deny other mass atrocities, in this case the Armenian Genocide.

However, the term Holocaust was not always the sole descriptor of the extermination of European Jewry during the Second World War. One of the first invocations of the term was found in the writings of the Spanish missionary Las Vargas to describe the extermination of the indigenous peoples in the new world by Hernán Cortés. It was also used by American missionaries witnessing the early exterminations of Armenian populations in the Ottoman empire (Kiernan 2006, 9). David Lloyd George used the term in describing the events of 1915 in Anatolia (Suny 2012, 22). It is a historically recent phenomenon that the term 'Holocaust' represents a unique and specific event in history.

Other authors are less inclined to follow this model of uniqueness in regards to the Holocaust, and contend that the Holocaust ought to be included within the category of genocide, and not form its own exclusionary category or even be seen as the 'paradigmatic' genocide. For instance, Martin Shaw claimed that the Holocaust, while being the archetypal genocide, ought

not occupy a distinct analytic category (Shaw 2007, 1). Shaw claimed that the Holocaust tends to be used in such a way that it maximizes the Final Solution, but consequently has the effect of minimalizing the experiences of both victims of other genocides, and other victims of National Socialism. To quote Philip Lopat,

> What disturbs me finally, is the exclusivity of the singular usage, the holocaust, which seems to cut the event off from all others and to diminish, if not demean, the mass slaughters of all people- or, for that matter, previous tragedies in Jewish History….In its life as a rhetorical figure the holocaust is a bully`(*quoted in* Shaw 2007, 42).

Shaw contends that in many ways, the invocation of the new language intends to set an event apart from its initial definition as genocide (Shaw 2007, 44). By creating these exclusionary categories, the authors are bringing down the worth of other genocides, Israel Charney identifies this as a less known form of genocide denial (Charney 2002).

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the term ethnic cleansing occupies a similar attempt to minimalize an event to something smaller than 'genocide (Shaw 2007, 48). "Ethnic cleansing was a perpetrators term, embedding rather than criticizing their particular meaning of 'cleanliness', or 'purification', while failing to indicate the destructive character of the removal of groups from territories where they lived. (Shaw 2007, 49) Shaw analyzes the various mobilizations of these words as attempts at minimalizing various atrocities writing, "the prevalence of this language only underlies the perverseness of the attempt to separate cleansing categorically from genocide" (Shaw 2007, 58). The language of ethnic cleansing is a concerted attempt to minimize the importance of the events it describes. Thus, the invocation of new words does not distinguish the category of genocide, so much as it is an attempt at reshaping the events in the mind of the beholders by parceling them into distinct categories. These evasions by

vocabulary are an attempt at minimizing or maximizing the importance of these events. The application of these categories, but represents politics played in the realm of objectivity.

1.6: Towards Practice

There are two issues regarding analytic attempts to create a static definition for what genocide is: the first is that there are still numerous debates and contentions as to how genocide ought to be defined. The second is that there is a certain gravity to genocide that makes its application to an event something more than an analytic endeavor. When a past event is granted the category of 'genocide' then something more than a mere categorization occurs. It is here that I will make the argument that more work needs to be done in looking at genocide as not just a category of analysis, but a category of practice as well.

Chapter Two: Genocide as a category of practice

I propose that genocide studies have often neglected looking at genocide as a category of practice, in simpler terms, how the word genocide is 'used'. In the previous chapter I looked at how the term has difficulties in being congealed as a strict category of analysis. It is here that I propose a shift along a constructivist approach; we must analyze how it is used as a category of practice. The evocation of the term actually 'does' something and it is important that we look at what is being done by the utterance of the word. First I will introduce the relationship between categories of analysis and categories of practice. Second, I will then look at how the concept can be seen from a Wittgensteinian conception in the philosophy of language. Finally, I will discuss how 'genocide' as a term, is traded in the symbolic marketplace of ideas as discussed by Pierre Bourdieu.

I propose that genocide studies ought to shift away from determining a definition, but instead ought to focus on how the term genocide is 'used'. What I mean by this is in what ways the term genocide enacted as such that it serves a political purpose. The Wittgensteinian understanding of the word has the advantage of avoiding the issues that discussions over analytic definitions of the term often lead to. This entails that no stable meaning of the term genocide can be found because language, in and of itself, is an actively shifting phenomenon (Wittgenstein 1953, 18). Understanding genocide through the Wittgensteinian lens has been hinted at before (Akhavan 2012, 140), and the study of the term genocide as a fluid concept has also been undertaken (Therault 2010). It is through this understanding of the term genocide that we can better understand how the term is invoked. The term genocide is a difficult one to define both

legally and sociologically. However, there has been some work towards looking at genocide as an active term and a shift in study towards what the word 'does' as opposed to what it 'means'.

2.1: The Idea of a Category of Practice

It is time that genocide studies examined the term genocide exists as a category of practice. As Rogers Brubaker points out, "the traffic between categories of analysis and categories of practice makes it important for scholars to adopt a critical and self-reflexive stance towards the categories we use" (Brubaker 2012). This is a very Bourdeian point as it moves us away from the neat categories of subjectivism and objectivism, and instead places us within a *Habitas* (Bourdieu 1990). One is often led to parse the two concepts into separate spaces: a category of analysis develops in academic forums, whereas a category of practice is an invocation in the public sphere. Brubaker argues that academics need to be aware of the interplay that occurs between catefories of practice and analysis, as well as to be aware of their own evocation of 'folk terms'. Emic categories cannot be borrowed for analysis, but scholars must work to refine the terms if they are to be useful (Brubaker 2012, 257).

When discussing religion, a topic which Brubaker has devoted a lot of research to, Brubaker distinguishes how the category of 'Muslim,' a colloquial category, is often adopted by scholars. We see a category of analysis being adopted as a category of practice as opposed to vice versa. Genocide, being a new word (1944), was originally developed as a category of analysis, but has evolved into a category of practice. Within the two areas it seems that the two mutually coproduce one another. Many scholars have made the point that, despite its novelty, the term did not take long to catch on in political discourse (Schabas 2006; Quigley 2007; Berster 2014). The term genocide, still in its infancy, has not adopted a solid and fundamental meaning towards which international law or scholars of the field can find consensus. Genocide may not

have yet reached a point of use in our vocabulary that it can be an effective as a category of analysis.

'Genocide' seems to be a category that is mobilized by everyone. The language of genocide has been adopted by those who might perpetrate it. This can either come by denying that the events occurred, or by using it to describe the actions of the 'other', Martin Shaw points out that genocide was the most over used word in Slobodan Milosevic's vocabulary (Shaw 2007, 5). Henry Therault, also noted that strict definitions of the term genocide can become instructional to those who would avoid the charge, such as the purposely slow movements of the Janjaweed in order to avoid the UN classification (Theriault 2010). This would seem to imply that the term genocide can be appropriated by the perpetrators for their own gain in committing the crime. Even within Turkey, the language of genocide is often used to describe the events in Azerbaijan or the massacres of Turks during the First World War. Its language seems to exist as far more than a mere point of classification, but it seems to be useful even for those who would seek to use it for nefarious purposes. This is because the word genocide, like most words in language not only has *meaning*, but also has *use*.

2.2: Language as use

The later work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, applied an understanding of how we can look at language as something that is 'used', i.e. how is language something that is part of a greater understanding of how it is that language works. Language is always a functioning project, and one that is perpetually incomplete. The shifts in genocide's meaning is understood within a framework where language itself is viewed as a constantly shifting activity. We can understand this phenomenon through the idea of the Wittgensteinian language-game (Wittgenstein 1953). Language, as a whole, is an incomplete project; it is not an anomaly when a word's meaning

shifts, but a norm. When one builds a language, one builds a form of life (Wittgenstein 1953, 19). What is the utterer attempting to do when they use the word? Language is a world building project, thus the phrase genocide, places events into a certain societal context that informs our understanding our world.

If there is no stable meaning for genocide, then is it left to the lexicographer, politician, commentator, academic, or legal scholar, to imbue the concept with subjective meaning? The answer is yes, genocide has a multitude of interpretations because static meaning is impossible in shifting language. The word 'genocide' is understood when a myriad of different contexts, social settings, and language rules come into play. The meaning of 'genocide' is thus an object of the political. All of its assignments are the result of a taxonomic exercise of inclusion and exclusion. Multiple definitions of genocide are by-products of the term's active meaning. We should seek exploration as to how the term is used, and why it is used in certain contexts: a more productive discussion than analytic scruples over meaning. However, the Wittgensteinian 'language as use' framework could very well be at play in the courts. Legal scholar John Quigley (2007) maintained that the genocide convention ought to be understood as a bit of a work in progress: clarity will come with court decision and precedence (Quigley 2007, 284). Quigley claims that genocide does not, as of yet, have an agreed upon definition, but as future tribunals occur court precedent will cultivate the term. Quigley maintains what must be essential to the crime is "dual mental intent: one directed against the immediate victims, the second against the group." (Quigley 2007, 10-11). From a legal standpoint, the more the language of genocide is used, the better we can come to grasp what exactly the charge is. Rather than looking at the law in strictly Weberian terms as a kind of oath rather than seeing it as also a linguistic act, as Pierre Bourdieu puts it, "legal discourse is a creative speech which brings into existence that which it utters"

(Bourdieu 1999, 42). Thus, it is with 'genocide', a relatively new linguistic speech act that is constantly shifting meaning alongside the language the term is embedded in.

2.3: 'Genocide' and symbolic power

In looking at language and the term 'genocide' as fluid we ought to also refer to the ways in which 'genocide' becomes an object of symbolic power on the linguistic marketplace. Here I borrow much from Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu was concerned with shifting sociology from analyzing language merely through linguistics to viewing language as part of "the relations of communication p*ar excellence* – linguistic exchanges- are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers of their respective groups are actualized." (Bourdeiu 1999, 38). Language is an instrument of power, and is reliant on a variety of social conditions in order to work. The appropriateness of the label 'genocide' is a good example of this phenomenon.

Understanding 'genocide' as an object of power, and as a linguistic object capable of redefining the relationship between groups (as well as defining the boundaries of the very groups themselves), will be important when analyzing how states use the term to foster national narrative in chapter three. In the case of Turkey the state has a distinct role in reinforcing a normalized language (Bourdieu 1999, 47) surrounding the events of 1915, always "deportations" and "common-sorrow" but never, "genocide". Language is where symbolic power plays on the field of memory, in this case, 'genocide' represents a sort of symbolic imposition, as Bourdieu defines,

> that kind of magical efficacy which is not only the command and the password, but also ritual discourse or a simple injunction, threats to insults, purport to exercise- can function only if there is a convergence of social conditions which are altogether distinct from the strictly linguistic logic of discourse" (Bourdieu 1999, 72).

Language constructs the various social conditions of the day, and the governance of acceptable utterances is heavily dictated by those who impose authority and those who accept it (Bourdieu 1999, 113). There is, however, an opportunity for a certain "heretical subversion", which seeks to expose the 'natural' world of language as being a social world (Bourdieu 1999, 128). An example of heretical subversion (Bourdieu 1999, 127). is found in the manner by which the Armenian Diaspora and Turkish Civil Society Organizations challenge the Turkish state narrative regarding the events of 1915. 'Genocide' remains a word of very high value on the symbolic marketplace.

2.4: Towards a State Instrumentality

Throughout this chapter, I have shown how genocide works as a category of practice, outside of being a category of analysis. The process begins with the idea that the categories we use to analyze phenomena cannot be sterilized in ivory towers, but are coproduced alongside their emic twins in the public sphere. Meaning in language is largely fluid. This opens the way for us to analyze genocide as a tool or instrument on the symbolic marketplace. There are many areas in which analysis can focus on who uses the tool, and the spheres in which the term 'genocide' is invoked. For the purpose of this thesis, I will look closer at how 'genocide' is adopted into the national narrative of a state, and how non-state actors use the term to challenge that narrative. The ways in which states design the language of genocide and incorporate the category into narratives has an instrumental rationale.

Chapter Three: National Narrative and Genocide memory

The term genocide can be insturmentalized as a category of practice in many ways. I will only focus on one: the use of genocide as a site of memory for national narratives propagated by a state. This will exemplify, in the political realm, how the category of genocide is rendered a category of practice as shown by the previous chapter, and explains the existence of narrative resistance movements.

The concept of 'genocide' plays a symbolically important role in national narratives depending on its presence or absence in how a nation views its history. This chapter will mostly focus on Armenian Genocide denial by the state of Turkey, however the example is far more reaching than just this one explicit instance. The invocation of genocide is prominent in the national consciousness, thus state policy will often attempt to reinforce a particular use of the categorization in order to maintain a sanitized national character. First, I will look at how the term genocide fits within studies of collective memory, and how the usage of the term genocide becomes what Pierre Nora would call a 'site' of memory. Secondly, I will examine the social-psychological role that 'genocide' plays in national narrative. Thirdly, I will discuss the role of denial as part of a state legitimizing project. Fourthly, I will examine some techniques of state policy to enforce a chosen narrative. Finally, I will introduce how we can look at ways narrative categorization can be contested. This chapter aims to show how the concept of genocide is instrumentalized to maintain a specific state narrative, in order to bolster the creation of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1982; Wertsch 2002, 85).

3.1: Genocide as a Site of Memory

The labelling of events as genocide is part of the process of a collective memory, and what Pierre Nora would call a *site of memory*. Much like a monument, textbook, or gravestone, the term genocide offers a particular marker by which events are recollected in a certain manner. Genocide, has the symbolic importance of marking an event as something particularly heinous in the collective consciousness of a nation.

Collective memory exists as a socially constructed system of knowledge that guides a society's thoughts (Halbwach 1992, 22). Collective memory acts as the social framework for recollection, from the "degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in memory" (Halbwach 1992, 38). Halbwach offered that there is a difference between individual and collective memory, but that our thoughts of events are often the product of a social milieu (Halbwach 1992, 53). This social milieu is also the fabric by which a society is held together as a polity "can only live if only if in its institutions rest on potent collective beliefs" (187). Collective memory therefore becomes an important zone for the contestation of power.

The term collective memory, however, can mean many things, and it is difficult to pin down as the phenomena is multifaceted and dynamic (Wertsch 2002, 5). James V. Wertsch identifies some areas of dispute within studies of collective memory such as: collective vs. individual memory, collective memory vs. history, how collective memory changes, the difference between remembering and re-experiencing, and episodic vs. instrumental collective memory (Wertsch 2002, 31-55). Wertsch however holds that many of these debates are limited to attempts to specify a phenomena that is uniquely multifaceted.

So how does the term 'genocide' fit within collective memory? I contend the word ought to be viewed as *Lieux de mémoire,* a 'site' of recollection for public memory. Nora draws a distinction between memory and history: history is a strict analytic exercise turning anything it touches into prose, memory on the other hand is described as,

> Always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of memory and forgetting, unconscious to the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant until reawoken (Nora 1997, 3).

The work of historians is to analyze and deconstruct these 'sites of memory'. This approach was brought on by the arrival of a new type of French historiography: one that treated as a discipline of practice, as opposed to one of analysis. Historians began to take a more reflective approach to their personal interactions with their subjects, as Nora wrote, "we no longer celebrate the nation, we study the nation's celebrations" (Nora 1996, 6-7). I propose that the application of the term genocide can be considered one of these 'sites of memory', in that the term itself not only actively shapes how these events are perceived but relativizes them into the present which is built off of them. As Wendy Brown argues, history allows for "new political and epistemological possibilities to emerge" (Brown 2001, 5).

The understanding of *sites of memory* is also compounded with the issues inherent in living in the age of mechanical reproduction (Benjamin 1935), in which memory becomes part of the archival. Nora writes:

> What we call memoir is in fact a gigantic and breathtaking effort to store the material vestiges of what we cannot possibly remember, thereby amassing an unfathomable collection of things we might sometime recall…In just a few years, then, memory embodied in material form has expanded prodigiously; it has also been copied decentralized, and democratized (Nora 1997, 9).

History's textual nature changes the entire nature of the project, however, it does not necessarily mean that history has become more 'objective', it simply means that the way by which we approach history has changed, and it is the historians job to look at the interpretations of these events. Turkish state denial of the Armenian genocide grew emboldened by the death of witnesses, and the turn of all evidence into archival materials (Hovannisian 1998). President Recep Erdoğan's recently stated, "Armenian diaspora, our documents are here. Whatever documents you have, bring them" (Hurriyet Daily News 2015). While it may appear that the proliferation of recording technology replaces memory with history, it simply relegates memory to a new medium by which we can look at it.

Sites of memory can be analyzed in three senses: material, symbolic, and functional (Nora 1997, 14). There are obvious memorials as of memory which are state engineered, and there are the symbolic loci of memory (Connerton 2009, 5). Sites of memory develop at the intersection of history and memory. There are places whereby the concept of 'genocide' appears as both a symbolic and functional place of memory. Symbolic in that while the term is not a physical object, its utterance still carries incredible weight on the symbolic marketplace as was shown in chapter two. Exemplified by the efforts of the Turkish government to promote denial around the world: including setting up think tanks, research interests, promoting deniers through financial means, etc. (Goçek 2015, 2), or the concerted efforts to combat holocaust denial amongst historians (Lipstadt 1994; Charney 2000). Genocide's value on the symbolic marketplace becomes obvious when we look at the efforts expended by those who either want it recognized or forgotten.

The term's functionality comes through defining moment of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. For the victim, 'genocide' when it is accepted as the correct term for

categorizing the events is seen as part of the reconciliation process. Catherine Noble writes that acceptance of the category has a positive effect on citizenship and membership within the state polity for minority populations outside of material reparations (Noble 2008, 3; (Göçek 2011, 32)). Denial of genocide can be understood as a way to protect the collective ego of a nation that may have been founded through such events. The use of the term 'genocide' as part of nation-building will now be the subject of this next chapter.

3.2: Genocide in the National Narrative

Genocide's functionality as a term makes it an important aspect of state memory. This is because states have particular interest in how a national narrative is told. State legitimacy depends on a community whereby the nation becomes the results of massive efforts by states to control particular narratives regarding memory (Wertsch 2002, 69). States derive their legitimacy from their creation/foundation myth, as many nation-states arise out of the experience of a protracted war with numerous crimes committed by its founders[8]. Bernhard Griesen wrote "traumas and triumphs comprise the 'mythomoteurs' of national identity. They stand for experience and ultimate horizons for the self-constitution of a collective subject" (*quoted from* Goçek 2015, 35). Collective emotions are often fostered alongside a national narrative, by which the two are coproduced and the former is instrumentalized by political elites to bolster the later and to justify the nation-state, or the 'Imagined Community' (Anderson 1982; Goçek 2015, 35).

A crucial aspect of national narrative is a foundational event, these events will be remembered by and large by the society as the determining factor as to how the nation was created. Of course, it is not the event…but the meaning and significance attributed to it, as

[8] It would be embarrassing for Turkey to think of Mustafa Kemal as a man who protected genocidaires, or for Canada to think of John A. Macdonald as someone who tried to forcibly starve aboriginals from the Red River for settlers, or for Americans to think of George Washington as someone who led countless massacres against the aboriginals.

Alfred Schutz wrote, there is a "dialectic: the sedimentation of past experiences and one's intentionality towards the future" (*quoted from* Miller 1998, 187). The past will always colour one's perception of current events. I think it is fair to say that the application of the term 'genocide' to an event of historical memory carries a great amount of weight on how that event will be viewed, not to mention greatly determining social relations in the present.

States have an interest in maintaining a particular national narrative that bolsters their stability and legitimacy. The decision to incorporate genocide within a national narrative is not to be taken lightly. Müge Goçek offers two aspects of modernity, time and the imminence of violence, that cause genocide denial. Archiving the past opens room for doubting the facts which take on a textual form; the second is that nation-states require a level of violence (both physical and symbolic) to maintain order within their society (Goçek 2015, 31). The harnessing of collective emotion towards this project becomes an integral part of maintaining the national dialogue as well as the selection of what becomes a state's legitimating event. If an event close to the founding myth is given the label 'genocide' it drastically affects the legitimacy of the birth of that state, as numerous genocide scholars have identified with Turkey.

Recognizing genocide, however, can have the benefit of creating greater social bonds. Noble makes the argument that acknowledgement creates a decision for democratizing states, "the incoming leadership must decide how to address the political abuses of the outgoing regimes. First they must decide whether to do anything at all, and if so, for how long" (Noble 2008, 13-14).[9] The argument has also been forwarded that genocide recognition restores societal engagement once the 'G-Word' is acknowledged. Anton Pelinka identifies that Justice, and Truth,

[9] She makes the point in the first page to acknowledge that silence in regards to the Armenian Genocide is comparable to the silence by many Western governments to not acknowledge the decimation of first peoples in their state founding (Noble 2008, xi).

must be made before true societal peace can occur (Pelinka 2009[10]). Assman makes an interesting argument that remembering traumatic events is actually an exercise in 'forgetting', or as she puts it, 'moving on' (Assman 2009, 40). This is a greater discussion on the term's affirmation, the terms denial warrants a larger discussion.

3.3: The Rationale for Denial

Silence, amnesia, and denial play strong roles in how a state chooses to remember an event. Paul Connerton made the point that modernity has a distinct problem with forgetting due to its hyper-obsession with speed and scale (Connerton 2009). Certainly, in the case of a rapidly modernizing Turkey, the Ottoman past is forgotten as the future became the sole obsession of Ataturk's state (Göçek 2011,42). While much has been written about the effects of denial (see Hovannisian, Suny, Charney, Lipstadt). I will be looking more at what Israel Charney coins as the 'definitional denial', those that focus on denying the category of genocide to the events (Charney 2003). While Charney offers an exhaustive typology of the many different types of denial that a government can undertake, Henry Therault claims we can distinguish between denial of the actual events, and denial that such events constitute a genocide (Therault 2010, 421). Genocide becomes a part of history as practice that I focus upon in my analysis, as the denial of the actual category of genocide is also an exemplar of how genocide is a category of practice even in its absence.

An area of great concern to scholars in the field of genocide denial is that of silence. This is the manner by which the early Turkish Republic denied the Armenian Genocide. This exclusion is used to protect the overarching narrative of a state that rose from the ashes of defeat. The inclusion of 'genocide' in the foundation of the Turkish Republic would threaten the nobility,

[10] Here Pelinka uses the case study of Austria and the Holocaust.

and legitimacy, of the 'nation' in general (Goçek 2015, 18). The yearning to maintain a silence is identified by Noble in three forms: first, there is resistance to historical reinterpretation, second, there is a refusal to acknowledge that current disadvantage comes from past mistreatment, and third, they don't want past history to become current politics. (Noble 2008, 29). Silence can be active, as well as passive, for instance Turkish genocide denial began in 1919 with discussing the deportations as 'legitimate' but condemning the massacres, then slowly shifted into a general silence (Vidal- Naquet 1985, 3). Silence was the preferred form of denial, however, pressure on the Turkish state forced the narrative to address the events in an explicit denialist strategy.

Silence need not necessarily surround the events themselves. More importantly, is how the events are labelled: thus, one does not need to address the authenticity of the events, but only how they are described. Exemplified by the infamous 67 academics who signed a letter to the US congress that, "the massacres such as took place were a result of war; the Turks are not a people who could plan systematic genocide; and in any case it is time to forget and build a peaceful relationship" (Charney 2000, 32). Notice that this denial recognizes the existence of massacres but simply denies that those massacres constitute an organized attempt at eliminating a people. This is part of a shift in Armenian Genocide denial, as he writes, "the strategy has changed from one of absolute negation of intentional mass killing to that of rationalization, relativization, and trivialization." (Hovannisian 1998, 201). Hovannisian identified how Armenian genocide denial was similar to Holocaust denial in that the intent of the perpetrators is often denied as opposed to the physical acts of destruction (Hovannisian 1998, 204).

There are many universal characteristics of genocide denial, and the denial almost always has an instrumental element. By denying the intent factor, as well as characterizing a victim/perpetrator dynamic of both parties, denial of the category of genocide can be maintained.

These are not the sort of denials spurred by crude racism (Charney 2003), but are a sophisticated tactic employed by prominent academics such as Bernard Lewis and Michael Gunter. By denying the category, these academics show how symbolically laden and politically potent the "G-word" is when used to describe events.

It is important to note that genocide deniers often lack obvious material reward for denying genocide. Instead, the rewards are psychological. The Armenian Genocide has been described by Donald Bloxham as "a- perhaps *the*- archetypal example of a nationalist genocide" (Bloxham 2003, 23). This status makes it a fixture in Turkish national identity and thus it becomes important to maintain a cognitive dissonance from the event. The denial of genocide actually maintains an important social-psychological function within the citizenry of a perpetrator society. As Israel Charney wrote,

> many of deniers are not committed propagandists or hate-mongers, they are not known to be in the pay or employ of a group that has a commitment to revise the history of a given genocide, and in many cases they do not have a record of prejudice and antagonism to the target people whose genocide is being denied. Denial is, after all, a common powerful mechanism in the human mind which is capable of numbing, avoiding, and blocking out awareness both of terrible events that have befallen oneself as a victim as well as awareness of terrible things done to others." (Charney 2003, 18).

Genocide denial becomes a project whose intent is to save the psychological welfare of those who might be associated with the perpetrators, known as 'innocent denials'. As Deborah Lipstadt noted, it is hard to commend National Socialism after Auschwitz, holocaust denial is a tool to allow the individual to justify their beliefs in this ideology (Lipstadt 1993, 20). Genocide denial becomes a mean by which one can sanitize their ideological commitments of historical baggage.

3.4: State Policy and Narrative Surrounding Genocide

Since state legitimacy and stability often rely on a national narrative to justify their intrusion into daily life, the state has a vested interest in protecting that narrative via certain policy measures to maintain their 'imagined community'(Anderson 1982). In the case of defining and categorizing events as genocide, states have an even more vested interest in protecting the national narrative. There are numerous ways states can actively use policy to shape narrative and control discussion on events, here are some examples.

3.4.1: Legislation

Constitution

State constitutions occasionally address the experience of genocide. Cases where genocide is explicitly mentioned are rare, but there are some interesting examples to compare. Take for example the Constitution of Rwanda, which opens with points 1, 2, and 4,

> 1° In the wake of the genocide that was organized and supervised by unworthy leaders and other perpetrators and that decimated more than a million sons and daughters of Rwanda;
> 2° Resolved to fight the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations and to eradicate ethnic, regional and any other form of divisions;
> 4° Emphasizing the necessity to strengthen and promote national unity and reconciliation which were seriously shaken by the genocide and its consequences; (Rwanda 1995)

The explicit mention of genocide within this national narrative, puts the genocide of 1994 against the Tutsi front and center of any discussion of nation[11]. In the wake of atrocities, this state has enshrined genocide recognition as a part of the national narrative. In Rwanda, this tragedy makes up a determinant part of the national identity, and becomes extremely important to the national

[11] A similar clause can be found in the Burundian Constitution: "Reaffirming our unwavering determination to put an end to the profound causes of the continuous state of the ethnic and political violence, of genocide and of exclusion, of effusion of blood, of insecurity and of political instability, which have plunged the People into distress and suffering and compromise gravely the perspectives for economical development and the realization of equality and of social justice in our country; "(Burundi 2000).

psyche. This is an active step towards employing the events as part of a national narrative, thus genocide recognition becomes an integral part of identity.

A comparison can be made to states that do not recognize genocide, and offer constitutions which undermine genocide recognition in national narrative. The Turkish constitution maintains that it follows the direction and conception of nationalism as outlined by Ataturk, "its immortal leader and unrivalled hero." The constitution is best described as an ethno-nationalist constitution, reminiscent of the Rousseauian conception of an ideal nation state. The constitution claims "the absolute supremacy of the will of the nation", while also vesting that no individual or body empowered to exercise it on behalf of the nation shall deviate from democracy based on freedom." Those frequent appeals to the Turkish nation as a monolith homogenizes the state and directs its energies towards nation-building. Finally, the constitution reads,

> The determination that no protection shall be afforded to thoughts or opinions contrary to Turkish National interests, the principle of the existence of Turkey as an indivisible entity with its State and territory, Turkish historical and moral values, or the nationalism, principles, reforms and modernism of Ataturk;

It is from this clause that legislation such as Penal Code 301 is justified in defending the Turkish nation, or 'Turkishness'. Constitutional identity forms a cognitive center where states define the polity and their relationship to the state. Constitutions also justify various regimes for maintaining legal regimes that maintain narrative.

Legal frameworks for defending narrative

Along with the maintenance of constitutional safeguards against the narrative surrounding genocide, states often maintain legal safeguards regarding various narratives surrounding

genocide. States can mount certain legislation to protect genocide denial and to counter the affirmation of such claims. Turkish penal code 301 serves as the most notorious example of this legislation. The law gained such international notoriety that it has been altered numerous times by the Turkish parliament. The law explicitly targets those who insult 'turkishness', or the nation of 'Turkey'. As legal scholars have written,

> the use of the Articles represent a broader tendency within both the Constitution of Turkey and other laws, that favour an ethno-nationalistic concept of citizenship. This is done by blocking alternative interpretations of symbolic events as the Armenian genocide and by using vague ethnic terms as 'Turkishness' and 'Turkish Nation' to describe the scope of citizenship in Turkey. Further, even though the formulations of the Articles have changed over time, there is no sign of change in implementation. (Persson, Bastviken Rojan, 2011)

Due to the ethno-nationalist approach to citizenship, the state can wield legislations that protects the body politic. The law has been applied to prominent Turkish government critics who used the term genocide to describe the events of 1915 as genocide. These include such as Orhan Pamuk and Hrant Dink. This legislation reflects a current effort by the Turkish state to maintain strict control over the discussion regarding how these events are discussed.

3.4.2: Centralized Education Policy

States also introduce educational programs that shape how the public will remember an event. One of the primary areas this can occur is in education. As Jennifer Dixon cited in her Turkish textbook analysis the education system teaches the Turkish population, from an early age, that the 'events of 1915' do not constitute a proper 'genocide' (Dixon 2010, 473). The Turkish state first centralized control over the narrative, it then marshalled exaggerated evidence to support the official narrative, and used the education system to domestically reinforce the historical amnesia over the events of 1915 (Dixon 2010). The maintenance of such barriers allows the state to control the space by which individuals understand the events. This remains

part of a concerted state policy to remember the events of 1915 as ‘deportations’ and ‘massacres’, but never ‘genocide’.

3.4.3: Public Memory through physical monuments

The decoration of public space is also a site by which memory of an event can take place. Nora identifies that the public memorial is very much a place where memory occurs. States often take the step to commemorating or forgetting by the purposeful display of memorials, turning an ephemeral memory into monumental memory (Assman and Shortt: 2012). The nation-building project is the intent of this policy and can be effective depending on how the society responds to the creation of public memorials (Hobsbawm 1983). We can plot the interest in building a Turkish state through memorials beginning with the mass construction of Ataturk statues across Turkey in the Early Republican era (Fisk 2014) or the destruction of Armenian churches and landmarks continues Turkey’s genocidal regime (Hovannisian 1998, 173). How one remembers genocide becomes part of this contestation, take for example the struggle the Turkish government has undertaken to stop a proposed monument for the Armenian Genocide in Geneva (Zaman 2015). Monuments and memorials are sites of memory that can help set the market for the word.

3.4.4: Conclusion: breaking the silence, challenging denial

The symbolic importance of the term genocide requires that it play a vital role in national memory. As a category of practice, ‘genocide’ can be instrumentalized and tailored to a national narrative. States have vested interests in tailoring policy towards the incorporation or denial of genocide within their national narrative, particularly when that genocide occurs in the temporal space of that state’s foundation myth. States hold an interest in maintaining policy to control

narratives and to actively tailor them to fit national interest: via legislation, education campaigns, and public remembrance and memorials.

However, state narratives should not be analyzed by themselves but also in their acceptance (Wertsch 2001, 117). Take for example Eric Hobsbawm's example of the mass construction of Wilhelm the First monuments in Germany which the populace found less desirable than the columns dedicated to their hero Otto Von Bismarck (Hobsbawm 1983). While there may be a salient state narrative that attempts to enforce a specific collective memory, there are often discreet counter narratives that exist in a collective consciousness. The Bourdieuian concept of heretical imposition can be compared to this (Bourdieu 1999, 127), but I think the more appropriate conception might be Wertsch hidden dialogicity[12] (Wertsch 2001, 113). With the example of Turkey, there are examples of this counter narrative existing subtly in society such as generational transmission through stories in families of both survivors or perpetrators (Üngör 2014), or even in covert children's lullabies sung by Islamized Armenians to their children (Bilal 2015). These covert narratives have always in the Turkish consciousness.

The term genocide often finds itself as a site of *contested* memory. Genocide as a category of practice, is contested on the marketplace of ideas. The phenomenon of state directed remembering ought to be equally linked to the democratic discourse regarding how these narratives can meet their opposition. The term genocide, is always met with controversy, in Müge Goçek's recent work *The Denial of Violence* she muses on the difficult terrain academics have to navigate over using the word,

[12] Wertsch claimed that the collective memory enforced in Russian Education post- 1991 had its origins as a narrative had simply existed in the private sphere within Soviet society all along.

> When I started this research project, I objected to the use of the term "genocide" to refer to the 1915-17 collective violence against the Armenians not because I did not think what had happened was genocide…What I objected to was the almost total ignorance of contemporary Turkish society about what had happened to the Armenians in the past due to the nationalist education system that white washed all such violence on the one hand and the perception this was imposed by the west with the intent to only appease the Armenians on the other. I argued that I would start employing the term after I had personally written and informed the Turkish public about what I think had happened. With this book, I believe I had fulfilled that obligation and can therefore employ the term, although I concur that it carries an inherent value judgement, one that privileges the morality of the victim over the perpetrators (Goçek 2015, 19).

In this statement, Goçek highlights, quite nicely, the act of defiance in evoking the term genocide, as well as the gravitas of laying the charge. In using this site of memory to cause a rupture in a collective consciousness that is laden with a narrative of denial. As well, the use of this term empowers those populations who were the victims of such atrocities. For a contemporary example of the word being evoked in a contested space I will examine the Armenian Genocide centennial held in 2015 in Istanbul, and examine the currency the term has on the market.

Chapter Four: Genocide in practice at the 2015 Armenian Genocide Commemorations in Istanbul Turkey.

In the previous chapter, I focused on the symbolic utility of the term genocide when it is used in the context of state narrative. As in the case with Turkey, protection of state legitimacy occurs when stories of the development of the national character are uncategorized and free from the term. State narratives can also see themselves as sites of contestation that will be the focus of this chapter. The events surrounding the 100th anniversary commemorations of the 1915 Armenian Genocide in Istanbul, Turkey provide a cursory case study to show the employment of genocide as a category of practice, showing how genocide actually plays on the symbolic marketplace of ideas in a space of 'contested memory'. How is the term's symbolic importance mobilized in a social milieu that is hostile to its imposition?

I will argue that the term has symbolic acceptance, as it becomes a declaration of a greater frame of societal organization. 'Genocide' generates meanings for those who affirm the category and those who deny it. Its function, through utterance in the public sphere, becomes a defiant act against a state that heavily encourages forgetting. The use of the term genocide in Istanbul frames one's national identity, so its declaration serves as a marker of the user's social attributions to the collectivity as a whole. First, I will synopsize the immediate local and global backdrop to the recent event. This will include examination of how events leading up to the ceremony set the stage for how 'genocide' was to be discussed. Secondly, I will explore the space of the event, as well as the timing of the ceremony, utilized the political, social, and symbolic capital borrowed from the spatial location of the event to increases the worth of the use of the category of genocide. Thirdly, I will explore the lead-up and the publications on the day of the commemoration to show that the 'Armenian Question' was a highly salient public dialogue

leading up to the event. Finally, I will explore, through qualitative interviews, how participants and those outside of the commemorations define and use the concept of genocide to describe the events of 1915 and explore how the utterance of the term genocide signifies one's greater societal frame. The case study of this commemoration ceremony ought to exemplify how 'genocide', as a category of practice, is mobilized and traded in a hostile market, even by those who deny that the event constitutes the crime.

4.1: Methodology

In order to examine how the term genocide, can be understood in the context of use, I chose to analyse it within the space of the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide held in Turkey on April 24th[13]. This year, 2015, is the centennial of the genocide and this would be a space where I knew there would be conflicting narratives of genocide, and (dis)uses of the term.

I chose various approaches (qualitative interviews, participant observation, and media discourse) was that approaching from multiple angles allows the production of a comprehensive record of the event itself (Pearce 2006, 183; Spradley 1979, 69). It also allowed me to approach the event through numerous different angles to analyze the effect of the word on the symbolic market (Bourdieu 1999). The qualitative would allow me to situate competing definitions of 'genocide' and rationalizations of the term in a more controlled setting. Whereas participant observation during the ceremony allowed for an approach to the topic that favoured an intuitive, holistic, approach to studying the phenomena (Hamersley and Atkinson 1995, 24).

[13] This was the date that the Armenian intellectuals of Istanbul were rounded up to be killed, this was considered the beginning of the genocide.

4.1.1: Qualitative Interviews

Prior to the commemoration events I conducted qualitative interviews with university students living in Istanbul to assess a variety of perspectives surrounding why the students did, or did not, refer to the events of 1915 as 'genocide'. The sample was comprised of students between the ages of 22-28. The respondents were found through an internet forum discussing the events of 1915 on couchsurfing.com and were contacted by the researcher. The participants agreed to an interview for a study on how the events of 1915 are discussed today. Many participants asked for anonymity and I have done my best to respond to their requests by simply labelling them as Respondent x.

The sample is not representative of the Turkish population as a whole, where the majority of the populace either does not believe that the events of 1915 took place, or that such events constitute genocide. A heavily cited poll suggests only 9.1% of the Turkish population call the events 'genocide' (EDAM 2015). Being that the sample was generally of a young age, and many of them were pursuing higher education, this most likely affected their awareness of their events as well as the visibility of the events. The questions were analyzed for how they would fit in a communicative web, and were not meant to be taken as informative. (Briggs 1986, 103). Thus, I adopt a frame analysis in the style of Irving Goffman (Goffman 1974) when I argue that the participants frame the events with the utterance of the word genocide and that the (un)acceptability of the term in these situations is related to a much wider understanding of the world. The purpose of these interviews was to see how the participants rationalized whether the events fit the term 'genocide' and to see how it would fit within their understanding their social world regarding mass atrocity.

4.1.2: Participant Observation

I also placed myself within the commemoration ceremonies as a participant observer. This meant that I took part in all the activities arranged by the NGO Project 2015 as documented in my field notes section. By placing myself within the events, I was able to explore the symbolic importance of the utterance of the term genocide in the public sphere. I participated in the events as a researcher, yet I was still intimately involved with them participating in numerous demonstrations. I spent a total of five days living with a group largely made up of individuals who identified as Armenian-Americans[14] between the ages of 21-32 who had received travel grants from Project 2015 to visit Istanbul on the commemoration.[15] I also participated in most of activities set up by Project 2015.

Taking the approach of participant observation allowed me to become involved in the world of meaning by my participants. This meant I had greater access to their subjective experiences and approached this from a 'logic of discovery' (Jorgenson 1989 15-18). As Danny L. Jorgenson wrote in his methodological treatise on participant observation,

> Human meaning and interaction is approached through sympathetic introspection, verstehen, a humanistic coefficient, or sympathetic reconstruction. Participant observation, in other words, is a very special strategy for gaining access to the interior, seemingly subjective, aspects of human experience" (Jorgenson 1982, 21).

There is of course a large debate in anthropology as to how 'scientific' an embedded researcher can be. Armbruster wrote, while doing fieldwork on Syrian Christians living in Turkey, of feeling a shared anger toward the Turkish state while she was participating in their daily lives. Armbruster pointed to a tension within the researcher: "a yearning to reconcile our politically

[14] While the majority of the participants had come from Los Angeles there were many who were studying elsewhere. There were also participants who were from Russia and Iran.
[15] It is important to note, that the researcher also received one of these grants to travel to Istanbul and conduct this research.

and our academically biased selves. While the former is about the alignment with the powerless, the latter still is, in many ways, about the alignment with the powerful." (Armbruster 2008, 137-8). Similarly, even as a researcher who does not personally identify with any ethnic group in Anatolia I felt an incredible surge of emotion sitting on Istiklal Street while the word 'genocide', was uttered in a public space. However, there should not be an obvious tension as research on particular social issues should always be connected to an emancipatory praxis (Ann Davis 2008, 236). While maintaining a distance in both my own identity and my own emotional investment, I was able to use *otherness* but not *be* otherness (Laerke 2008, 173). This means that, while I was mostly observing others within the event, I myself was actively participating in the commemoration and engaging in local politics[16]. While this does have the limitation of bringing the neutrally of my work into dispute, it also allowed me to share in the experience of appreciating the symbolic significance of the space at the time.

4.2: Lead-up to the Event

4.2.1: Domestic

Before looking at the event itself, it is important to see what was occurring within and outside of Turkey prior to the commemoration ceremony. There were some notable events within Turkey in the lead-up to the events. One such was President Erdoğan's statement on April 15th, in response to the EU Parliament's condemnation of continuous Turkish genocide denial, "We could have deported (Armenians living in Turkey illegally) but we did not. We're still hosting them in our country. It is not possible to understand such a stance against a country which displays such hospitality" (Guardian 2015). Many in Turkish civil society construed this

[16] For the spirit of transparency, I will state unapologetically that I believe the Turkish state has an ethical obligation to categorize the events of 1915 as a genocide against the Armenian People.

statement as a veiled threat to the Armenian community living in Turkey.[17] The Prime Minister Bulent Arinc, made an interesting statement on April 21st claiming, ""We [i.e. the Turks] have not knowingly and deliberately committed genocide; those who committed genocide are known to the world" (News AM 2015). Some in civil society saw this odd statement,, as "a confession" that *something* happened, though this follows in the newly minted narrative of redefining intent in order to escape the genocide categorization. The Turkish government also turned the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli, normally held on April 25th into a two day event in which Erdoğan could speak at the memorial on the 24th of April. Many saw this as a cynical ploy to distract attention away from Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day (Dabbagh 2015). Erdoğan's response was one of deflection, stating, "Quite the contrary: They fixed their ceremonies to coincide with our date. We have no such consideration. We have no such worry to coincide it with that event on the 24th of April" (Armenian Weekly 2015). While the comments are milder in tone from previous years, they do point to a continuation of the Turkish strategy of denial which has grown progressively slicker from the 1970's onward (Hovannisian 1998, 16). A significant reason for this was most likely the required response to the events that occurred on the international stage during the buildup to the centenial.

4.2.2: International Stage

One of the first moments was the recognition on April 12th that came from Pope Francis who declared the events of 1915 as "the first genocide of the 20th Century", he then claimed, "Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it" (BBC 2015). The use of the term genocide itself caused the Republic of Turkey to recall its

[17] At a press conference I was present at, as well as a subsequent NGO meeting with Turkish civil society organizations, this statement was a long topic of conversation.

ambassador from the Vatican. The statement would also cause nationalists within Turkey to start using words such as Imperialism, or crusade to characterize the Pope's remarks.

One of the fastest reprieves to the claim of 'genocide' by Pope Francis came from the UN secretary General Ban Ki Moon, who offered that the events of 1915 cannot be understood as a 'genocide', but as an atrocity crime. At a later press conference, the Secretary General was pressed on choice of not using the term genocide a spokesperson dealt with reporters at press time,

> **Spokesman:** I think the Secretary-General is very mindful that, on 24 April of this year, the Armenia nation and others around the world commemorate the centenary of the tragic events of 1915. He's also fully aware of the sensitivities related to the characterization of what happened in 1915, 100 years ago. The Secretary-General firmly believes that commemorating and remembering those tragic events of 1915 and continuing to cooperate with a view to establishing the facts about what happened should strengthen our collective determination to prevent similar atrocity crimes from ever happening in the future. And the UN, as you know, has sought to strengthen the capacity of the international community to prevent such atrocity crimes from ever occurring again.
>
> **Question:** So he has no position whether it's genocide…
>
> **Spokesman**: You've asked me a question. I've related what the Secretary-General's position is. (UN 2015)

The explicit rejection of the term genocide marks definitional denial. The rewording of the term genocide into one that is simply 'mass atrocities' has huge symbolic importance. There is a comparison to be made with the infamous interview between Whitehouse press spokesperson Christine Shelly and Reuter's Reporter Allen Elsner during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

> **Elsner**: How would you describe the events taking place in Rwanda?
>
> **Shelly**: Based on the evidence we have seen from observations on the ground, we have every reason to believe that acts of genocide have occurred in Rwanda.
>
> **Elsner**: What's the difference between "acts of genocide" and "genocide"?
>
> **Shelly**: Well, I think the—as you know, there's a legal definition of this ... clearly not all of the killings that have taken place in Rwanda are killings to which you might apply that

> label ... But as to the distinctions between the words, we're trying to call what we have seen so far as best as we can; and based, again, on the evidence, we have every reason to believe that acts of genocide have occurred.
>
> **Elsner**: How many acts of genocide does it take to make genocide?
>
> **Shelly**: Alan, that's just not a question that I'm in a position to answer (quoted from Power 2001).

While the two examples are temporally different, one being the remembrance of an historical event, and the other being a call to recognize a present one, both these cases provide clear examples of definitional denial by which the speaker does not deny the actuality of the events, but their categorization. It is here that by employing a specific vocabulary, which is intended to give another meaning to the events, is practiced as a means to evade responsibility to enact justice.

As the commemorations grew nearer, many states subsequently recognized the genocide: Austria[18], Germany[19], and Russia[20] on April 23rd. All of these recognitions of genocide were accompanied by equal condemnation from Turkey which retracted its ambassadors from both Germany and Austria. The European parliament also implored Turkey to recognize that genocide occurred as part of a reconciliation effort (EU 2015). Since Turkey is currently vying for EU membership, this particular diplomatic row becomes exceptionally poignant. The Turkish Foreign Ministry responded, "We don't take seriously this resolution that slaughters history and law" (Uras 2015). Diplomatic battles over the categorization of Genocide were especially bolstered by the coming centennial of the events.

[18] The Austrian Embassy in Armenia wrote, "The atrocities committed against the Armenian people of the Ottoman Empire during WWI is defined as the Armenian Genocide." (Embassy of OST 2015)

[19] The German President Joachim Gauck claimed, "The fate of the Armenians is exemplary for the history of mass destruction, ethnic cleansing, expulsions and genocides which marks the 20th century in such a terrible way" (ISL news 2015).

[20] Russian President Vladimir Putin Proclaimed: "April 24, 1915 is a sad date connected with one of the most appalling and dramatic events in the history of humankind: the genocide of the Armenian people" (Azbarez 2015).

The Turkish state, in the lead up to the commemorations, was forced to contend in both the domestic and international sphere the categorization of the events of 1915. This is a continuation of the long standing state policy of denial of the genocide. However, there are signs that the policy is changing, with regards to the category (such as the Prime Minister's statement). These events on the international stage very much affect how the term could be used in the domestic sphere. It is here that I turn to my case study of the commemoration events in Istanbul to show how the utterance of the word would find an opening market in Istanbul.

4.3: Layout of the Market

The reason for this section title, and the chapter itself, is that the physical and temporal aspects of the commemoration events on April 24th contribute to how the term 'genocide' would be accepted and bargained in this space by participants and witnesses. There lies a connection between how the *physical* space of the event contributes to the *symbolic* marketplace. The first is the position of the space and location chosen for the commemorations, as well as various other areas where commemorations were held. The second is the temporal nature of the events that explain their importance.

4.3.1: Symbolism through Physical Space at Taksim Square and Istiklal

Public space, both in the wider concept of democracy, as well as in the context of the physical space by which the commemorations occurred in Istanbul is an important area of analysis for public demonstrations. In this case, how was the term genocide used? Space as an area by which democracy can occur was neglected in much of the literature until the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement renewed scholarly interest in the subject. As John R. Parkinson wrote: "while a growing proportion of political communication uses digital means, the things that are communicated involve real people who take up, occupy, share, and contest physical space. Those

who accredit media as the agent of political change confuse medium and message" (Parkinson 2012, 1) (6). While Facebook and Twitter are ample tools to unite and broadcast social movements it is the physical gathering of these groups that remains of the utmost importance. Saskia Sassen, however, offers us an important distinction between a public space and a new concept, the 'Global Street'.

> I would argue that the street, the urban street, as public space is to be differentiated from the classic European notion of the more ritualized spaces for public activity, with the piazza and the boulevard the emblematic European instances. I think of the space of 'the street', which of course includes squares and any available open space, as a rawer and less ritualized space. The Street can, thus, be conceived as a space where new forms of the social and the political can be made, rather than a space for enacting ritualized routines. (Sassen 2011, 492)

Taksim Square and the adjoining Istiklal Street, mark an important intersection between the two concepts of a Global Street and a Public Space. Taksim is heavily ritualized by governmental institutions to foster nationalist sentiment[21], it also has daily function in the lives of many citizens who use the square as a major transport hub and meeting point. This public space can serve two functions: it remains an integral part of democracy albeit a rawer physical exemplar of the practice, while still being a site where the Turkish nation is remembered via state planned initiatives.

Despite the attempts at modernization and transformation, Istanbul remains a distinctly cosmopolitan, Amy Mills wrote, "It is through everyday life in (Istanbul) that people negotiate among themselves to accommodate Kurdish accents, conservative Islamic dress, or memories of a local Greek or Armenian past in the ethnically Turkish, secular, and Muslim nation of Turkey"(Mills 2010, 2). The particular space in which the commemoration ceremony occurred,

[21] The statue of Ataturk in Taksim which shows him both as a warrior (personified in his role at Gallipoli) and as a statesman (surrounded by others from the Early Republican period), is part of the greater nation-building project as his personification is found in almost every major public place within Turkey (Gur 2013).

Taksim Square and the adjoining Istiklal Street, has a storied history in urban development and urban politics. Taksim Square, like most of Istanbul was part of a massive redesigning campaign during the early republican period. Much of Istanbul was redesigned by French architect Henri Prost; the streets and urban spaces were reworked to conform to both modernist style and utility as well the square would be the symbol of the new republic. The accomplishment of this task included destroying the old Ottoman Barracks and introducing a monument to Ataturk in the square (Gokturk, Soysal, Turelli 2010, 8-9). Istiklal is a pedestrian street that was developed mainly for the bourgeois of the city, it is home to many famous film houses, theatres, and café's (Clark 2010, 135-147). The street and Taksim represent are a large focal point of life in the city (Clark 2010, 246). Despite being centrally planned, Taksim and Istiklal Cadessi remain a useable space as opposed to a sterile and purely symbolic space that centrally planned public spaces often become[22] (Scott 1998). The site has also been the focal point of various urban development controversies. The site is seen as the point of sparring on the new and old Turkey. Some of these conflicts include the public debate as to whether to allow a mosque to be built in the square (*see* Walton 2010) as well as the 'Tarlbassi demolitions' in the 1990's to demolish slums and rework the landscape into a beautiful modernist space and present a sanitized vision of the city (Bartu 1999, 34). Taksim was intended in its function as the central public square of the biggest city of the new state and was to be appropriately decorated to manifest the modernization project hailed by the new republican order (Orz 2014, 492). Political tension over the space's design often reflect the greater societal cleavages within Turkey as a whole, between reflecting the past, or looking towards the future. The square, in many cases, has reflected the future oriented perspective of Ataturk's Turkey. Around the 1990's the square became a site for many

[22] For an excellent review of public squares as a place of urban authoritarian politics see James C. Scott's *Seeing Like a State* (1998).

nationalist holidays, and the use of the square became important for fostering these sorts of public rituals and rehearsals (Soysal 2010, 308).

Any analysis of Taksim Square would be completely bereft if it did not include a discussion of the subsequent Gezi Park protests in 2013. The protests focused over a proposed redevelopment of Gezi Park, found in the north part of the square into a neo-Ottoman mall. Like most contentious discussions over development of the square, it focused on the more conservative neo-Ottoman elements of Istanbul society, and the more modernist oriented pro-Kemal segments. The protests over Gezi Park quickly blossomed into a widespread anti-government enterprise, forming its own "sub-political entity" (Ors 2014, 141). Onur Ekmekci identified that the protests marked a new era of civic and grassroots protests, "redefining the notion of democratic participation in politics, especially the part concerning the role people could play in the quest of claiming rights to their city" (Onur Ekmekci 2014, 146). The media also played a distinct role in Gezi as the government desperately attempted to engage in a form of media management, to turn attention away from the now threatening space (Parikka 2014, 92). The language of odor was often evoked by the more conservative elements of Turkish Society, the protestors were described by high ranking state officials as dirty 'White Turks'(Ozkirimli 2013)[23]. The public space is intimately linked to democracy outside of an institutional framework and new versions of democracy "are visualized and performed in the square. While it is the street that enjoys live reporting through social or conventional media, the street that develops a new language of resistance" (Orz 2015, 490). Taksim presents an excellent example of a space that can be both the center and commercial hub of Istanbul as well as a theatre where

[23] Many protestors who fled to a local mosque to escape the controversy were accused of drinking beer inside by President Erdoğan who claimed, ""They entered Dolmabahçe Mosque with their beer bottles and their shoes on. They have insulted my headscarf-wearing daughters and sisters. And they haven't stopped at that," (*quoted from* Hurriyet 2013).

the physical representations of political power are carried out. This area of the city is probably one of the most accessible points to democracy in the city.

There are two factors that embolden the symbolism of hosting an Armenian Genocide commemoration in Taksim Square. The first is that the square is a focal point of politics in Turkey, thus bringing the events into the public sphere. The second is that the square is reflective of the Turkish Nation-building project, thus a ceremony that challenges the state narrative of genocidal innocence is ever more provocative.

There were many side commemorations across Istanbul prior to the ceremony held in Taksim Square (in the mouth of Istiklal Street)[24]. Around 10:00 AM, on April 24th, students and activists picketed near the houses formally occupied by the Armenian intellectuals who had perished in the genocide. This was done in broad daylight, and the signs portrayed the intellectuals who had perished in the events. The visibility of the signs on the busy Cumhurriyet Street (just north of Taksim) became a powerful symbol of remembrance, as well as demonstrated the imposition of past events in daily life.

[24] The Municipal Authorities later deemed that the events were too political to be held in Taksim Square which has seen a ban on political protesting since Gezi Park. The relocation of the event on Istiklal Street was still in full view of the square however.

Figure 1: Commemoration at 10:00 AM on Cumhurriyet Road, blocking significant traffic. Note the difference between Figure 1 and Figure 2 in which the word genocide is not explicitly mentioned. Figure 2 shows the protest at Hayderpasa Train station (note that the researcher could not photograph over two dozen riot police on the side.)

A more explicit protest, at least as far as political aims, was held in front of the Haydarpasa train station, where the intellectuals were deported to be killed. The crowd carried placards that read "genocide, recognize" and "this is a crime scene". The train station marks the symbolic importance. A key difference between the two areas, was that the word genocide was used on the placards. The first protests, in front of the houses of the intellectuals, used the word 'genocide'. This interesting choice of word was more readily used in this space as opposed to the houses of the intellectuals, this protest was featured in numerous news media sites including the Guardian (Letsch 2015), Der Taggespiegel (2015), the Huffington Post 2015, CNN, and Le Monde. Even though this protest was held in a much less busy public space. The moment highlights the volatile nature of using the category of 'genocide' in the Turkish state, even unto this day.

The larger ceremony occurred at the mouth of Istiklal Street leading unto Taksim Square at 19:00. The "Wishing Tree Ceremony" a popular form of visual commemoration through artistic expression, unfolded in front of the French consulate. On numerous instances, counter protestors who had been able to pass the barriers attempted to attack the symbol. Members of the audience carried placards with the names of relatives who had perished in the genocide, but also those of Hrant Dink and political victims of the debate on the 'Armenian Question'. Also in attendance was a large group of individuals carrying placards portraying 'Mehmet Ayvalıtaş', a victim of the original Gezi Park protests. Many attendees of the commemoration saw this event as a continuation of the Gezi protests, with several shouting "Down with Fascism", alongside the

more familiar “We are all Hrant, we are all Armenians”. The contrast between the two styles of defiance show the duality of the event: it is both a commemoration, a memorial to the lives lost, and also a protest against a state collective memory by which the events of 1915 are denied the category of genocide. The commonality is that the use of the square continues the tradition of challenging a state that has been historically violent towards its minorities.

One of the stronger linguistic acts of the ceremony was the moment when art historian Heghnar Watenpagh declared “As I speak Armenian in the heart of Istanbul on this hallowed day, I can hear the sounds of the past…” the very symbolic moment of uttering what was a counter narrative to the state defined a shift in the public consciousness. Another speaker resoundingly used the word ‘genocide’ multiple times during this ceremony. This moment was the culminate opening of the symbolic marketplace to the acceptance of the term genocide. The word was uttered in one of the most symbolically important areas of Turkey, for a large audience in an area where it had been historically suppressed.

The term ‘genocide’, being mobilized in this space, and at this time represents a significant moment in the Turkish collective memory, and the term's potency (yet acceptance) in the public sphere. In one of the most highly politicized spaces in the national consciousness, the word ‘genocide’ was used as part of a challenge to the general milieu of silence to gaining a new currency in the marketplace of ideas. For this linguistic act to have potency, I suggest we ought to combine our understanding of genocide’s currency in the symbolic marketplace with the social significance of the physical space in which the utterance was made. The use of this word in this space can be analyzed in two ways: primarily, it shows the shifting landscape of Turkish politics in which a word’s utterance can go from a criminal act, to one affording the protection of

riot police. Secondly, it shows the highly symbolic importance of the word. The second point is the one I would like to highlight the most, the use of the word genocide

4.3.2: A Question of Time

The timing of the events was also an area of great importance as the events found themselves sandwiched between Children's Day[25] (April 23rd), and Anzac Day (April 25th). These days have significance for the placement of the commemorations as they are both nationalist traditions: the first, being the formation of the national legislature which Kemal famously dedicated to the children of Turkey, and the second being the battle of Gallipoli which the current AKP controlled Turkey sees as the repelling of a crusade. In between these two sites of national celebration, the Armenian protests serve as a national embarrassment. Both national celebrations are significant in that they celebrate the birth of a republic thus the 1915 commemorations generate an opposition to the celebrations of national founding by invoking the label of genocide.

Time became vital for the Turkish government, as they moved the Gallipoli celebrations to a day earlier than Anzac day on the 24th of April. The move was seen by many as a cynical ploy by the Erdoğan administration to distract attention away from the genocide commemorations. The timing of the event also meant that Taksim was heavily adorned with both flags, and by iconography of Ataturk among other nationalist motifs (Gur 2013). Armenian participants on the trip expressed shock at what they perceived as a high level of nationalism on Children's Day, one participant commented, "do you think they're trying to compensate for something?" Later during a break, a fellow participant invited me to a game of counting the number of flags we could spot from the upper floor of the International Continental hotel in

[25] Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramı, literally "The Holiday of National Sovereignty and Children". The day was formed when Mustafa Kemal founded the Turkish Legislature.

Taksim Square. This case of banal nationalism (Billig 1995) increases the potency of the term 'genocide', within this particular space as it directly confronted Turkey's founding event. The time and spacing of the events lend to the symbolic importance of uttering the term 'genocide', affecting its entry into the symbolic marketplace.

4.4: Counter Protests: The So-called Armenian Imperialist 'Genocide'.

On April 24th there were numerous counter-protests as well. One of the most visible was that of the Vatani 'Patriotic' Party who posted across town to meet and protest the 'so-called Armenian Genocide', the party claimed that the assertion of genocide is a ploy of imperialism against Turkey. The visibility of the posters were widespread and the counter protest was held a kilometer away from the commemoration at Galatasaray on the same street as Istiklal. The CHP party also held a counter protest the day after in response to those being held in Taksim. Black metal wreaths were laid out in front of the publication house for *Agos*, a paper known for its pro-recognition position (Today's Zaman 2015).

The counter-protests also exemplify that the state, or actors sympathetic to the state narrative regarding the genocide, are forced to reckon with the word. The term now has symbolic acceptance, at least at the level of confusion. This shows that the word has come to signify, with its utterance, one's orientation towards their state, or towards themselves, and not to anything else. No longer can a silence be maintained on the events but they are said explicitly and they are put out for the world to see. These events were of particular interest to the local dailies and it is interesting to see how the media complemented the commemorations.

Figure 2: Posters could be found frequently around Istanbul for the Patriotic Party's rally against the "So-called Armenian Genocide".

Figure 3: A protestor from the VP's rally sits next to a placard that reads "The false Armenian Imperialist so-called genocide".

4.5: Newspaper Coverage: The decision to weigh in

During the day of the genocide commemorations, the major Istanbul daily newspapers, made the decision to grapple with the events of 1915. Turkish Newspapers are known to be extremely polarized politically and have been shown to engage in a consistent process of 'othering' and essentializing social antagonisms in daily life (Gümüs & Dural 2012). An examination of Turkish newspapers available on April 24th, revealed that all major dailies in editorial staff chose to discuss the 'Armenian Question' even leading up to the events. Newspaper layout is key to understanding how newspapers frame a political issue (Barnhurst 1993) and thus I chose to look at how each of the newspapers presented the issue of the Armenian Question.

In the lead up to April 24th, various elements of Turkish media addressed the issue of historical memory regarding the events of 1915. Armenian Genocide recognition became a prominent discussion on the international stage and thus it required address on the domestic level. Local dailies were compelled to address what had occurred in the buildup to the event. Many

times, it was usually in conjunction with the Gallipoli celebrations that the government had moved to April 24th, or with Children's Day that occurred the day prior on April 23rd.

The Turkish newspaper Hurriyet, often described as the country's leading Kemalist newspaper, had a series of articles responding to the international pressure for genocide recognition in Turkey. On April 20th there included a front page story featuring Barack Obama and the use of the word 'genocide' to describe the events of 1915. The same edition featured on op-ed entitled, "Genocide lesson" on page 32, which claimed to lay the case as to what is, and is not, genocide, with the events of 1915 being in the category of 'not' genocide. The next day, the newspaper had another op-ed with concerns regarding protests on April 24th and May 1st near Taksim Square. In the same edition they again addressed the claims of an alleged imperialist 'Soykirim' plot on page 25.

On the day of the actual commemoration ceremony, there was a wide divergence in how many of the daily newspapers handled the genocide. Hurriyet published articles regarding Turkish diaspora's demonstrations in Washington. Taha Akyol wrote an editorial on the 'Armenian Genocide', using scare quotes as well. The newspaper Posta published an article on page 14 regarding Germany's recognition of 'genocide on the same day but stayed mostly silent on the events. The large publication Milliyet chose to cover the Turkish diaspora protesting in Washington on the centennial, an event meant to express Turkish-Armenian friendship, the mass canonization of victims of the genocide (8), and Putin's decision to attend the ceremony in Yerevan on page 22. Probably the most damning response came from the far-right publication Aydinlik 24 April 2015: which featured a front page, a response to Barack Obama's Whitehouse statement, while pages 10-11 carried a spread of articles 'debunking' the genocide claim.

However, many left-leaning newspapers in Turkey published headlines that were sympathetic to the cause of the protestation in Taksim square. The small newspaper Agos[26] for instance, published its front page in Armenian. The newspaper Gundem similarly typed its front page in Armenian. The last page featured images of survivors of the genocide. Bir Gun another famous publication printed an original letter from Hrant Dink on its front page and explicitly used the word genocide.

The major dailies, on the day of the commemorations, mostly dealt with the issue of the 'Armenian Question', showing that the word 'genocide' is now a bartered word on the marketplace of ideas. While there were many other potential stories of a nationalist character newspapers on this day could have covered: particularly, the Gallipoli commemorations which moved to April 24th, or Children's day which occurred on the day before on the 23rd of April, most publications chose to address the 'Armenian Question'. While the newspapers had different editorial opinions as to whether these events could be adequately called 'genocide', the fact that newspapers proactively felt compelled to address the commemorations shows the terms newfound salience in the societal collective memory. Denial could long be held by silence, now public figures are actually forced to vocalize an opinion in opposition to a linguistic imposition that was once held in silence.

4.6: Rationalizing 'Genocide': Qualitative Interviews prior to the events

One of the more interesting aspects of the discourse were the words that were used by the respondents who did not believe that the events of 1915 were genocide. Respondent One identified the event as a 'massacre', and claimed that the term genocide was "something more deep, something more harsh". This is an example of what Martin Shaw would identify as

[26] The newspaper is famous for being founded by Hrant Dink and being one of the original newspapers to tackle the 'Armenian Question'.

minimization via the use of alternative understandings of the term genocide (Shaw 2006, 48). Respondent 6 only used the term "Ermeni soykırımı" in scare quotes and denied the events themselves had ever occured[27]. Respondent 7 claimed the terms "forcible migration" and "deportation" were better than the term 'genocide' and that he only referred to it as the Armenian Genocide because that is how he learned to refer to the events in English. Language acquisition seemed to play a large role in affirmation of the events respondents Three, Five, and Seven claimed that they first started hearing of the events as 'genocide' when they first began learning English.

Respondent Five claimed that they once adopted alternate terminology in order to maintain social acceptance, claiming, "When I was writing my (masters) thesis in Italy I thought should I write Armenian genocide or so-called genocide? The government reads your thesis to get accredited in Turkey so I decided to play it safe and wrote so-called Armenian genocide." Even Respondent Two, who did refer to the events as the Armenian Genocide claimed, "the term (genocide) is an international law term I guess…..I'm not sure of the situation was suitable for using the term but if it is we should recognize. If not we should investigate whether or not it was ethnic cleansing." The respondent warned me that pursing this topic was dangerous and that, if I used the term 'genocide', I would not be able to garner responses from the average individual.[28]

Primarily, responsibility and intent were the two biggest factors that affected the use, or disuse of the term genocide. Respondent One was an exemplar of this trend, he primarily claimed threat the "some of the Armenians started to fight with the allies against the Ottoman Empire, so they just decided to send them away. I don't know, I mean it was World War One!

[27] Subsequently, he came to the interview with a folder of papers by denialist academics to 'prove' his position.
[28] Numerous respondents, particularly those who had affirmed that the events were genocide often warned me about pursuing this topic in Turkey, those who denied the category tended not to care as much about my position as a foreign researcher.

They had some excuses you know, it wasn't like Hitler's craziness, like no one said okay, let's go kill all the Armenians." Coached within this statement are two discursive framing strategies, it removes the *Mens R*ea or the intent of the Ottoman Empire in destroying a mass population, and secondly it validates their destruction. Respondent Four differentiated what he claimed happened in Istanbul, was a 'genocide', whereas the Armenians killed in eastern Anatolia was a 'massacre' because they shared a collective guilt for rebelling, thus that portion of the violence did not warrant the label of genocide.

Respondent Two, who did affirm the category of genocide referred to a process of societal restructuring she felt would be enacted by the term's use, claiming:

> If you want reconciliation, or you want closure, first you must acknowledge the pain, and you should acknowledge what you have done, and then you can expect normalization and reconciliation, because if you neglect your contribution in an event killing lots of people, then you can't just expect that now they will love Turkish people, or like anything you know. We should be able to acknowledge our faults, acknowledge that we killed Armenians, that it was a genocide because lots of people, then we will get normalization and reconciliation."

Respondent Five agreed, and claimed that reconciliation needed to occur in order for society to come to peace, even claiming it would improve their relationships with their Armenian friends on a personal level. Respondent Three claimed their reason for going to the commemoration ceremonies were to "share the pain" and to rebel against the anger they felt for being taught facts that were "logically lies". Respondents Two and Three also claimed they felt a sort of bond with the Armenian cause as they too felt they had been the subjects of oppression by the Turkish state, the first for identifying as 'half-Kurdish' and the second for coming from a conservative Muslim background. The concept of genocide became a frame by which the respondents could orient themselves and the society as a whole.

These conversations, prior to the commemorations, revealed the term genocide's use in framing an event. Alternative terms and definitions were often deployed as opposed to outright denial that the events occurred. Interesting to note, amongst all the respondents were the way in which their use, or disuse of the term genocide very much reflected their social frame. This result is very similar to a quantitative study conducted by Rezarta Bilali which suggested that higher positive in group associations led to a higher prevalence of denial amongst participants who identified as Turkish (Bilali 2013). The interviewees in this study also revealed the different ways genocide was conceived by those who defined the application. Their use of the words was reflexive to how they perceived societal relations in Turkey.

4.7: Participant Observation at the Events

During the events themselves I participated, alongside a large group of Armenian American students. This was to document the subjective experiences of individuals who had come to Turkey to participate in the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Participants in the commemoration often expressed a feeling of otherness being in Istanbul on this day. Many would express nervousness, one expressed to me that when they told their parents they would commemorate the genocide in Istanbul they responded that they would be "slaughtered." Other participants told me that they informed their families where they were going only after they had left for Istanbul. Another participant informed me that they had tried to contact their family in Istanbul, but they responded that they would not communicate with their while she was in the city because they were afraid of government reprisals[29]. Another respondent told me after returning from the Turkish baths "It's kind of eerie, like the fascist party is handing

[29] Surprisingly, her family later contacted her to meet after the 24th of April. The fact that no violence broke out at the ceremony had assuaged their fears.

out pamphlets saying the genocide never happened." Notably, the participants often vocalized a feeling of being an unwanted outsider in this environment.

A moment that highlighted the difference between the community living within Istanbul and the community living in the diaspora was the visit to the local church patriarch. Many respondents expressed displeasure at seeing a Turkish Flag flying over the historical cathedral, as well as the massive portrait inside the cathedral of Mustafa Kemal. The local community in Istanbul did not use the term 'genocide' to describe the events of 1915. At one point, a member of the diaspora challenged the patriarch to open the archives. At dinner, the patriarch delivered a message: "We are a minority, with a functional community we will survive, this is how we always survive. The diaspora is different. Here, we are saving whatever we have." [30] After the dinner one participant exclaimed, there is "no other time like this in our lives, there is nowhere else I'd rather be right now, you would have to be here to see this."

Figure 4 Lunch at the Patriarch, note the enlarged portrait of Mustafa Kemal over the hall.

For many participants on the trip, this was a moment of reconciling a perceived antagonism. Multiple participants had told me that this was the first time in their lives they had

[30] Translated from Armenian by participant who sat next to me.

ever met Turkish people. While waiting for friends at the Hagia Sophia one participant told me "this feels so weird, I was always brought up to hate these people.[31]" Two participants, during a night of late evening drinks, informed me that they felt conflicted because they actually enjoyed the nightlife of the city, yet felt this enjoyment was not something they could share with his friends back home. Later that night, a member of our group told a Turkish student we met at the commemorations that this was the first time he ever met a Turk he could call a friend, the exchange became highly emotional. The trip to Istanbul to commemorate the genocide had a notable reconciling effect to many perceived antagonism the participants felt towards those they perceived as guilty.

During the ceremony, many of the participants noted feelings of immensity at being in Istanbul on this particular day in 2015. They felt not only emboldened by the moment to assert their identity in what appeared to be a hostile space, but also the feeling of being supported by Turkish Civil Society. One participant told me directly after the events,

> I think it's almost indescribable my feelings. When I started studying the genocide I saw things in very absolutist ways … I don't agree with members of the diaspora who are going to line up in Hollywood and march to the (Turkish) consulate in LA, I really don't agree with these groups that will go and chant yell, nothing will change by doing that.
>
> I can't gauge what effect this will have but I can say that the initiation has really come from the Turks. When I was high school all I learned was what horrible terrible people the Turks were. It needs to be more than this propaganda. ..Not all the people leaning out of the windows (over the street) were Armenians yet at the end, you could see them clap their hands, one guy who was speaking in English said, "This isn't based on hatred, this is our history," and *our* history means Turks *and* Armenians.

Another participant claimed immediately after the ceremony concluded,

> "When I saw all the posters with the intellectual's faces I got chills and was filled with this great sadness. I thought I would be angry when I saw the nationalists with their flags

[31] The same participant told me they could not pose for a tourist photo wearing Ottoman Garments with other members of the group because he felt it would destroy his social reputation back home.

> but I just felt sad…I'm so glad I commemorated here, and not anywhere else. I feel I've grown as an Armenian here, and I don't think you could compare this experience to being anywhere else in the world…I'm so thankful for the Turkish human rights groups that really set this up, because that completely blows my mind, I can't even imagine not being Armenian and being this dedicated to the cause.

The two excerpts above indicate not only the empowering effect of the commemorations for empowering the subject's perceived identity, but also the effect of reconciliation through dialogue as the events are discussed within a public space. The fact that the word could be used, in a linguistic market where it was once barred, reveals societal relations and alters the local milieu.

Figure 5 Istiklal Street on April 24th, 2015.

4.8: Analysis: Uttering Soykirim in a hostile space: some notes about Genocide on the symbolic market.

The conclusion of such an event ought to highlight the way in which the term 'genocide' was mobilized as a category of practice in the centennial of the Armenian Genocide

Commemorations in Istanbul, Turkey. The commemorations brought the symbolic importance of the term genocide into the public sphere, a new space for democracy to flourish. This acts as what Bourdieu would refer to as the Heretical Imposition of language in a space where it is not normally accepted (Bourdieu 1999, 127). However, the protests also mark a slow change in discourse within Turkish society, for the utterance was made and openly discussed in a public sphere. This dialogue shows that genocide is no longer relegated to denial by omission and silence. Regardless of whether it was met with acceptance or refusal, the term had to be reckoned with in the public sphere. We can, using this case example, actively see how genocide is very much a category of practice for those who use it as a call for justice.

4.9: Limitations and Future Research

There are some obvious limitations to the research that are important to address. Primarily, the qualitative sample for interviewing is certainly far from representative of the average views of Turkish society, not only due to the number of those respondents that affirm the events as genocide, but also that this was a university aged population. I avoided contacting individuals who had made implicit or explicit threats on the forum as well. I was also restricted to English speaking respondents which, as my findings showed, influenced whether or not they referred to the events of 1915 as 'genocide'. It was unfortunate that time constraints did not allow follow up interviews to assess the visibility of these events to the average Istanbulu. In regards to participant observation, most of those who received the travel grant were Armenian Americans, but it would have been interesting to have come across other members of the diaspora to evaluate their experiences of the event.

Future research could include comparisons with commemorations around the world, particularly, the commemoration in Los Angeles, which was claimed to have 130,000 attendees

(LA times, 2015), or the event in Yerevan in which Turkish flags were allegedly burned (Reuters 2015). The experiences of participants in these spaces would have been far different, particularly in their uses of the term genocide. An interesting comparative study would be to track future commemorations in Istanbul, and to see if they continue to grow and how explicit the charge of genocide is continued. My heavily was heavily focused on Armenian Americans, but there was a large presence of the French Armenian community and their perceptions of the same event could have been radically different.

Conclusion: Towards Summation

The definition of the word genocide has remained a heated contention point in academia, but its use in the colloquial market is often ignored. The crime of genocide is one of the more heinous aspects of human nature. Determining what exactly it is that constitutes this crime has, however, been a challenge in the literature. While most writing has focused on genocide within the legal and academic understanding of the term, I decided to engage with the term's colloquial use, and what its use can look like outside of a court or a lecture..

Genocide can be researched as a category of practice, as opposed to strictly analysis. 'Genocide' exists not just as a scholarly term, or a legal indictment, but also as a powerful linguistic marker of societal relations. Analysis ought to shift strictly from what genocide *means*, we can also look at what it *does*. My first chapter established the debates within genocide studies regarding what constitute genocide and how the category has been broadened or refined by various scholars. Chapter two looked at how the term could be understood not just as a category of analysis, but as a category of practice. How the word has a symbolic gravitas that should be analyzed by what the utterer intends to do with it, using its symbolic power. Chapter three highlighted how 'genocide' is used in state narrative, exploring how states attempt to control discourse regarding the use of the categorization of genocide in order to maintain legitimacy surrounding their founding myth. Particularly, I focused on the avoidance of the label as state policy in Turkey. Finally, I used the case study of the 2015 Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration in Istanbul to exemplify what a challenge to state narrative at this site of memory can look like. The commemoration best shows the power of the word 'genocide' and its exchange on the linguistic marketplace, defining both social relations and (depending on the

market) fostering reconciliation. 'Genocide' makes it way as something more than an analytic or legal term, it becomes a social marker.

This finding has important implications for literature on the public memory of mass atrocities. In examining how these analytic categories become emic categorizations: genocide is very much a category of practice. This was simply one attempt at examining how an analysis of this term can look like. Admittedly, the choice of studying the Armenian genocide centennial was an extraordinarily convenient one, recording a phenomenon a well informed reader might have already suspected. However, I think it will be of interest to look at other contested claims of 'genocide' and see how they manifest at the colloquial level, then we can see if the framework I have established is tenable to other cases.

However, by adopting a more constructivist approach to the term genocide there is a worry that the author will be granted the charge of being a relativist. Relativism was initially cited by Deborah Lipstadt as the reason for the rising tolerance of holocaust denial in academia (Lipstadt 1993, 27). However, I hope I have illustrated that the word genocide means a great deal, part of the reason it could never remain academically parceled as a category of analysis. Genocide, in its colloquial use is a world-building activity and ignoring its use as a political tool would be to miss out on one of the fundamental operations of language: to accomplish tasks. Thus, going outside the realm of stipulated definitions, we should analyze how the term genocide is understood in the public sphere, and within the public consciousness.

The word 'genocide' is when it is especially powerful when evoked in a space where its imposition was traditionally denied. When I sat on Istiklal Street on the 24th of April, I was something more than a researcher. Hearing the chants of those who wished to remember, and

those who wished to forget echoing through the street while sitting in the middle of a space where physical danger once met those who would simply use the word ‘genocide’. I was a participant in one of the most important commemoration events in history, a part of the gradual shift in the public consciousness towards recognizing one of the ugliest episodes of the 20th century for what it was. Towards recognizing the world as it is, and not how the statesmen, architects, or pseudo-historians want it to be. It was a moment when I realized my small place in a massive storied movement. My ability to handle prose is unsuitable to capture the euphoria of what sitting there, at that time, actually felt like. That is a task best left for a poet.

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