**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

Reframing the Armenian Question in Turkey:
News Discourse and Narratives of the Past and Present

Bengi Bezirgan

A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, September 2015

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# Abstract

The problematical notion of the 'Armenian question' has become a political and linguistic tool for the official genocide denial ever since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, and has come to stand for the controversy that exists around the denial and recognition of the Armenian Genocide at both national and international levels. This research explores how the 'Armenian question' in Turkey opens up a discursive space in which various forms of Turkish nationalism are constructed and reproduced, and addresses multifaceted narratives from members of the Armenian community. By employing this term I aim to challenge the attempt to decontextualize collective acts of violence against Armenians, restricting them to the period of the Ottoman Empire, and indicate how this issue goes far beyond the politics of genocide. The objective of my research is to point out particular production and consumption phases of the Armenian question in Turkey. The production side focuses on three national newspapers in order to unveil overlapping and divergent discursive strategies in their coverage of three recent incidents, namely the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı, and the public protest against the Khojaly Massacre. In contrast, the consumption side embraces the perceptions and experiences of particular members of the Armenian community in Istanbul with respect to past and present occurrences. This research thus uncovers consistencies and contradictions between news discourse and the responses of the Armenian interviewees concerning three particular events and sheds light on the asymmetrical production and consumption patterns of the Armenian question in Turkey. Drawing on data from both a critical discourse analysis of three cases in three Turkish national newspapers and forty-five semi-structured interviews with Armenians, this qualitative study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on the Armenian question and Turkish nationalism.

# Acknowledgements

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The co-existence of practices between different identities and an imposed national identity are important indicators for a nation state's problematic treatment of minority groups within its physical and mental borders. Past atrocities, particularly those committed for the sake of national unity/security and identity, reveal how the ideological agendas of a nation state play roles in the acts of violence committed against distinct ethnic and religious communities. In this respect, nation-building processes in post-conflict and post-colonial settings develop their own strategies of dealing with divergent groups and their peculiarities. The formation of the nation state in the Turkish Republic which, among many other states, became the successor state of the multicultural and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, also resulted in conflict-ridden relations with minority groups. The organic link between past injustices perpetrated during the Ottoman Empire period and continuing state violence in Turkey against its particular unwelcome citizens (Armenians, Jews, Kurds, etc.) also stands for current patterns of oppression and discrimination. More specifically, the mass killings, deportation, torture and starvation of the Armenian people under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the state-sponsored discriminatory policies and attitudes of consecutive governments in Turkey since 1923 towards Armenians, epitomise deep-seated official prejudices against the members of this community.

The focal point of the discussions, however, mainly revolves around questions of whether those violent incidents should be called a 'genocide' or 'deportation' and whether the Turkish Republic should be held responsible for the unjust acts of its predecessor. The tension between the official denial of the Turkish state and the decisions of some other states and international bodies to identify historical atrocities against Armenians as genocide also confines the issue to the politics of genocide recognition at both national and international levels. This dichotomist way of understanding genocide tends to overlook the collective and distinct sufferings of Armenians and the ongoing manifest and latent forms of state violence legitimised through national institutions and narratives. In addition to the political calculus of the state and the dynamics of international relations, one of the main reasons that might lie

behind these partial accounts is the fixed conception of genocide as an 'event' and 'the outcome of a process' (Rosenberg, 2012: 16-17). In this study, though, genocide is viewed as a process which is 'a temporal and spatial unfolding of ambiguous actions, shifting contexts, and actors with multiple and contradictory motives' (Fujii, 2009: 11). Thus, from the very beginning this research maintains a stance against the official denialist ideology, and more importantly the discursive reformulation of the Armenian Genocide as the 'Armenian question'. In broad terms, the notion of the 'Armenian question' is the constituent element for the construction and reproduction of the rhetoric of the state to restrict collective violence against Armenians to a specific temporality and spatiality, and to present the Armenian community as the major actor in the extension of this 'issue' due to their unending demands for genocide recognition. However, by employing this term I intend to move beyond this perspective, which endeavours to downplay the magnitude and scope of the multifaceted process of the Armenian Genocide. My research indicates that this 'issue' is not solely of particular concern to Armenians in Turkey and Armenia or the Armenian Diaspora and their reparations claims, but that it also uncovers diverse forms of Turkish nationalism as primary components of the genocidal process in today's Turkey.

The expression 'genocidal process' on the one hand refers to multifaceted practices of destruction, including the mass executions of Armenian elites, the expropriation of Armenian property and capital transfer to the state, deportations, forced assimilation through conversion to Islam, the kidnapping of women and children, the construction of an artificially created famine region, and the destruction of material culture such as churches and buildings (Üngör, 2013). On the other hand, this phrase denotes the permanent actions and policies of the Turkish state after the period of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1917) and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire aimed at eradication of the Armenian presence and its heritage, and more crucially the promotion of a genocidal ideology in both institutional and public spaces. In other words, I consider the genocidal ideology that structures genocide as 'natural, necessary, rational and/or obligatory' (Freeman, 1991: 189) and adopted by the perpetrators as an integral part of the existing genocidal process in Turkey.

This also comes to mean the interconnected relationship between genocidal ideology and Turkish nationalism in different settings and instances. The understanding of

Turkish nationalism held by the Young Turks, as the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, was based on an 'ethnoreligious homogenisation' which can be defined as the 'cleansing' and assimilation of non-Muslim and non-Turkish communities (Akçam, 2012:29). By taking into account the catalyst role of this perception of Turkish nationalism for the genocide, this research in the most general sense addresses the 'Armenian question' with a specific emphasis on its current interactions with various forms of Turkish nationalism. In order to expose the patterns of this problematic encounter, as a first step I will explore how the 'Armenian question' in Turkey creates a discursive space in which Turkish nationalisms are constructed and reproduced in the national newspapers. As a second step of this research I will disclose the repercussions of this 'issue' for Armenians as citizens of the Turkish Republic and their engagements with the complex and fluid dimensions of the genocidal process.

For a comprehensive picture of the research the first part of this introduction chapter will clarify the aims of the study. In the following parts I will describe the research questions and research design that provided the basis for this research and highlight other bodies of research that are related to the theoretical framework of this study. Finally, I will present the outline of the subsequent chapters. Based on this plan, I attempt to point out the originality of this research and its potential contributions to the academic literature on genocide studies, nationalism, media representations and minority groups.

## 1.1. Aims of the Study

Before setting out the core objectives of my research there are a few conceptual points that need to be underlined. Given the shifting and 'paradoxical nature of nationalism as a diversity of types with an overall unity' (Smith, 1969: 119) this research is not built upon a singular definition and/or understanding of Turkish nationalism. In order to reflect this fragmented and plural understanding of nationalism, I prefer to use 'diverse/various' forms of Turkish nationalism or 'Turkish nationalisms' throughout the thesis. In addition to the commonalities between varieties of nationalism in distinct spaces and at different phases, the forms of nationalism in the Turkish case have their own particularities. Accordingly, this research is mostly concerned with the ways in which these forms of Turkish nationalism are unveiled in their 'confrontation' with the 'Armenian question'. To be more precise, I will especially concentrate on the

construction and reproduction of Turkish nationalist discourses in media representations by taking into account the heterogeneous and non-monolithic composition of Turkish nationalisms.

Secondly, the frequently employed terms 'Armenians in Turkey' and 'the Armenian community' in the following parts of the study are inclusive of Armenians living in Istanbul as citizens of the Turkish Republic. In contrast, in the public and academic debates and in the mass media the expressions 'Turkish-Armenian' and 'Turkish citizen of Armenian descent' are largely employed. However, from my point of view both of them imply the so-called 'achievements' of suppressive and assimilatory state policies that have propagated ethnic and religious homogenisation within national borders. Moreover, the stress on 'Armenian descent' signifies the importance of ethnic origin and at the same time the difference of being an Armenian from being 'pure' Turkish. Therefore, I decided to refer to more politically correct words, such as 'Armenians in Turkey' and 'the Armenian community'. However, it should be noted that there are three inherent problems in using these terms, namely the assumption of a homogeneous community, the ignorance of 'disguised' Armenians, and the claim to represent all members of the Armenian community. Although I pick out these identifications for practical reasons, basically, this research takes note of significant intra-group disparities in terms of social class, age, gender, political and educational background and other variables. This study also does not involve the perceptions and experiences of Islamised Armenians in Turkey. Consequently, this research investigates and exemplifies only a sample of the Armenian population in Istanbul and undoubtedly it is unable to represent the status and standpoints of the entire community.

Bearing in mind these points, the main goal of my research is to scrutinise particular 'production' and 'consumption' phases of the 'Armenian question' in Turkey. My particular focus is on the contemporary period as well as issues concerning the Armenian question. The distinctiveness of my approach towards this issue mainly lies in an attempt to bring these two processes together. As there are many actors engaging with the Armenian question namely, the Turkish state, Armenians in Turkey, the Armenian state, Armenian Diaspora as well as civil society groups, national institutions and international community, this research centres around designated national newspapers and a certain number of Armenians in Turkey. In addition to the analyses of

Turkey's genocide denial efforts and state-led discrimination and inequality, I put specific emphasis on the creation of a discursive sphere by the printed press regarding the production side of the Armenian question in Turkey. In particular, my research looks at the role of media representations in the normalisation of acts of violence against the Armenian community and the discursive formation of Turkish nationalisms on an ongoing basis. The inquiry of the consumption stage also enables this research to move beyond official and legal forms of knowledge production concerning both past and present experiences of Armenians. Despite the formal narratives that aim to confine the Armenian Genocide to the Ottoman Empire period and bring Turkish nationalisms forward as a defence strategy, the perspectives of Armenians offer alternative ways of understanding the connection between the contemporary and historical events.

Accordingly, on the production side I focus on national newspapers as one of the central and effective instruments for information production and dissemination in society. Considering the role of national newspapers in the creation of narratives through the language and ideology of the state, news discourse turns into a crucial object of analysis for the inquiry into the 'Armenian question' in written communication channels. Therefore, I aim to question the overlapping and divergent discursive strategies employed in three national newspapers (*Hürriyet*, *Zaman* and *Cumhuriyet*) with supposedly different political affiliations in their coverage of three recent incidents, namely the murders of two Armenian individuals and the public protest against the Khojaly Massacre. I will discuss these cases and their media portrayals in detail in the following chapters, but at this point it needs to be mentioned that these three events demonstrate how the Armenian question unfolds discursive spaces in the national newspapers, in which forms of Turkish nationalism are constructed and reproduced. As these happenings have both direct and indirect relationships with the 'Armenian question', their media representations are noteworthy to observe the interplay between the 'Armenian question' and Turkish nationalisms. Generally speaking, national newspapers' perception management techniques with regard to the 'Armenian question' and the image of Armenians through positioning Turkish nationalisms against them have become evident in the coverage of these incidents. Furthermore, it is equally interesting to discover changing hegemonic nationalist discourse vis-à-vis victim and perpetrator roles in the Armenian situation. Drawing on these three particular cases, a

comprehensive analysis of the 'production' phase of the 'Armenian question' in relation to forms of Turkish nationalism will be provided in the empirical chapters.

On the other hand, this research delves into the 'consumption' side of the 'Armenian question', which corresponds to the opinions and experiences of certain members of the Armenian community living in Istanbul. The key intention here is to find out how Armenians define, interpret and challenge the dominant understanding and representation of the 'Armenian question' in Turkey. To put it explicitly, it becomes relevant to question how Armenians, as descendants of genocide victims and recipients of state violence, come to terms with past and present experiences. I point out the consistencies and contradictions between news discourse in the national newspapers and the responses of the Armenian interviewees with respect to the three particular incidents. This research thus sheds light on the asymmetrical production and consumption patterns of the Armenian question. Unquestionably, this must not lead one to neglect intra-textual and intragroup dynamics. In addition, the analysis of the consumption side of past experiences includes the formation of collective memory across generations of the Armenian community concerning the genocidal process and the redefinition of the Armenian question and the Armenian Genocide. On the subject of more recent history my exploration of the consumption phase embraces the ideas of Armenian interviewees on the discourses of nationalism and national identity, the official ideology of the state and the developments under the latest government. In an effort to unsettle particular victim and perpetrator images ascribed to the Armenian community, I attach importance to the accounts of Armenian individuals as they indicate the multi-layered aspects of the 'Armenian question'.

## 1.2. Research Questions and Research Methods

In line with the purposes of this study, I attempt to answer two main research questions as follows:

- How Turkish nationalisms are constructed and reproduced in their encounter with the 'Armenian question' in the discursive sphere?

- How does the Armenian community in Turkey define, experience and confront both past and present forms and processes of the 'Armenian question'?

With reference to the first question I pick out three recent incidents, namely the murders of an Armenian journalist in 2007 and an Armenian soldier in 2011 and the protest in Istanbul against the Khojaly Massacre in 2012. I examine news stories concerning these incidents in three national newspapers (*Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman*) for a one week period after the time of the occurrences. By employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a data collection method, I unmask prevailing and suppressed Turkish nationalist discourses in the media representations of these events, as well as the Armenian issue in general. The analysis also includes three sub-questions:

- How do Turkish national newspapers that seem to be ideologically different depict those events concerned with Armenians in Turkey?

- What sort of discursive strategies are developed by national newspapers in terms of constructing and reproducing Turkish nationalisms with regard to media representations of Armenians?

- How does the editorial language reflect the wider understanding of the Armenian issue within the socio-cultural and political setting in Turkey and how does it disseminate the dominant official ideology?

Relying on these questions, I additionally probe how the interaction between news discourse and Turkish nationalisms plays a part in the writing style and visual preferences of journalistic texts in their reporting of Armenians and the Armenian issue.

In conjunction with the first question, the second part of the research investigates the interpretations and reactions of the Armenian community with respect to these three incidents. Furthermore, I critically engage with the connotations of the 'Armenian question', as well as the far-reaching effects of its relationship and confrontation with collective memory, Turkish nationalisms, official ideology, and pro- and anti-Armenian developments under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in Turkey. Thus, this qualitative research draws on data from forty-five semi-structured interviews with Armenians in Istanbul, along with a CDA of news stories in designated national newspapers. The sub-questions below demonstrate the focal points of the semi-structured interviews.

- How do Armenians in Turkey react to the assassination of Hrant Dink/the murder of Sevag Balıkçı/the protest against the Khojaly Massacre?

- How does the Armenian Genocide still affect memory transmissions among the Armenian generations in Turkey, and their acts of remembrance and forgetting with regards to past atrocities and present violent attacks?

- How is the artificially constructed binary opposition between the Armenian question and the Armenian Genocide read by Armenians in Turkey?

- How do Armenians describe and experience discourses of Turkish nationalisms and national identity and how do they evaluate the period under AKP rule for their own identity and rights?

As a result, this research indicates the multi-dimensional aspects and implications of the 'Armenian question' in Turkey through CDA of news discourses in the national newspapers and semi-structured interviews with particular members of the Armenian community. Accordingly, the following part focuses on previous studies that deal with the Armenian question.

## 1.3. Previous Studies

The academic literature on the Armenian Genocide, Turkey and the Armenian community mainly revolves around the specific nature of the 1915 events and the consequences of this humanitarian catastrophe for the victim group. In relation to the research focus of this thesis one set of previous studies concentrates on the historical aspects and stages of the Armenian Genocide along with the official denialist standpoint of the Turkish state (Akçam, 2004, 2006, 2012; Göçek, 2015) and the comparative analysis of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide (Melson, 1989, 1992, 1996; Hovannisian, 1999; Travis, 2010, 2013; Balakian, 2013). Although my research is not primarily concerned with historical accounts of the causes, conditions and perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, it adopts the claim that the dominant understanding and representation of the 'Armenian question' in today's Turkey is strongly grounded in systematic and continuing state violence and a denialist tradition, a lack of confrontation with the past and a refusal to recognise the role of Turkish nationalisms in both past and present acts of violence against the Armenian community. Furthermore, on one level the studies that put forward the differences and similarities between the Holocaust and the

Armenian Genocide leads this research to spotlight the unique traits of the Armenian Genocide. On another level, they provide important insights into the patterns of recognition and remembrance of the Holocaust by the German state and the ways in which the images of Jews and the Holocaust are constructed and reproduced in the national media in comparison with the Armenian case. From another perspective, however, a number of scholars, such as Bernard Lewis, Heath Lowy, Justin McCarthy, Stanford Shaw, Roderic Davison and Rhodas Murphey, do not consider the 1915 events as genocide and 'hesitate to reach a judgment in terms of identifying the causes of the events that resulted in the death or removal of the entire Armenian population' (Canefe, 2007:238). Instead they underscore 'the inter-communal characteristics of warfare, the involvement of irregular forces in the massacres and the consequences of disease and famine throughout the First World War' (*ibid*). Even though this research takes a stand against this line of academic inquiry, these bodies of work might be considered as functional in terms of their ability to show how discourses of denial rationalise and trivialise state oppression and antagonism against Armenians.

The second line of research draws attention to the victim accounts in which genocide survivors or their descendants recount their own experiences in different settings. The studies carried out by Miller and Miller (1982; 1991; 1993) based on oral history fieldwork examine the effect of the Armenian Genocide on the memories and identities of the survivors and their descendants. From a psychological perspective Kalayjian *et.al* (1996) also take first person testimonies into consideration and discuss the retrospective recollection of personal experiences, coping strategies, communication patterns and the influence of continuing denial on the survivors. Drawing together the physical and mental outcomes of the Armenian Genocide, the research conducted by Sarkisian (1984) interestingly addresses the correlations among survivors' perceptions of coping immediately after the Genocide and their current opinions about their own health and morale. In more recent study by Azarian-Ceccato (2010: 107) the narratives of eleven great-grandchildren of genocide survivors in central California are selected as objects of an analysis which alleges that the 'genocide narrative is told by descendants in a manner in which there is little linguistic delineation to differentiate the past from the present'. In a similar vein, this research also intends to emphasise the consequences of a symbiotic relationship between past and present for the lives of the members of the Armenian community. More importantly, I illustrate how past atrocities are considered

and lived through as mundane parts of present day life by Armenians in Turkey and how the historical heritage of sorrow and oppression has become a decisive aspect of the Armenian identity. Unlike the above mentioned works in which the members of the Armenian Diaspora stand at the core of analysis, my research seeks out the forms of memory transmission in the Armenian community in Turkey which Armenians consider as 'homeland'. When viewed from this aspect the differences and similarities between these two groups in terms of attributing meaning to the Armenian Genocide and its continuing effects bring the importance of genocide denial at both societal and state levels to light. This enquiry into the patterns of collective memory among the Armenian community in Turkey also unmasks the influence of various factors such as imposed national collective memory, the state and its institutions' power of silencing, and the processes of mourning and melancholia.

In addition to the studies that look at the ways in which acts of remembrance and forgetting become evident in the lives of the offspring of Armenian survivors in the diasporic communities, academic interest in the experiences, identity and status of the Armenian community in Turkey is correspondingly noteworthy. In order to discover the in-group (Armenian), out-group (Turkish) and global-human identities of Turkish-Armenians, Der-Karabetian and Balian (1992) use questionnaires on seventy Turkish-Armenians and conclude that men, the elderly and those who attended Armenian schools had more of an in-group Armenian identity. In a different way Bilal (2006) attempts to challenge mutually exclusive definitions of belonging and displacement and describes a feeling of being displaced and/or being a minority 'at home' as the prevailing sentiment within the lived experiences of Armenians in Turkey. By employing a field survey, Örs and Komşuoğlu (2007) portray the definitions of Turkey's Armenians with respect to their own identity and the elements that contribute to the perpetuation of a dominant Armenian identity. In their follow-up study Komşuoğlu and Örs (2009) introduce the role of Armenian women in the survival of Armenian identity and reproduction of Armenian culture and Örs (2010) investigates the perception of the Turkish army by Turkey's Armenians. By focusing on *Agos*, a weekly bilingual Armenian newspaper in Turkey, Dönmez (2008) also questions how and in what context the newspaper plays a part in the construction of collective identity for Turkey's Armenians. Along with these academic efforts to understand the collective identity, experiences and perceptions of the Armenian community, other studies also deal with the minority rights

of Armenians and their controversial depictions in public spheres. While Hofmann (2002) sketches out the historical background of the lives of Armenians during the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, she only briefly touches on the problems of Armenian institutions, the violation of the civil rights of Armenians and anti-Armenian reporting in the Turkish media. From a different point of view, Dixon (2010) brings up the issue of altering official narratives of the 'Armenian question' in Turkish high school history textbooks and analyses the content of narratives within four diverse historical phases. The investigation of the Turkish media debate on the Armenian Genocide by Necef (2003) additionally reveals four different positions held by Turkish intellectuals and political commentators. According to his classification, 'genocide recognisers', 'mutual killings group', 'we are the real victims group' and the group arguing that deportation and massacre were necessary measures, are the major standpoints that direct public discussion on the Armenian Genocide in Turkey.

These scholarly works notably point out different components of Armenian identity and the difficulties Armenians confront in their daily lives, as well as the problematic aspects of their representation and the 'Armenian question' in mass media and the national education system in Turkey. Unquestionably, their reflections on both the inherent tensions and founding characteristics of the Armenian identity, along with the unsettled relationship between the Armenian community and state institutions, partially laid the groundwork for this research. However, this research takes a step forward in explicating the reverberations of discourses of Turkish nationalisms and national identity, the official ideology of the Turkish state, the standpoint of the current government and recent violent attacks, for the interpretations and experiences of particular members of the Armenian community. Moreover, I identify the discursive strategies in selected national newspapers that are mobilised in the news coverage of Armenians and, more notably, the mismatch between the media portrayals of the 'Armenian question' and Armenian identity concerning particular incidents targeted at this minority group, and the repercussions of these incidents for Armenian interviewees.

Lastly, recent years have been marked by a growing body of research on the Armenian community in Turkey. In particular, some unpublished theses and dissertations (Kopşa 2008; Baykal 2011; Tataryan 2011; Özden 2014; Gabrielsen 2015) written in the universities in Turkey  have strived to break the taboo of the Armenian Genocide or the

'Armenian question'. It might be argued that the assassination of Hrant Dink was the turning point for these academic enquiries as this event opened up the debates over genocide claims, the position of the Armenian community within the wider society, and the conflictual relationship between the Turkish state, the government and minority groups. Kopşa (2008) looks at the psychological effects of this assassination on the 'Turkish Armenian' youth living in Istanbul and asks how the murder affected the opinions of young Armenians with respect to Turks, the Turkish-Armenian conflict and its resolution. Furthermore, Tataryan (2011:6) discusses 'how Armenian society experiences the state of being Armenian', 'how Armenian history is carried and lived today' and 'how a new affective memory emerged after Hrant Dink's death'. In addition to these two studies that examine the impact of the assassination of Hrant Dink on Armenians in Turkey, Baykal (2011) and Gabrielsen (2015) respectively scrutinise the construction of Armenian identity, defined as multi-layered, situational and fluid, in Istanbul and the role of Islamised Armenians in the process of identity reformulation in the Armenian community in Turkey by inspecting Agos, the Armenian-Turkish newspaper between the years 1996 and 2014.  Based on oral history research, Özden (2014) also concentrates on how particular events after the genocide, such as the confiscation of Armenian properties, the Democrat Party's election victory, the 6-7 September riots, the emergence of ASALA (the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia)  and the assassination of Hrant Dink, are experienced and narrated by Armenians.

However, in contrast to these studies, the thesis database of the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Turkey is an illuminating source to comprehend the effect on academic works of state-propagated narratives regarding the Armenian Genocide. Even a cursory glance at the headings and abstracts of some masters' and PhD theses uncovers the fact that many of the studies in the Turkish context fail to adopt a critical approach to the study of the 'Armenian question'. Even the titles - for instance, 'Armenian Genocide claims in view of international law' (Onay 2006), 'The evaluation of Armenian claims from the point of view of law' (Takımsu 2008), 'The importance of diaspora, pressure groups, lobby activities within the context of the so-called Armenian Genocide' (An 2013), 'According to the documentations the Holocaust and genocide

claims in the Turkish-Armenian relations'[1](Taşcıoğlu 2014), 'An analysis of Armenian Genocide allegations in terms of propaganda techniques' (Talipoğlu 2014) - give a rough idea about the common mind-set and discourse shared by the Turkish state. In addition, they exemplify how the occurrence of genocide is primarily cast as an 'invention' of Armenians, how their 'claims' have no statutory bases in international law, and how they are utilised through the efforts of the diaspora and other actors.

By taking into consideration all these studies, this research intends to fill the gap in the literature by combining the stages of the 'production' and 'consumption' of the 'Armenian question' with a specific focus on the news discourse of national newspapers and opinions and the experiences of particular members of the Armenian community. It critically addresses the ways in which an incomplete genocidal process and ideology emerge in the discursive construction and reproduction of different forms of Turkish nationalism, and also impinges on the opinions and experiences of Armenians in Turkey with respect to both past and present circumstances. In other words I intend to explore the current discursive construction and contestation of the Armenian question rather than simply doing historical work or studying the Armenian community. In the following and last part of the introduction chapter, I will briefly explain the organisation of the thesis.

## 1.4. Outline of the Chapters

Chapter Two basically consists of historical background of the Armenian question. Starting from the Ottoman Empire period I give an overview of the process of Turkish nation state formation, and the subsequent discriminatory state policies, particularly the Incident of Reserves and the Wealth Tax. Then I delineate the 6-7 September riots as an important anti-minority attack in the history of the Turkish Republic, the effect of military coups and the ASALA on the understanding of the Armenian question and the lives of the Armenian community.  Finally I concentrate on the developments during the AKP government period.  This chapter underscores continuous discriminatory policies of the state against the Armenian community along with other non-Muslim and non-Turkish citizens. Furthermore I aim to explicate uncompleted genocidal process in

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[1] This is the original title of the PhD thesis which mistakenly translates the word 'katliam' in Turkish as Holocaust instead of 'massacre'.

Turkey that paved the way for contemporary anti-Armenian attacks, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter Three describes the theoretical framework of the research. Firstly, I critically assess previous literature on nationalism with a specific focus on the conventional discussions on nationalism and national identity. Then I re-examine the quotidian and discursive aspects of nationalism mainly because I think these are important and neglected issues in the debates of the Armenian question. This is followed by a review of the interplay between nationalism and media representations, and the portrayals of minority groups in the national newspapers. The importance of temporal and discursive dimensions in the Armenian question for the construction and reproduction of Turkish nationalisms and Turkish national identity led this research to centre on the relationship between national identity and memory. This chapter ends with a discussion on collective memory, national myths, historiography and (trans-) national remembrance and forgetting.

Chapter Four is the methodology chapter, which clarifies data collection methods of the research, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA) and semi-structured interviews. First, I open up a methodological discussion on CDA and then explain the discursive tools that are employed in the research, the selection of the newspapers and the selection of news stories for CDA. Following this, I discuss different perspectives on the interview process, followed by an outline of the semi-structured interviews with Armenians. Next, I describe the interview topic guide, sampling design, gaining access for interviews and the reflections on my position as a researcher and the impact of contextual factors on the interview settings.

Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, as the first three data analysis chapters, respectively explore the cases of the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre. I present the findings of my CDA of the news stories concerning these incidents, integrated with the analysis of the interviewees' responses into each chapter. These chapters reveal the ways in which news discourse is incompatible with the accounts of Armenian interviewees. In other words, they provide important insights with respect to the asymmetrical production and consumption stages of the Armenian question. Chapter Eight, as the next data analysis chapter, especially discloses the opinions and experiences of the interviewees by

critically dealing with the topics of collective memory, the distinction between the 'Armenian question' and the Armenian Genocide, the discourses of nationalism and national identity, the official ideology of the Turkish state and developments during the AKP government. Finally, Chapter Nine concludes the thesis with a summary of empirical findings, theoretical implications, a discussion section, limitations of the research and the recommendations for prospective studies.

# CHAPTER TWO

## The CONTEXTUALISATION of the ARMENIAN QUESTION

This chapter outlines the historical background of the research and situates it within the socio-political context in which the 'Armenian question' was and has been shaped by historical and recent developments during the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Contemporary debates on the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian community basically originate from a historically problematic socio-political milieu and the discriminatory approach of the state towards non-Turkish and non-Muslim citizens. As this research views the Armenian Genocide as a process that has a continuous interaction with the various forms of Turkish nationalism, I reconsider their confrontations in the course of past occurrences. The main objective of this chapter is thus to point out how catastrophic acts of violence against the Armenian community show historical continuity, and, more notably, how unending nation-state formation in Turkey has led to the treatment of Armenians as 'the strangers' who 'by definition represent an anomaly to be rectified' (Bauman, 1997: 19).

In other words, I suggest that what is called the 'Armenian question' at present is not merely concerned with the long-lasting clash between the recognition and denial of the genocide. From a historical perspective, instead, it stands for the encounter between the ambivalent status of Armenians 'who are located within the ensemble of the imagined nation, yet are simultaneously rendered strange and undecidable precisely because they are haunted by their presumed links to an outside' (Kumar, 2013:85), and the ways in which the Turkish nation-state copes with 'the problem of strangers' (Bauman, 1991: 63) and 'superimposes one kind of allegiance over the mosaic of communitarian "particularisms"' (Bauman, 1997:190). Based on this standpoint, in this chapter I briefly touch upon the momentous events, with respect to the 'Armenian question', during the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. By pursuing a chronological order, firstly I provide a general overview of the massacres of Armenians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Following the disintegration of the Empire and the formation of the new Turkish state, I deal with the implications of this regime change for the relationship between Turkish nationalisms and the Armenian community, along with other non-Turkish and non-Muslim ethnic and religious

communities. In line with acute conflicts throughout the state formation process in the 1920s and 1930s, my succeeding examination indicates that assimilatory policies and treatment towards minority groups took a new form in the 1940s and 1950s. The next part correspondingly delineates the consequences of the military coups in Turkey, and the actions of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), for the interpretations of the 'Armenian question'. The chapter concludes with an analysis of more recent developments during the AKP government period.

## 2.1. Massacres of the Armenians during the Ottoman Empire

Although large bodies of research on the extermination of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire centre on the period 1915-1917, in this part I also refer to the massacres of 1894-1897, as they were earlier atrocity crimes against the Armenian community. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, under the reign of the Ottoman Empire non-Muslim minorities were entitled to self-government thanks to the unique *millet* system, and the Armenian population, among several ethnic and religious groups, were known by Turks as the *millet-i sadıka*, the 'loyal community'. The noticeable weakening of the power of the Ottoman Empire and the rising European influence during the early nineteenth century resulted in the change of the status of non-Muslim minority groups. In particular, the position of Armenians as the 'loyal community' started to change due to the Russian conquest of the Caucasus and the creation of 'a Russian Armenia, where the Armenian Church was established and recognised and Armenian governors and generals ruled provinces and commanded armies' (Morrock, 2010:126). Moreover, before the outbreak of the Balkan Wars and World War I, the decay of the Ottoman Empire was affected by the losses of the 1877-78 war against Russia. In that time period 'the Armenian question also became a secondary theatre of confrontation between the Great Powers, particularly Britain and Russia, with Germany and France playing a secondary role' and the Ottoman Armenians were perceived as 'Christians in peril' (Deringil, 2009:345). The Ottoman Empire perceived Christianity as a common ground shared by Armenians and the allied powers, which in turn became a direct threat to the dominant Islamic character of the Empire.

Armenians were inevitably exposed to oppressive living conditions due to the decline of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century in territorial, economic and political terms. According to Sarkissian (Gunter, 2011: 2), there were mainly four problems that

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Armenians faced at that time: 'the non-acceptance of non-Mohammedan testimony in the courts; the abuses connected with the matter of taxation; oppressions and outrages committed by government officials (forced conversions, rapes, assaults); and oppressions and outrages committed by civilians'. These legal, economic and social difficulties that Armenians confronted also drew attention of Russia, as it had gained some of the eastern Armenian provinces as a consequence of the war. Cohan (2005:334) points out that Russian Armenians gradually started to defend the rights of Ottoman Armenians and also encouraged their efforts to launch political organisations under Ottoman law. In addition to these developments, the Treaty of Berlin, which was signed between the European Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the 1877-78 Russia-Turco war, led to the overturning of relationships between Armenians and the Ottoman Empire. Although this agreement consisted of the provision of more rights for Armenians, such as 'fair taxation practices, protections from tribal attacks, and the right to give evidence in Ottoman courts of law' (*ibid*), 'the period in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Treaty of Berlin can clearly be identified as one of dramatic risk escalation for the Armenian minority' (Mayersen, 2014:29).

Accordingly, a tragic event took place when the Ottoman Armenians maintained their protests against discriminatory laws and Sultan Abdülhamid II counteracted this with mass killings (Cohan 2005: 334). Even the massacres were referred to by the name of the emperor (Abdülhamid). Although many studies have examined the 1915 events concerning the Armenian issue, little attention has been devoted to the massacres that took place in the late nineteenth century. Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the years 1895-97 witnessed the Hamidian Massacres, which refer to the annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, with estimates of the dead ranging 80,000 to 300,000 (Akçam, 2006:42). Most of the Armenian survivors of the Hamidian Massacres were also forced to convert to Islam. In his inspiring article, Deringil (2009:352) addresses the issue of mass conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres and considers adoption of Islam as a survival tactic during the extermination and the insecure environment of the Empire. He also points out the ways in which those mass conversions were presented to the 'outside world' and underlines how those conversions were shown as the result of voluntary preferences rather than the forced choice of Armenians. Thus, official authorities had planned to prevent the reactions of

the 'foreign observers' and the conversions to Islam from Christianity served the purpose of Islamisation of the Ottoman land. Despite the legal efforts to conceal the inner reasons and hostile atmosphere, the Armenian conversions were instances of the violation of the basic principle of freedom of religion.

The sufferings of Armenians entered a new phase of tragedy with the uninterrupted maltreatment of the Ottoman Empire until its collapse in the twentieth century. Three historical developments can be considered as catalysts for the Armenian Genocide. These are, sequentially, the Committee of Union and Progress's (CUP – the governing political party of that time) coup d'état, the defeat of Balkan Wars, and the outbreak of the First World War. At the domestic level, the incompetence of the system, mostly displayed in the army and administration, along with the despotism of the ruler and at the international level, 'the aggressive and imperialist ambitions of Great Powers' to intervene in Macedonia, led to political and social unrest in the Ottoman Empire. All these problems paved the way for the revolution of the Young Turks in 1908, which included the demand for the re-establishment of the constitution of 1876 (Ahmad, 1968:19-20). The political thought behind this revolution is also important to comprehend the big picture of the dominant mind-set in the Ottoman Empire during this period. This new doctrine, with 'the aim of creating a huge ethnic state' (Poulton, 1999:16), was defined as Turanism, referring to 'the trend towards a closer association of the Turks with the original, semi-legendary home of the Turkic peoples' (Arnakis, 1960:22). More notably, Arnakis (*ibid*) emphasises that 'Turanism bore the stamp of genuine Turkish ideology and came closer to the roots of Turkish nationalism'. In other words, the origins of Turkish nationalism are based on this quest to unite all Turkish people under a single flag, single religion, single language and also single race.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 resulted in the loss of major cities of the Ottoman Empire, degrading the status of the Ottoman elite as well as the potency of the army. This defeat was the confirmation of the myth of the 'stab in the back' by Ottoman Christians, such as Ottoman Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians, to Turkish nationalists. Thus, the polarisation of Ottoman society in terms of ethno-religious differences emerged (Üngör, 2013:98). In addition to the Balkan Wars, the wartime conditions and the consequences of the First World War directly shaped the status of Armenians in the

Ottoman Empire. As Winter states, within the condition of total war, an armed and mobilized society, a heightened sense of national security, a deepened xenophobia, and a sense of chaos were created; and these conditions were employed by the CUP to mobilise the 'final solution' for the Armenians. According to Winter, the Armenian genocide 'opened up a new phase in the history of warfare: The CUP waged a campaign of race annihilation against the Armenians by deeming them 'the internal enemy' (Balakian, 2003:166). From the perspective of the ruling party, all the discriminatory and even fatal policies against Armenians could be explained by their non-Muslim attributes and their capability to endanger the solidarity of the Empire. Therefore, they deserved remain only as the subjects of the Empire rather than the active citizens.

When the Armenians -who were known by the Ottoman Empire as the most loyal subjects- were accused of collaborating with the Russians against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the first implementation of the CUP 'regime was the elimination of Armenians from Anatolia in 1915 so as to create a homogeneous nation' (Göl, 2005:130). The policies of 'homogenisation' and 'Turkification' reinforced by the conditions of World War I were implemented by the CUP leadership (Rae, 2002:151-3). Between the years 1915 and 1917, the Armenian genocide, which involved deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire, took place 'when the governing leaders of the CUP organised and executed the forced deportation of the vast majority of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire' (Dixon, 2010:469). Despite the variety of reports, it is agreed that there were about two million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire during the massacres. By the early 1920s, when the massacres and deportations finally came to an end, one and a half million Armenians were dead and Armenians who survived during the genocide were forcibly displaced or expelled from the country.

According to Göl (2005:131), three historical factors were connected to the relationship between nationalism and modernisation and led to the process of 'othering' of Armenians in Ottoman/Turkish social history. First, by means of the use of print capitalism and standardised language in the Ottoman Empire, a strong national consciousness developed among Armenians; they claimed more socio-political rights and sought to be considered as equal to Muslim subjects of the Empire. Secondly, as the power of Ottoman Empire declined, the European intervention in Ottoman domestic

politics on behalf of Christian minorities came into question. 'The refusal of Armenian demands gave legitimacy to Western interference in Ottoman internal affairs during the modernisation period'. Third, the territorial claims of Armenians over the six Ottoman provinces which were recognized as one of the main parts of the historic homeland of Armenians brought about controversy between the Turkish and Armenian nationalist claims.

However, this othering process of Armenians went far beyond discriminatory or penalising policies and the efforts to solve unexceptional problems between the state and its subjects. The debates over the recognition of the mass destruction and deportation of Armenians as genocide necessitate re-examining its relation to the Holocaust. In the history of genocide, Hitler provided one of the most conspicuous sentences, speaking before the invasion of Poland by Germany in 1939: "Who, after all, talks nowadays of the annihilation of the Armenians?" (Dadrian 2003 cited in Jones, 2010:149). This sentence also triggered discussions about the link between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Genocide. According to Travis (2013:34), there existed a similarity between the Nazis and the Ottomans in terms of genocidal methods in both theory and practice, such as the pivotal position of race 'in the self-conception of the fascist elites and the notion of relocating ethnic minorities to reservations'. Melson (1989:162) also puts forward three parallel aspects of these genocides: first, the despised minorities became the targets of genocide because of their social mobilisation; second, the conditions formed by revolutions strengthened the power of authorities and paved the way for genocidal movements; and third, wartime circumstances enabled the implementation of genocide as a state policy.

More notably, Melson (1989:162-163) calls attention to the scholarship on the Holocaust about which two schools of thought, the intentionalists and the functionalists, are influential; the former emphasises the effects of Nazi ideology and its pathological anti-Semitist intentions, whereas the latter stresses the middle and lower strata of the Nazi system that 'translate general directives into practical actions'. These explanations are mostly employed to explain the underlying reasons for the Holocaust and how the genocidal policies were legitimised by both Hitler's intentions and the institutional structures. As distinct from those standpoints, in some of the analyses of the Armenian

Genocide, the provocative behaviour of the victims is presented as the main reason for these mass killings and deportations. As Melson (1989:164) summarises, the supporters of this 'provocation thesis' allege that 'the Armenian Genocide was due to the intolerable threat the Armenians posed to the Ottoman Empire and to the Committee of Union and Progress' and the conflict between two national movements over the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire was the main issue. However, this perspective is insufficient to answer the question: why did the genocide not only aim at the elimination of the Armenian population but also 'the eradication of its intellectual and cultural identity along with its cultural process of symbolization and its continuous history'? (Balakian, 2013:65). Üngör (2013) also criticizes the view regarding the genocide as just one phenomenon and argues that the Armenian Genocide was a multifaceted process of destruction which embraced the mass executions of Armenian elites, the expropriation of Armenian property and capital transfer to the state, deportations, forced assimilation through conversion to Islam, the kidnapping of women and children, the construction of an artificially created famine region and the destruction of material culture such as churches and buildings. Despite all these diverse and connected dimensions of the genocide, as well as the historical and social developments under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the still question under consideration is 'whether the Turkish regime intentionally organized the annihilation of its Armenian minority' (Lewy, 2005:48). But the magnitude of the issue exceeds the disagreement on its definition, the intentions of those involved and the numbers of people killed or deported. Even a cursory glance at the history of the Turkish Republic as the successor of the Ottoman Empire suggests a predominant understanding towards non-Muslim and non-Turkish minorities.

## 2.2. The Turkish Nation-State Building Process

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the Treaty of Sévres, which was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Allied powers, included the occupation of most of the territories of the Empire by France, Britain, Italy and Greece. As a response to this 'invasion', the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) began under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and The Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) was inaugurated in 1920 and later in 1923, the foundation of Turkish Republic was promulgated. More importantly, the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923 called a halt to the War of Independence, set the national borders of Turkey,

rearranged the Ottoman debts and the independence of Turkey in political and economic spheres was officially recognised. The Republican People's Party (CHP), founded by Atatürk in 1923, was the dominant ruling party from 1923 to 1945, which is identified as the main single-party period in the history of the Turkish Republic.

By these means, in what ways did this regime change (from empire to republic) influence political and social life in Turkey, and what did it mean for the citizens of new Turkey, especially for non-Muslim minorities? I intend to indicate how the Turkish Republic underwent a period of transition in terms of the understanding of nationalism, citizenship and minority rights. To begin with, the most remarkable change throughout the 1920s was the endeavour of the Kemalist paradigm to detach itself from all its historical ties with the Ottoman Empire. The clear-cut distinction between the East and West, and the darkness of superstition and religion and the light of progress and science, marked the reorientation of Turkey. During this period, the new and modern Kemalist Turkey was in consistent conflict with the Ottoman past, which had been labelled as backward, Islamic and traditional, and thus lacking value in the new system (Philliou, 2011:172).

In line with this effort, secularism became the predominant aspect of the political identity of the new state, which also symbolised the deliberate break with the Ottoman past. The legal and social reforms of Atatürk that were planned to achieve a secular, modern nation-state, constituted the backbone of the efforts for Westernisation and modernisation (Eisenstadt 1984). This nation-building process was also significant for the conceptualisation of nationhood and the link between nationalism and modernism. The universal validity of Western modernity was acknowledged as the only way to construct modern Turkey by the early republican ruling elite; thus, the epistemic and moral dominance of the West formed the basis of Turkey as a project of modernity (Keyman and Kancı, 2011:320). However, while Turkey strove to take Western civilisations as role models for its own progress and consolidation as a newly established state, the contradiction between the concepts of citizenship and nationality was not resolved.

Although the Constitution of 1924 regarded all inhabitants of Turkey as Turkish, irrespective of religion or ethnicity, the 1920s were characterised by the 'emergence of a hierarchy of citizens', in which particularly Armenian and Greek Orthodox populations

'were perceived and treated as suspect populations' (Bayar, 2013:2). The distinction between 'being Turkish in terms of citizenship' and 'being Turkish in terms of nationality' was obviously clear in that almost all the laws passed during this single-party period consisted of discriminatory policies based on this distinction. Put differently, as minorities were accepted as Turkish citizens rather than Turks and citizenship rights were only for 'real Turks' in practice, minorities could only be 'half citizens' of the Republic (İnce, 2012:45). Even before the Constitution of 1924, the Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923 also outlined the definition of minorities in Turkey and the attitudes of the Turkish delegation about the criterion to designate the citizens that belonged to the minority groups were notable. For the Allied powers, ensuring the protection of the Christian populations within the national territories of Turkey was one of the central aims, so they demanded 'an expansive definition of minorities', involving linguistic and ethnic minorities and different Muslim denominations. However, the Turkish delegation opposed this idea and claimed that there were no minorities in Turkey other than non-Muslim minorities, and they also overlooked the denominational, linguistic and ethnic differences among the Muslim population (Meray, 1969-1973 cited in Bayar, 2013:114). By doing so, the political elite of the republic planned to safeguard homogeneity in the nation-building process. The differentiation among the citizens on the basis of their Muslim or non-Muslim identity reduced religion to the basic dichotomy between Islam and Christianity and neglected all their different sects and other religious or non-religious beliefs. Thus, Christian minorities were described in reference to Islam rather than their own characteristics. Moreover, all other linguistic and ethnic identities among the Muslim population such, as Alevis and Kurds, were also neglected. As Bayar (2013: 109) rightly argues, the discussions over the Lausanne Treaty and the stance of the Turkish Grand National Assembly manifest the tension between 'the protection of minorities and the process of homogenization'. However, it might be noted that for the Turkish state to defend the suitable political and social environment for national homogeneity has been always in the foreground.

White (2013: 28) ironically highlights that non-Muslim citizens were not excluded according to Atatürk's definition of the nation; at least if they spoke Turkish as their mother tongue, adopted Turkish culture, and accepted the ideals of Turkism. As a part of the Turkification process, those citizens were asked to disperse their 'own community structures and dissolve their religious/ethnic identities into the new national Turkish

identity so they were be able to become Turks of Jewish or Christian faith, indistinguishable from Muslim Turks' (*ibid*:29). Thus integration of those non-Muslim citizens depended on the number of criteria they met for Turkification and their survival and the protection of their rights could be guaranteed within the Turkish state. However, the strategies adopted by the state and also other social actors to assimilate non-Muslim minorities were multi-directional in the late 1920s and 1930s.

The 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' campaign started in 1928 was a typical example of the unification of language as one of the common and influential means in the course of nation-state formation. This campaign expectedly targeted non-Turkish speakers (Armenians, Greeks, Jews, etc.) and compelled them to speak Turkish, particularly in the public spheres. However, the state was not alone in enforcing nation-building policies. Aslan (2007) demonstrates how a social network that considered themselves as the missionaries of the state contributed to the creation of homogeneous Turkish nation and the reproduction of Turkish nationalism during this campaign. Not only did the state and its centres of power create and implement nationalist projects and work for the assimilation of minority groups as claimed by state-centred analyses, but in addition, 'the mobilization of university students, intellectuals, and journalists was effectual in creating strong public pressure on the non-Muslim minorities' (*ibid*:267). This historical event also lays the groundwork for a discussion of the role of narrative for the construction of the nation. In particular my analysis of national newspapers in the following chapters reveals the discursive strategies to create and reproduce a homogeneous Turkish nation.

Moreover this campaign indicated that the majority of the Turkish citizens, and mainly the Kemalist missionaries, were supporters of the state policy of linguistic homogeneity. As Bali (2000:136-137) mentions, during the campaign it became impossible to speak in a language other than Turkish due to the risk of verbal harassment and even physical attack. In addition, the newspaper articles and columns played an important role in proliferating the idea that 'as long as the state recognized them as minorities with certain minority rights and allowed them to have separate schools, orphanages, and charitable foundations, their inclusion into the Turkish nation would be impossible' (Hizmet, 22 Feb.1928; Ahenk 15 Jan. 1928 cited in Aslan, 2007: 255). This was also the evidence for the disapproval of the Lausanne Treaty among the public and the press.

Moreover, the resentment against non-Muslim minorities within the Turkish state revealed by this campaign was connected to the idea of Turkishness based on Muslimhood, which was actually opposite to the secular ideals of the Republic.

The 1930s Turkish Republic was marked by the 'Turkish History Thesis' and 'Sun Language Theory', which underlined the importance of race for the description of the nation and brought a new construction of citizenship to the agenda. The Turkish History Thesis had mainly four implications: 1) the Turks were the ancestors of all the brachycephalic peoples, including the Indo-Europeans; 2) the Turkish race had created civilisations in all the lands to which the Turks had migrated; 3) the contemporary Turks were the inheritors of the glories of ancient Sumerians, Egyptians and Greeks; 4) all Anatolia's inhabitants were Turks. More radically, based on these premises, the Minister of Education claimed that the Armenians had the same ethnic origins as the Turks and 'believed that he sufficiently indicated the logical line of conduct which the Armenians in Turkey should follow with the regard to the performance of their duties as Turkish citizens' (Çağaptay, 2004:88-89). In other words, having common origins with Muslim Turks as members of the minority group also entailed the responsibility of meeting the expectations of the Turkish state. In a similar manner, Sun Language Theory contended that most major languages were of Turkish origin. As Çağaptay (*ibid*:89-93) sums up, the ideologues of Kemalism argued that all the past and present inhabitants of Turkey were ethnically and racially Turkish and thus the main signifiers of Turkishness were the emphasis on language, ethnicity and race. This rise of the concepts of race, ethnicity and language and their interdependent relations, and the decline of the emphasis on Islam during the 1930 were distinct from the understanding of nation-formation in reference to the minority groups in 1920s.

## 2.3. The Incident of Reserves, the Wealth Tax and the 6-7 September Riots

The problematic relationship between Turkish nation building and minority rights was affected by the Second World War in a similar way as for other nation-states. In terms of militaristic measures, during the war, the concerns for national security and defence controlled the policies of the Turkish government regarding the issues related to the minority groups. Non-Muslim men aged 26-45 were enrolled in the special recruitment named as the Incident of Reserves, in which the main goal was to quarantine society's

'untrustworthy' elements so as to preserve the national security (İçduygu *et al*., 2008:367). In economic terms, these unequal measures reached their peak when the Wealth or Capital Tax was implemented in 1942. It came into force in order to grant supplementary resources for wartime expenses. However, non-Muslims and Converts were charged five to ten times higher than Muslims, so they were forced to sell their properties to pay their taxes (Ökte, 1978:24). It was claimed that the underlying reason for this tax was the elimination of minorities from the economy and the replacement of the non-Muslim bourgeoisie by its Muslim counterpart (Akar, 1999: 75).

Although a new law was levied two years later, according to Aktar (2000 cited in İçduygu *et al*., 2008:367) 98 per cent of the real estate belonging to non-Muslims was either bought by Muslim individuals or confiscated by the state. All those measures signal how non-Muslims were subjected to discriminatory policies on behalf of the nation's security and development. For the sake of the so-called nationalisation of capital and employment, Armenians, Jews, Greeks and other minority groups were penalised due to their ethnic and religious identities. The capital transfer from non-Muslim minorities to Muslim citizens also disclosed the state's objective of economic Turkification.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkey also experienced the transition from single-party government to multi-party parliamentary rule. The period 1946-1950 was a significant break in Turkish modernity because of the transition to democracy (Keyman and Kancı, 2011:325). Despite the more democratic stance of the Democrat Party (DP) in terms of citizenship rights and the understanding of nationalism, İçduygu *et al.* (2008:371) claim that the status of minorities began to be influenced by the diplomatic crises of external (international) relations as well as nationalist aspirations at the domestic level. The tense relationship between Turkey and Greece over the issue of Cyprus was the catalyst for the 6-7 September riots targeting Greek and other non-Muslim citizens. After a pro-government paper published the news that the house where Atatürk was born had been bombed by Greeks in Salonika, thousands of people attacked the properties of non-Muslim citizens in Istanbul. The records of the court revealed that 4214 houses, 1004 shops, 73 churches, 1 synagogue, 2 monasteries and 26 schools were damaged. Although many people were murdered during these attacks, the official death toll was 10-12 and around 400 women were raped. It was claimed that the police said:

"We are not police today we are Turks". Despite claims concerning the role of the government in this ethnic and religious violence, the communists were announced as the genuine offenders by the government and by the press as well. However, the DP was brought down by a military coup in 1960, five years after the riots, and the military court declared the final decision that the government was highly involved in the planning of the riots; consequently, three members of the DP, including the prime minister, were executed (Kuyucu, 2005:362). Kuyucu (*ibid*: 364) examines these riots to understand Turkish nationalism and its measures to ethnically homogenise the population and to create a unitary nation out of an ethno-religiously diverse population. Kuyucu (*ibid*: 364) claims that this catastrophic collective violence against non-Muslim minorities, 'the designated 'others' of Turkish nationalism, constitutes an important episode in the ethno-national homogenisation of Turkey'. These riots also demonstrated the means by which nationalist projects marginalise and charge the minority groups by creating an invented enemy. Despite the inclusionary narrative of the state, the non-Muslim minorities became radicalised through the image of potential threat.

## 2.4. The Military Coups and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia

The military coups and interventions in the subsequent years -1960, 1971 and 1980- have been a challenging test ground for democracy in Turkey throughout its history. The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) have been always recognised as one of the inseparable components of national integrity and security and the protector of Atatürk's principles and reforms, which are acknowledged as the prerequisites for modernisation and Westernisation. While İnce (2012:133) explores the civic virtue aspect of citizenship during the period 1960-1980, she finds that the textbooks underlined the significance of democracy and multi-party politics, but that they identified the military coup of 1960 as a revolution. This also showed the positioning of the army as the guardian of the national identity and a vital presence for political stability in Turkey.

During the 1970s and 1980s, due to the attacks of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) against Turkish institutions and diplomats, Armenians in Turkey suffered from this insecure atmosphere and once again came to be seen as precarious citizens regarding national security interests. In response to these attacks, both the state and the military took action by 'fostering, organising and

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institutionalising' symbolic violence against the Armenians, in particular in two ways. Firstly, a nationalised historiography of the Armenian issue predicated on the national myths was generated and secondly, the state arranged a series of organisations with the 'overt purpose of studying and researching the Armenian issue' (Göçek, 2008:100). More importantly, 'the Armenian community was brought under pressure by the state to constantly issue statements that they lived in peace in Turkey, that they condemned the attacks and that they professed their undying allegiance to the Turkish Republic' (Simsir 2000 cited in Göçek, 2008:101). In other words, Armenians in Turkey were asked to prove their loyalty to the state and convince the public that they were different from the diaspora Armenians. Besides this, the Turkish state intended to renovate its self-image in the eyes of the Western powers by making Armenians speak about their comfortable life in Turkey.

The epoch between the late 1960s and 1970s also witnessed the confrontation of the rightist and the leftist groups in Turkey that resulted in an alarming rise in political violence (Toktaş, 2005:410). While the rightist fraction employed a nationalist discourse mainly resting on anti-communist ideas, the leftist fraction supported an anti-imperialist nationalism; but they shared a common interest in the primacy of the state and the nation. The military coup in 1980 put an end to this clash and targeted the depoliticisation of the society by employing 'Atatürk nationalism', which was depicted as an 'authentic form of nationalism' distinct from the nationalisms of the Left and Right cohorts (Kancı, 2009:363). However, in the 1980s the effects of globalisation in terms of questioning the supremacy of nation-states and the dominance of nationalism were also felt in Turkey. Bora (1998) draws attention to the escalation of a Turkish-Islamic synthesis, which postulated Turkishness and Islamism as complementary elements for the composition of Turkish nationalism. In contrast to the expectations of the state, the imagined national unity based on this idea of Turkish-Islamic synthesis moved into a 'process of disintegration along the lines of ethno-cultural cleavages'. The identity claims of the ethnic-Kurdish, Alevi-sectarian and fundamental-Islamist groups as Turkish-Muslim citizens became a current issue (İçduygu *et.al*, 2008:377). Moreover, non-Muslim minorities started to criticise the 'non-egalitarian practices of the Republican regime and sought ways to accomplish substantive reforms that would relieve their 'second-class' position in the country' (Levi 1998; Saul 1999; Bali 2000 cited in *ibid*).

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These identity claims and the demands for the recognition of the differences of both Muslim and non-Muslim citizens became prominent by the end of the 1980s. Although the 1982 Constitution aimed at restoring state authority and suppressing the citizens through militaristic measures, as in the case of the 1961 Constitution following the coup of 1960, the calls of both Muslim and non-Muslim groups for a new understanding of citizenship based on constitutional rights could not be repressed. The issue of human rights started to be discussed, along with the claims of those groups, by the early 1990s, and the positioning of the state with respect to minority groups took on a new form.

## 2.5. The AKP Government Period

From the 1990s onwards, the criteria of the European Union (EU) integration process added a new dimension to the status of the non-Muslim minority groups and the recognition of their rights in Turkey. Besides this, the Republic of Armenia as a new actor in the politics of the Armenian Genocide emerged by the end of Cold War. Although Turkey recognised the new republic in 1991, it closed the shared border due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Ever since then, Turkey has used this conflict to verify its denial of the Armenian Genocide and the issue of the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia turned out to be an indispensable aspect of the 'Armenian question' (Dixon, 2010:118). The well-known image of the Armenians in Turkey as an 'internal threat' came to be supported by its counterpart as an 'external threat'.

Under the government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), since 2002 Turkey has been a state in which Islam has enjoyed its most visible form with a single-party government (Keyder 2004).The recent changes, such as the increasing visibility of political Islam, 'the growing polarisation between the secularists and the Islamists in Turkey' (Haynes, 2010: 319) and the notable steps taken by the AKP for widening religious freedom, were read by the Kemalist elite as evidence of the government's hidden agenda to challenge the principles of secularism (Goltz, 2006:181). The criticisms of Kemalists were deepened by the presidential elections in 2007 where Abdullah Gül (one of the followers of the Islamic movement of the 1990s and a member of the Islamic Welfare Party) was nominated by the AKP. Consequently, mainly the opposition party in the Parliament, and other supporters of the Kemalist ideology, organised Republic Protests in 2007. Millions marched to Anıtkabir- the mausoleum of

Atatürk- with flags and mottos declaring that 'Turkey belongs to Turks' and 'Turkey will remain secular forever'.

Mardin's account of the centre versus periphery debate can be helpful to understand the clash between secularism and Islam and also the Kemalist ideology and the AKP's stance. In Turkish politics, the centre stands for an official ideology and the constitutive philosophy of the state advocated by the Kemalist political elite, whereas the periphery denotes the segments of the population who object to the current form of the system. According to the AKP, it is more important to bring the demands of the periphery to the centre than to be considered as a centre party (Akdoğan, 2006: 59-60). The main claim of the AKP is that Muslims were exposed to the constraints of secularism throughout the republic's history and their presence, particularly in the public sphere, was ignored by the official ideology and also successive governments; thus, they were forced to stay on the periphery of the system and society. One AKP parliament member confessed that it is now their turn to 'blacklist' those who used to blacklist the Islamists in the 1990s. The AKP constantly underlines its role in representing the periphery and its claims against the state. However, the conceptualisation of the periphery is based on the AKP's perception of whom belongs to the periphery. Although PM Erdogan has continuously stated that the Armenians in Istanbul do not face any problems, the majority of Armenians still feel insecure in their daily lives, particularly after the Hrant Dink assassination, and when there arises a problem between Turkey, Armenia, France or USA, Armenians in Turkey become the defenceless targets of the Turkish nationalists' acts of retaliation and hate campaigns, which in turn result in an increase in discrimination. (Ter-Matevosyan, 2010:99-100). The AKP's overemphasis on the citizens on the periphery also fails to encompass the status of Armenians.

The changes in the legal arena also revive the debates about the freedom of speech/expression with regard to the issues of the minority groups in Turkey. Since 2005, Article 301 of the new Turkish Penal Code has charged more than sixty journalists, academics, intellectuals and even fiction writers for 'insulting Turkishness'. According to White (2007: 127), '[t]his phenomenon reinforces at the same time as it restricts the development of free speech in Turkey at the cusp of a society balanced between EU accession and ultra-nationalist isolationism.' The controversy concerning Article 301 began when journalists and authors who had expressed their ideas

concerning the 'Armenian incidents' were charged with insulting Turkishness, including the best known case, that of novelist and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk (BBC News 2005; Hurriyet Daily News 2006). Hrant Dink, an Armenian journalist and a defender of the rights of Armenian citizens, who was assassinated in 2007, had been also prosecuted for allegedly 'insulting Turkishness' under Article 301. This lawsuit 'had made Dink a likely target of extremist violence' (Uslu, 2008: 88) and he was 'subjected to a steady stream of death threats - a total of 26,000 according to some writers in the Turkish press'. (Freely, 2007:3).

Furthermore in 2005, Boğaziçi University attempted to organise a conference entitled 'Ottoman Armenians of an Empire in Decline' but it was harshly criticised by the Justice Minister who said that "[t]his is like stabbing the Turkish people in the back. I wish that, as justice minister, I had not given up the right to bring cases to court on my own."  After this statement, the conference was postponed and never carried out. This intervention of the government once again signals how any effort to start a discussion on Armenians, even in an academic environment, is perceived as a threat to Turkishness. All of these developments still reinforce the perception of Armenians today as a direct threat to the Turkish Republic, and they are used to legitimise the official narratives. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the denial of the Armenian genocide is a 'part of the nation's founding history [that] has become a fundamental (if silent) part of Turkey's national identity' (Dixon, 2010: 106). Turkey's resistance to admitting its responsibility for the massacres also reveals itself in its uses of terms such as the 'Armenian question', '1915 events', 'Armenian relocation' and 'Armenian allegations'. The Turkish version of the explanation of the genocide argues that the 'civil war' between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenians caused many deaths on both sides so it was not genocide. This belief is also held by much of the Turkish public that have been convinced by 'decades of silence, limited access to historical material and more recently active propaganda campaigns' (Cooper and Akçam, 2005: 84) Despite the existence of various governments, social actors, the means of communication and a civil society composed of different ideological backgrounds, in the nearly 90-year history of the republic, the Armenian genocide has remained as a taboo topic.

Cooper and Akçam (*ibid*: 85) indicate the underlying reasons behind the persistence of the Armenian genocide as taboo in the Turkish state and among the Turkish public. At

an international level, the accusations of genocide are perceived by Turks as a 'continuation of the historical tendency of the Christian West to denigrate Turks as barbaric' and a defamatory effort to equate Turkey with Nazi Germany and the Holocaust with the 1915 events. At a national level, 'Armenians serve as a persistent symbolic reminder of the most traumatic event of Turkish history: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of most of its territory'. Despite the attempts to silence and suppress the claims about the Armenian genocide in Turkey, there is still remarkable political pressure coming from the international arena to acknowledge it. The House of Representatives in the United States proposed resolutions in 1999, 2007 and 2010, and some European states have passed resolutions 'recognising the Armenian genocide' in their legislative institutions. In 2005, the European Parliament said the recognition of the genocide is a prerequisite for Turkey's accession to the European Union, and a deterioration in Turkey-EU relations followed (Açar and Rüma, 2007: 450-1). In 2006, despite Turkey's warnings to France, the French National Assembly adopted a new bill defining the 'denial of the Armenian Genocide' as a crime- violation that carried the same punishment (a year in jail and a 45,000 euro fine) as that imposed for denying the Nazi Holocaust (BBC News, 12 October 2006). This bill was criticised heavily by the Turkish nationalists and intellectuals and it caused a heated discussion over the intervention of the French political elite in the EU membership of Turkey. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that "[t]his is an issue between Turkey and Armenia. It is none of France's business" (BBC News, 9 October 2006) and 'Turkish nationalists perceived this bill as another episode of genocide claims aimed at cornering Turkey in the international arena and reflecting prejudice against it' (Aktan 2005). Although the Turkish executive organisations and the majority of the Turkish public oppose these international interventions about the genocidal history, the representations and experiences of the Armenian community in Turkey are still controversial and need to be explored.

# CHAPTER THREE

## The THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
## The INTERSECTIONS of NATIONALISM, DISCOURSE and MEMORY

This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings of the research with the intent of providing an overview of the debates and perspectives that are directly linked to the research questions and empirical findings. The first part of the chapter begins by revisiting the established literature on nationalism and national identity. Focusing on the classical distinction between 'nationalism from above' and 'nationalism from below', I readdress the question of the role of this artificial dichotomy for an understanding of nation-state formation in Turkey and the diverse forms of Turkish nationalism. This reassessment is also important to pinpoint the foundation of the official ideology of the Turkish state and its national narratives, and their positioning as 'glorious' national history, as well as to examine past atrocities against particular citizens of the Turkish Republic. In line with the importance of the construction and reproduction of national rhetoric for this research, I intend to concentrate on the discursive and quotidian aspects of nationalism. It is my aim to discuss the constant flagging of nationhood (Billig 1995) and the articulation of nationalist discourses in order to provide a basis for my critical discourse analysis of news stories in the subsequent chapters. I also look particularly at the ways in which the ethnic and religious 'others' of Turkish nationalisms are formed in discourse.

Following the first section, the second part revolves around the literature on news discourse because I see news discourse as fundamental to interpret nationalism through the lens of discursive approaches. First, I examine the debates over the discursive power of nationalisms and their interactions with media representations. While this examination points out the contextual conditions of the Turkish national newspapers, it also raises the issue of the discursive strategies that they adopt in their news coverage of Armenians. Second, I explore how ethnic and religious minority groups are depicted in the national newspapers. This field of scholarly debate sets out the background that my empirical findings on the news portrayals of three incidents draw upon. The third part of the chapter is concerned with the relationship between national identity and memory in order to provide a backdrop to the ideas of the Armenian interviewees regarding the

linkage between past, present and future. Furthermore, this theoretical line of inquiry is essential to comprehend how the national newspapers selected for this research associate currents events with the past or pass over their historical significance. Consequently, I deal with the issues of (trans) national forgetting and remembrance that lay the groundwork for the genocidal memories of the Armenian interviewees, along with their viewpoints about the connection between present and past attacks against the Armenian presence and collective identity. As a final point, this chapter also attempts to support the review in Chapter Three of the developments that occurred during the periods of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, and to justify the reasoning behind the selection of data collection methods in Chapter Four.

## 3.1. A Re-examination of the Typologies of Nationalism

In this section I mainly highlight two specific arguments from the conventional literature on nationalism and nationality in order to situate the debates surrounding the current forms of Turkish nationalism. By taking into consideration the active involvement of the state in the creation and representation of the 'Turkish nation' and Turkish national identity, this research engages in discussion oriented towards the discrepancy between 'nationalism-from-above' and 'nationalism-from-below'. Since Turkish nationalism as a foundational ideology of the state and the Armenian Genocide as a 'foundational violence in the constitution of the Turkish Republic' (Göçek, 2015: 19) were major components of nation-state building, their historical link provides important insights into their present encounters. Following this, I reconsider the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalisms in order to comprehend the inner mechanisms of Turkish nationalism and citizenship.

First, I re-examine the process of Turkish nation-state formation based on the understanding of 'nationalism-from-above' in order to emphasise the limits of this approach. This perspective, identified as 'state-led nationalism' (Tilly 1994:133) or as 'state-building nationalism' (Hechter *et.al*, 2006:89), argues that nationalism operates as an instrument to reinforce homogenisation of the population and promote a nationalist ideology to provide the state rulers with a claim to rule on behalf of the people. Accordingly, the far-reaching and coercive nation-building process of a state results in the establishment of a national consciousness and the cultural homogenisation of the

people within its national borders (Aslan, 2007: 247-48). Despite the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish state has insistently turned a blind eye to the heterogeneous composition of the population and their diverse identities and claims while carrying out the nation-state project. In the Turkish case, many scholars (Keyder, 1997; Çolak, 2003; Keyman, 2006; Üngör, 2011; Kadıoğlu, 2011) have reached an agreement that Turkish nationalism was enforced from above and that the implementation of nationalism-from-above also constructs the founding ideology of the Republic (Keyder, 1997: 42). More notably, Turkish nationalism signifies 'an extreme example' throughout the intense moments of state formation as 'the masses remained silent partners and the modernizing elite did not attempt to accommodate popular resentment' (Keyder, 1997:42-3). This also comes to mean that the nation-state building project predicated on the dominant form of Turkish nationalism as the official ideology and the idea of Turkish national identity as a unifying force leads to the exclusion of particular ethnic and religious identities despite their citizenship ties with the Turkish state. With the purpose of achieving homogenisation and imposing a particular form of national belonging, the nation state formation process in Turkey has been targeted at removing and silencing 'unwelcome citizens'.

According to Kadıoğlu (2007: 286-9), there are mainly three sets of 'others' for Turkish national identity; these encompass the non-Muslims (the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks), non-Turkish Muslims, recognised as being different owing to their language and religious sects (Kurds, Arabs, Alevis, Circassians, and Georgians), and 'the backward representations of its Ottoman past' (Bora 1996). Under these circumstances, along with the other non-Muslim populations, the status of the Armenian community falls into two categories. On the one hand, their distinct religious and ethnic identity challenges the fundamental idea of Turkish-Muslim national identity. On the other hand, their existence interrupts the efforts of the Turkish nation-state to detach itself from its Ottoman past as 'Armenians serve as a persistent symbolic reminder of the most traumatic event of Turkish history: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of most of its territory' (Cooper and Akçam, 2005: 85). In other words, the nation-building process in Turkey rested upon a belief in the discontinuity between the new Turkish state and the Ottoman Empire in terms of regime, policies and citizenship, and a

complete break from its Islamic legacy. In the present day, the official denial of past atrocities against Armenians still points to the responsibility of the Ottoman Empire.

However, from the perspective of primordialism, the idea of the antiquity of the (Turkish) nation, the theme of the golden age, the superiority of the national culture, the periods of recess from which the nation is destined to 'awaken', and the concept of the national hero, all contribute to the construction and representation of Turkish national identity. They indicate the representation of the nation as a mystical, temporal and even transcendental entity. Accordingly, the survival of the nation is more significant than the survival of its individual members (Özkırımlı, 2010:50-2). It might be further claimed that the official ideology puts forward the six hundred year-old national and cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire and the sovereignty of the empire in three continents as evidence for its entrenched national power. By excluding the status of the Ottoman Empire during the recession period (17th and 18th centuries), and its situation as the 'sick man of Europe' in the early 20th century, from its national narratives, Turkish nationalism attempts to acclaim a robust Ottoman heritage and nostalgia. According to state ideology, the Turkish War of Independence, the foundation of the Turkish Republic and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as the founder of the Republic, are also regarded, respectively, as the end of a period of corruption, the awakening moment for the Turkish nation, and the figure of a national hero.

This contradictory self-identification and representation of Turkish nationalism and national identity, mobilised by the enactment of 'nationalism-from-above' also came to light in the recognition and treatment of minority groups. While Armenian, Greek and Jewish communities gained legal minority status through the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, assimilatory policies of the state continued in the following years. Despite official educational, social and religious rights granted to these groups, the Turkification policies and practices of the state to build 'a society united in a common language, culture and religion' ensued 'at the expense of distinctions which ideally were thought outside the mainstream identity category of nation' (İçduygu *et.al*, 2008: 366). For instance, the 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' campaign to achieve linguistic unity, the Law on Settlement to arrange the settlement practices of non-Muslim groups, the Incident of Reserves to control the recruitment of non-Muslim men into the Turkish Armed Forces,

and the Law on Capital Tax to remove non-Turkish capital from the national economy, were mainly aimed at the homogenisation, Turkification and Islamisation of the population within the national boundaries. Thus, non-Muslim minorities were not acknowledged as natural members of the Turkish nation, but have remained as 'others' in the Turkish-Muslim nation (Bora, 1995; Keyman and İçduygu, 1998 cited in İçduygu *et.al*, 2008:359).

The implications of this 'othering' process, along with 'top-down' nationalism with regard to the status of the Armenian community, are notable in two respects. On the one hand, to describe the '1915 events' as genocide and to express genocidal experiences once again leads to a questioning of the 'loyalty' of Armenians to the Turkish state and nation. Since, from the very beginning of the formation of the nation-state, they were characterised as unreliable and disloyal 'subjects' of the state due to their ethnic and religious identities and assumed collaboration with the enemy forces during the First World War, their genocide 'claims' justified national security concerns and the idea of the 'inner enemy'. Moreover some Armenians' ways of describing their experiences as evidence of state violence is interpreted by the official ideology as a failure of assimilatory policies. This also reveals the existence of citizens that challenge the practices and rhetoric of the Turkish state. On the other hand, the elimination of heterogeneous constituents in the name of a single national identity, history and discourse results in the erasure of the Armenian community from official historiography. The period of massacres, deportation and other acts of violence against Armenians are totally overlooked in Turkish historical recollection and in the history textbooks in schools (Kadıoğlu, 2007: 287).  That is to say, one of the aspects of the imposition of Turkish nationalism by the founders and elites of the state is also the absence of Armenians and their sufferings from 'national' collective memory.

Secondly, in line with the inherently conflicted nature of Turkish nationalism and national identity, I reassess the other controversial facet of Turkish nationalism and citizenship. Although the dual categories of 'civic nationalism'- a French style conception of nationalism' and 'ethnic nationalism', a German style conception of nationalism - are themselves problematic, Brubaker's opinions on this distinction allow one to comprehend the construction of citizenship in Turkey as well as the central

inconsistencies within the forms of Turkish nationalism. Since citizenship in Turkey epitomises 'an uneasy marriage between ethnic and civic conceptions of national identity and belonging', both the French conception based on territory and the German conception based on blood define Turkish citizenship (İnce, 2012:24). The constitutional definition of Turkishness denotes that 'one who is connected to Turkish people in terms of Turkish citizenship regardless of religion and race is a Turk' (Yeğen, 2006:69). Nevertheless, Yeğen (*ibid*:72) demonstrates how this description is ethnicity-oriented and discriminatory in terms of deciding who is a Turk; the expression 'in terms of Turkish citizenship' is itself problematic, in that the non-Muslims and Kurds can only be Turks in terms of citizenship, but cannot be 'real Turks'. This state-defined citizenship also coincides with Bora's conceptualisation of the 'official nationalism'. As Bora (2011: 62) considers Turkish nationalism as 'a series of discourses with a vast lexis' rather than a homogeneous discourse, he provides a topography of the nationalist discourses and regards the language of the official (Kemalist) nationalism as the 'root language' of Turkish nationalism. More notably, he draws attention to the ideological ambiguity of this official nationalism, in which the French-style conception of nationalism based on the principles of citizenship and territoriality is in a continuous tension with the German-style nationalism based on ethnicity-centred postulations (*ibid*:63).

In a similar vein, Kadıoğlu (2011:45) reflects on the importance of the distinctions between French and German nationalisms and the conceptualisations of citizenship, and suggests the idea of the paradoxical nature of Turkish nationalism. The reason behind this cohabitation of civilisation and culture within the Turkish nationalist discourse is the Turkish intellectuals' task of transforming a popular consciousness, in Chatterjee's words, 'steeped in centuries of superstition and irrational folk religion'. In the process of nation-building, in other words, the Republican elites have a pivotal role in enhancing national consciousness and promoting political mobilisation (Smith, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Chatterjee, 2006). However, the incompatibility between the objectives and attitude of state elites and the religious and ethnic configuration of the people of the Republic ended in the contradictory disposition of Turkish nationalism. This constructed synthesis within the discourse of Turkish nationalism also marked the 'balance between modernity and tradition, Western materialism and Eastern spirituality, and civilization (based on the premises of the Enlightenment) and culture (based on the premises of

Romanticism)' of Turkish modernisation. The striking point here is that Turkish nationalism generates obligations for the Turkish citizens, rather than empowering them, and regards them as the 'dutiful servants of the state'; unlike the French case, Turkish nationalism advocates a language of obligations rather than a language of rights (Kadıoğlu, 2011: 41-6). The discourse of nationalism and national identity in Turkey, predicated on statist ideas, also poses questions about the status of the non-Muslim and the non-Turkish groups and their civil, political and social rights. The interconnected identity, and the temporal and spatial claims of nationalist discourse (Özkırımlı, 2010: 208-9), revive issues of the contestation and negotiation of zones of nationalism(s), and the discursive aspect concerning relations to minority groups such as Armenians in Turkey.

Although it might be maintained that a 'language of obligations' instead of a 'language of rights' is applied to all the citizens of the Turkish Republic, and that 'the nation-building project promoted a process of assimilation for everybody defined as citizen', this project simultaneously decided on 'a public good and identity only accessible to those who internalised the new value system' (Çolak, 2003:15). When viewed from this point of view, the citizenship ties of the Armenian community with the Turkish state are unable to protect Armenians from being excluded or being 'unnoticed' in the public sphere. Recent studies on Turkish nationalism and the formation of Turkish national identity have also unveiled how actual state practice reflected an ethnic nationalist view, in contrast to the official discourse, which alleges that Turkish national identity is identified in civic-territorial terms (Aslan, 2007:249). Although 'the official discourse of Turkish Republicanism may stress an inclusive conception of national affiliation' (Parla and Davison, 2004:68), an exclusive perception also comprises the racist face of Turkish nationalism that spotlights ethnic and racial characteristics.

More importantly, ethnic and racial thoughts are activated in order to illustrate the unique features of the Turkish nation, which contradicts with 'more open conceptions of national citizenship' (Parla and Davison 2004 cited in Maksudyan, 2005: 292). For instance, the research and publications of the scholars associated with the *Turkish Review of Anthropology* uncovers how the government encouraged research that supported an ethnic-racial version of nationality in which the Turkish race had a sense

of proprietary ownership of the nation and national identity (Maksudyan 2005). Furthermore, it is claimed that the racialist stance of the nationalist ideology was not only visible in practical terms, for example granting privileges to Turks and excluding others, it also operated by utilising the *theoretical grounds* arranged by the scientific racist elite of the Review in order to create 'the tyranny of nationalism over science (or rather pseudoscience) and to 'translate ideological arguments into *scientific facts*' (*ibid*: 314; emphases in original). Therefore, 'the nationalisation of citizenship in Turkey', incorporating both practical and discursive aspects, comes to stand for the exclusion and assimilation of various ethnic, religious and  language-related differences represented by Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Kurds, Arabs, Alevis, Circassians, Georgians, Lazes, etcetera (Kadıoğlu, 2007: 291).  This discussion revolving around the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism in Turkey, ethnic-racial or nationalist comprehension of national identity and the nationalisation of citizenship is apparently pertinent to the process of nation-state building. However, it is this contradictory socio-political, legal and even 'scientific' setting that is at the basis of current forms and representations of Turkish nationalism.  Correspondingly, the three cases against Armenians scrutinised in this research are claimed to be a repercussion of the deep-rooted ambiguities inscribed in Turkish nationalisms and Turkish citizenship and contemporary acts of violence and discrimination. In a similar way to how state elites and pseudo-scientific works were employed in order to consolidate specified image of the Turkish state and Turkish nation and a particular interpretation of Turkish nationalism, now discursive and quotidian fields contribute to uncompleted process of the construction and reproduction of diverse forms of Turkish nationalism.

## 3.2.  The Discursive and Quotidian Aspects of Nationalism

By challenging the classical debates on nation, nationalism and national identity, the 'new approaches to nationalism', as Özkırımlı (2010) terms them, underline the discursive and contested traits of nationalism and national identity. These approaches were mainly affected by the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences, which ensued with the increasing number of social movements in the late 20th century that questioned the homogeneity of national cultures and identities (*ibid*: 169). This emphasis on the heterogeneity of culture and identity also led to the academic enlightenment and the search for new forms of nationalisms and national identity in context. The variety of the

contexts stands not only for studies on numerous states and their national traits, but also for the discursive, representational and exclusionary facets of nationalism(s) and their relation to other social and political domains, such as the media, education or citizenship rights. Moving beyond the analyses on the repressive and restrictive aspects of nationalisms and states, critical scholars draw attention to 'how nationalisms are lived out in quotidian life, how these become part of the taken-for-granted social environment, how nationalisms produce particular accounts of history and cultural identity and how state policies deny some people equal citizenship not through proscription but through prescription' (Puri, 2004:60). In line with these questions, the encounter between national narratives and citizens, the discursive aspects of nationalism, and the unequal status of minority groups, have come into prominence. This section is briefly concerned with the importance of these 'new' and critical approaches for the objectives of the study.

In this research I draw attention to the discursive and quotidian aspects of nationalism in the Turkish context by analysing news discourse in national newspapers and the readings of Armenian interviewees on the discourses of nationalism and national identity. The Turkish nation-state presents a good example of a 'nationalizing state' rather than a 'nation-state' for the reason that 'the latter implies an achieved or completed condition, while the former usefully implies that this completed condition has *not* been achieved… [a] nationalizing state is one conceived by its elites as a specifically *unfinished* state' (Brubaker 1996 cited in Yumul, 2009: 265-66). This nation-state in progress is also in constant need of 'nationalizing' for its survival and is recognised under incessant internal and external threats. More importantly, the justification and rationalisation of the duty 'of using state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation' (Brubaker, 1996:5) are realised through these perceived threats along with 'the sense of injustice the "core nation" had experienced in the past' (Yumul, 2009: 265-66). By taking these points into account, I consider that news discourse in the Turkish national newspapers fulfils the need of 'nationalizing' the Turkish state on a daily basis. The repetitive emphases on the idea of the Turkish nation, national identity and nationalisms in news stories, facilitate the process of the self-actualisation of Turkish nationalisms. In the following chapters I explore how discursive strategies are employed to portray attacks towards Armenians,

who constitute one group of 'acknowledged' internal threats against the Turkish state. This exploration is also significant in the sense that the combination of perceived internal threat (the Armenian community in Turkey) allied with external threat (the Armenian Diaspora) and 'the sense of injustice' that the 'core nation' (the Turkish nation) still undergoes due to 'genocide claims' becomes evident through the critical discourse analysis of news coverage of designated incidents. In addition, the micro-level analysis of nationalist discourses in the media representations of minority groups indicates the patterns of national insecurity.

In particular, the works of Hobsbawm and Anderson have paved the way for an understanding of nationalism and national identity as fabricated arrangements that impose themselves as 'normal' and 'indispensable' parts of a modern state. Both of them share what might be called the 'constructionist' approach to nationalism and they agree on the idea that the nation is 'invented' or 'imagined' and is represented to the majority by a variety of cultural media and social rituals (Smith, 2000:52). Hobsbawm (1992, 2000) claims that what people come to perceive as natural, such as their national identities and their practices/rituals, are in fact 'invented' through repetition and imposition by the state. The notion of an 'invention of tradition' was initially intended 'to provoke, to demystify what was taken for granted' (Burke, 2002:6) and was employed to indicate how 'nations, nationalism, the national state, national symbols and histories are types of recently invented traditions and that any seeming continuity with the past is largely fictitious' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983:1-14). Correspondingly, Hobsbawm and Ranger (*ibid*: 12) maintain that the nation and its paraphernalia are the most pervasive of those invented traditions which 'use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion'. As they underline the importance of the nation state as the political outcome of nationalism and the role of political elites and political institutions, Puri (2004: 56-57) calls attention to nationalism from the perspective of ordinary people. This fictitious character ascribed to the nation and national identity by Hobsbawm also resembles Anderson's depiction of the nations as 'imagined communities'. Employing a similar theoretical frame, Anderson's (1991:4) point of departure is that nationality and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind; and more importantly, the real challenge lies in showing why and how these cultural artefacts have aroused such deep attachments (Özkırımlı, 2010:106). What seems to be obvious is that both of these

theoretical standpoints aim to reveal how national identity or nationalism is an artificial conception in the modern world and is attributed to inherent characteristics to legitimise the hegemonic power of the state and political elites.

Moreover, Calhoun (1997) considers nationalism as an issue of identity embodied in a Foucauldian sense of 'discursive formation', through which people are able to speak in everyday life by reproduction of the binary oppositions of 'who we are' in comparison with 'who they are'. By calling attention to the discourse of nationalism, Calhoun (1993: 214) notices the involvement of many categories and presumptions of this discourse that are deeply rooted in everyday language and also academic theories. More notably, this discourse is "inherently international", in that its claims to nationhood are not just internal claims to social solidarity, common descent, or any other basis' but 'also claims to distinctiveness vis-à-vis other nations'. Despite the various 'internal nature of nationalisms', they unite by 'common external frame of reference'. The claims of nationalism highlight that 'certain similarities should count as the definition of political community' and 'internal homogeneity throughout a putative nation' should be provided (*ibid*: 216-29). Calhoun's interrogation might be regarded as instructive in terms of recalling the ethnic, cultural or religious differences and identities other than the dominant national identity. The discursive and quotidian reproduction of nationalism based on certain presuppositions and claims has also led to the problematic status of minority groups in a given nation-state. The dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' operates not only by indicating the divergence from other nations outside the national borders; the citizens with different ethnic, cultural or religious belongings are also seen as threats to the homogenous political community and genuine nationhood.

Billig's study, *Banal Nationalism* (1995), has also led to a shift in the research focus from macro-scale theorising on nationalism to more empirically-based studies that have concentrated on issues of representation, contestation and localised meaning-making and contextualised case studies (Skey, 2009: 333). Billig (1995) emphasizes the everydayness of nationalism, which is defined as an ideology embedded in everyday life through constant and unconscious encounters with the symbols of the nation. According to Billig (*ibid*:8), there is a constant flagging of nationhood in established nations and he introduces the term 'banal nationalism' to cover all those unnoticed, routine practices,

ideological habits, beliefs and representations which make the daily reproduction of nations in the established states of the West possible. While Billig opposes the conventional approaches to nationalism, which concentrate on its extreme manifestations and project it on to 'others' (Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000:787), the supposed dichotomies between 'our' civilised societies and 'their' violent ones (Skey, 2009:334), and also 'our' nationalism and 'their' nationalism, are challenged. The manifold ways in which the nation continues to be flagged also point out the on-going production of a hegemonic discourse whose power comes from being seen as natural, taken-for-granted, common sense (Sutherland, 2005:196).

Billig's contentions are revealing for the goals of this research because I intend to interrogate how the Armenians in Turkey perceive and interpret their constant encounters with the symbols of the nation and nationalism. As national newspapers constitute one of the main domains in which the nation is flagged and a hegemonic discourse is constructed and reproduced, I concentrate on three Turkish national newspapers (*Hürriyet, Cumhuriyet and Zaman*) with supposedly different ideological backgrounds in order to unmask nationalisms in their divergent forms. Focusing on three recent events, I look at the ways in which discursive spheres are created in selected national newspapers. As I also ask questions about recent attacks against Armenians during the interviews, the ideas of the interviewees expose how they construct, represent and/or challenge the discourse of nationalisms. This is equally crucial to observe the differences and/or similarities between media representations and the perceptions of interviewees in terms of the construction and consumption of discourses of nationalism.

Since both the academic and public discussions on nationalism and national identity in Turkey usually revolve around the theme of the 'rise of nationalism', the increase in nationalist sentiments and manifestations are presented as a menace to the democratisation process in Turkey. The claims about the rise of nationalism in Turkey also overlap with 'the return of the repressed' (Ignatieff 1994; Brubaker 1998) perspective which became prominent following the disintegration of the Soviet bloc in 1989. Briefly, this perspective refers to the idea that the ingrained national identities and national conflicts in the pre-communist history of Eastern Europe, which were

'frozen or repressed' by the anti-national communist regimes, returned with redoubled force after the collapse of communism. It is also suggested that the communist regimes did not only repress nationalism but also nationhood, so they were anti-national (Brubaker, 1998: 246-7). Correspondingly, Schwarzmantel (2004: 392) supports the view of the proliferation of nationalisms since 1989, but broadens its scope to the world rather than confining it to post-communist states. However, 'the return of the repressed' perspective restrains nationalism to a tidal force that strikes settled nations on special occasions or regards it as an exotic force located on the periphery and which threatens the stability of existing states (Billig 1995; Özkırımlı and Uyan-Semerci, 2011:61). Therefore, in line with the emphases of Özkırımlı and Uyan-Semerci (2011: 65), this research adopts the conceptualisation of nationalism as 'a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world', 'a frame of reference', 'a hegemonic language common to all political actors' which enables me to scrutinise the discursive sphere in the national newspapers under examination. In order to comprehend the views of the Armenians and provide an assessment of the claim of 'the rise of nationalism', I pose the following question during the interviews: 'As a citizen of the Republic of Turkey, do you think there is a prevalent/increasing discourse of nationalism and national identity in Turkey? If yes, how do you describe/experience it? Do you think it excludes Armenians?' This question is important in two respects; first, it aims to disclose how nationalism and national identity and the claim about their escalating effects are delineated by Armenians; and secondly, how do they interpret their own social and political status with regard to Turkish nationalism. I will elaborate these points in the following chapters.

In addition to critical theorising on nationalism, the arguments of the postmodern/postcolonial studies' approach, which concentrate on nationalist discourses, have shaped the theoretical framework of this research. The endeavour of these discourses is 'to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress'. The idea of the nation is 'haunted' by a particular ambivalence of 'the language of those who write it' and 'the lives of those who live it' (Bhabha, 1990:1). Inspired by Bhabha's work, Hall (1992) draws attention to diverse discursive strategies employed by nationalist projects. Firstly, the story of the nation is narrated through history books, symbols and rituals to construct and reproduce the past and future of a

national destiny. Secondly, the emphasis on 'origins, continuity, tradition, timelessness' generates the characterisation of the nation as unchanged and unchanging throughout its history. Finally, a historical continuity for the nation is fabricated by the invention of tradition along with a foundational myth (Spencer and Wollman, 2002: 49-50). As I attempt to indicate in the contextual background chapter, the historical continuity of the nation-state formation and its reproduction in Turkey revives the issue of national 'others' with different ethnic and religious identities. A critical gaze at the discriminatory political, social and civil implementations towards the historically marginalised groups, as well as their representation in the different domains, also sheds light on nationalisms in divergent forms.

Although Chatterjee's analysis deals with the anti-colonial resistance and the post-colonial setting, mostly focused on India, his criticisms of the discussions on nationalism which fail to take the non-European world into account are relevant to the debates on nationalism and its prevailing discourse in Turkey. According to Chatterjee (1986: 50), there are mainly three moments -*the moment of departure, the moment of manoeuvre and the moment of arrival*- of nationalism in the non-European world. For the Turkish case, particularly, the moment of departure and the moment of arrival are relevant and explanatory. The moment of departure is positioned in the encounter of a nationalist consciousness with the framework of knowledge created by post-Enlightenment rationalist thought. This results in the awareness and the acceptance of an essential cultural difference between West and East; the former has attributes of power and progress, whereas the absence of these features leads the latter to be doomed to poverty and subjection. Yet the nationalist's claim is that this backwardness is not historically immutable; it can be surmounted by adopting all the modern characteristics of the European culture. At this moment of departure, nationalist thought expresses the distinction between the West as superior in the materiality of its culture and the East as superior in the spiritual aspect of culture. In the moment of arrival, nationalist thought attains its full development and becomes a discourse of order and the rational organisation of power. The success of this discourse lies in its capability to dismiss all earlier contradictions, divergences and differences and to incorporate them within the body of a unified discourse instead of simply introducing a single, consistent and unambiguous voice (*ibid*: 51). Moreover, from the viewpoint of post-colonial studies, the

duality between being spiritual, religious and Eastern, and becoming rational, modern and Western is subordinating, because the Western conceptual framework is the ultimate and universal model for the imagination of the nation. However, simultaneously it is liberating, as the spiritual and religious elements of the East disrupt the Western hegemonic structure and the secular character of national identity (Bhabha 1990; Chakrabarty 2001). The encounters with the West generated the effects of anti-colonial nationalism in Turkey, which became visible in the attempts to enact top-down modernisation and Westernisation processes, while at the same time discarding the cultural superiority of the West (Breuilly, 1993: 230).

### 3.3. The Interplay between Nationalism and Media Representations

Critical theorising on the different facets of nationalism and national identity has also revived discussions on their relationship with media representations. Given the role and influence of the media, particularly national newspapers, in shaping public opinion and constructing/reproducing nationhood in Turkey, it is crucial to focus on the interaction between nationalism and media representations. Since Anderson (1991:24-46) introduced the idea that 'the nation' is an 'imagined community' and the mass media are primarily, though by no means exclusively, agents of its imagining, debates over the dominant discursive power of nationhood, and the role of mass media within nation-states, have been given scholarly attention. With regard to national identity building, a group of theorists have underlined the role of media coverage (Anderson, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991a, 1991b; Billig, 1995; Higson, 2002; Polonska-Kimunguyi and Kimunguyi, 2011). Underlining the role newspapers play in the reproduction of nationalism, Anderson (1991) claims that as all newspaper readers know they perform the same daily routine of reading the same newspaper at the same time as other readers, so the feeling of a national community emerges, despite the different identities of the readers. The narratives of national identity and the hegemonic socio-political landscape based on the 'discourse of difference' (Hall 1989 cited in Erjavec, 2001:703) might serve to exclude certain groups and raise issues of ethnic/ religious discrimination. The cumulative media representations, which are implicitly national, present individuals with a version of what their societies look like as a whole and convey the message of how society is and how one is located within it; Charles Taylor has described this as 'the

social imaginary', which refers to 'the ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows' (Frosh and Wolfsfeld, 2006:106). This research also looks at the ways in which 'the social imaginary' concerning Armenians is portrayed in Turkish national newspapers. The analysis of news discourse with respect to three specific cases accordingly unveils how discursive strategies position Armenians in relation to forms of Turkish nationalism and 'imagine their social existence' in the Turkish nation-state.

Since the media is a 'battlefield', a space 'in which contests for various forms of dominance take place', within 'the communicative space of the nation-state' (Schlesinger, 1991b:299), it plays a crucial role in the formation of a collective national identity and the identification of the difference between 'us' and 'them' and 'their potential threat' to 'our' territory, society and culture. One of the focal points of this research is, thus, the role of national newspapers 'in the discursive construction of nations and national identities' together with 'the *construction of difference/distinctiveness and uniqueness*' (Hall, 1994, 1996; Martin, 1995 cited in De Cillia *et.al*, 1999: 153; emphasis in original). More importantly, it is my aim to illustrate 'the construction of difference and uniqueness' in Turkish national identity and national symbols through the exploration of representations of 'Armenianness' and the Armenian community. This should be conceived as a reciprocal process in which the difference of the Armenian identity is designed by ascribing certain characteristics in news coverage. Although the use of the term 'national identity' seems as if there is 'only one national identity', depending on 'the situational setting of the discursive act and the topic being discussed' different identities are discursively formed. Therefore, national identities are to be recognised as 'dynamic, fragile, vulnerable and often incoherent'; but 'there are certain relations (of transfer and contradiction) between the images of identity offered by political elites or the media and 'everyday discourses' about nations and national identities' (De Cillia *et.al*, 1999: 154). In a similar way to the discussion of the Turkish nation-state as a 'nationalizing state' in need of 'nationalizing', Turkish national identity composed of multiple identities also requires continuous self-referential discourses. This requirement also brings its vulnerability to light, in that both 'the images of identity' produced by the media and 'everyday discourses' endeavour to camouflage the unfinished and imperfect condition of Turkish national identity. Accordingly, the incidents concerning the Armenian community provide an opportunity for news stories

to reinforce the understanding of a stable, powerful and coherent Turkish national identity since the Armenian question as an unresolved problem continues to challenge national myths, narratives and discourses.

By focusing on the construction and reproduction of a national community in *Banal Nationalism*, Billig (1995) scrutinises how a national frame of reference is flagged in explicit or implicit ways in the content of newspaper texts. He emphasises the way in which British newspapers effectively nationalise the news and position their readership in national terms by 'the pervasive use of direct national reference (e.g. using terms such as British or Britain); by dividing the news into separate 'home' and 'international' sections; by concentrating on events located within Britain, and by using nationalised deixis, whereby terms such as 'we' and 'here' were understood to pertain to the British and to Britain'. More notably, he asserts that 'the naturalness of a national-specific frame of reference was signalled implicitly through its unmarked status: that is, by *failing to name it*' (Rosie *et.al.*, 2004:438; emphasis in original). In order to underline the banality of the nation, Billig (1995) conducts a survey of British daily newspapers on a randomly selected day and shows how the nation is flagged everyday by means of the newspapers. Replicating this study in Turkey, Yumul and Özkırımlı (2000: 789) conducted a survey of 38 Turkish daily newspapers on a randomly selected day. They highlight the importance of selecting an ordinary day because it allows them to observe 'to what extent and in what forms nationhood is flagged or reminded daily by the media even when there is no major crisis'. The most evident indicators of banal nationalism were detected in almost one third of the newspapers that used the Turkish flag or a map and/or slogans, reminding readers of 'our' homeland and national identity. They also emphasize how any news story (sports, weather, economy, religion) is framed within the Turkish nationalist discourse by its unquestioned assumptions and conclude that the discourse employed by the Turkish press is packed with the essential elements of nationalist ideology (*ibid*: 801). For example, in the economy section, the presentation of the news about the pending arrival of the credit rating institution *Duff and Phelps* marks 'our' nationhood: "Duff and Phelps is coming for an oral examination" (*Yeni Yüzyıl*), "American graders are coming" (*Yeni Şafak*), "Turkey is being evaluated" (*Emek*). Yumul and Özkırımlı (*ibid*: 799) highlight that the way this news is presented in the newspapers sends a message that 'our' country, 'our' economy is going to be evaluated by the 'foreigners', by institutions of imperialist countries whose decision will affect

'our' future. In a similar vein, the weather sections report national and foreign weather in separate sections, and in line with Billig's observation (1995:116-7), newspapers use a map of Turkey in reporting the weather. Supposing the shape of the national geography to be familiar to the readers, the presentation of the weather contributes to naturalising, at the level of the unconscious, the geographical shape of the homeland (Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000: 790).

In a similar study, Köse and Yılmaz (2012) analysed 36 daily newspapers of the Turkish media on an 'ordinary' day by employing the content analysis method to expose how various key words, concepts and themes incorporate the idea of nationhood within the discourse of the daily news. Seventeen years after Billig's original survey, in order to disclose how the press produces nationalism on an ordinary day, this study focused on all the newspapers from different ideological backgrounds, publishing policies and owning styles. Thus, 3,146 news items and 462 columns were examined and evaluated under five categories: the newspapers' logos, the use of the words evoking nationalism, the expressions that instil a sense of the nation and national achievements, the emphasis on common interest and history, and the news dichotomies of 'us' and 'them' (*ibid*:912). Consequently, Köse and Yılmaz reached the same conclusion as Yumul and Özkırımlı (2000), namely that the newspapers in the samples sensationalise the news and reproduce nationalism through explicit ideological references, inferences and specific contrasts. Moreover, despite their different positions along the political spectrum, 36 newspapers seemed to find a common denominator about nationalism, in that there were no significant differences among them in terms of constructing nationalistic semantics (*ibid*:924).

Both of these studies provide an idea about the present conditions of Turkish national newspapers and the dominant discursive sphere of nationhood, nationalism and Turkish nationalist ideology in particular. For the purposes of this research, it is vital to recall the common argument shared by these two studies, that the dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' in the news discourse continuously produces and reproduces the idea of 'othering'. More importantly, the identification of internal (e.g. Armenians, Jews, Kurds, LGBT) and external (e.g. neighbouring countries, Western powers) enemies in the Turkish national newspapers reveals, as Brookes (1999:248; emphasis in original) highlights, how the symbolic power of 'the dominant representations of nationhood'

characterises 'the nation as the *natural* political and cultural unit' and 'requires the denial of difference within the nation and the subordination of other possible identifications with the communities based on locality, ethnicity, etc.'. Rather than selecting an ordinary day to examine the discursive sphere in national newspapers, this research focuses on extraordinary events. As the 'flagging of the nation' and the dominant prejudices and the discriminatory ideas about the Armenians/Armenian genocide can be found in Turkish national newspapers on a daily basis, the peak events might suggest an alternative means to explore whether this prevailing discourse about the nation and national identity is maintained.

Critically addressing Billig's notion of banal nationalism, Law (2001) also scrutinises the national rhetoric of the press. He points out how national identity and newspapers in Scotland are mutually constitutive of each other and indicates the need for a revision of Billig's remarks on nationalism in the context of Scotland. This is mainly because the scope of nationalism in Billig's analysis cannot be directly applied to a 'stateless nation' like Scotland where a semi-autonomous media exist (Law, 2001: 300). One of the most notable conclusions he draws is that 'the generic idea of nation remains banal enough [and] each national identity must be generated daily with particular, though mutable, semiotic material'. Therefore, by routinely carrying the stories that flag nationhood, 'newspapers provide a daily index to shifts within the nation/media problematic' (*ibid*: 314).

In addition to the points raised by these studies, there are two interrelated issues that have to be taken into account in reflecting on the Turkish case. Firstly, the freedom of the press is still a controversial topic in Turkey due to the repressive laws, particularly in the Turkish Penal Code, and the mass imprisonment of journalists who generally write on delicate topics and have a critical stance towards the government. Thus, it is becoming difficult to talk about even a semi-autonomous media in Turkey. According to the report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (2012:6), 76 journalists are in prison and at least of 61 of these journalists are being held in direct relation to their published work or newsgathering activities. In addition, the efforts of the government to disrupt the media's watchdog function and suppress the dissident views make it difficult for Turkey to achieve its long-term strategic goals (*ibid*: 7). It might be argued that the situation of press freedom in Turkey continually conflicts with Turkey's efforts at

integration into the European Union, and the claims of the current government of the Justice and Development Party that 'advanced democracy' is being experienced and Turkey has become a role model for other countries, particularly in the Middle East. Secondly, the relationship between media ownership and the government raises the issue of censorship, especially on certain subjects, such as the recognition and rights of Kurds, Armenians and other minority groups, the arrested journalists or criticisms about 'Turkishness' and/or Islam. As Algan (2003: 188) mentions, the state chooses to ignore the monopolistic practices of media corporations as long as their broadcasts do not conflict with the state's official stance on critical issues, such as the Kurdish struggle. It should be noted that a similar attitude is also reinforced in the newspapers towards Armenians and, as Human Rights Watch (1999:82) underlines, self-censorship is imposed when the sensitive issues, namely the role of military, political Islam, the conflict in south eastern Turkey, subsequent massacres of Armenians, are covered. Therefore, it is crucial to point out how the media remain silent about topics connected with minority groups and in what ways the news stories about these groups are neglected and/or different discursive strategies are developed.

## 3.4. The Portrayals of the Minority Groups in National Newspapers

From the late 1960s onwards, the academic literature devoted to the media portrayal of minority groups has mainly been concerned with analysing the two main ways in which ethnic minorities are problematically presented in media accounts. First, studies about the under-representation (or absence) of ethnic minorities, and second, the research on the mis-representation (or negative portrayal) of ethnic minorities, were prevalent (Mahtani, 2001: 101). According to Gandy (1998), until the late 1990s, the theoretical debates concerning media-minority relations were dominated by the idea that the mainstream media had not only been inaccurate but also individually, institutionally and culturally prejudiced in its news stories about the marginalised groups in a society. In all ways, this attitude of the media has not been detached from the overriding socio-cultural and political settings and the government's constraints.

Ungerleider (1991: 160) distinguishes three mechanisms that determine the ways in which the minorities are represented in the news media. Firstly, the reliance on the government and corporations as sources of news is reinforced by the assumption that those who exercise authority in political, social and economic or social institutions may

speak authoritatively about issues and events (*ibid*: 159). In the case of Turkey, this authoritative treatment of the current government under the leadership of Erdoğan and its effects on news making and self-censorship of the media have become a hot topic. More recently, the Gezi Park protests have revealed Erdoğan's domination over the mainstream media as many journalists reporting the protests were subjected to police violence and/or were compelled to quit. These protests also revived discussions on the reliability of the Turkish media, because TV channels such as CNN Turk and NTV preferred to broadcast a cooking program and a documentary about penguins whilst there were severe clashes between the protesters and the police, who used brutal force and tear gas. At least 6 newspapers also carried the same headline, 'Democracy Demands Sacrifice' by referring to Erdogan's speech[2] instead of reporting the events, the police violence or the injured people. In such an atmosphere, focusing on the media representation of the minority groups, particularly the Armenians, and the events concerning their recognition and rights might demonstrate how the collusion of the government and the media owners makes the national newspapers unable to report the news autonomously. Thus, the Armenian question provides a productive theoretical ground for exploring the self-censorship of the media and the intervention of the official ideology.

Secondly, 'pack' and 'copy-cat' journalism contribute to the under-representation of minorities in the media because, given the expense of news gathering and tight timelines, the media often disseminate information gathered by other news media (Ungerleider, 1991:159). In other words, the decisions about which issues related to minority groups will and will not be covered in the newspapers are mutually dependent. Thirdly, the narrative structure of the news classifies people as heroes, villains, and victims, and the issues are framed as conflicts between these figures. As Manoff (1988) underlines, a narrative structure creates unity among events separated by time and space and creates the impression that separate events share a common 'meaning' and so provides a single interpretation of many events (*ibid*:160). This also opens the way for stereotyping minorities in the news media and for the denial of ethnic/religious diversity in a given society.  In that respect, the media would repeat rather than challenge a highly inaccurate and negative public image of the minorities (Spoonley

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[2] Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/09/turkey-social-media-smartphones-occupy-gezi-protests_n_3411542.html

1990), and the media's causal role is noticeable in terms of replicating and confirming the dominant ethnic discourse towards the minorities (Gans, 1979; Holtzman, 1980 cited in Koldaş, 2013:206).

However, Mahtani (2001: 108) criticises these binary conceptual frameworks based on the under-representation or mis-representation of the minorities in the media as they do not necessarily create ample room to reflect on other complicated theoretical discussions to comprehend media-minority relations. In line with this critique, in the past ten years the research in this field has started to move beyond citing examples of under-representation or mis-representation in the media towards an attempt to understand why these images are tolerated and produced at all. Moreover, Mahtani (*ibid*) claims that the works of Hall (1981), Gilroy (1993), Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) and Bhabha (1994) have also encouraged researchers to concentrate on the reasons behind the prolonged persistence of stereotypical portrayals of minorities in the media and their involvement with multiculturalism, discrimination, and the re-circulation of racist discourses.

Echoing these claims, it is also important to point out the construction and reproduction of the media portrayals of Armenians in Turkey by investigating their relation to prevailing discourses of nationalism and national identity. Thus, news discourse based on a particular meaning system, needs to be understood, as Hartley (1982:6) asserts, by a closer glance at the social, political, and historical conditions of its production and consumption, because these 'determinants' will affect what it says, the way it develops, the status it enjoys, and the people who use it. This emphasis on the consumption aspect of the relation between media representations and minority groups is also illuminating for this research as the audience reception of the media, particularly the national newspapers, might differ. At this point, it is crucial to recall Hall's (1973) most widely circulated and debated argument that there is a lack of fit between the moment of the production of the message (encoding) and the moment of its reception (decoding); these moments of encoding and decoding are also the points of entrance into and exit from the systems of the discourse. Borrowing the concept of discourse from Foucault, Hall is interested in how discourse works to govern and empower certain understandings of a subject while ruling out or delegitimising the others (Procter, 2004:59-60). In addition

to the construction process of discourse in the moment of decoding, the perceptions of certain portrayals and images by the audience has become a current issue.

The studies concentrating on the relations between the media, nationalism and minority groups seem to regard media audiences as homogenous and passive recipients. The researchers also assume that the misinformation provided by the mass media can be received by the audience directly and uncritically (Ericson, 1991:220). However, Jewkes (2004: 11) criticizes these media-centred assumptions and argues that this approach cannot sufficiently touch upon the 'subtleties of media meanings, the polysemy of media texts, the unique characteristics and identity of the audience member'. Entman (1993: 52) points out that the news frame 'selects some aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text'. Therefore, specific information and a certain line of reasoning are developed through legitimising particular ideas and overlooking 'other' ones. News frames as 'interpretive packages', giving meaning to an issue (Gamson and Modigliani 1987), and the packages of key concepts, stock phrases and stereotyped images to underpin the particular interpretations (Norris 1995), are not value neutral according to critical media theorists; they 'reproduce the ideological orientation of the larger socio-political system' (de Souza, 2010:478-9). Madianou (2005:7) also argues that the audience cannot simply be seen as 'empty' vessels who uncritically absorb the media messages that they encounter, and suggests unpacking the concept of the audience by asking 'what role-if any- the media play in the articulation of identities'. In a similar vein, Mahtani (2001:115) calls attention to the need for a greater understanding of the ethnic minorities' comprehension of their treatment in the media; thus, more research, including interviews with minorities to discern their opinions about their representation in the media in relation to identity formation in particular, needs to be carried out. By taking these remarks into account, the reception of the Armenians, as active agents of the issue, to the media portrayals of the three incidents outlined above are included in this research, as well as an analysis of the media representations. Following Mahtani's (*ibid*: 116) warning about the risk of regarding minority groups as homogenous entities and ignoring other facets of identity that play a role in minority consumption of media, the interviews shed light on how gender, class, age, educational background and other characteristics of the interviewees play decisive roles in their opinions. This attempt to investigate the 'decoding' moments of the Armenians also reveals their critical viewpoint towards the mainstream media and

alternative ways of gathering information in order to avoid degrading and biased news stories.

## 3.5. (Collective) Memory, National Myths and Historiography

In line with aforementioned theoretical discussions on nationalism, national identity and media representations, in this part I scrutinise the collective memory debate that problematizes the notions of memory, myths and their relationship with national historiography. This examination provides a fertile ground for exploring the remembrance and forgetting of past atrocities in the present. The construction of patterns of confrontation with the past in nation-building institutions also reveals how memories are repressed or totally erased in a public space. In particular, the Armenian question might be regarded as a constant reminder of past injustices committed by the Turkish state, as well as the passing on of the experience of state violence across generations of the Armenian community. The contemporary politics of denial with respect to the Armenian Genocide is also nourished by the continuity between past and present national narratives that legitimise and promote particular interpretations of historical and current events.

Although there has been disagreement over the concept of collective memory and pervasive criticisms concerning its abundant and imprecise usage, academic interest in this notion, which is usually defined as 'memory boom' or 'memory wave', is still predominant across many disciplines. However, some scholars have attempted to replace this notion with other terms, namely 'social memory' (Fentress and Wickham 1992), 'collective remembrance' (Winter and Svan 1999), and 'popular history making' (Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998), or have continued to employ the old- fashioned concept of 'myth' (Gedi and Elam 1996 cited in Kansteiner, 2002: 181). Despite this terminological diversity, most academic explorations in the field of memory studies follow similar 'research agendas that used to sail under separate colours' (*ibid*: 182). In addition to an increasing focus on this topic, careless use of the concept of memory has come under heavy criticism. According to Gillis (1994:3) 'memory seems to be losing precise meaning in proportion to its growing rhetorical power' and the close relationship between memory and identity emerges in the way in which 'a sense of sameness over time and space is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity'. In the same vein, Gedi and Elam (1996: 40) argue that

'"collective memory' has become the all-pervading concept which in effect stands for all sorts of human cognitive products generally'. This situation, accordingly, may lead the concept of memory to 'become indistinguishable from either identity or culture' (Fabian, 1999:51). Berliner (2005) thus draws attention to the 'abuses of memory', in which the process of conceptual overextension of (collective) memory might remove the boundaries of the notion. He (*ibid*:202) further asks, 'if memory is how the past persists in and invests the present' and 'if it is defined as "the pattern-maintenance function of society or as social reproduction per se (Olick and Robbins, 1998: 112)", then isn't memory the process of culture itself?' It follows that this process of broadening the conceptual limits of memory converts this notion into 'everything which is transmitted across generations, everything stored in culture' (*ibid*: 203). Therefore, it becomes crucial to clarify what is meant by the term 'collective memory' and how it differs from history, historiography and mythology as another means of encountering and representing the past in a nation-state.

By taking Halbwachs' (1992) framework of memory, in opposition to the theories of Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud, as a starting point, this research adopts the idea that individual memories are embedded in collective interaction. It is suggested that collective memory is beyond a series of individual memories or a 'constructed reservoir of ideas and images, but rather is a socially articulated and socially maintained 'reality of the past'" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994: 54). Thus, it is 'the experience mediated by representation of the past' that comprises collective identities and boundaries that are national, cultural, ethnic or religious (Misztal, 2010:28). Along the same lines, for the formation of collective memory, Kansteiner (2002:180) puts emphasis on 'the interaction among three types of historical factors: the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artefacts according to their own interests'. When considered from this point of view on the production side, this research views Turkish national newspapers both as institutions of myth-making rather than memory-making, and as powerful tools in the hands of the myth-makers, as well as mediators between different social and political actors. The objections and reactions of the members of the Armenian community as addressees of prevailing 'traditions' and attitudes concerning the representations of the past and present also illustrate the consumption side.

More notably, Halbwachs 'emphasis on the function of everyday communication for the development of collective memories' (Kansteiner, 2002:181) reveals the significance on a daily basis of media representations in the construction and reproduction of collective myths instead of memories. From this perspective, the present discourses and images that have appeared in national newspapers with respect to Armenians might be considered as reflections of a cumulative body of knowledge produced by Turkish national historiography. Regardless of the attempts of a few authors to engage in forming a realm 'in which memory can serve as an alternative to history', as Klein (2000:128) asserts, 'much current historiography sets memory against history'. On the subject of the Armenian Genocide and its repercussions for Turkish national historiography, Klein's argument draws a boundary between the so-called historical facts and fictional memoirs of the survivors. Göçek's (2015) historical research interestingly points out ample evidence based on over three hundred contemporaneous memoirs, particularly of Turkish Muslim officials and officers, which unmask the devastation of the Armenian population and the subsequent expropriation of Armenian properties. This study is correspondingly significant in the sense that it challenges 'the main contention of the Turkish official narrative' which is predicated on the premise that 'almost all of the literature on the collective violence against the Armenians in general and in 1915 in particular had been produced outside of Turkey in Western languages with the express intent to "undermine the Turkish state and society"' (*ibid*: 56). Therefore, the utilisation of source material produced in Turkey, especially by ethnic Turks, as the verification of state violence not only confronts national historiography but also discloses the selective representation of the past.

Consequently, the distinction between memory and myth comes into prominence as 'subsuming them under the monolithic notion of collective memory' masks the function of memory 'as a counter-hegemonic site of resistance, a space of political opposition' (Bell, 2003: 66). By taking this difference into account, this research on the one hand uncovers the ways in which national newspapers, as one of myth-making mechanisms, develop discursive strategies concerning the interaction between forms of Turkish nationalism and the Armenian question; and on the other hand, it reveals how the Armenian question, including past atrocities and present violent attacks against Armenians, becomes a site of resistance, as the remembrances of some Armenian respondents challenge hegemonic myths enforced by national actors and institutions.

This is also why the analysis of the Armenian question in Turkey sheds light on the idea of the 'mythscape', which refers to 'temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people's memories and the formation nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly' (Bell, 2003: 66). This discursive sphere, therefore, stands for an intersection point between constitutive myths of the Turkish nation-state and the ongoing mythical construction and reproduction of the Armenian Genocide. More notably, this mythscape characterises how 'the representation of the past' is rewritten 'for the purposes of the present' (*ibid*).

Moreover, there are two aspects that need to be addressed. First, the Armenian question in Turkey has been persistently viewed as an issue of contest for a 'nationalist governing mythology' which imposes 'a definite meaning on the past, on the nation and its history' (Bell, 2003: 74). This might be interpreted as a reason behind the efforts of national newspapers to take an active role in sustaining the governing mythology in the present-day, even though news stories do not directly deal with the past atrocities against Armenians. Second, subaltern myths coexist and also continuously challenge the governing myth, and they generate 'their own traditions and stories' that are pertinent to 'past oppression and suffering at the hands of the dominant groups as by tales of national glory' (*ibid*). In this respect, some of the narratives of the Armenian interviewees in this research exemplify this coexistence between the governing myth and subaltern myths. In addition, some interviews epitomise 'organic' forms of collective remembrance that question the governing mythology and 'the alleged repository of national collective memory' (*ibid*: 66). A number of accounts thus unveil how a traumatic genocidal process and mentality affect the patterns of remembrance and forgetting as coping strategies contrary to stories of national glory and heroism. The interviews congruently demonstrate that particular members of the Armenian community are captured by the 1915 events, and their sense of temporality and spatiality seems to be eliminated. In other words, memory transmissions of trauma and suffering among the Armenian generations still haunt their contemporary perceptions.

Regarding the specific and unusual experiences and memory challenges of survivors and their descendants, Kansteiner (2002:187), however, asserts that both the concepts of trauma and repression are unable to capture and illustrate 'the forces that contribute to the making and unmaking of collective memory'. This is mainly because the members of

small groups, as the victims of traumatic experiences, are capable of influencing 'the national memory if they command the means to express their visions, and if their vision meets with compatible social and political objectives' (*ibid*). In a similar manner, Zerubavel (1995:5) argues that 'collective memory continuously negotiates between available historical records and current social and political agendas' and the interpretations of these records are shifted and selectively emphasised and suppressed. These contentions intriguingly mention the importance of the access to political power for historically victimised groups to make their distressing experiences seem legitimate in the eyes of the national public. More importantly, the compatibility between the collective memory of these groups and existing social and political agendas determine whose experiences and encounters of the past are recognised as valid and valuable. This discriminating approach towards reminiscences, unlike national governing myths, is equally noteworthy for understanding the wider implications of ongoing nation-state building project on the efforts to standardise and manipulate national acts of remembrance and forgetting.

## 3.6. (Trans) National Remembrance and Forgetting

In addition to the academic focus on the control over what is to be remembered and forgotten by political and social dynamics within national borders, in recent years, states' level of democratic governance has started to be measured by their efforts to recall their undesirable past. A growing body of research on national and regional cases, such as post-war Japan and Germany, post-apartheid South Africa, post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, and post-dictatorial South America, revolves around 'the question of how countries deal with the material and symbolic legacies of totalitarian rule, genocide and civil war' (Adam 2001; Barkan 2000; Baruma 1994; McAdams 1997; Minow 1998; Schwan 2001; Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd 2000 cited in Moses, 2001: 91). Although this might be recognised as a positive development in terms of coming to terms with the past, the question of which legacies are remembered and which ones are not opened up for discussion still remains important. Since 'what is to be remembered and forgotten becomes ideological, symbolic and rhetorical', 'in the articulation of memories' 'some "storytellers" are listened to more carefully as they are thought to be more powerful and authoritative' (Middleton and Edwards 1990 cited in Crawford and Foster, 2007:6). In addition, even if particular acts of violence are 'selected' for the

reconciliation process of a state, it is disputed how key components, for instance the political and social actors, contextual factors, and consequences, are addressed and which aspects of hostility are revealed or ignored.

Regarding the Turkish case, the legacy of acts of violence against Armenians has been persistently bounded by particular patterns of selective remembrance and forgetting. The Turkish state's official narratives towards the Armenian genocide as integral parts of national historiography authenticate the idea of denial as 'the final stage of genocide' (Stanton 1998). The earlier formal attempts to eradicate not only material, but also the cultural heritage of Armenians, also play a part in the current understanding of the Armenian question. Since the crucial question, 'how did the Armenians so swiftly and near totally disappear from their ancestral territories', cannot be responded to sufficiently despite the evidence of a massive *corpus delicti,* 'the Turkish denial syndrome' benefits from 'a repertoire of rationalisations, distortions and falsehoods'. This is also the reason behind 'a political end-game bent on reducing the Armenian genocide to a "debatable" issue' (Dadrian, 2003: 270). What is more notable about this state-led commitment to repress and eliminate the traces of mass violence is 'the active enforcement of denial' which goes along with 'the policy of silencing alternative historical narratives' (Bakiner, 2013: 696).  These two concurrent processes that aim to regulate memory practices also signal the incapability of the Turkish state, as a 'nationalizing state' in an incomplete condition (Brubaker 1996), to critically reflect upon its past and rearrange its prospective policies towards minority groups. In addition to 'internally generated obstacles to self-reflection' Zarakol (2010: 3-4) argues that 'the ontological insecurity of the state', which refers to a lack of a consistent sense of 'self,' makes the state refrain from apologising for past crimes. She draws attention to the insecure status of Turkey, as well as Japan, within international society, which is embedded in the national identities of both states, and the intersubjective ontological security pressures for an apology which entails two major transfigurations in the self-perception of the state. The transformation from 'peaceful' or 'peaceful when 'unprovoked' to 'one that is capable of unjustifiable violence', and also from 'righteous' to 'apologetic', would inevitably 'challenge the integrity of the narrative of state identity'. More importantly 'the past crime, which has been already figured into the state narrative in a certain way, has to be rearticulated in another manner' (*ibid*: 7). This comes to mean that both the Turkish state's self-narratives and the positioning of

Turkey with respect to the international society dominated by Western European states, enforces limits on the commemoration of the Armenian genocide. It might be further claimed that the continuous need for 'nationalizing' through discursive and non-discursive realms and the enduring 'ontological insecurity' based on both endogenous and exogenous identity pressures, lead the 'Armenian question' to embody the tension between national and transnational memory practices.

This clash concerning the acts of remembrance and forgetting of the Armenian genocide and its present implications also stems from the existence of multiple actors. Along with the Turkish state and Armenians in Turkey as the major interested parties, the Armenian Diaspora, the Armenian state, Armenian civil society, transnational civil society and the international community, confront and rearticulate the official narratives which immobilise reminiscences of the genocidal process in the year 1915. Although 'until recently, the dynamics of memory production unfolded primarily within the bounds of the nation-state; coming to terms with the past was largely a national project... under the impact of global mobility and movements'(Assmann and Conrad, 2010: 2) transnational interventions and condemnations of both past and present injustices against particular groups has become a human rights issue. It is thus vital to concentrate on the Armenian question within the field of memory studies which has witnessed the shift from 'static sites of memory to the dynamic movement of memory' (Craps, 2012: 74). In particular, the mass media contributes to this change on a transnational level by synchronising 'the witnessing of worldwide events for a global spectatorship' that gains 'the power to critique and challenge national myths and authorities' (Assmann and Conrad, 2010: 4). As memories of violence across states might be depicted as the meeting point for national audiences and transnational spectators, it has become conceivable to mention a shared understanding of oppression and justice. The mobility of memory beyond territorial boundaries, and possessing a range of viewers, has also become visible via the increasing awareness towards the remembrance of the Holocaust since 1980s. This universal growth of the memory of the Holocaust, has, according to Levy and Sznaider (2006: 4), resulted in a 'cosmopolitan memory' which 'harbours the possibility of transcending ethnic and national boundaries'. More importantly, the American media has converted the Holocaust into 'a universal imperative, making the issue of universal human rights politically relevant to all who share this new form of memory' (*ibid*: 132). While Levy and Sznaider (2006)

transform the traditional nation-state framework with respect to memory into a local-global understanding of memory, they also portray the Holocaust as being emancipated from its spatial and temporal limitations and as being a mutual moral standard (*ibid*:18).

Regarding this interpretation of cosmopolitan memory, Mistzal (2010:37) calls attention to its relationship with the emergence of the human rights regime. She underlines Turner's (2006) argument that 'human rights are rooted in our awareness of our common vulnerability, which is increased by our remembering lessons from the past'. Thus, the memory of past atrocities is an indispensable trait of the human rights regime (*ibid*). From this viewpoint, the global dissemination and de-contextualisation of the experiences of the Holocaust are understood as progressive developments in terms of human rights and global justice. Moreover, it is assumed that prospective mass atrocities might be prevented by means of the creation of awareness with regard to the traumatic memories and representations of the Holocaust and its global implications. In accordance with this research, however, there are mainly two aspects which require close attention.

First, the pervasive adoption of the Holocaust as an exemplary case for genocides and collective suffering and trauma runs the risk of assessing the devastation of other massacres in a comparative analysis. Since the Holocaust ascribes itself 'like a floating signifier to historically very different situations', Huyssen (2003:99) warns about references to the Holocaust, because they may either enable 'a strong memory discourse' and bring 'a traumatic past to light' or block 'any such public reckoning by insisting on the absolute incommensurability of the Holocaust with any other historical case'. In the Turkish context, unsurprisingly, this incommensurability argument has been principally promoted by official narratives, as well as scholars who underscore the differences between the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide in order to refute 'Armenian claims'. For example, Hitler's infamous question of '[w]ho speaks today of the extermination of the Armenians?' in 1939 before the invasion of Poland (Lochner 1943 cited in Travis, 2013:27), has become a matter of debate. In particular, some scholars, as supporters of the Turkish national historiography, have attempted to counteract this idea that connotes the historical linkage between these two human catastrophes. According to Ataöv (1999), Hitler's quote is absent from Nuremberg documents and the Armenian genocide did not take place and 'Armenians collaborated with the Nazis

whereas Jews were welcomed by Turks' (Travis, 2013: 30). In a similar vein, Lowry (1985) believes in the inadequate evidence of this alleged statement and argues that 'the Armenian genocide was simply a type of 'propaganda' and 'vilification against the Republic of Turkey', and Lewy (2005) insists that 'any attempt to link the anti-Armenian massacres and the Holocaust rests 'on a shaky factual foundation' (*ibid*:31). It is thus not very uncommon to encounter the discourse of denial articulated through the comparison and contrast of the inhumane and intentional aspects of the Holocaust and the systematic slaughter of Jews in Hitler's Germany, and the 'unexpected' consequences of deportation of Armenians during wartime and the tolerant approach of the Ottoman Empire towards all ethnic and religious communities. In other words, it is difficult to operationalise the concept of cosmopolitan memory vis-à-vis the Armenian question in Turkey. This is related not only to its identification with the Holocaust remembrance, but also the dominant rhetoric that propagates the recollection of the Armenian genocide as a matter of Turkish national struggle and pride rather than a human rights issue.

The second problem with the notion of cosmopolitan memory involves attributing importance to memories depending on the existing hierarchy among different states. Margalit (2002: 80) contends that 'our memory of Kosovo overshadows our memory of Rwanda' as 'the atrocities of Europe will be perceived as morally more significant'. This assertion implies asymmetrical portrayals of regions of the globe in the cosmopolitan memory since memories and events from Third World countries are subjected to being suppressed by memories and events from the First World (Margalit 2002 cited in Misztal, 2010:39). If the memory narratives of the Armenian Genocide are considered within the context of the cosmopolitan memory, one can identify incompatible access to passing on genocidal memories between the members of the Armenian Diaspora and Armenians in Turkey and Armenia. This might predictably be caused by distinct experiences and patterns of remembrance and forgetting past atrocities among those groups. However, the valorisation or trivialisation of their recollections in both national and transnational political and social realms is quite dissimilar. For the Armenians in Turkey, for instance, it is not very 'easy' to speak out about their past sufferings and present problems encountered in their relationships with the state, in comparison with the members of the Armenian Diaspora in France or United States. Although the Armenian Genocide, in the same way as the Holocaust, might open up a space for

discussion about the confrontation of a national historiography with past atrocities, memory transmissions among the Armenian generations in Turkey are still compelled to remain within the boundaries of the national historiography. In other words, the construction of a cosmopolitan memory with respect to the Armenian Genocide might pose a question of whose memories and whose victimhood is more significant and legitimate than others.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Methodological Considerations about the Research Methods

In line with the research questions and objectives of this qualitative study, critical discourse analysis (CDA) and semi-structured interviews constitute the methods of inquiry. This study draws on data from both CDA of three Turkish national newspapers and forty five interviews with Armenians living in Istanbul. There are a number of reasons for deciding on this research design to investigate the discursive formation of nationalism(s) in media representations and unveil the perceptions and experiences of Armenians. First, the persistent influence of print media in Turkey on the dissemination of information and the construction of public opinion, as well as the intervention of the current government in 'adjusting' the content of the news stories concerning delicate topics (namely, the Kurdish issue, the status of Alevis, political and military relations, the Armenian issue, and the headscarf issue) led me to concentrate on national newspapers. Second, the way in which Turkish national newspapers' make news stories about incidents concerning Armenian citizens and create dichotomies in terms of ethnic-religious belongings and nationalism(s) might be regarded as a reflection of the official ideology and tradition of the Turkish state. Finally, the sensitive and taboo aspects of the 'Armenian question' in Turkey raise the question of self-censorship in the national newspapers.

Therefore, CDA is an appropriate method to reveal the underlying messages, power relations, stereotypes and discursive manoeuvres of the newspaper texts. By applying CDA my aim is to enquire into 'the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance', 'different modes of discourse-power relations' and 'discursive strategies of elites for the maintenance of inequality' (Van Dijk, 1993:249-50) in the news stories of three Turkish national newspapers with reference to the particular events focused on in this study. Moreover, this approach enables me to pinpoint how national newspapers with different ideological standpoints and journalistic ethics and standards employ both distinct and common linguistic and visual tools while reporting news about Armenians. Although it might be argued that all over the world the press has a general tendency to

be prejudiced and to act in collusion with the established order, CDA will allow me to identify new findings which apply uniquely to the Turkish context.

In addition to the CDA of three Turkish national newspapers with respect to the events under analysis, this qualitative research also includes semi-structured interviews with Armenians. The motives behind the choice of semi-structured interviews as a tool for collecting data were threefold. First of all, I preferred the technique of semi-structured interviews as they have the potential to provide valuable insights which cannot be offered by any other methods. The ideas, perceptions and experiences of Armenian interviewees helped me to uncover the various dimensions of my research questions and revise the focal points of this research. Secondly, this interactive encounter gives me the opportunity to recognise the peculiar 'realities' and interpretations of the interviewees and also reconsider my position as a researcher. In very practical terms, this technique seemed a way to divulge the past and examine how specific occurrences shaped the thoughts and feelings of people, and to provide information about social settings which are otherwise inaccessible for a researcher (Weiss 1994). Finally, in order to intensify the scope and validity of this qualitative research I decided to take account of both the media representations as the production side of certain images, patterns and prejudices, and also the opinions of Armenian interviewees on the consumption side of their own representations in the newspapers. This combination of data collection methods correspondingly exposes the differences and/or similarities among the media representations and the attitudes of interviewees. Moreover, my changing researcher roles during the interviews and the inspection of the newspapers point out the dissimilar facets of this research.

## 4.2. Data Collection Methods

In order to employ CDA, following the decision to set the national newspapers as the object of analysis, I agreed to focus on only three incidents, the assassination of an Armenian journalist (Hrant Dink) in 2007, the murder of an Armenian soldier (Sevag Balıkçı) during his military service in the Turkish Armed Forces in 2011 and the protest in Taksim Square against the Khojaly Massacre in 2012. The main rationale behind the choice of these cases is that they stand for both distinct and common aspects of the debates over the 'Armenian issue' in general, and the status of Armenian citizens in Turkey, as well as the divergent forms of nationalism(s). As I intend to unmask a more

up-to-date understanding of the 'Armenian question' in Turkey and also the problematic and fluctuating interaction between the Turkish state and Armenian citizens, these latest events are timely indicators for the ongoing relevance of this subject matter.

For CDA I selected a sample of news stories regarding these events in three Turkish national newspapers. In order to broaden my analytical perspective vis-à-vis these events I opted for *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman* as the three Turkish national newspapers, in order to scrutinise news stories and identify both prevailing and suppressed news discourse, and to disclose journalistic strategies. With the purpose of doing more focused and comprehensive research, the CDA covers only one week after each of these incidents. By applying CDA I aim to explore the following questions:

- How do Turkish national newspapers that seem to be ideologically different depict the events concerned with Armenian citizens in Turkey?

- What sort of discursive spheres are developed by the national newspapers in terms of constructing and reproducing Turkish nationalism(s) with regard to the media representations of Armenians?

- How does the editorial language disseminate the dominant official ideology pertaining to Armenians?

Using this method my goal is to probe and expound the reasons why Armenians and/or the incidents concerning Armenians are portrayed in particular ways in Turkish national newspapers and to delve into what forms these media representations take. This attempt also suggests how the interaction between news discourse and hegemonic power relations and socio-political context plays a pivotal role in writing style (language, tone, style, and attitude) and visual preferences (photos, colour, font type, font size) of journalistic texts.

Along with a CDA of the media representations, I conducted interviews with Armenians who are Istanbul dwellers. For the interviews one of my main concerns is to assure the diversity among the interviewees in terms of age, gender, occupation, social class and political stance as much as possible. In parallel with a CDA of the news stories covering the murders of an Armenian journalist and an Armenian soldier and the protest in Istanbul against the Khojaly Massacre, these cases are also located at the centre of my

interview guide. Moreover, the interviews undertaken for this research aspire to map out both general and particular inclinations of the interviewees with regard to their reading habits of Turkish national newspapers with different ideological backgrounds and their views on their own media representations. The intermingling phases of these two methods, additionally, led me to grasp various theoretical and methodological dimensions.

## 4.3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

First of all, it needs to be emphasised that diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks of the scholars working with CDA has resulted in various approaches. In particular, the dialectical-relational approach of Norman Fairclough, the discourse-historical approach of Ruth Wodak and the socio-cognitive approach of Teun Van Dijk, have been influential within this interdisciplinary field and opened up a novel area of investigation. As the analysts themselves highlight, there is no single, homogeneous version of CDA. It is common to categorise a whole range of critical approaches (e.g. Gee, 1990; Scollon, 1998; Rogers, 2004; Jeffries, 2007; Richardson, 2007) as CDA (Machin and Mayr, 2012:4). However, the mutual interests in 'the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, abuse, and political-economic or cultural change in society' (Fairclough *et.al*, 2011:357) and 'the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures' (Machin and Mayr, 2012:4) are the unifying points for various attitudes with respect to CDA. Moreover, all these approaches are concerned with 'de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and *retroductable* investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)' (Wodak and Meyer, 2001:3; emphasis in original).

These key objectives of CDA, regardless of the dissimilar positions, are also crucial for this study since news texts as hegemonic discourses (Hall 1982; Van Dijk 2003) constitute the objects of analysis and their relationship with the social forces that underlie a discursive regime (Wodak, 2001:9) stands at the centre of this inquiry. Through CDA I intend to explore how news discourse mirrors the social reality. Congruently, this research unveils the reflections of the prevailing power relations and socio-political and cultural structures on the discursive sphere of Turkish newspapers, along with a specific focus on Armenians as an ethnic-religious minority group. Both written and visual forms of semiotic data in the national newspapers are analysed in order to point out how news discourse about Armenians and the Armenian question is

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produced and reproduced. More notably, 'a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s)' (Fairclough *et.al*, 2011:357) is investigated by addressing certain incidents, such as the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of an Armenian soldier and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre.

Rather than following a particular path of CDA, this research takes into account different arguments from the dialectical-relational approach, the discourse-historical approach and the socio-cognitive approach. Although this might give the impression of a jumbled understanding of CDA, I consider these diverse interpretations as complementary and their critical stances pertaining to discourse, power relations, social structures and ideology as the common denominator for their explorations. In order to elucidate on which grounds these notions are utilised in the CDA of this research, I refer briefly below to these main approaches.

In their critical studies, Van Dijk, Fairclough and Wodak, the most prominent scholars in the CDA field, attach great importance to the symbiotic relationship between discourse and power relations. Both Fairclough and Wodak deal with the question of 'how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse' and assert that CDA can indicate 'how the kinds of power relations involved in racism are maintained through news texts' (Machin and Mayr, 2012:5). Regarding the relations between discourse and power, in a similar vein, Van Dijk (2003:355) argues that access to specific forms of discourse, e.g. those of politics, media or science, is itself a power resource. He then elaborates his claim and expresses the view that '[i]f controlling discourse is a first major form of power, controlling people's minds is the other fundamental way to reproduce dominance and hegemony' (*ibid*: 357). By the same token Reisigl and Wodak (2009:91-3) identify three ways to search different types of discourse, which are the identification of the major themes, the investigation of the discursive strategies used, and the examination of the types of linguistic realisations in discourse. This stress on the various aspects of discourse and discursive strategies and their key role for the socio-cultural and political setting, sheds light on the interaction between discourse and power relations.

Having been inspired by these lines of arguments, my research looks at the ways in which power relations as well as the (official) ideologies involved in Turkish nationalism(s) and national identity are perpetuated via news stories and photos in relation to Armenians. However, the sole intention here is not simply to reveal negative or prejudiced images of national 'others', i.e. Armenians in this case, within the media representations. Instead, it is important to focus on how news discourse (both written and visual) concerning Armenians and the Armenian issue imitates the contemporary socio-political context in Turkey and the deep-rooted nationalist state tradition. As the national newspapers might be acknowledged as the ideal zones for 'mind control' from a socio-cognitive perspective, I aim to identify discursive patterns of news making strategies among different newspapers (*Hürriyet*, *Zaman* and *Cumhuriyet*) on the same incidents. What is more to the point is that I attempt to unmask 'the manipulation of mental models of social events through the use of specific discourse structures, such as thematic structures, headlines, style, rhetorical figures, semantic strategies' (Van Dijk, 1996:85) in the national newspapers.

Furthermore, the dialectical-relational approach of Fairclough (2009: 162) intends to analyse the power relations as shown through discourse. By borrowing Foucault's concept, Fairclough (1993:138) defines order of discourse as the 'totality of discursive practices of an institution and relationship between them'. He puts forward a three-dimensional framework to comprehend and analyse discourse. The first dimension is discourse-as-text, which is the linguistic features and organisation of concrete instance in the discourse. Thus, the choices and patterns in vocabulary, grammar, consistency and text structure need to be systematically examined. The second dimension is discourse-as-discursive-practice, in which the discourse is regarded as something produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society. Finally, the third dimension is discourse-as-social-practice, i.e. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which the discourse is a feature (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 448-9). I adopt this framework as a guideline for my CDA, in which first the linguistic manoeuvres of news discourse are identified. The analysis, then, seeks to find out how 'discursive practice' is produced and distributed by news stories, and on the consumption side the semi-structured interviews present significant insights regarding the perceptions of Armenians as the recipients of discourse. Lastly, following Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) and Van Dijk (1998) describe the

power of media discourse as 'manufacturing consent' which stands for a persuasive and manipulative form of power and discourse access as a means to implement power and dominance. Therefore, by recalling Van Dijk's (1996: 86) complex question 'Who may speak or write to whom, about what, when, and in what context or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles', CDA in this research draws attention to the multi-layered ideological and hegemonic processes that affect both the production and consumption sides of news discourse.

As a research tool CDA provides an additional space for this research in terms of probing discursive, representational and exclusionary aspects of nationalism(s) and national identity. Wodak and Reisigl (2001:385) differentiate the constructive, perpetuating, transformational and destructive strategies of discourse, as they regard discursive practices as socially constitutive. According to this classification, 'discursive practices play a decisive role in the genesis, production and construction of certain social conditions'. Thus, 'discourses may serve to construct collective subjects like 'races', nations, ethnicities, etc.'. This shows the way for a CDA of the media representations of Armenians and the Armenian issue to enquire into the characterisations of 'Armenian' and 'Turkish' as contradictory ethnic and national categories which have their own essence and customs. Second, 'discursive acts might perpetuate, reproduce or justify a certain social status quo (and "racialized", "nationalized", and "ethnicized" identities related to it)'. For my CDA this raises the question how Turkish nationalisms and Turkish national identity are perpetuated, reproduced or justified, and in which news stories, with respect to the way specific events about Armenians are formed. Third, discursive practices 'are instrumental in transforming the status quo' and finally they 'may have an effect on the dismantling or even destruction of the status quo'. This implies a CDA quest for news texts in the Turkish national newspapers in order to grasp whether there are any attempts to alter or challenge the status quo, particularly Turkish nationalism(s) and Turkish national identity as the dominant systems of belief in contrast to the Armenian identity.

In more concrete terms there are also other studies that employ CDA as a research tool to scrutinise the representations of minority groups in the news discourse. Khosravinik (2010) explores the representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants (RASIM) in various British newspapers between 1996 and 2006 by employing a CDA

investigation on the discursive strategies. In line with one of my objectives for the Turkish case, he seeks to find out an answer to the question: 'What are the most significant differences in representation of RASIM in different British newspapers?' (*ibid*: 2). Hartman and Husband also underline the impact of media discourses on immigration to England in the early 1970s and point out the similarities between anti-Semitic discourses in the 1920s and the discursive strategies adopted for immigration in the 1970s; they claim that in both historical instances fallacious xenophobic arguments are used in news discourse (*ibid*: 4). In a different study, Mahmood *et.al* (2011) uses CDA for the news headlines of different papers about the budget of Pakistan in 2011-2012 by looking at the different representations in different newspapers of the same budget speech made by the finance minister. CDA illustrates how ideology performs in the construction of newspaper headlines. These headlines are also surrounded by certain hidden ideologies of the editors that lie behind apparently simple statements (*ibid*: 128).

Given that the mass media are the major source of 'ethnic' knowledge and opinion in societies, extensive research focuses on the representation of minorities in the media, such as on television, in newspapers and in movies (Dates and Barlow 1990; Jager and Link 1993; Hartmann and Husband 1974; Van Dijk 1991 cited in Van Dijk, 2002:152). However, many previous academic inquiries are based on the content-analytical method which denotes the investigation of the observable features of text or talk through the lens of the quantitative approach. For instance, counting the number of portrayals of members of a particular ethnic group in the news, or advertising and identifying the ascribed roles of these groups in the news, are frequently applied ways to examine the representations of the minorities. Although these studies present some understanding of the positioning of the minorities in the newspapers, they fail to reveal precisely how the media depict minorities or ethnic relations. Conversely, CDA is able to offer such a study and 'also is able actually to explain why media discourses have the structures they have, and how these affect the minds of the recipients' (Van Dijk, 2002:152).

It should be also noted that CDA does not only pave the way for pinpointing the existence of the minorities in the news discourse, but also signalling their absence. In order to construct and reproduce the hegemonic language and the dominant presentation of social events, as Erjavec (2001:703) underlines, the selective use and

misuse of information are utilised as journalistic strategies. In addition, 'at the level of meaning news discourse is determined by what is there but also by what is absent, not selected and discursively repressed' (*ibid*); by taking a CDA approach in this research, I intend to expose these discursively 'repressed' and/or 'dominating' news stories about the Armenians in three Turkish national newspapers that are allegedly distinct in their ideological affiliations. Discovering the differences and/or similarities between the newspapers in terms of the ways they handle and disseminate the Armenian issue seems to be enlightening, as the media owners, their relationship with the government/political elites and the self-censorship become the effective forces. The foremost and most eye-catching domains in which all of these factors come into effect are the headlines of the newspapers, as they describe the most prominent and relevant news information and the underlying semantic macrostructure from a subjective and biased point of view (Van Dijk 1987; 1988). Accordingly, particular attention is devoted to the newspaper headlines in this research to observe whether the Armenians appear in headlines in association with negative acts, as Van Dijk (1988) alleges, even if there is an issue pertaining to the survival of an Armenian. Although the characterisation of 'negative-active actors' is attributed to the minorities in the headlines of mainstream media in such a way that the majority would not consider their acts as acceptable (Hall 1982), the analysis of crisis events might introduce different patterns of news making and interpretations concerning the Armenians.

Concerning the importance of headlines in CDA of newspapers, Billig (2008:785) claims that the works of Fowler *et al.* (1979) and Fowler (1991) transformed the understanding of common discursive phenomena such as newspaper headlines. These works indicated that the headlines are beyond innocent summaries of reported stories as they select the noun phrases over the verbs and the passive voice over the active voice, so they are ideologically charged. Fowler and colleagues merged the producing of nouns/noun phrases, or nominalization, with the producing of the passive constructions, or passivization; both of these concepts were defined as processes or the transformations. In connection with nominalization and passivization, there are mainly four traits which are: deleting agency, reifying, positing reified concepts as the agents and maintaining the unequal power relations (Billig, 2008:785). In other words, there occurs the risk of removing and censoring the core information, such as the agents of the action and according to Fairclough (1992:181) 'nominalization turns processes and

activities into states and objects, and concretes into abstracts'.  I explore these linguistic transformations in the Turkish national newspapers, particularly in the headlines. Tracking Van Dijk's CDA techniques, Sezgin and Wall (2005:789) identify some analytical categories for their analysis of the Kurds in the Turkish press and in accordance with my research I adjust these categories, such as the topics and the sub-topics (main events, or subjects of discussion), the language (verbs, adjectives, and phrases used to describe the Armenians), the background information about the Armenians, and the sources in the coverage of the Armenians. My effort to disclose the (re)production of the media representations of the Armenians unquestionably embraces the unveiling of the (re)production of power relations in the news discourse.

Since one of the objectives of this research is to explore the construction and reproduction of the 'flagging' of the nationhood and the discursive aspect of nationalism(s) and/or national identity in the Turkish national newspapers,  CDA as an appropriate method enables me to detect the underlying mechanisms of the texts in the newspapers. Among many other national products such as national holidays, museums, officially sanctioned curricula, the national newspapers form a significant part of 'consuming the nation', which refers to 'the constitution and expression of national difference through everyday consumption habits' (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008: 538). Thus, discourse is the primary means through which the national newspapers' selection of certain headlines, words, idioms and photos in making the news become important for 'consuming the nation'. The various discursive strategies used by the national newspapers, particularly for the delicate topics that might have the potential to question the status-quo entail, a CDA approach. This analytical perspective contributes to the quest for the ways in which the Armenians/Armenian question in Turkey are covered and presented by the Turkish national newspapers by addressing specific events.

As one of the pioneering scholars of CDA, Van Dijk (1993: 249-250) draws attention to 'the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance', 'different modes of discourse-power relations' and 'discursive strategies of elites for the maintenance of inequality'. The pursuit of CDA to investigate 'opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language' (Wodak 1995 cited in Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000:448) is also in accordance with the analysis of the discursive formation of nationalism and

national identity through the media representations of the Armenians in Turkey. As it is through the discursive practices of the media that the dominant ideology is disseminated and reinforced, the mass media play a pivotal role in the establishment and perpetuation of power relationships (Fairclough 2001 cited in Hakam, 2009:36). Therefore, the ways in which discourse in the media constructs, represents and also challenges the prevailing understanding of the Armenian issue in Turkey come into question.

### 4.3.1. Discursive Tools

The CDA in this research puts forward the 'interpretations of the meanings of texts' and positions 'what is written or said in the context in which it occurs' (Richardson, 2007:15). This interpretative and contextual understanding of CDA also enables this research to uncover the textual structures of the newspapers that construct and reproduce the discursive formation of Turkish nationalisms during times of crisis. In addition, the incidents under investigation in this research allow me to delve into different linguistic techniques utilised by the national newspapers to disseminate overriding ideologies. For instance, the assassination of Hrant Dink might be regarded as one of the turning points for the ideological struggle and negotiation between various forms of Turkish nationalisms and the media representations. Particularly in the course of national crises and conflicts the task of the media is to underpin the psychological bonds between nation and citizen through the pervasive construction and reproduction of founding myths, and through which a common identity and a sense of collective purpose becomes more powerful and visible (Chan, 2012: 362). Therefore, a close examination of the discursive strategies employed by the Turkish national newspapers sheds light on, as Titscher *et.al* (2000:146) argue, 'the relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations'. Not only does a CDA of Hrant Dink case provide insights into the media representations of Armenians, it also offers a snapshot of the patterns of confrontation and denial of both the past and present events concerning the Armenian community in Turkey. In a similar vein, CDA of the selected newspapers reporting the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest in Istanbul against the Khojaly Massacre introduces the intersection points between the issues of nationalism, religion and ethnic/racial identities.

In order to do a comprehensive CDA, the starting point is to identify the emerging themes for each incident in the news stories and columns. Moreover, other linguistic devices, such as lexical choices, direct quotations, grammatical features (active and passive forms) and nominalisation are taken into account. Before presenting the findings of CDA it might be useful to explicate what is meant by these working notions. In basic terms, lexical choices refer to the word choices for the sentences which are directly connected to the ideological agenda of the news makers. This selection mechanism impinging on the meaning of a text reveals which types of words are chosen to inform the readers. In terms of the word selection Pape and Featherstone (2005) highlight the perceptions of the journalists who decide on how the events will be conveyed by means of the words they choose. Moreover, these decisions of journalists might coincide with their mediator roles in the relationship between ruling class ideology and news content (Murdock 2000), as well as their support for the hegemony, by naturalising, or taking for granted, the inequalities of contemporary capitalism (Gitlin 1979 cited in Richardson, 2007: 36). The lexical choices, accordingly, are far beyond the products of the straightforward judgements of the news writers. In fact, attempts to divulge the components of the selection process might suggest the multi-layered collaboration between the news makers, the news content, the newspaper ownership, and the journalistic ethics on the one hand, and the dominant class ideology, the prevailing status quo and the deep-rooted inequalities on the other hand.

Secondly, the use of the direct quotations in the news stories and columns signifies another important aspect of the discursive strategies. The 'neutral' appearance of the direct quotations might be misleading as they camouflage the underlying motivations of the news makers. Although from a reader's point of view the encounter with a direct quotation within the discursive sphere might give the impression of reading an unprejudiced text, once again picking out the particular passages of the spokesperson might suit the newspaper's self-interest together with the wider political and social dominance. Moreover, pragmatically speaking, the space constraints and concerns regarding news consumption compel the news makers to single out eye-catching clauses rather than allocating a whole page to a sole declaration. Kuo's (2007) CDA of the quotation patterns in two ideologically opposed newspapers in Taiwan also draws attention to the significant differences among newspapers in terms of their selection of quotation content and quoted speakers. More importantly, her study illustrates that the

choice of quotation patterns is by no means objective or neutral and that the presentations of speech in the news tends to be loaded with ideological bias (*ibid*: 298). In this research I also probe into the use of direct quotations in the news stories by employing CDA, as in each case the statements of states people were given space in the newspapers under analysis. For this reason, the positioning of these statements within the news coverage of these susceptible cases becomes important.

Finally, the active and passive forms of the sentences and the nominalization technique employed by the newspapers are crucial to understanding the modes of representation ascribed to the particular communities, individuals, and ideas at a particular time and in a particular setting. The choice between active and passive transformation indicates two interrelated preferences of the newspapers; 'the involvement of specific participants (whether to focus or not on the responsible agents)' and a specific type of "action" (Svetanant, 2009: 233) in the news stories. Unmasking this strategy through the CDA approach might also bring about findings in which agents and actions are removed or overemphasised deliberately in the news discourse. Furthermore, making use of nominalization, described as 'the syntactical transformation of predicates (verbs and adjectives) to nouns', is governed by 'ideological opportunities such as the deletion of important participants (details of "who did what to whom"), indication of time and indication of modality' (*ibid*). Therefore, this transitivity analysis provides the means for scrutinising how readers' attitudes towards the meanings of a text are directed in a particular way and how the linguistic structures of a text effectively encode a particular world-view (Simpson 1993 cited in Oktar, 2001: 324).

Following this argument, this study intends to answer questions such as: Which subjects are attributed to the active or passive roles in the news stories? When and how are the active agents and specific actions eliminated or overstressed in the texts? How are the perception of time and space characterised in the news content? To sum up, a CDA of the news stories in *Zaman, Hürriyet and Cumhuriyet* concerning the cases of the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre, draws on linguistic tools such as themes, lexical choices, direct quotations, active and passive forms and nominalisation. In the following parts the findings of CDA for each case are analysed.

### 4.3.2. The Selection of the Newspapers

In order to scrutinise news discourse in relation to the diverse forms of Turkish nationalism, national identity and the portrayal of Armenians, firstly I have decided to focus on print media despite the escalating power of social media in Turkey. Although the demise of print media has become a widely debated subject matter in public discussion, it still plays a decisive role in the opinions of the audience and the (re)production of the status quo. Besides this, quantitatively, newspapers in Turkey continue to be the leading discursive realms. According to the results of the latest print media survey announced by the Turkish Statistical Institute on 1st September 2014, 7.158 newspapers were published in 2013 and 90.7% of those published in 2013 were local, with 3.5% being regional and 5.8% national publications. This also means that the total of number of national newspapers in Turkey is 180.[3] By taking into account the importance of country wide publication, national newspapers might be considered as more effective tools compared to local or regional publications in terms of reaching more readers, and setting/affecting the agenda of the political arena, as well as moulding public opinion. Amongst 180 national newspapers, I decided on three national newspapers, namely *Hürriyet* (which means 'Liberty'), *Cumhuriyet* (which means 'Republic') and *Zaman* (which means 'Time') in order to apply CDA to the news stories and photos with regard to the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in Istanbul. For the years 2007, 2011 and 2012, the time of the above incidents, the circulation of these selected newspapers is shown in the table below.

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[3] Retrieved from: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=16122

|  | 15th -21st January 2007[4] | 25th April-1st May 2011[5] | 27th February-4th March 2012[6] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Zaman** | 625.916 (Ranking:2) | 1.009.150 (Ranking:1) | 945.162 (Ranking:1) |
| **Hürriyet** | 597.259 (Ranking:3) | 453.193 (Ranking:3) | 418.581 (Ranking:3) |
| **Cumhuriyet** | 63.045 (Ranking:19) | 53.135 (Ranking:23) | 51.003 (Ranking:22) |

As is clearly evident from the chart, *Zaman* is the most widely circulated newspaper and *Hürriyet* is in third position in all the years listed. However, the superiority in number is not the only reason for choosing these national papers. My initial assumption is related to their prospective differences from each other in terms of the coverage of news about Armenians and the emphasis on the distinct aspects of the incidents such as the ethnic-religious identity of the victims, the current status of their minority rights, the denial of the Armenian Genocide or the issues of national unity and security. This is mainly because they stand for divergent ideological affiliations and appeal to various addressees with dissimilar political and social backgrounds. Additionally, the news discourse of these newspapers is governed by their publishing policies, journalistic ethics, their owners and also their relationship with the government. All these factors might be expected to affect the way they make and produce news about identical incidents and the newsworthiness of an incident might change, depending on the news criteria of these newspapers.

In very simple terms, *Zaman*, as the biggest daily of Turkey, has a pro-religious standpoint and as a part of a large media empire of the Gülen community, which is 'one of the most powerful and best-connected of the networks that are competing to

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[4] Retrieved from: http://www.aktifhaber.com/sabahin-tiraji-saha-kalkti-98925h.htm
[5] Retrieved from: http://www.dorduncukuvvetmedya.com/tiraj-raporu/3396-zamanin-satis-rakami-1-milyonu-gecti-vatan-100-bine-geriledi-.html
[6] Retrieved from: http://www.haber365.com/Haber/27_Subat_4_Mart_2012_Tarihli_Tirajlar/

influence Muslims around the globe'[7], it is predictably a supporter of moderate Islam (Tunç, 2010:646). This moderate Islamist position also suggests its right-wing tendency in the political spectrum. According to Yavuz (2013:141), among Turkish newspapers *Zaman* is exceptional because it is printed in 13 different countries that have large Muslim Turkic populations and, more importantly, this is a 'conscious effort to promote an imperial Ottoman Muslim vision'. Analysing the news stories/photos regarding Armenians as a non-Turkish and non-Muslim community in a newspaper committed to the Turkish-Islamic synthesis and the Ottoman heritage might identify peculiar discursive strategies.

Being in the third rank of the circulation figures, *Hürriyet* is usually associated with mainstream news production in Turkey and its news discourse can be seen as an illustrative form of the state ideology. Its pro-secular and nationalist outlook also reveals itself in its logo, Atatürk's silhouette on a Turkish flag, as well as its motto, 'Turkey belongs to Turks'. Even this dictum gives an idea about the editorial line of the newspaper with regard to the Turkish nationalism(s) in conjunction with the ethnic religious minority groups. Moreover, Korteweg and Yurdakul (2014:76-77) claim that *Hürriyet*, as the representative of the different attitudes of the pro-secular public, was evidently critical of the AKP government, but that the recent negotiations between the holding company (Doğan Media Group - the owner of Hürriyet) and the government have resulted in the 'tempering of *Hürriyet*'s critical stance toward the government'.

Finally, *Cumhuriyet* presents itself as the defender of Kemalist and secular ideology, which is the basis of the official nationalism in Turkey. Tunç (2010:646) describes its editorial line as leftist secular, strongly nationalist, and pro-army, groups who are critical of the policies of the AKP government and the Gülen movement, and claims that *Cumhuriyet* acts as a partisan paper of the Republican People's Party, which is the main opposition party in Turkey. Its statist and secular stance might also become evident in the news stories concerning the Turkish Armed Forces, such as those on the murder of Sevag Balıkçı during his military service.

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[7] Retrieved from: http://www.economist.com/node/10808408

### 4.3.3. The News Stories: the Time Frame and the Access

As stated above, in this research CDA addresses the news coverage of the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in three national newspapers, i.e. *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman*. With the purpose of undertaking a more focused and detailed analysis, the period is limited to one week for a CDA of the news coverage of these particular incidents. That is to say, this research examines the news stories and photos regarding the assassination of Hrant Dink which took place on 19th January 2007 between the dates 20th-26th January 2007 in these designated national newspapers. As the murder of Sevag Balıkçı occurred on 24th April 2011, the analysis covers the days between 25th April-1st May 2011, and the protest against Khojaly Massacre was held on 26th February 2012 so the CDA of the news coverage consists of the days 27th February-4th March 2012. My decision concerning this time restriction also depends on the issue of managing the volume of news stories, as well as the data analysis.

In order to access these old news stories, first I benefited from the newspaper archive section of Beyazıt State Library in Istanbul. However, the newspapers published after 2010 have not been documented yet. Thus I was only able to collect news stories including the assassination of Hrant Dink in 2007. As an alternative, I visited the archives of *Zaman* and *Hürriyet* in person through special permission. Among these, only three papers from *Cumhuriyet* were presented in its archive of previous issues in an actual printed form through online access. Thus I used its online archive to get access to the news stories.

In terms of the quantity of news stories/photos, there is a considerable difference between the incidents. Since the death of Hrant Dink, a prominent figure at both national and international levels, led to many political and public debates, the news stories about this event occupied a great deal of space in comparison with the other two events. CDA of all the news stories in the three national newspapers regarding the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against Khojaly Massacre are included. However, for the case of Hrant Dink I decided to classify the news stories depending on the publication date, the headlines, the content, and the page (i.e. national news, economy, or international news). This also allows the allocation of some space for the analysis of those columns which might introduce distinct aspects of the issue.

## 4.4. Semi-Structured Interviews

### 4.4.1. Interview Techniques in a Qualitative Research

Given the importance of interviews as the most common cross disciplinary research instrument, researchers from various disciplines such as education, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and social history, utilise interviews as a vital research method alone or in combination with other techniques (De Fina and Perrino, 2011:1). The ubiquity and importance of interviews have also inspired Atkinson and Silverman (1997) to claim that "perhaps we all live in what might be called an 'interview society' in which interviews seem central to making sense of our lives" (cited in Gubrium and Holstein, 2002:10). According to Kvale (2007:7), the interview society is one in which the production of the self becomes the focal point and the interview 'serves as a social technique by construction of the self'.

However, the interview process itself is more multifaceted than regarding it as only as a means of gathering data from the respondents in line with the intentions of the research. Alvesson (2003:17) draws attention to the academic literature on interviewing, which copes with issues such as the effective use of interviews as much as possible and making interviewees talk a lot - openly, trustfully, honestly, clearly, and freely - according to the researcher's interests. At the same time, there is an increasing tendency among researchers in terms of involving comments, such as the interviewees 'reported such feelings' (Martin *et.al.*, 1998:449) or 'gave me this account' (Barker 1993 cited in Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011:100). More notably, Alvesson *(*2003:17*)* maintains that

> Still, such qualifiers only marginally soften the impression of the data and results presented as being robust and authoritative, and the reader is not encouraged to reflect upon what the accounts really are about. The interview then appears, on the whole, as a valid source of knowledge production, although it is indicated that the social process and local conditions need to be appreciated and actively managed by the interviewer in order to accomplish valid results.

For my research, likewise, rather than simply considering the interview data and results as the ultimate means for obtaining knowledge about the 'Armenian question' and Armenians, I endeavour to develop reflexive interpretations of the interviews by paying attention to multiple factors. These factors, for instance the contentious sides of the

Armenian issue, the interaction between my presumed ethnic-religious identity as an interviewer and the narratives of the interviewees and existing power relations, play a central role throughout the analysis of my interviews with the Armenians.

The construction and reproduction of the interaction, meaning systems and unique conditions that exist between the different social agents during the interview process has also led researchers to adopt distinct methodological stances. Gephart (1999:3) points out a classification for the idea of the interview as a research method by using the terms positivism, interpretivism, and critical post-modernism. In a similar vein, Alvesson's (2003; 2011) reconceptualization of neo-positivist, romanticist and localist perspectives is particularly inspiring for a critical assessment of the interviews used in this research.

Both the neo-positivist and romanticist perspectives are inclined to consider the interviewees as epistemologically passive and as mere vessels of their answers, whereas the localist perspective challenges 'the assumptions, claims and purposes of those wanting to use interviews instrumentally' (Silverman 1993 cited in Alvesson, 2003:17). As the localist standpoint criticises the idea of employing the interview as an instrument, it perceives the interview process as 'an opportunity to explore the meaning of the research topic for the respondent and a site to be examined for the construction of a situated account' (Qu and Dumay, 2011:241). While critically reflecting on different interview methods, Qu and Dumay (*ibid*: 239-240) point out a typology in which the neo-positivist view (studying facts) corresponds more to structured interviews, the romanticist view (focusing on meanings) to unstructured interviews, and the localist perspective (social construction of situated accounts) to semi-structured interviews.

Although these types of categorisations seem to run the risk of constraining the interviews within a modernist understanding and drawing on the boundaries between various methods, this taxonomy at the same time enables me to clarify my methodological approach and concerns with regard to the interviews. Put briefly, the 'interview conversation is a pipeline for transporting knowledge' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004:141) according to the neo positivist approach based on the claims of the objective perception of the interviewer and the discovery of a 'reality' out there. Therefore, structured interviews based on a rigid format provide an ideal setting for a neo-positivist to grasp the 'objective' responses of interviewees. In a different way, the

romanticist view tends to consider research interviews as a human encounter which encourages interviewees to disclose their unique experiences by forming a relationship, trust and commitment between the interviewer and interviewee (Qu and Dumay, 2011:242). This approach tends to employ unstructured interviews with open-ended questions which are contingent on the characteristics, experiences and responses of an interviewee and also the communication between the interviewer and interviewee. As this interactive bond constructed between the two sides of the interview process depends on the interviewees' narration, Fontana and Frey (1994:371) recommends that the researcher engages in a 'real' conversation with an empathetic understanding instead of performing 'outdated' techniques that seek to preserve the distance from the interviewee. Throughout the fieldwork of this research the building of trust has been one of the top priority issues as it was usually hard to convince the subjects of the interviews. This was mainly due to their deep rooted fear about being recognised easily within the society and being identified by the state and its institutions if those interviews were publicised. Thus, this research shares with the romantics the conviction that the trusted and committed relationship between the interviewer and interviewee needs to be built with an emphasis on empathy.

However, disentangling itself from the neo-positivist and romanticist standpoints, the localist position takes the interview statements into account as a local, situation-specific context and empirical situation. I also follow this localist perspective, both in the course of collecting and analysing interview the data in this research. More importantly, this point of view claims that interviewees do not only report external events, but also produce situated accounts by relying on cultural resources so as to generate morally adequate accounts (Alvesson, 2011:19). In other words, from a localist perspective the interview process is recognised as a situated event in which the interviewer creates the reality of the interview situation, instead of a neutral tool for exposing reasonable responses. The semi-structured interviews have the potential to yield distinct responses depending on the characteristics of the interviewer, and different interviewers arouse different responses from the same interviewee given the way the questions are asked and explored (Qu and Dumay, 2011:247). Therefore, my decision to employ semi-structured interviews with Armenians is based on three premises: (1) not only the interview data, but also the interview situation itself contributes to the whole research process; (2) each of the interviews has its own circumstances defined by the socio-

cultural and political atmosphere and the 'need' for generating morally and socially accepted responses; (3) the particular interaction between the interviewer and interviewee has an immediate effect on the interview process.

## 4.4.2. Semi-Structured Interviews with Armenians

I conducted semi-structured interviews with forty-five Armenian citizens who identify themselves as Armenians and have Armenian parents as well. These face-to-face interviews contained the pre-determined questions and themes relevant to the research focus. During the five-month period, I interviewed twenty five male and twenty female Armenians in different neighbourhoods of Istanbul. This research was limited to Istanbul because the present estimated population of Armenians is between 60,000 and 70,000 and the great majority of them live in Istanbul today, even though the eastern part of Turkey is the original homeland of the Armenians. According to Hofmann (2002:6), this region was emptied of Armenians in the course of the genocide in 1915 and 'follow-up cleansing operations' in the subsequent decades and the 'persistent discrimination towards Armenians and also other Christian groups'. Therefore, the main interview site of this research was Istanbul where the Armenian population is immensely concentrated.

These semi-structured interviews mainly took place in public areas such as coffee shops and cafes and in private spheres such as the offices and homes of the interviewees, depending on the interviewees' choice of interview location. The table below presents brief descriptions of the respondents.

| Interview Number | Gender | Year of Birth | Birth Place | Occupation | Duration of the Interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Female | 1972 | Istanbul | Housewife | 49' |
| 2 | Female | 1980 | Istanbul | Journalist | 24' |
| 3 | Male | 1981 | Istanbul | Journalist | 25' |
| 4 | Female | 1985 | Istanbul | Journalist | 30' |

| 5 | Male | 1991 | Istanbul | Undergraduate Student | 37' |
|----|--------|------|----------|-----------------------|------|
| 6 | Male | 1979 | Istanbul | Reporter | 15' |
| 7 | Male | 1960 | Istanbul | Accountant | 21' |
| 8 | Male | 1974 | Istanbul | Columnist | 21' |
| 9 | Male | 1977 | Istanbul | Executive Editor | 34' |
| 10 | Male | 1975 | Istanbul | Web Designer | 19' |
| 11 | Male | 1980 | Istanbul | Journalist | 40' |
| 12 | Female | 1985 | Istanbul | Employee (NGO) | 43' |
| 13 | Male | 1960 | Malatya | Retired | 44' |
| 14 | Male | 1989 | Istanbul | Master's Student | 50' |
| 15 | Male | 1980 | Istanbul | Tradesman | 41' |
| 16 | Female | 1990 | Istanbul | Undergraduate Student | 39' |
| 17 | Male | 1984 | Istanbul | Employee (NGO) | 96' |
| 18 | Male | 1964 | Istanbul | Business Owner | 21' |
| 19 | Male | 1963 | Hatay | Craftsman | 38' |
| 20 | Male | 1984 | Istanbul | Postgraduate Student | 58' |
| 21 | Male | 1954 | Istanbul | Editor in Chief | 29' |
| 22 | Male | 1976 | Istanbul | Columnist | 45' |
| 23 | Male | 1967 | Adana | Writer/Activist | 64' |
| 24 | Female | 1974 | Malatya | Housewife | 28' |
| 25 | Male | 1968 | Istanbul | Craftsman | 53' |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **26** | Female | 1958 | Istanbul | Retired | 51' |
| **27** | Male | 1949 | Istanbul | Business Owner | 109' |
| **28** | Male | 1972 | Istanbul | Business Owner | 52' |
| **29** | Male | 1988 | Istanbul | Craftsman | 39' |
| **30** | Female | 1951 | Sivas | Housewife | 35' |
| **31** | Female | 1988 | Istanbul | Postgraduate Student | 40' |
| **32** | Male | 1960 | Dersim | Chairperson (NGO) | 54' |
| **33** | Female | 1986 | Istanbul | Postgraduate Student | 48' |
| **34** | Male | 1980 | Istanbul | Producer | 92' |
| **35** | Female | 1959 | Istanbul | Housewife | 45' |
| **36** | Male | 1969 | Istanbul | Columnist | 53' |
| **37** | Female | 1975 | Istanbul | Housewife | 82' |
| **38** | Female | 1979 | Istanbul | Employee (Company) | 70' |
| **39** | Female | 1987 | Istanbul | Graduate Student | 53' |
| **40** | Female | 1987 | Istanbul | Employee (Company) | 33' |
| **41** | Female | 1948 | Istanbul | Retired | 70' |
| **42** | Female | 1965 | Istanbul | Housewife | 33' |
| **43** | Female | 1958 | Istanbul | Housewife | 41' |
| **44** | Female | 1963 | Istanbul | Housewife | 19' |
| **45** | Female | 1950 | Istanbul | Retired | 21' |

The oldest interviewee was sixty-five years old, while the youngest was twenty-two years old, and the average age of the interviewees was forty. Few of them were grandchildren of the survivors of Armenian genocide, but most of them had second hand information retrieved from their older parents and relatives about their previous experiences. As the medium age indicates, most of the interviewees were witnesses of the last forty years of the Turkish Republic which was founded in 1923, only eight years after the genocide. Since the main goal of these interviews was to explore the ideas, perceptions, and experiences of Armenians about their current understanding of the 'Armenian issue' in Turkey, the recent events concerning the Armenian community and their positioning within the nationalism debates and media representations, the emphasis on the attitudes and interpretations of the interviewees concerning the genocide was narrow, and this was set out in the interview guide.

All the interviews were carried out and transcribed in Turkish and tape recorded. After pinpointing the salient responses, I translated some parts of the quotations into English in order to save time. The average length of time of the interviews was forty-five minutes, but it took five months to complete all the interviews. Four underlying causes seemed to bring about the extension of time for the finalisation of the interviews. Firstly, I did all of the interviews by myself, which was very time-consuming, but given the thorny issue of Armenians in Turkey the confidentiality of the interviewees' personal details and responses were of great importance. In order to address the basic ethical issues (i.e. providing necessary information about the research, the voluntary participation of the interviewees, the competency of the interviewees in terms of age, mental health, etc.) I gained informed consent from the participants through verbal means rather than written forms. Secondly, many of the interviewees were working professionals who were not very willing to meet after work or at the weekends. It sometimes became difficult to arrange a convenient time for the interviews and prevent a timetable clash, so there were a few weeks that were only taken up with organising interview times and sites. Thirdly, some of the interviewees asked for appointments before the interviews to meet and find out more about me and my research. This was mainly due to my limited acquaintance with the Armenian community until this fieldwork, so the persuasion process for some interviews took more time on a few occasions. However, my female identity and the fact that I was carrying out PhD research abroad facilitated this process. Finally, only less than half of Armenians with

whom I made contact agreed to be interviewees in this research, even though I got in touch with approximately one hundred potential interviewees via email, telephone or gatekeepers.

### 4.4.3. Interview Topic Guide

During semi-structured interviews with Armenians I used an interview guide containing the list of questions which were related specifically to the research questions. Thanks to the flexibility and spontaneity of the semi-structured interviews, the order of questions was changed, and when it was necessary new questions were added, whereas the existing ones were deleted, explained or probed so as to receive adequate answers from each interviewee (Cargan, 2007:108). The interview guide starts with some general 'warm up' questions such as:

- Can you tell me a bit about your life?
- When and where were you born?
- How many generations of your family have lived in Istanbul?
- Have you been told anything about the Armenian Genocide in your family?
- As an Armenian, what aspects do you like and/or dislike about living in Istanbul?
- Do you think you belong to Turkey as an Armenian citizen?'

After building a 'trusted' rapport with the interviewee courtesy of these introductory questions, the follow up question aimed to open a general discussion by asking: 'What do you understand by the idea of the Armenian issue in Turkey and how do you define it?' Then I moved on to 'direct questions which directly introduce topics and dimensions' (Kvale, 2007:61) and focused on more specific topics with regard to the three recent events that composed the focal points of this research. These more focused questions were as follows:

- What do you think about the assassination of Hrant Dink and how do you feel about it?
- Did you hear the about killing of Sevag Balıkçı on Genocide Remembrance Day during his compulsory military service two years ago and how do you feel about this?

- What did you think when you saw or heard the protests about the Khojaly Massacres in Taksim Square and the slogans/posters targeted at Armenians?

In order to explore the Armenians' experiences and perceptions concerning the official ideology and developments during the current government I asked questions such as:

- As a citizen of the Republic of Turkey, do you think there is a prevalent discourse of nationalism and national identity in Turkey? If yes, how would you describe/experience it? Do you think it excludes Armenians?
- As you might know, the official narratives in Turkey still deny the Armenian genocide and regard it as an "ethnic conflict" - what do you think about this claim as a citizen of Turkish Republic?
- How would you evaluate the eleven year period under the government of the Justice and Development Party regarding the position of Armenians in Turkey?

Another set of questions address the Armenians' reading habits of Turkish national newspapers with different ideological backgrounds, and their views on their own media representation; in this way the interviewees responded to these questions below:

- Which newspaper do you read daily or weekly?
- What is your opinion about the media images of Armenians in Turkey?

On the basis of these central questions, various responses were collected and over two-hundred pages of transcriptions were produced from these interviews.

### 4.4.4. Sampling Design and Gaining Access for Interviews

I employed the snowball sampling technique to reach interviewees where one subject provided the researcher with the name of another, who in turn gave the name of a third and so on. I reached my initial snowball contacts through the assistance of my acquaintances and their friends in Istanbul. It was particularly useful for this research as I made an effort to contact people with 'unusual experiences or characteristics who are likely to know one another' (Vogt and Johnson, 2011:368). Cohen and Arieli (2011: 428) point out this method plays a key role in three critical stages of data collection, that is,

locating, accessing and involving a hidden and hard to reach populations. In addition to the sampling as a significant phase in research design, Flick (2007: 34) argues that 'finding access determines how far the plan of research formulated in this design is going to work in the concrete research practice' and it 'takes a form of negotiation with and in the field'.

First of all, I was introduced to different segments of the Armenian community by means of the social networks of the gatekeepers, without this it would have been very hard to convince the members of the society to take part in the interviews. Secondly, even after the initial location of potential research subjects, accessing, involving and gaining the subjects' cooperation in the data collection processes continued to be a vital challenge (Flick, 2007:34). Through the snowball technique I asked for help from previous interviewees in order to gain access to the potential new interviewees in such a closed community. This sampling technique is primarily used in the studies in which 'the population under investigation is 'hidden', either due to the low numbers of potential participants or the sensitivity of the topic' (Browne, 2005:47). Under the circumstances of this research, the amount of potential interviews was not very low given the total population of the Armenian community, but the numbers of Armenians who were eager to respond to questions about such a delicate topic and who were 'fearless' about the 'prospective harm' of this research on their lives was very limited.

There are also other studies which employed the snowball sampling technique to penetrate into social networks in marginalised populations and conflicted societies. In their research on refugees, Jacobsen and Landau (2003) were able to interview 750 research subjects thanks to the snowball technique in an otherwise impenetrable research environment. In a similar vein, this technique helped Romano (2006) in his study in Iraq to enlarge the network of his contacts and interviews and gain access to high-level meetings and conferences, and Tessler and Jamal (2006) reached many civic associations in their field research (cited in Cohen and Arieli, 2011:430). Browne (2005:47) also points out that due to the use of social networks and interpersonal relations, the snowball sampling informs how individuals act and interact in focus groups, group interviews and interviews. More notably, she describes how her membership in these networks assisted this type of sampling and how the potential subjects in the study were more likely to trust her than to trust heterosexual researchers

(Babbie, 2012:201) as her sexuality became the facilitator for the recruitment of the interviewees.

However, this chain-referral sampling has questionable representativeness as research subjects are not selected randomly and/or depending on their unique features. Instead, the selection process relies on 'the referrals of the respondents first accessed and on the willingness of the research subjects to participate'; that is why most snowball samples are biased and cannot be generalised from (Kaplan *et.al.* 1987; Griffiths *et.al* 1993 cited in Cohen and Arieli, 2011: 428). In addition, Heckathorn (1997:175) indicates the points introduced by Erickson (1979) about the shortfalls of snowball technique, such as 'masking' the potential interviewees due to the gatekeeper's choice to protect their friends, particularly in societies with privacy concerns and when 'oversampling' subjects with larger social networks. Needless to say, the interviews conducted for this research do not represent the whole Armenian community in Istanbul or in other areas of Turkey and is not intended to generalise the ideas and experiences of the respondents. Correspondingly, this research does not perceive Armenians as a homogenous group nor does it seek to interpret their responses within a stereotyped understanding. In order to guarantee the diversity of responses and increase the representativeness of the sample, I attempted to reach interviewees with different ages, occupations, education levels and classes, and with the assistance of multiple gatekeepers rather than relying on a single one. Furthermore, in order to overcome the problem of bringing relatively isolated and reluctant members of the community into the interviews, I stated that the Armenian point of view might have the chance to be recognised through these interviews, which encouraged these members to participate in the interviews.

### 4.4.5. The Reflections on My Researcher Position and Contextual Factors

As an interviewer, my ethnic and religious identity, which is assumed as Turkish and Muslim, had an effect on the interview situation and entailed its own 'reality', which is consistent with the localist premises. This evokes the question of whether the manners and/or responses of the interviewees would have been different in some ways if the interviewer had been an Armenian researcher. Being an 'outsider', meaning Turkish in this case, was the most constitutive element in the course of the interviews. Most of the interviewees asked my intentions in undertaking research on this issue despite my Turkishness and the potential risks of this research for my prospective academic career

in Turkey. Moreover, by assuming that I do have restricted knowledge of Armenian-Christian culture and identity due to my ethnic background, some of the interviewees felt obliged to describe even the basic features and practices of their lives. At the same time, in order not to offend me, some of the interviewees paid attention to their speech, especially in their criticisms of the Turks, even if I did clarify my position as a researcher at the very beginning of the interview.

Furthermore, it has become obvious that for the interviewees with a lower educational level and for male interviewees, my educational background (doing a PhD) and my female identity, respectively, have formed new relations between me and the interviewees. Before starting the interviews, with few exceptions the interviewees, who are primary or secondary school graduates, insisted on the idea that they were not able to offer any 'valuable' responses as they did not have enough knowledge to answer my 'scientific' questions. During the interviews, even if they realised that the interview questions did not require any expertise, they seemed to feel the need to re-assert their 'inadequate' level of educational qualification in order to lower my expectations about their answers. Therefore, I was obliged to persuade these interviewees to voice their own views and experiences without hesitation and repeatedly explained to them the importance of these interviews, as well as the analysis of the media representation. However, in such attempts to explain the objectives of the research there was a thin line between making these interviewees feel at ease and leading the interviewees to tell me what they thought I as a researcher preferred to hear. Depending on the circumstances of the interviews, it was hard to maintain this balance. In addition to the effect of educational background, gender roles also affected the nature of the interviews. The interviews with some of the male interviewees were different compared to the 'woman-to-woman interviews', in which a sense of shared understanding was influential.

During my interviews with the Armenians I also had the chance to observe their ideas and feelings about being examined by a 'Turkish' researcher and being the focal point of a piece of sociological research. It might be suggested that the meaning of this research for the Armenian interviewees was two-fold. On the one hand, some of them expressed the view that they felt pleased to find out that such sociological research was being carried out, and that they were able to be a part of it, and were aware of its importance for the visibility of the Armenian community and the potential amendment of their

conditions in Turkey. On the other hand, some of them seemed uncomfortable about voicing their views on such a delicate topic and were also suspicious about my identity as a researcher, stating that such studies only '(re)open the old wounds'.

The former standpoint also draws attention to the shortage of academic studies on the Armenian Genocide from a non-official perspective, as well as the experiences, representations and reactions of Armenians in Turkey which have been neglected in academia until recently. In one of his latest pieces, the columnist and human rights lawyer Cengiz (2013) comments on how the censorship mechanism operates in Turkish academia with respect to the Armenian issue. He asserts that according to a database search of the Higher Education Board (YÖK); only four theses have been written on the issue and more strikingly all of these mirrors the official ideology of the Turkish Republic concerning the massacres. Moreover, the bilingual Turkish-Armenian weekly Agos disclosed an official document in which the Turkish Historical Society (TTK) has asked the Higher Education Board (YÖK) for the names of the scholars studying the Armenian issue, the titles of their research and their contact information, and in return the universities were asked to provide all the information about these academics. However, it should be noted that the problematic situation of academic freedom and the restraints of the state on researchers working on subjects such as minority issues, LGBTI rights, or state violence in Turkey, have been always prevalent. Therefore, the interviewees with a more constructive attitude tended to perceive this research as one of the steps to overcome the taboo of the Armenian Genocide and raise awareness of the presence and problems of the Armenian community among Turkish citizens.

In contrast, some of the interviewees were sceptical about the goals of this research so they questioned my position as a Turkish researcher regarding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and my views about the official ideology and the current situation of the Armenian community. In other words, they attempted to find out if this research would make any difference to their lives and enable them to speak out about both their previous and current experiences and the representations in the Turkish media. Even if these interviewees agreed to answer my questions and disclose their opinions, they also declared their doubts about the potential benefits of this research for the community. For instance, at the very beginning of the interview a 53-year-old male interviewee explicitly stated that, '[t]here is no point in probing the old events. The more you

investigate these issues, the more likely long-standing pains will persist and this wound will never be healed and will always bleed.' However, rather than uttering such criticisms and suspicions about this research at some stage in the interviews, intriguingly most of these opposing ideas and/or reactions were put into words during the off-the-record chats and/or telephone calls to arrange an interview time. In other words, not only the responses of the interviewees, but also the interview process itself has paved the way for exploring the new meanings attached by the interviewees and the different sociological dimensions of the research. For instance, such an attempt to explore the Armenian issue and the ideas and experiences of the Armenians might not be welcomed even by some segments of the Armenian community. More notably, from an Althusserian viewpoint the influence of 'ideological state apparatuses' and their historical role in terms of assimilating various minority groups in Turkey have been revealed through the concerns of the Armenian interviewees. Furthermore, the special request of some interviewees, particularly female Armenians, to meet in their own residences and the reluctance of many interviewees to speak out in public spaces gives an idea about how ingrained insecurity is a dominant feeling among the Armenians and how self-preservation against potential threats turns into a defence mechanism, particularly in the encounters with the 'stranger'. This also calls to mind the debate in Turkey on 'neighbourhood pressure', which is a term coined by a leading Turkish sociologist, Şerif Mardin (2007), to portray 'the unofficial, local and communal pressure on individuals to conform to religious-conservative norms in their everyday lives' (Altınordu 2009). It was illuminating to witness how this neighbourhood pressure affected the interview sites and the non-verbal actions of the interviewees, such as following the people around with their eyes to check if our conversation was heard or not.

Departing from the view of the interview data as 'a mirror of reality', in methodological terms this research follows the localist argument that 'the interview data only represents the interviewee's world view at a particular point in time in a particular context' (Qu and Dumay, 2011: 246). In other words, the opinions and reactions of the interviewees are dependent on the timing of the interviews. For instance, the possible effects of the Gezi Park Protest in Istanbul on the interviewees' responses epitomise the importance of contextual factors for the interview process. Since the prevalent patterns of social relations were transformed and people from distinct segments of the society

actively participated in the protest and resisted against the 'authoritarian' structure of the AKP government and PM Erdoğan in particular, the political and social atmosphere at the time of data collection inevitably acquired a new dimension. In a parallel vein, the AKP government's recent announcement of the 'democratisation package', which is claimed to offer several developments with reference to the rights of non-Muslim minorities and Kurds, and also significant steps towards democratisation in Turkey, might have altered the opinions of interviewees about the developments for the period of the AKP government. That is to say, the vibrant political, economic and socio-cultural conditions in Turkey as a developing country necessitated a flexible attitude with respect to the analysis and interpretation of the semi-structured interviews.

The changing conditions of the interview process and the impact of contextual factors on the ideas, reactions and/or feelings of the interviewees also necessitated reflecting on the quality of the interviews. Schensul and LeCompte (2013:163) put forward three main principles, namely: maintaining the flow of the interviewee's story, having a positive researcher and respondent relationship, and avoiding interviewer bias, all of which are asserted to ameliorate the 'standard' of the interviews. The self-management of the interviewer during the interview is underlined through particular strategies, such as avoiding leading questions, redirecting/interrupting the story, asking questions that suggest the desired responses, using non-verbal cues, and failing to follow up on or omitting topics the interviewee introduces (*ibid*: 166). However, the interviewee bias might be also introduced to the list of factors that might affect the quality of the interviews. In some of the interviews with Armenians, the interviewee bias came to light through the constant stress on 'you, Turks' and the use of binary oppositions, such as 'we' and 'you', and 'ours' and 'yours' in the sentences. More notably, it is possible to claim that the ethnic/religious difference between me as an interviewer and some of the interviewees was particularly crystallised in the question referring to the issue of genocide and/or the mention other historical events, such as 6-7 September riots or the expropriation of Armenian wealth by Turkish citizens. As I was perceived as a so-called representative of the Turkish society and the Turkish state by some Armenian interviewees, my interviewer role failed to remain important. However, this was an underlying interpretation which was not put into words within the interview settings very often, but some of the expressions and non-verbal manners of the interviewees were straightforward. I might argue that the nature of past encounters with Turks,

particularly in public spaces, and the unpleasant memories transferred from the preceding generation affected the susceptibility of the interviewees. For example, one very explicit account belonged to a 28-year-old female interviewee who generalised the characteristics of Turks by means of offensive language, since her history teacher in high school compelled her to admit that the 1915 events took place in wartime and that people from both sides were killed so it could not be called genocide. This unforgettable confrontation with the Turkish teacher led the interviewee to speak of how she portrays Turks:

> I do not think he was trying to cover his guilty feelings because he really believed that this is not genocide. This is mainly because committing genocide is something that damage Turkish pride. However the main conviction is 'Turks are humane, Turks hurt nobody'. In the European history books Turks are labelled as barbarian but Turks absolutely refuse to accept this characterisation. However Turks are barbarian and they burn the libraries. These accounts may seem to be racist discourse but they exist in the history. You, Turks did try to eradicate the problem instead of attempting to solve the problem.

According to my reflexive interpretation, this situation does not stand for the illusory responses of the interviewee, but instead her 'sincere' opinions and feelings. Therefore, it is crucial to read between the lines of the interviewees' answers and focus on the hidden messages or ambivalence (Qu and Dumay, 2011:251) in order to disclose the underlying dominant themes.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The CASE of the ASSASINATION of HRANT DINK
## (19th January 2007)

Although the problematic status of the Armenians under the rule of both the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic has a long history marked by discriminatory acts/policies as mentioned in the preceding chapters, their 'visibility' in the public space and their citizenship rights have entered a new phase since 2002. With the election of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in November 2002 it might be argued that the emphasis on Islamic identity, the pluralistic and democratic demands of various social groups, and meeting EU membership criteria, has become prominent. However, the discussions over violations of freedom of expression, interventions into the freedom of the press, and the exclusionary treatment of historically marginalised groups such as Kurds, Armenians, and Alevis, have not ceased. According to Öktem (2011) the European years of the AKP government have witnessed a more critical analysis of Turkish history because taboo topics such as the Armenian Genocide, the September 6-7 Events, the National Struggle and the Kurdish Question have begun to be discussed. However, at the same time a new type of nationalism has developed, which was demonstrated by bestseller books such as *These Mad Turks* or television series such as *Valley of the Wolves*. The murder of Hrant Dink is one of the traumatic events through which this nationalist hysteria displayed itself. Öktem (2011) identifies the rise of nationalist hysteria as the return of the guardians aiming to overthrow the AKP government (cited in Ertan, 2011: 264).

Within this context on the 19th January 2007, Hrant Dink, a well-known Armenian journalist and founder of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian weekly newspaper *Agos*, was killed by an ultranationalist assassin. In this chapter I intend to explore media representations of this incident in selected national newspapers and find out both common and distinct discursive strategies to construct and reproduce Turkish nationalisms. To begin with, this assassination challenged the established order in Turkey and triggered large-scale public demonstrations with the signs, 'We are all Armenians, We are all Hrant Dink'. Not only Armenians, but different ethnic and

religious groups in Turkey voiced their disapproval of this murder and showed their support for Armenians. This momentous resistance was also linked to Dink's peculiar standpoint about the Armenian issue and his attempts to remove the obstacles against the rights of minority groups in Turkey. Dink was opposed to both anti-Armenian and anti-minority sentiments in Turkey and also the Armenian diaspora's international campaign for the official recognition of the genocide. It is claimed that the first incident that caused this assassination was Dink's article, published in Agos on 6 February 2004. The article was titled 'Lady Sabiha's Secret' and suggested that Atatürk's (the founder of the Turkish Republic) adopted daughter, Sabiha Gökçen, who was the first Turkish female pilot, could have been an Armenian girl taken from an orphanage. This claim became a topic of public debate when it appeared on the front page of Hürriyet on 21 February 2004. More notably, the Head of the General Staff - the commander of the Turkish Armed Forces - responded to Dink's statement by saying that, '[t]o open such a symbol to public debate, for whatever reason, is villainy against national unity and social peace.'(Christensen, 2010:185).

In a society where the terms 'Armenian' and 'Armenian seed' are used as swear words to insult a person or to point out his/her degraded position, to question the 'Turkishness' of a national sacred figure unsurprisingly led to many public and political discussions. As Christensen (*ibid*: 186) stresses, Dink's ironic writing style and a number of expressions he employed were taken out of context by some in the media and were framed as 'degrading Turkishness'. Thus, he was prosecuted under Article 301 in the Turkish Penal Code and sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended. The court decision (in part) read: 'This is disrespectful to the Turkish ancestors, martyrs, and values that form a nation' (*ibid*). In other words, referring to one's Armenian identity, particularly a national symbol, is regarded as evidence for 'insulting Turkishness'. In addition, calling the 1915 events genocide and/or pronouncing the number of deceased Armenians has been considered a betrayal of Turkish national unity and national identity in other cases.[8]

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[8]  In 2005 Orhan Pamuk- well-known novelist and Nobel laureate- was accused under Article 301, since in an interview with a Swiss magazine, he said, 'Thirty thousand Kurds have been killed here, and a million Armenians. And almost nobody dares to mention that. So I do." One year later, Elif Şafak -one of the most famous female writers- was also accused of insulting Turkishness through her novel 'The Bastard of Istanbul' in which one of the heroes defines the Armenian issue as genocide (Leonidas 2009).

Although the reactions of the far-right and nationalist camps and Dink's exposure to death threats were somehow anticipated, the attitudes of the government and security forces towards his vulnerable position was notable. Freely (2007:3) alleges that Dink was summoned by Istanbul governor's office twice and told that 'if he did not watch his step, "anything" could happen to him'. Although the assassin, a 17-year-old ultranationalist boy, was caught 20 hours later, it was mainly claimed that this was an organised crime in which different segments of the state took part and did not take any measures to protect Dink. In spite of being a Turkish citizen, Dink's Armenian identity by itself is considered as a precondition for his disloyalty to Turkish Republic and its 'glorious' history. Moreover, Dink's 'critical' ideas on both the official denial of Armenian Genocide in Turkey and the efforts of the Armenian Diaspora, particularly in the US and France, to impose their own demands, e.g. compensation, paved the way for his assassination. In their report for the 3rd anniversary of Dink's murder, Çetin and Tuna (2010:1), Dink's lawyers, declared that the National Intelligence Organisation (MIT), the Gendarmerie and the Police Department were all guilty of neglecting their responsibilities and of not cooperating and not coordinating among themselves as far as the murder of Hrant Dink was concerned. More importantly, it is maintained that these three institutions, which generally quarrel among themselves, have united and acted in unison in two matters, their determination not to take any steps to protect Hrant Dink, even though they knew he would be killed, and treating the suspect/suspects of the murder of Hrant Dink as heroes (*ibid*)[9]. The police officer's treatment of Samast -the assassin- as a 'national' hero came to light when photos and video recording appeared in the media. The policemen in the Anti-Terror Branch of the Samsun Police Directorate had souvenir photographs taken together with the assassin holding the Turkish flag, and one of these police officers received a promotion later.[10] In the ensuing years, almost all the officials involved with the Dink trial received promotions[11], which was interpreted by some sections of the society and intelligentsia as an 'award' given by the government to those who 'silenced' the counter voice.

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[9] For the whole report, please see http://www.hrantdink.org/img/Hrant_Dink_Murder_Case-Three_Years_After.pdf
[10] Retrieved from: http://bianet.org/english/english/137070-police-officers-posed-with-murderer-samast-after-offence, *Bianet*, 20 March 2012
[11] Retrieved from: http://www.panorama.am/en/law/2013/05/01/ermenihaber/, Panorama.am, 1 May 2013

The public demonstration in Istanbul following the assassination of Hrant Dink, which was the strongest protest thus far against the killing and intimidation of the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey, also overlapped with the debate on the civic definition of Turkish national identity. From this new point of view, Turkish national identity should not be based on ethnic Turkish decent (*Turk*), but should be based upon one's own origin within the territory that constitutes the Republic of Turkey (*Türkiyeli*). Although the primary goal was to bridge the gap between the Turkish state and its biggest minority, the Kurds, this new definition of citizenship remained highly significant for all non-Muslim minorities at the symbolic level (Grigoriadis, 2012:288). Despite the nationalist reactions which caused the governments to dissociate itself from the discussion, this new understanding enriched the public debate about the integration of the non-Muslim minorities into the Turkish people (Grigoriadis 2007); it also revitalised the debate on the reconciliation of the minority rights and full citizenship in Turkey (Kurban 2006 cited in Grigoriadis, 2012: 288). However, these attempts to compromise on the new understanding of citizenship and redefine the rights of minorities brought about nationalist reactions. In particular, the banners saying 'We are all Armenians' and 'We are all Hrant Dink' and the participation of the non-Armenian citizens in the protests after the assassination of Hrant Dink challenged the very basic component of Turkish nationalism based on Turkish and Muslim identity.

Correspondingly, this slogan became the focal point of the nationalist and religious reactions in Turkey; as Sünbüloğlu (2009:111) mentions, the far right and Islamist political parties, including The Nationalist Movement Party, The Felicity Party, and The Great Union Party, put forward the counter slogan, 'We are all Mehmet[12] , We are all Muslims'. In addition, the head of the Great Union Party objected to the phrase, 'We are all Armenians' as it charged the Turkish state and the Turkish nation with the assassination of Hrant Dink. In a similar vein, PM Erdogan stated that his sole objection to the funeral was the expression 'We are all Armenians' (*ibid*). Çetinkaya (2007:103-4) underlines that by means of the billboards, posters and headlines of some newspapers, the slogan 'We are all Turks' was publicised, but the important aspect is that this counter slogan apparently implies the ethnic-based description of Turkishness. More

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[12] 'Mehmet' is a typical Turkish name and is also used to refer to Turkish soldiers, so this name has a symbolic meaning for Turkishness and the Turkish Armed Forces as the fundamental guardian of Turkishness.

remarkably, as the terms 'Mehmet' and 'Hrant' are constructed as mutually exclusive categories, the non-Turkishness of 'Hrant' is emphasised through the subtext of 'he is not one of 'us', so the status of Armenians as the 'others' is underlined once more.

The tragic character of this assassination is not restricted to the killing of another Armenian on 'Turkish' soil, but also indicates the limits of freedom of expression in Turkey, particularly for a non-Turkish citizen. Besides this, the murder reminds us how counter opinions are suppressed by the involvement and cooperation of different segments of the Turkish state, in the same way as discussions revolving around the 'so-called'[13] Armenian genocide, by connecting to external powers instead of addressing the current status of the Armenian community and the oppressive setting in Turkey. In addition to these points, to examine the news stories about this case, it is also significant to uncover the neglected aspects of the news about minority groups and the silence of newspapers about the government's moving away from responsibility.

### 5.1. Critical Discourse Analysis of the Hrant Dink Case

Since Dink was indeed the target of a media lynching campaign (Göktaş 2007 and Pakkan 2011 cited in Türkmen-Dervişoğlu, 2013: 680) before the assassination, the role of printed press in the assassination was extensively debated. Four years after the assassination, the perpetrator sent a letter to Istanbul's 2nd Juvenile High Criminal Court and said 'I am not guilty. Guilty are the headlines that showed Dink as a traitor. I learned about Dink from the newspaper headlines.'[14] From this perspective, editorial approaches of papers towards this attack gained importance. Therefore this part seeks to answer the question: "How is the case of the assassination of Hrant Dink portrayed in the news stories of *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* as the leading Turkish national newspapers?" By utilising CDA as an analytical tool I point out both the overlapping and diverse discursive strategies adopted by these designated newspapers while framing the news about this murder. Due to the high amount of news stories and columns focusing on this incident published between the dates 20th-26th January 2007, the news stories are examined in terms of the emerging themes for the one week time span after the incident.

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[13] The phrases 'so-called' or 'alleged' are commonly used in Turkey to point out the invalidity of the Armenian Genocide.
[14] Retrieved from: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hrant-dink-shooter-blames-turkish-media-for-his-actions.aspx?pageID=438&n=hrant-dink-shooter-blamed-the-turkish-media-for-his-action-2011-04-04

Rather than focusing on the newspapers individually, the major themes and sub-themes are identified and investigated within a comparative framework.

### 5.1.1. The Figure of Enemy as a National Threat

To begin with the day after the assassination of Hrant Dink (20th January 2007), the incident was carried on the front pages of the three newspapers under analysis and the news stories, along with the photos of Hrant Dink, were spread across the front pages. This can be interpreted not only as an indicator of the political and social impact of this tragic event, but also a mutual concern shared by national newspapers with distinct ideological affiliations. However, the headlines of *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* on 20th January 2007 were written as follows: 'This Bullet was fired against Turkey'; 'Hrant Dink was Killed - The Assassin is Traitor'; 'The Bullets Hit Turkey'. This showed that the main reason for apprehension was the national security of Turkey. It implied that the Turkish state, rather than Dink himself, was the real target of this attack and thus the bullets fired by an unknown perpetrator were aimed at Turkey. In particular, the lexical choice of *Hürriyet* indicates how the offender was proclaimed a 'traitor' by the reporters, even though the guilty party had not been arrested and/or the motives behind the crime had not been discovered yet.

The prioritisation of the idea of national security and the figure of an anonymous enemy comes to light by means of the word selections of the newspapers, such as 'Turkey', 'bullet', and 'traitor'. It is also interesting to observe how the actual victim of a deadly shooting was relocated with the image of the Turkish state as an aggrieved party in the headlines. The distinction between active and passive positioning of the subjects becomes evident through this discursive manoeuvre. In contrast, these headlines can be read as a verification of the inclusive attitude of the national newspapers towards a citizen of the Turkish state despite his ethnic-religious identity. In other words, the news coverage of the murder in this manner might stand as a reflection of the Turkish state's commitment to its citizens, as the bullet fired against this respected journalist is depicted as if it also hit Turkey in a metaphorical sense.

However the subheadings, and the lead and body paragraphs of the newspapers suggest that the purpose of this assassination was to impair national security and unity as

Turkey would be put on the spot, particularly in the international arena. For instance, in *Hürriyet*, underneath the photo of Dink it was written, 'The traitors targeted Turkey and democracy once again', in parallel with the headline. The news story in *Zaman* correspondingly read as follows: 'The murder targeted at internal peace [in Turkey] and leaving Turkey in a difficult position was reacted to strongly. The powers intending to disturb [national] peace and serenity in Turkey attempted a new provocation yesterday.' Besides this, *Cumhuriyet* drew attention to the timing of the assassination and reported the news as if 'Hrant Dink lost his life in an armed attack during the time when the declarations of Ankara regarding the issue of Kirkuk become rigorous and the Armenian claims are taken to the agenda of the United States Congress'. In addition to the victimised portrayal of the Turkish state and the threat perception associated with national security and internal peace, the choice of the terms 'the traitors' and 'the powers' particularly implies fabricated enemies of the nation.

This emphasis on the notion of enemy in the news discourse is also regarded as one of the reflections of the ethno-nationalist discourse in the Turkish self-image, especially in the 2000s (Çırakman, 2011). From this point of view, the transformation of the Turkish self-image from a modernist and secular nationalist discourse to an ethno-nationalist discourse can be witnessed in the forms of identification with both the enemy-within and the enemy-without in the Turkish media. The discursive constructions of ethnic-religious groups -the Armenians, the Kurds or the Jews- as the enemies-within, and the European Union, United States or the globalising West in general, as the enemies-without, have close connections. Therefore, the ethno-nationalist discourse redefines the concept of enemy in terms of an ethnic and religious identity and labels the West as a dividing and contemptuous force, whereas the modernist and secular nationalist discourse in Turkey used to regard the West as a model for progress and a civilizing force (Çırakman, 2011: 1907). Bearing in mind these points, it's worth mentioning the news framing of *Cumhuriyet*, with its specific focus on the controversial relationship between Turkey and Kirkuk and the likelihood of the Armenian Genocide recognition in the US while reporting on the assassination of an Armenian citizen. Despite the murder of a member of 'enemies-within' groups it is implied that both internal and external enemies acted together to plot against Turkey.

In order to legitimate particular representations, drawing on the voices of symbolic elites is also a common strategy, as their authority is vested in them due to their particular position (Van Leeuwen 2008 cited in Don and Lee, 2014:4). Therefore, the use of the direct quotations from the President, the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff and the party leaders, both in the front and inside pages of the newspapers, might be taken as central signifiers for the legitimisation of a particular ideological structure in discourse. For example, the Prime Minister was quoted as saying, 'Once again, dark hands[15] have chosen our country and spilled blood in Istanbul to achieve their dark goals' and the President expressed the view that: 'The apprehension of the perpetrators of this attack which has deeply wounded our nation is our immediate expectation.' Besides this, the official statement of the Motherland Party (ANAP) declared: 'This is a provocation aiming to strengthen the idea that the Turks committed genocide', and the leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP) said: 'The ones who committed or involved in this crime caused the biggest damage in Turkey'. The ways the political powers issued messages condemning Dink's murder might be regarded as an accurate example of the primordialist perspective that underscores how the survival of the nation is more significant than the survival of its members (Özkırımlı, 2010:52). In this case, the importance of the survival of the Turkish nation is underlined many times in the discursive domain. This discloses how the newspapers under analysis refer to the authority figures to reinforce the idea of Turkey and the Turkish nation as equivalent notions.

Consequently, the terms in the news stories such as 'our country' and 'our nation' are represented as if they have identical meanings, regardless of the diverse ethnic and religious groups residing in Turkey. The declarations of other political agents were also given space in all three newspapers by using direct quotations. Accordingly, in a similar way the subheadings that highlighted the words 'our reputation', 'our national interest', 'provocation', 'negative impact on freedom of expression' were selected to capture the reader's attention. The narratives in all three papers draw a picture in which the assassination was brought about by anticipated, but anonymous, adversaries of Turkey as a part of an extensive plan to bring about national chaos. Taking this incident out of

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[15] The expression 'dark hands' is a commonly used metaphor by Turkish statesmen and officials to describe those who attempt to trigger provocative events such as assassinations, bombings or similar incidents in order to harm national interests and the international image of Turkey.

the context of the descriptions of the news stories removes the decisive roles of time and space in creating the conditions that paved the way for this murder.

**5.1.2. In Between the National Identity and the International Image**

In the days after the event, the subheadings of the newspapers under investigation focused on the assassin and his personal life, as well as the potential link between the murder of Dink and the murder of priest Andrea Santoro in 2006. In *Hürriyet*, underneath the subheading 'The Second Case from Trabzon', it was expressed that the murder of the Italian priest Andrea Santoro was called to mind, as it was revealed that the perpetrator of Dink's murder was also from Trabzon. The verb selection 'call to mind', instead of other verbs, to point out the resemblances of the two cases and the tone of the writing, disregarding the usage of 'might/could', are self-explanatory in terms of the newspaper's undoubted judgments. The news story also implies a relationship between a clandestine criminal organisation in Trabzon, the hometown of the offenders, and the anti-Armenian and anti-Christian killings. In a similar vein, *Cumhuriyet* referred to the suspicion concerning the existence of an illegal organisation in Trabzon, claiming that both of the offenders were from the underclass and nationalist juveniles. *Zaman* also called attention to the identical traits of both perpetrators, such as age, homeland and the fact they were both children of divorced parents. These parallel ways of reporting in the newspapers thus signals how the focal points of an issue can be repositioned and the readers' attention can be directed to a particular agenda. Furthermore, the executors are labelled as 'nationalist' in the news discourse and, concerning the public discussion over the rise of nationalism, particularly in Trabzon, it is indicated that the murders are the direct consequence of a nationalist wave in a particular territory.

On 21st January 2007 the headings of *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* revolved around the arrest of the assassin and were written, respectively, in the following manner: 'His Father Reported, He was Arrested in Samsun', 'His Father Made the Traitor Get Caught', and 'The Suspect is Arrested'. The use of the passive forms that reorients the focus away from the agent of an action and toward the object (Fowles 1991 cited in Saft and Ohara, 2006:89) is noticeable in the titles of the front pages. The police departments are constructed as the key social agents for the arrest operation and their success is praised

in the news stories. *Hürriyet* alludes to the public statement of the Prime Minister and highlights his gratitude to the police forces for their help for maintaining democracy in Turkey. An extended version of this statement, which also includes the PM's thankfulness on behalf of 'his country, his nation, and the struggle for democracy and freedom', and the pace of the police operation, is given space in *Zaman*. According to my reflexive interpretation, the importance of these news stories concerning the arrest of the offender lies in their subtexts in two interrelated aspects. The first point is that in discursive terms the overemphasis on the achievement of the police forces rests on their presentation as a national asset. As the police are central 'to the production and reproduction of order and security' within national 'structures of feeling' (Loader, 1997:3), the representation of the 'success' of police departments in national papers epitomises a mechanism of bolstering nationhood. In their work, Gorringe and Rosie (2010) examine the processes through which national identities are articulated, contested and acted out in the context of the policing. Their research focus is policing in Scotland, and they seek to discover the interplay between national identity and policing, analysing the 'banal' ways in which national identity is naturalised through the police. They come to the conclusion that Scottish policing is a 'convenient fiction' as it manifests implicit and taken for granted assumptions. More importantly, they argue that the discursive construction of Scottishness has ramifications for how policing is conceived and conducted (Gorringe and Rosie, 2010: 80). In my analysis the function of policing for the construction of Turkish national identity is transferred to the discursive domain by the national newspapers. That is to say, the figure of the 'Turkish' police as a determining factor for the sense of nationhood plays a role in solving a national crisis which incriminated the Turkish state and Turkish nation. By following the assumption that '[t]he police are as influenced by the boundaries of the imagined community as they are influential in their imagining' (Gorringe and Rosie, 2010: 72) it can be claimed that the news discourse has a negotiating role in this relationship. In terms of the Dink case, the portrayal of Turkish policing in the papers also contributes to the understanding of national unity.

The second point concerning the arrest of the offender is the newspapers' preoccupation with the international image of Turkey. The capture of the perpetrator in a very short period of time is incorporated in the news stories as if the image of Turkey has been

acquitted on charges of the violation of freedom of expression, the protection of minority rights and the failure to act against nationalist attacks in the eyes of the international community. The elapsed time -expressed numerically as 32 hours - for the arrest operation is repeatedly accentuated in the news texts to confirm the determination of the national security forces. In addition to the selection of the headlines, the way the assassination was reported by the leading newspapers in Europe and United States is integrated into the news stories to emphasise how this large-scale incident is described by the foreign press. *Hürriyet* attaches importance to the reactions expressed by the 'world' press, such as *Independent*, *the Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *El Pais*, and *La Razon*. However, it should be underlined that the 'world' press only consists of the papers from UK, USA and Spain, according to the reporters, and the absence of the French press is interesting due to the ongoing tension between France and Turkey on the subject of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The selected title for the news story including the quotations from these cited newspapers is 'A Big Impact on the Hope for EU Membership'. It is apparent that the notion of agency is deleted in the headline through the technique of nominalisation. The murder of Dink is cited as a reason for the potential rise in the arguments against Turkey's EU accession process, depending on the commentaries of the foreign newspapers. Through this representation, which 'implies the active work of selecting and presenting, and of structuring and shaping' (Hall 1982 cited in Don and Lee, 2014: 688), the above mentioned title situates the murder itself as the major obstacle for national interest and pictures 'the hope for EU membership' as a national will shared by all Turkish citizens. More notably, a causal relationship between the assassination and the international image of Turkey is produced.

*Zaman* congruently frames the international responses to the death of Dink by pointing out the headlines of the leading newspapers in Europe and America, which are limited to the UK, US and Spanish press, just as in the case of *Hürriyet*. It is predictable that both of these newspapers draw on the same news agency to obtain information for their news texts regardless of their alleged ideological affiliations, audience profiles and editorial lines. However, *Zaman* especially spotlights the reactions of Armenia, the Armenian diaspora and Armenian lobbying groups. The two excerpts below are only parts of two different news stories published on 21th January 2007 in *Zaman*.

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**The subheading:** It became a trump card for the Armenian lobby

The Armenian lobby in America started to make use of the murder. In his message issued to condemn the murder Aram Hamparian, the executive director of Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), defended the idea that the murder took place in a period in which official investigations and nationalist pressures are on the rise to silence Dink's writings on the Armenian genocide. Robert Fisk, the well-known columnist of the British newspaper the Independent, also wrote that: "Yesterday Hrant Dink became the one million, five hundred thousand and first victim of the Armenian genocide."

**The heading:** A Calm Approach from Yerevan to the Assassination

Armenia is struck by the news of the murder of Hrant Dink. While the politicians and journalists consider the incident evenly some political scientists blamed Turkey. All the channels on TV interrupted their programs and broadcasted the assassination by citing Turkish television and news sources.

These two excerpts signify the influence of the newspaper's standpoint on the syntax preferences for the titles. As 'headlines are the subjective definition of the situation, which influences the interpretation made by the reader' (Van Dijk 1991 cited in Dağtaş, 2013:22), the selection of the words also reveals the negotiator or contestant roles taken by the newspapers. In the first excerpt, the word 'trump card' in particular has strong connotations, implying that there are at least two opposite camps seeking to prevail over an enemy. Although what is meant by the Armenian lobby is not clear as it seems to include both the Armenian diaspora in the US and the Armenian groups actively striving for genocide recognition in the political arena, it is implied that the Armenian lobby is now in an advantageous position for the control of the issue. The title implies that in terms of the ongoing confrontation between Turkey and 'the Armenian lobby' over the issue of genocide recognition, the murder of Dink changed the conditions in favour of the Armenian lobby. This argument is also substantiated by the choice of the verb 'make use of' in the first sentence and the verb 'defend' before the account of the subject. In featuring a quotation from a British journalist, though, a neutral verb 'write' is picked out by the newspaper. However, the overall tone of the extract is made to sound defensive and the expressions of disapproval are embedded in the text. It might be further claimed that by the means of incorporating the direct quotations, *Zaman* intends

to prove its point that the Armenian community abroad will immediately embark on an effort to impose the genocide claim in the international arena and, figuratively speaking, the assassination of Dink will be the instrument used to achieve their goal.

In the title of the second excerpt, Yerevan, the capital of the Republic of Armenia symbolises the Armenian state authorities whose attitude towards the murder is assessed by the reporters of *Zaman*. As a result of this journalistic evaluation, the stance of the Armenian powers is delineated by the adjective 'calm'. The title also tacitly contains a probability calculus of the opposite reaction of the Armenian state. It conveys the message that the Armenian state decided to maintain its level-headed approach to the murder instead of showing an offensive or inflammatory attitude. Before illustrating the responses, the standpoints of the 'politicians' and 'journalists' are portrayed in a positive manner in which there is a clear generalisation realised in the use of the words 'politicians' and 'journalists'. The expression 'some political scientists' then unfolds the discursive uncertainty and it is  also vague on which topics and in what respect 'some political scientists' 'blame' Turkey. The news story, hence, begins with speculative descriptions and carries quotations from the state authorities such as the Armenian president, the Armenian foreign minister, the speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia, the statements of two political parties (*Dashnaktsutyun Party* and *Orinats Yerkir Party*) in Armenia, the news of two Armenian newspapers (*Haykakan Zhamanak* and *Aravot*), and the views of the political scientist Stepan Grigoryan. It becomes apparent 'who speaks in the news text?', 'whose speech is valued?' and 'which politicians and journalists are recognised as the representatives for their colleagues?' Furthermore, it is thought-provoking to grasp that the phrase 'some political scientists' corresponds to a single specialist. The passage below demonstrates the entire declaration of the political scientist.

> For me, the ethnic background of the murderer, of which nation he is a member of, is out of consideration. The thing that matters is what has this murder done. Beyond any doubt, an authority or a state arranged this murder against Turkey's EU membership and the reconciliation of Turkish-Armenian relations.

Contrary to the accusation claim of the news text in *Zaman*, it seems hard to find evidence of incriminating idioms in this statement. Rather, the national interests of Turkey and the support for a rapprochement between two states are emphasised.

Moreover, the rhetorical techniques employed by *Cumhuriyet* with regard to the issues of genocide recognition, the Armenian community and national signifiers seem more distinctive. For instance on 22th January 2007, three days after the assassination, *Cumhuriyet* ran an editorial under the title 'The Suspect and The Incident?' on the front page.

> As everyone knows Hrant Dink was adopting the views which were not shared by the majority with respect to the so-called Armenian genocide as well as other related subjects. This difference has been reduced to zero abruptly and the murdered journalist has been fully defended. The Armenian attribute of Dink led to the rise in sympathy and tolerance shown to him. The sad incident demonstrated the cooperation between a society respectful of freedom of opinion and opposed to ethnic discrimination in our country. Turkey adopts a more liberal and modern profile than many European states which have approved the Armenian genocide claim by law, and it has prohibited opposition to this view and formally linked the historical event to anti-democratic status within the state

The passage is just a minor section of this editorial which might give an idea concerning the dominant features of news discourse in this particular paper. In line with Hall's (1996 cited in Van Dijk, 1998:9) definition of ideology as mental frameworks - the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought and systems of representation, this excerpt exposes how these mental frameworks are constructed within the news discourse. Ambiguous concepts such as 'everyone', 'the majority' and 'other related subjects' used in the first sentence oversimplify the multi-dimensional aspects such as the involved social agents or groups and the competing claims or ideas. The newspaper's disapproval of removing the differences, to put it simply, between the supporters and the opponents of genocide recognition and Dink's viewpoint, is detectable in the second sentence. That is to say, *Cumhuriyet* has no hesitation in terms of publicly taking sides. However, the passive form of the sentences also gives the impression that no subject is held responsible for advocating the ideas of Dink. More notably, in the next sentence the

ethnic identity of Dink is spelled out as the main reason behind the 'sympathy and tolerance' shown to him. Yet again the answers to the questions 'who shows this 'sympathy and tolerance'? and 'how has Dink's Armenian identity led to these sentiments?' are equivocal. The political stance of the paper alludes to the fact that being an Armenian is a condition that requires tolerance from 'the majority' in a national context. This is tantamount to an argument that the hierarchy between the ethnic-religious identities grants the right to decide whom to tolerate and under what conditions as Turkish-Muslim citizens. *Cumhuriyet* then draws a picture of 'our' ideal country by pointing out the 'deixis of homeland' which 'invokes the national 'we' and places 'us' within 'our' homeland' (Billig, 1995: 94-107). The following sentence also reinforces the sentiment of national belonging by means of a comparison of 'our' nation-state to the European nation-states. The important point at this juncture is to notice how the recognition of the Armenian genocide in the sphere of jurisdiction by 'many' European states is marked as 'anti-democratic', whilst Turkey as 'our' homeland is portrayed as liberal and modern. This discursive gesture also addresses the patterns of the (re-) positioning of a nation-state with respect to minority groups as well as the echoes of the official denial. Therefore, the ideas expressed in this editorial remind Armenian readers of how the state associates their status with the issue of genocide recognition in the international arena.

### 5.1.3. 'We are all Hrant, We are all Armenians'

The funeral ceremony of Hrant Dink took place on 23ⁿᵈ January 2007 and in particular the mass protest during the funeral made a mark in news stories published in *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. As over a hundred thousand people from different ethnic-religious or social backgrounds, gathered for the funeral and carried placards that read: 'We are all Hrant, we are all Armenians', this momentous resistance naturally featured in all the newspapers under analysis. In particular, the slogan which connotes a developing empathy with Dink as well as Armenians attracted the public's attention and became a contentious question in Turkey. To explore the reflections on this funeral in the national newspapers thus unveils how news discourse becomes a field for the construction, reproduction of the forms of nationalism and national identity.

The headline in *Zaman*, 'The entire Turkey Bids Farewell to [Hrant Dink]' on 24th January 2007 appears to give a message of solidarity among Turkish citizens. The news text, however, contains conflicting discourses, as follows:

> The funeral of Hrant Dink revealed the picture of Turkey. Thousands of people from every segment of the society came together as one heart in the funeral. Turkey, who shows her determination to live together by respecting the differences to the world, also gave the best answer to those attempting to abuse the topic of the assassination in the genocide discussions.

On the one hand, the language employed in the news text promotes the idea of national togetherness, which might be interpreted as a challenge to the understanding of an 'internal enemy'. The language of respect for differences is also notable, as the assumption that an inclusive approach, which is able to engage with difference in Turkey, is underlined. On the other hand, by means of a definitive judgement indicated as the 'best answer' in the news content there is no room left for different observations. The advocates of genocide recognition, more importantly, are accused of taking advantage of the murder to justify their claims concerning the confrontation of genocide. This clear-cut deduction might have the potential to lead readers to overlook the possibility that the participants of the funeral might not necessarily share the views of the adherents of genocide recognition. The praising tone at the outset, expressed as 'one heart', is then converted into a narrative of isolation created between interrelated stances and agents.

Despite their distinct ideological points of reference, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* also follow a common discursive path. The encounter with such a massive protest after the killing of an Armenian has, interestingly, brought about identical reactions in the news discourse. The extracts below exemplify not only the similar writing styles of the papers, but also the mind-set towards both the territorial and mental boundaries of the nation-state.

**Hürriyet:** The bullet backfired. Turkey became a single heart.

**Cumhuriyet:** The thousands who gathered together in Dink's funeral responded to those who attempt to divide the people of this land, an attack on thought, and the dark hands and opponents of Turkey in the world.

These excerpts reinvent the category of Turkey, referring to both a national territory and the Turkish nation. The theme of national cohesion is also explicitly underlined that the challenges instigated by internal and external enemies/threats are claimed as being overcome through the congregation of the people. Furthermore, the day after the funeral, the headline of *Hürriyet* "[Hrant Dink's wife]: You did not leave your country, my dear', and the subheading in *Zaman*, 'you did leave from everyone, you did not leave from your country', cite Rakel Dink's speech. The phrase 'your country' seems to be an especially important factor for the selection of this particular sentence for the titles. While *Cumhuriyet*'s headline, 'An Enormous Farewell' draws attention to the magnitude of the funeral, the same sentence, 'You did not leave your country' as a subheading highlights the most allegedly important aspect of Dink's murder. The recurrence of this phrase evokes the question of national belonging in relation to the identity construction of minority groups. It might be interpreted as a discursive form of confirming the 'loyalty' of Armenians to the Turkish state even after their death.

Despite the positive atmosphere in the front pages of the dailies with regard to the coordinated acts of the different segments of the 'Turkish' nation against the murder, the slogan "We are all Hrant, we are all Armenians" challenged the very basic component of Turkish nationalism based on Turkishness and Muslim identity. The assassination also undermined the belief in 'the benevolence of Turks' as one of the chief components of Turkish national identity and the funeral is claimed to have 'help[ed] those who feel guilty repair that rift, purge themselves of collective guilt and refresh their trust in their nation' (Türkmen-Dervişoğlu, 2013: 684). The slogan, however, is perceived as a threat to Turkishness and the reactions from the political powers were given space in the national newspapers. *Cumhuriyet* recited the criticism of the leader of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) on 25th January 2007 with the title 'Bahçeli: [The slogan] is a freak that begs elucidation'. The passage below illustrates the direct quotations that appeared in the news story.

> The leader of Nationalist Action Party Devlet Bahceli made a declaration concerning the slogans 'We are all Armenians' in the funeral of Dink: "It is a freak that begs elucidation that as a member of the Turkish nation the social circles whom never be seen at the [Turkish]martyr funerals and visits of condolence now develops slogans over the ethnic belonging of the victim."
>
> Nationalist Action Party Antalya Provincial Chairman: "I do not believe that the citizen who does not say 'I am a Turk' in this geography has the right to life." Stating that they feel sorry for Dink's death Sagır asserted that the Turkish nation is regularly insulted in the newspapers and TV channels.

These statements might be regarded as blatant forms of nationalism that become visible and also consumable within the news discourse. The selected title, though, deceives the reader as it gives the impression that the slogan itself is described as 'freak' by the quoted speaker. However, the news content clarifies that the creators of the slogan are labelled as 'freak', which means that the focal point of the quotation is a particular social group instead of the slogan. This discursive strategy attempts to pass on the idea of conceiving the slogan as abnormal and unacceptable. In order to bring forward the same quotation, *Hürriyet* also provides a title, 'We are all Armenians is a freak that begs elucidation', and the text is also written in almost the same way as *Cumhuriyet*. In addition, the decision of the editorial office in *Cumhuriyet* to publish the 'offensive' views of the provincial chairman might typify possible biases in news discourse which 'not only reside in the selection and prominence of news actors, but also in the ways they are presented as speakers who give their interpretation of, and opinion about news events' (Van Dijk 1991 cited in Kuo, 2007: 297). Both of the newspapers thus 'allow the insertion of subjective interpretations, explanations, or opinions about current news events' through employing these particular quotations 'without breaking the ideological rule that requires the separation of facts from opinions (*ibid*).

## 5.2. The 'Unexpected' Consequences of an 'Expected' End: Hrant Dink

The dynamics of the 'Armenian issue', the status of Armenians in Turkey as well as the relations between Turkey and Armenia, have entered a new epoch in the wake of the assassination of Hrant Dink in 2007. As the founder and editor-in-chief of the bilingual newspaper *Agos* Dink attempted to call attention to the visibility and rights of the Armenian community in Turkey. Particularly, his critical writings about 'the

exclusionary nature of Turkish nationalism, the official discriminatory Turkish state policy against non-Muslim minorities and the continued lack of accountability for past collective violence committed against the Armenians' (Göçek, 2015: 419) led him to become a prominent figure. However, these challenging claims also brought about death threats along with lawsuits under the pretext of denigrating Turkishness based on Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. For instance, the first prosecution against him was the result of his conference speech in which he said, 'I am not a Turk, but an Armenian of Turkey'; the second derived from a decontextualized sentence in 'an article in which he urged the Armenians of the diaspora to abandon their blanket hatred of the Turk' (Freely, 2007: 16). As these charges against Dink started to appear in both visual and printed media he became the target of a hate campaign in the public realm. This murder, therefore, includes a multifaceted process that consists of different actors, such as the state, the media, and the judicial system.

Since the press plays a pivotal role in the pre and post period of this assassination, as demonstrated in the previous section, I intend to explore the news discourse of Turkish national newspapers, namely, *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, with regard to this incident. In addition to the production side of the discursive sphere, in this section I point out the ideas and reactions of Armenians in Turkey concerning the assassination. On the one hand, this scrutiny discloses the meaning of Dink's controversial efforts for the interviewees, the implications of this murder for the Armenian community and the reverberations of the funeral. On the other hand, this examination correspondingly opens up the discussion over the involvement of the state and also the 'deep-state' in the assassination, and the positioning of the press and the problematical aspects of the judicial process. In response to my question, 'What do you think about the assassination of Hrant Dink and how do you feel about it?' many respondents had begun to express their thoughts about Dink as a 'spokesman' and a 'pioneer' for the Armenian community before they commented on the murder. In parallel with their line of reasoning, I also start by briefly indicating the interviewees' descriptions vis-à-vis the public image of Dink and his contentious standpoint.

To begin with, a 41-year-old female interviewee compares the condition of the Armenian issue twenty years ago with the present situation. She claims that even to

pronounce the word 'Armenian' would have been 'the end of the world', but that Dink broke this taboo and took the lead in the discussions on the Armenian issue on TV as well as in the newspapers. In spite of the optimistic portrayal of Dink, the interviewee questions the potential connection between the prevailing political climate and his ability to speak up on polemic matters. She implies that Dink was able to raise his voice concerning the status of Armenians owing to the consent of the AKP government. From my point of view, the interviewee's argument is illuminating as it uncovers an aspect of distrust among the Armenian community towards the government. The scepticism about the perfunctory acts/policies of the government merges with the likelihood of bringing Dink to the fore so as to pretend to be concerned with the problems of the Armenian community. Although the interviewee questions the self-determination of Dink, along with the pressure of the government on him, she underlines the significance of voicing these topics by an Armenian. Dink, as described by a 33-year-old female Armenian, was able to 'break the shell' around this minority group, which in return enabled Armenians to act freely and look inside and outside the community. His ideas, as the interviewee maintains, opened a new door for this closed and reserved society. Along the same lines a-53-year-old male interviewee depicts Dink as 'a pioneer for themselves' and continues as follows:

> He could be beneficial to the society and capable of being a bridge between the two countries [Turkey and Armenia]. Some nationalist people chose Hrant Dink as a target to remove this peace bridge. Now a setting is created in which the murderers wander around as if they are national heroes. This is our pain and sorrow. He actually have devoted himself to our cause and paid with his life. He could have kept silent so he might have survived but some things might have remained enclosed. At least now they are unlocked. We will feel the absence of him in this country and no one like him will come along again.

Although the excerpt fails to elucidate in what ways Dink might have been able to change the conditions for Armenians, it captures the Armenian identity, revolving around the struggle of Dink, with the 'nationalist' mind-set. The figure of a leader who is cast as a liberator is also portrayed as a way to break the silence of Armenians in the search for an anticipated recognition by the Turkish state and society. Furthermore, the vanguard role of Dink is explained through his ability to instil confidence in Armenians.

A 29-year-old male interviewee, as an example of Dink's influence, puts forward the enlightenment of Islamised Armenians with regard to their identities and the efforts of some families in other Anatolian cities to send their children to Istanbul and enable them to be educated in Armenian schools. It is suggested that the reawakening of identity and collective memory among these converted members of the Armenian community came to light as Dink started to demystify the overlooked aspects of the lives of Armenians. According to a senior interviewee (a 59-year-old male) Dink confidently declared his stance and made Armenians believe that they can also defend their rights and say what they think in this country; as the interviewee put it: 'he made us accustomed to this idea'. This is read by another interviewee (a 39-year-old female) as an opportunity for Armenians to explain that 'we live in this land too, we love the country too and we also enrich this land differently'. At the same time, this demonstrates the deep-rooted idea of serving the country and the constant need for proof of loyalty to the Turkish state.

In contrast to this picture of a prominent figure, along with his impact on the Armenian people, the self-criticisms about how 'we', the majority of the Armenian community, left Dink to his fate came out in a few interviews. The paragraphs below exemplify the feelings of guilt experienced by the few interviewees who obviously agreed to share their sentiments.

> **Interviewee 3 (32-year-old-male):** I and my family are often surrounded by a feeling: 'how did we leave Hrant Dink alone?' I mean why did this come to an end like this? So it is a feeling of distress. What might have been done? I don't know but it is an issue of why we left him alone.
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> **Interviewee 25 (45-year-old-male):** Hrant did receive threats until his death and did not we, as the people around him, hear these threats? We did hear them and we did nothing. But now we blame the state and say that the state closed its ears to the truth. We also did the same thing. If only ten percent of the crowd in the funeral had sided with Hrant when he was alive would it be possible to go through such an event?
>
> **Interviewee 34 (33-year-old-male):** Due to his Armenian identity neither liberals, nationalists, politicians nor his own close friends looked after Dink. While Hrant was

on a trial due to Article 301 many of his friends were not there to support him. Thus,
they are guilty as well.

Although the regrets seem to share a mutual theme, it is possible to pinpoint two distinct reactions. On the one hand, the first account still seeks to find out alternative explanations for the past lack of interest in Dink's 'fight' and the feeling of embarrassment on behalf of the Armenian community is easily recognised. On the other hand, in other narratives the interviewees appear to blame the Armenian community and equate its responsibility with other actors such as the state and people from different ideological backgrounds. The resentment toward all Armenians thus becomes visible. However, the interpretations unite in admitting the responsibility of the Armenian community for the process that paved the way for the assassination.

In addition to the importance of Dink as a public and political figure for the Armenian community, the meaning-making processes and reactions of the interviewees with regard to the assassination of Hrant Dink are one of the focal points of this research. First of all, there are crucial differences between the younger and older generations of the Armenian community in terms of their assessments of the assassination. While the younger interviewees aged between 22 and 40 mostly characterise this murder as a 'trauma', the interpretations of the older counterparts aged between 40 and 65 generally focus on the 'banality' of this attack, which bears a relation to state violence. Although my intention is not to generalise the views of the interviewees depending on their ages, it is possible to detect definite discrepancies amongst the generations of the Armenian community. From my perspective this generational divide comes into the picture because of the asymmetric experiences of violence and the shifting patterns of remembrance and forgetting of the past. For some senior interviewees the assassination was not an 'unexpected' or an 'unusual' incident; as stated by a 46-year-old male respondent, it is just 'a part of a larger picture' in Turkey where deep-seated prejudice is still held by the media and the state. He also put forward the assaults against non-Muslim and non-Turkish individuals, such as the killing of the priest Andrea Santoro in February 2006, the murder of Dink in January 2007 and the massacre of three Christian missionaries at a publishing house in April 2007, to illustrate the recent social atmosphere. However, his sentence 'we got used to these types of events, we experience

the same things from time immemorial' reveals the connection between the understanding of routine hostility and the effects of distant memories of the past. Moreover, a 53-year-old male interviewee explains the assassination as the continuation of the process of political structuring in Turkey. He elaborates his argument as follows

> In my opinion Turkey is always founded on blood, tears and massacres. From past to present none of the incidents has been resolved. For example the Alevi massacres in Çorum, Maras and Sivas were not resolved. Turkey killed its own journalists and intellectuals such as Abdi İpekçi, Turhan Dursun and Bahriye Üçok. Turkey established its system on status quo and fear and slaughtered some people to take advantage of its system. It has continued its dominance through threats and military coups. Armenians were also made terrified by the assassination of Hrant Dink.

While this thought-provoking account criticises the Turkish state concerning its repressive and destructive actions, simultaneously it reminds us of the 'equal' treatment of groups or persons by the state due to their different identities or critical ideas. Thus, the positioning of the murder of Dink within the broader power relations of the state by the interviewee is illuminating in terms of interrelating the Armenian identity and its sufferings to other ethnic religious identities. Furthermore, the interviewee's interpretations of recent events, in a similar way to the ideas of other interviewee, take as reference point the preceding experiences that are unforgettable for the collective identity. Regarding the predictable aspect of the murder, a 49-year-old male Armenian also affirms that many Armenians had expected that Dink would get in trouble soon. However, he offers a different explanation and dissociates this situation from the peculiar case of Dink, asserting that a number of Armenians also received death threats at that period of time; thus, he underlined the mundaneness of the death risk for Armenians. Although I asked for further details, such as information about the dispatchers or the motivations behind these letters, the interviewee stated only that the senders were the predicted but unnamed persons and that no action was taken to solve this problem. His reluctance to speak out about his idea or the experience of his acquaintances might be considered as an indicator of an ingrained fear of violence and the acceptance of this violence as a form of ordinary conduct.

In a similar vein, from the standpoint of a 44-year-old male interviewee, one of the probable consequences of the increasing public visibility of Dink might have been assault instead of a murder. More notably, he condemns his generation, as they aimed for a 'desk-based struggle' for the normalisation of relations in Turkey. From this point of view, the assassination confirmed the fears of this cohort, as the costs for the visibility of Armenian identity and unconventional claims become evident. For the interviewee, losing Dink is a sign of the collapse of an attempt to resolve the issue through dialogue, and of the unchanging nature of social relations. Nonetheless, the unexpected aspect of this murder, as pronounced by the interviewee, came out in the reactions of the Armenian community, particularly the younger generation, who refused to withdraw themselves from the public sphere. This is rationalised by the idea that 'we also lost Hrant. What else could happen?' and strikingly the interviewee describes the influential state of mind among Armenians in this way: 'If the only thing that they can do is killing, they can kill us at most; what else they could do?'

While the tendency of some senior interviewees to consider the loss of Dink as a justification for their reservations appears in their accounts, the narratives of younger interviewees emphasise both the traumatic and incentive effects of this tragic event. On behalf of his peers, a 29-year-old male interviewee outlines why this loss has a different meaning for the same age group, as follows:

> Due to our age we did not witness the military coups, the 6-7 September riots or the Wealth Tax. The killing of Hrant Dink was the biggest trauma that we had ever experienced in person. It showed us that an Armenian might be shot in the back of his neck in broad daylight on the streets of Istanbul. There is still no obstacle for them to do it again.

Similarly, a 27-year-old female interviewee depicted the assassination and the protest in the wake of this tragic event as the breaking point in her life, as she started to find out more about the genocide and the subsequent sufferings of Armenians. In her own words she elucidated that:

> To understand what my identity is made me realise that my own identity is actually a problem. My family elders lived through the Wealth Tax, the 6-7 September riots

and the military coup in 1980, but this was the first happening for my generation who understood how we become targets in this society owing to this loss.

Although younger interviewees have some knowledge regarding the genocide and other state-sponsored sanctions, the role of witnessing the death of Dink resulted in an awareness of their identity. More importantly, some interviewees claim that the aftermath of this murder also corresponds to the beginning of their politicisation process. It is equally interesting to observe that three young female respondents in the 26-28 age range articulate the same ideas, as follows:

> **Interviewee 12 (28-year-old female):** I'm too young so I didn't go through the history of this country in the same way as my parents. Of course I know that being an Armenian is such a thing that needs to be concealed. I was taught to say 'I am a Turkish of an Armenian descent'. When my parents saw the protests and the slogan 'We are all Armenians', for the very first time my parents felt guilty since they raised me in such an assimilated way. I think this murder affected the youth more. For instance, I used to be apolitical but now I am more interested in politics. I had never gone out and shouted slogans in the protests, but now I feel myself more involved in the events.
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> **Interviewee 33 (27-year-old female):** I was 21 when this event took place and was not a very political person at the time. The protest organised on the day of the murder was the first protest that I had ever attended; and after that I didn't re-enter the home. It was a breaking point for me. I was at the university and came to realise more things. I started to find out everything, including the genocide, after the murder.
>
> **Interviewee 39 (26-year-old female):** I could understand his uneasiness from his writings during the process that resulted in the murder. I was proud of him as he was able to speak up about the issues and he paved the way for us. This murder also coincided with the time that I recently started to become politicised. Since then I became more politicised and sorrow was replaced by anger.

In spite of the self-enlightenment of these respondents with regard to their Armenian identity and engaging in political matters after the murder, a female interviewee within the same age group approaches the subject from another perspective. She explains the predictability of this assassination through the lack of democracy in Turkey and 'the

command of the sovereign'. Her criticism toward the AKP government, and Erdoğan in particular, is apparent; nonetheless, she asserts that this political situation is not limited to the AKP government but ever present within the roughly 100-year-old history of the Turkish Republic. This point of view also resembles the points raised by the senior interviewees, in the sense that they consider the assassination of Dink as an extension of previous forms of state-led violence and a discriminatory mentality embedded in the state apparatuses.

Consequently, the funeral of Dink challenged the state-imposed ethnic and religious segregation, as a heterogeneous crowd gathered together to raise their voice against the hostility towards Armenians. The slogans 'we are all Armenians' and 'we are all Hrant Dink' even contradict the official historiography that dictates the Turkish and Muslim identity for a desirable citizen. It is also argued that the funeral march indicated how solidarity surpassed ethnicity by a 'contentious collective action' (Tarrow 1994) in which individuals without any access to political power through institutions, congregate to 'voice a claim that challenges authority through sustained interface' (cited in Gellman, 2013: 786). The attitudes of Armenians pertaining to this social cohesion, when considered from this point of view, come into prominence. As I did pose a non-directive question about the assassination to delve into the perceptions and feelings of the interviewees, the decision about commenting on the funeral was completely left up to the interviewees. Based on the accounts of the interviewees who integrated the impact of the funeral ceremony into their analysis, the forms of observations and recollections might be classified into two standpoints. On the one hand, the gathering of thousands of people from different backgrounds to protest against the murder and speak up for the Armenian community led some interviewees to depict the funeral as an extraordinary moment. To witness the support of non-Armenian individuals, as expressed by a 29-year-old male interviewee, overturned the disappointment and dispiritedness felt after the murder. Particularly, the slogan 'we are all Hrant; we are all Armenians' was, according to a 39-year-old female respondent, an atypical manifestation of solidarity. More notably, another interviewee (a 53-year-old male) claims this solidarity was able to arise since different actors and dynamics of the society assembled in order to contribute to the democratisation process in Turkey. The funeral ceremony, along with its components, thus comes to provide counter-hegemonic spatial and discursive

articulations. Through the lens of official ideology, the selection of the protest site, in front of the *Agos* newspaper's office building, and the challenging slogans that associated the image of the national 'we' with the Armenian identity and the placards in Armenian and Kurdish, as well as Turkish, might be read as forms of resistance to Turkish nationalism and its official narratives. Regarding the implications for the participants of the funeral, one exceptional interpretation belongs to a 55-year-old female interviewee who depicts the slogans as a 'salve on the wound', since they caused Armenians to perceive that they are not isolated and to relate this sense of unity to collective resistance in the Gezi Park protest.

On the other hand, the persistence of the support for the Armenian community and the sincerity of non-Armenian attendees of the funeral are questioned by another group of respondents. The focal point of this sceptical thinking is voiced by a 33-year-old-female interviewee along these lines: 'There was a crowd of people in the funeral and on every 19th January to support us. It is really good to see this support but I am not sure if we can experience the same support at any moment of our lives.' The subtext of this explanation points out the marginalisation of Armenians in their quotidian interaction with other members of the society, as well as their continuing experiences of everyday nationalism in the Turkish state. Although the protest march consolidated the sense of protection among Armenians, a 29-year-old male interviewee poses challenging questions, such as: 'where are all these people who attended the funeral and gathered together even after the funeral? Did these people come to the funeral just to confess and ease their consciences and was that all?' Even if he admits that the solidarity created among different ethnic and religious groups assisted them to overcome 'their' trauma and made Armenians think that 'we are defended this time', he complains about the impermanence of this help. In a similar vein, another respondent (a 33-year-old male) probes questions such as: 'was this event supposed to happen to make thousands of people march? How can I trust your sincerity?' He calls to account both those Armenians and non-Armenians who had not taken action before the murder for their indifferent attitude in the earlier period. By taking into consideration these critical comments, it becomes discernible that the interviewees seek out a consistent approach from non-Armenians towards their problems and, more importantly, that they oppose the ostensible support for the minority rights.

Finally, the interviewees' opinions with respect to the assassination bring up the themes of the involvement of the state and deep-state, the positioning of the media and the problematic aspects of the judicial process. The tone of the criticisms toward different agencies for the most part might be regarded as accusatory. For instance, a 33-year-old male respondent asserts that the state is 'the biggest mafia' which also instigated the perpetrator to commit this crime. By referring to the books 'Hrant' (2010) by Tuba Çandar, and 'The Murder of Hrant Dink: Media, Jurisdiction, State' (2009) by Kemal Göktaş, another interviewee (a 38-year-old male) highlights the fact that this assassination is an organised crime and that its origins should be investigated within the inner mechanisms of the state. In a more explicit manner a 37-year-old respondent expresses his views as follows:

> It is an official murder; it is a murder of a national consensus. In the murder of Hrant Dink the state is in a white cap[16] . Not only Ogün Samast, but the state as a whole is in a white cap. Ideologically, the state is the murderer. 'I killed an Armenian' as the exclamation of the perpetrator is also the motto of the state.

The governing idea in this account also coincides with the remarkable phrase, 'the state's tradition of being murderer' employed by another interviewee (a 34-year-old male) to explain how the different channels of the Turkish state were involved in the assassination of Hrant Dink. This phrase also accentuates the historical continuity in terms of the elimination of Armenians through the hands of the state and a pervasive distrust of the state and its institutions even in terms of the protection of the basic right to life. As stated by a 26-year-old female interviewee, the stance of the Turkish media might be also considered as equivalent to the strategy of the state in terms of distorting the truth. The differences in the media representations before and after the murder are provided as an example by a 39-year-old male respondent to point out the biased attitude of the Turkish media towards Armenians. Although the mainstream media, such as *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*, had caused Dink to become a target for nationalist attacks, after the murder news discourse in the same newspapers changed and the titles, such as 'Hrant Dink is Turkey' and 'Freedom has been shot', appeared in these papers. In simple terms, the interviewee also highlights the selection of the term, 'an Armenian from

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[16] The white cap was worn by the perpetrator on the day of the murder and later it has become an infamous symbol of the incident and a mark of pride among nationalist voices in Turkey.

Turkey', instead of 'an Armenian' by the newspapers in the case where a person represents Turkey in the Olympic Games. In contrast, three respondents call attention to the positive attitude of the press that keeps the audience informed of the latest developments with regard to the case of Hrant Dink. Thanks to the efforts of the Turkish media, a 36-year-old male interviewee argues, the assassination remains on the political agenda. Although 'extreme rightist and nationalist' print media adopted a negative attitude towards the murder, according to the interviewee newspapers generally took a positive stand on this case. Another interviewee (a 44-year-old male) also points out the attempts of some journalists to extend the investigation. Regarding the judicial process of the Hrant Dink case, the most repetitive theme is the suspicion of the interviewees about the independence of judiciary. Based on the assumption of the involvement of the state in this assassination, the spoliation of evidence comes to the agenda. However, two interviewees interestingly stated that such a judicial question is not peculiar to the case of Hrant Dink, as other court cases are also cursorily conducted in Turkey. A 44-year-old male respondent describes this legal process as another scandalous moment for the judicial system in Turkey. More notably, he underscores the fact that all the state organs in Turkey remain unresponsive to the killing of an Armenian, which also reflects the inner structuring of the state. In the same way, a younger interviewee (a 24-year-old male) enunciates that this case once again reinforces the assertion of impunity after 1915 for the killing of an Armenian. Nevertheless, other unsolved murders of intellectuals and public figures are recalled by some interviewees to contend that different voices are always silenced by the cooperation among the state bodies.

## 5.3. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of both CDA of a sample of news stories in selected national newspapers and semi-structured interviews with Armenians with regard to the assassination of Hrant Dink. In the first section I identified three dominant themes in news discourse of three different newspapers. The first theme is connected to the idea of insecurity of Turkish national identity along with the formation of an implicit enemy figure. News representations depicted the Turkish state as an actual aggrieved party and attempted to prevent any argument that the attack was the consequence of prevailing existence of Turkish nationalisms and the connivance of the state. The second theme focuses on the emphasis of the international image of Turkey and Turkish national

identity. All the newspapers under analysis drew attention to the risk of instrumentalising this particular act of violence against an Armenian by 'non-Turkish' actors to strengthen Armenian genocide claims. The third theme is related to ambivalent standpoints of designated newspapers concerning the slogan 'We are all Hrant, we are all Armenians', which challenged the fundamental components of Turkish national identity. In spite of common discursive stress on national unity and reaction to this incident it is possible to observe a shared tendency among dailies to picture the protest as evidence for a homogenous Turkishness. In contrast to my presumptions, the overall outcome of CDA regarding this case is that newspapers under review employed quite similar discursive strategies in their news reporting of the assassination of Hrant Dink.

The second section of this chapter unveiled the perceptions and reactions of Armenian interviewees about this happening and its repercussions for their lives and identities. From my point of view the most significant argument that came out of these narratives was that this assault led the respondents to establish a connection between the Armenian genocide and continuing atrocities against the Armenian community. Although many of the interviewees pointed out other discriminatory state policies and violent incidents targeting themselves in the wake of the genocide, the assassination of Hrant Dink seemed to add a new dimension to their own Armenian identities as well as interpretations of state-sponsored violence. Moreover generational differences among younger and older respondents became evident as their depictions of the Hrant Dink case were dichotomised into 'traumatic' and 'usual/expected' experiences. In this regard I claim that the uniqueness and mundaneness of this case at the same time denote both an interruption and continuity in the treatment of the Turkish state against its citizens. While this assassination was read by some interviewees as another 'sacrifice' for the visibility of the Armenian identity and the official denial to confront the past, a group of interviewees perceived it as a similar case to previous attacks against intellectual figures in Turkey. In opposition to news coverage of the Hrant Dink case in three national newspapers, many of the interviewees situated this particular act of violence within a socio-historical context; and despite 'national' concerns implied by three newspapers concerning the genocide recognition, many of the accounts associated this assault with wider institutional problems of the state and intolerant aspects of forms of nationalism in Turkey.

# CHAPTER SIX
## The CASE of the MURDER of SEVAG BALIKÇI
## (24th April 2011)

This chapter addresses the murder of an Armenian private, Sevag Balıkçı, by a Turkish private in the same unit under his compulsory military service.[17] As this distressing event took place on 24th April 2011 which was also the 96th anniversary of Armenian Genocide, the timing became the most noteworthy aspect of this incident. This incident thus raised new questions about the status and experiences of the minority groups in the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and the implications of compulsory military service for non-Muslim and non-Turkish male citizens. Regarding the maltreatment and discriminatory practices against members of 'different' ethnic and religious groups during the military service, Bali's (2011) book includes interviews with eighty non-Muslim citizens served in the Turkish army. According to his analysis Armenians encounter the most serious problems during their military service; it is mainly because the 1915 incidents continuously become a matter of discussion and Armenians are compelled to concede the official ideology of the state as well as the nationalist sentiments of other soldiers.

In the present case, hence, the issue is not limited to find an answer to the question 'how a soldier could be killed by another soldier under the protection of TSK?' Instead the question 'how this incident was dealt with by different institutional and societal actors such as TSK, judiciary system as well as national newspapers?' needs to be asked. Although this murder was initially believed to be an accident and reported as an unexpected outcome of the joking around of two friends, the testimonies of other soldiers suggested Sevag's Armenian identity was the main cause of his murder.[18] The Turkish-Armenian weekly Agos reported that Sevag had told his fiancée about his problems in his unit; a couple of weeks before the event a soldier lost some money and one of his commanders had held Sevag responsible and beat him mercilessly. Although

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[17] Here I use the terms 'Armenian' and 'Turkish' to refer to different ethnic/religious identities. However, all the male citizens doing their compulsory military service are accepted officially as 'Turkish' but the emphasis is on the descent, in this case Sevag was a Turkish private of Armenian descent.

[18] Retrieved from: http://www.todayszaman.com/news-269806-armenian-private-killed-intentionally-new-testimony-shows.html, Today's Zaman, 27 January 2012

he filed an official complaint against the commander for the incident, he had to withdraw his complaint under pressure. His fiancée also said

> I don't believe that this happened while they were kidding with one another. I believe that he was murdered. Some fascists in his unit were pressuring him. I think that they were talking about April 24 the Armenian Genocide commemoration day, and one of them shot him.[19]

Moreover this killing 'coincided' with the Easter and as the testimonies revealed Sevag was threatened by his murderer who told him "I will kill you, fatty!' 'This will be the last Easter cake you ate' 'If the war begins between Armenia and Turkey, I will shoot you!' On the basis of the comments and photos the murderer shared on the social media, it was later recognised that he was a follower of Great Union Party which is a far-right Islamist party and defends the synthesis of Turkish nationalism and Islam for the governance.[20]

Similar to the Hrant Dink case the official authorities failed to interrogate the incident by wide ranging methods and publicise all the details about this 'suspicious' death of an Armenian citizen. Although TSK first announced the killing of Sevag as an unfortunate result of the kidding of two soldiers, later on it was declared that he was the victim of a stray bullet. As Karaca (2013) writes, on the contrary, the advocates of victims called attention to the contradictions in witnesses' testimonies and indicated the report of Turkey's main forensic institution. This report also proved that the murderer's rifle was shot in parallel to the victim, which was the evidence which might refute the claims for the accident. However the court decided that it was an accident and sentenced the perpetrator to serve only for 4 years and 5 months in prison. Depending on this verdict Kalaycı[21] (2013), an activist from *Justice for Sevag Initiative*, claimed that for the Armenian community and other communities in Turkey the court reproduced the idea that 'if you claim your identity and presence you might be killed 'accidentally' and appeared in the news as 'a soldier committed suicide' and underlined that Armenians are not able to find solutions for their problems unless they resist the dominant system

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[19] Retrieved from:http://www.armenianweekly.com/2011/05/01/istanbul-armenian-soldier-shot-dead-on-the-96th-anniversary-of-armenian-genocide/, Armenian Weekly, 1 May 2013
[20] Retrieved from: http://rojpress.com/?p=11194
[21] Retrieved from: http://rojpress.com/?p=11194

in Turkey. More remarkably, Kalaycı emphasises that Armenians played a part in the court's decision-accidental killing-as they did not make an effort to demand justice. These self-explanatory statements are also enlightening for this research. On the one hand, the constitutional definition of Turkishness comprises Armenians who are expected to serve for the Turkish Republic and also 'Turkish' nation and continually prove their loyalty to the state through the compulsory military service. Yet at the same time Armenians are not able to become the military officers or hold high ranking positions in the TSK due to their descent. On the other hand, the existence and visibility of Armenian identity still challenge the 'identity, temporal and spatial claims of nationalist discourse' (Özkırımlı, 2010:208-209) in Turkey and the very basic definition of Turkish citizenship. Their unequal position as Turkish citizens also reveals itself in the unfair trials such as the cases of Sevag Balıkçı and Hrant Dink that fail to meet the standards of unbiased and in-depth judgement process. Kalaycı's stress on the responsibility of Armenians in terms of claiming their substantive rights from judicial system and countering the prevailing structures within the state and TSK is also worth mentioning. Although the Turkish Armenian civic group *Nor Zartonk* and the *Justice for Sevag Initiative* attended all hearings and struggled to publicise this case, it is difficult to say that the Armenian community in general showed enough interest and commitment for the lawsuit of this murder.

My endeavour to explore how the murder of an Armenian private by another private under the protection of Turkish Armed Forces is reported and represented in different national newspapers also aims at discovering discursive formations of Turkish nationalisms with respect to the 'Armenian question'. As the democratisation process in Turkey has been interrupted by several military coups (directly in 1960 and 1980, indirectly in 1971, 'post-modern' coup in 1997 and 'e-coup' in 2007) and Turkish Army is encircled by nationalist and religious motifs, civil-military relations particularly between non-Muslim/Turkish citizens and military becomes a new testing ground for Turkish nationalism. It might be argued that recent years under the rule of AKP government witnessed the weakening of the strength attributed to TSK as the guardian of secular Turkish national identity. Particularly as Ünver (2009:2-3) elaborates *Ergenekon* process, the investigation of retired army generals, politicians, media representatives and civil society leaders who are accused of making an attempt to

initiate a military coup to overthrow the AKP government brought the deep-state networks in Turkey to the agenda. However, the politicisation of Ergenekon case has been harshly criticised as it has been claimed that AKP government uses this case for its own interest in order to silence opponent groups and individuals (*ibid*: 12). While the attempts of AKP government oppress the power of TSK and consolidates its supremacy, in 2012 PM Erdogan paved the way for a new law to propose the concept of civil martyrdom which includes distributing various government benefits to the families of martyrs, security personnel wounded in an attack and civilians lost their lives in attack. However the leader of Nationalist Movement Party objected to this new law by saying that 'Martyrdom is not a legal term or concept; it is a religious or national value. Nobody has the right to determine who can be called a martyr by legal interventions'[22] and 'Someone is required to be Muslim in order to be accepted as martyr'[23]. Afterwards Sevag's family reacted to this emphasis on the link between Turkish-Muslim identity and martyrdom. Sevag's mother underlined that this statement made themselves feel as the 'others' and said 'if anyone who decease during the military service is taken into account as 'martyr', my son also needs to be accepted as martyr'[24].

It might be alleged that the discussion about the civil martyrdom law over the murder of an Armenian private also bears the stamp of the debate on the civic definition of Turkish national identity after the protests against the assassination of Hrant Dink. Sevag's Armenian identity as the main cause of his death, the controversial judgment process and the ways this murder is appeared and/or overlooked in national newspapers once again necessitate focusing on the equal citizenship rights of non-Muslim citizens. From my point of view, this murder stands at the intersection point between distinct but at the same time inter-related dimensions of the power relations, discrimination and demands for rights in the Turkish nation-state with its own hegemonic structures.

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[22] Retrieved from: http://www.todayszaman.com/news-275577-mhp-leader-bahceli-protests-new-regulation-of-civil-martyrdom.html, *Today's Zaman*, 27 March 2012

[23] Retrieved from: http://www.hristiyangazete.com/2012/03/gayrimuslim-sehitler-otekilestiriliyor-mu/, *Hristiyan Gazete*, 30 March 2012

[24] Retrieved from: http://www.internethaber.com/er-sevag-sahin-balikci-ani-ermeni-vatandaslar-gayrimuslim-sehit-tartismalari-vat-411075h.htm, *Internet Haber*, 28 March 2012

**6.1. Critical Discourse Analysis of the Murder of Sevag Balıkçı**

This section delves into media portrayals of the murder of Sevag Balıkçı in newspapers under analysis. As Balıkçı had not been a public figure and had come to be known after his death accordingly the quantity of the news stories featuring this event are limited compared to the Hrant Dink case. The other point that needs to be mentioned is that the murder became a newsworthy subject in *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* after the three days had passed. Thus from 27th April 2011 onwards the incident were given space in these mentioned papers. By employing CDA I investigate a series of themes in news coverage of three papers concerning the murder of an Armenian soldier by a Turkish soldier.

**6.1.1. The Reference to Ethnic Background**

To begin with *Zaman* reported the killing of Sevag Balıkçı on 27th April 2011 by using the title 'from the gendarmerie to the family of Armenian descent: Your son died in an accident'. The title selection itself seems to unmask the ideological standpoint of the daily. The word choice 'Armenian descent' expounds not only the importance attached to the ethnic-religious identity of the victim's family but also the reminder of the inferior status of his identity. In other words even if the victim as a citizen of the Turkish Republic is killed when serving for the Turkish army his Armenian identity remains as a unique indicator. Moreover the tone and writing style of the title are so harsh which gives the impression of lack of empathy for both the victim's household as well as for the entire Armenian community in Turkey. Although the newspaper might disagree with the gendarmerie's verdict that the cause of death is accident by incorporating this statement into the title, the paper looks as if promoting this estimation.

The opening sentence of the news text also describes Balıkçı as the 'Turkish citizen of Armenian descent' and underlines that his death caused by a bullet fired from the rifle of 'his friend' led to discussions. While narrating the interrogation request of Balıkçı's family from the authorities it is emphasised that the Balıkçı family regards their son whom they lost in the Easter holiday not as a 'martyr'. There are basically two controversial points in this news content. First the Balıkçı family refuses the claim of the accidental nature of Sevag's death but not the status of the martyrdom given by the Turkish army as it comes light by the subsequent statements of the family. But the news

story depicts the situation as if from the very beginning the family renounces the martyrdom status of Sevag. The basic reason for this discursive strategy might be the Islamic connotations of the martyrdom in which deceased soldiers are granted highest religious status by the Turkish army. The decease of a Christian soldier in this case however might lead the newspaper to develop such a prejudiced language. Second the stress on 'the Easter holiday' draws attention to the non-Muslim character of the victim and also the family. More remarkably the timing of the murder is associated with the Easter holiday instead of the Armenian genocide remembrance day. That is to say the newspaper puts aside the symbolic meaning of this murder committed by nationalist motives.

The murder of Sevag Balıkçı hit the headline of *Hürriyet* 'Martyr's House' on 27th April 2011 and a part of his story appeared on the front page of the daily. After informing the readers that the victim was shot by a 'stray' bullet during his 'national' service in the army the news story quotes the last conversation between the mother of the victim and Sevag Balıkçı. It is conveyed in a narrative form and includes a dialogue that recounts how they celebrate Easter with each other and Sevag did receive one of the sweet yeast breads that his mother had sent him. It is also written that Sevag had said 'Kiser Pari Mama' which means 'Good night Mom' while he hung up the phone. Interestingly the reporters employ this Armenian phrase 'Kiser Pari Mama' in the subheading.  That is to say the text tacitly leads the news audience to perceive both the religious and linguistic attributes of the deceased by abstaining from using the word 'Armenian'. Beside the news story there is also a photo of a waving Turkish flag in front of a house which might be assumed as a possession of the Balıkçı's family. By means of this visual image the paper authenticates the Turkish nationality of an Armenian family along with the lexical choices of 'national' service and 'martyr' in the eyes of the readers.

The news article is continued on the fifth page and the journalist maintains the story-telling tone that the personal details about Balıkçı (i.e. the university and the department he had graduated from, his favourite football team, his career plans) and his experiences at the army and relations with his parents are narrated. In contrary to the writing style and editorial preferences of *Zaman Hürriyet* seems to arouse the reader's interest by focusing on the tragic aspects of the incident and pictures the murder of

Sevag as a totally unexpected accident. Furthermore the following paragraph intends to legitimise a particular mentality through the direct quotations of Sevag's father and uncle as such

> The father Garabet Balıkçı said that "Long live the homeland but I opt he would have been dead during a battle. Due to the cause of his death I cannot accept that he is a martyr." The uncle Murat Sant Ozler explains that they have no doubts regarding the day coincided with 24th April and states that 'On that day the only thing that occurred to Sevag was to share the cake with his friends.'

These statements also underpin the prevailing attitude that there is no organic link between the murder and the genocidal aims of the perpetrator. The expression 'Long live the homeland' correspondingly infers that 'the survival of our homeland and our state is enough of a remedy to the tragedy of the individuals we lose' (Akyol 2008). This media portrayal also reveals how the conception of sacrifice for the nation is naturalised even in the absence of wartime. As 'blood sacrifice connects the citizen to the nation' and 'the flag is the sign and agent of the nation formed in blood sacrifice' (Marvin and Ingle, 1998:63), the news stories concerning the murder and funeral of Sevag Balıkçı operate as legitimizing tools for this national imaginary.

The news reporting of the murder of Sevag Balıkçı is initially raised in *Cumhuriyet* on 27th April 2011 in the same way as *Hürriyet* and *Zaman*. *Cumhuriyet* however allocated comparatively less space to the coverage of this murder which contains only two sentences on the ninth page. As the selected title 'They will host Sevak's family' utilises null subject it is uncertain who will host Sevag's family. More importantly as the title assumes that this murder had been already a familiar topic for the readers it fails to give any answer to the questions 'who is Sevag' and 'why his family is hosted by an unknown subject'. In addition to the vague language in the news discourse the word choice 'host' to describe the incident seems unsuitable as it purports a positive and voluntary action. It gives the impression that thanks to the hospitality of the General Commandership of Gendarmerie the Balıkçı family decides to visit gendarme station where the event took place. However it becomes clarified in the news content that the General Commandership of Gendarmerie plans to 'host' the Balıkçı family in order to enable them to talk privately with the commanders and friends of Sevag. It should be also noted

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that just as in the news coverage of *Zaman* the phrase 'Turkish citizen of Armenian descent' appears in the news item of *Cumhuriyet* as well as the emphasis on the 'martyr' status of the deceased.

It is also interesting to see that the Armenian name of Sevag turns out to be 'Sevak' in the title as well as in the text. As the words in the Turkish language do not end with the letters 'b, c, d, g', this letter change in the news signifies the linguistic effort to adjust an Armenian word according to the grammar rules of Turkish. Although this might sound a minor attempt language has been always one of the apparatuses for the self-identification of Turkish nationalism. From a historical perspective also during the construction of the Turkish state language was employed as a significant device 'to create Turkishness as a collective identity' which was essential for the formation of national consciousness (Smith 1991 cited in Aydıngün and Aydıngün, 2004:416). In this case also the sense of collective identity and the perception of a shared language are invented via linguistic assimilation of another language. The discursive strategy adopted by *Cumhuriyet* as a secular and defender of Turkish national 'values' paper operates through the patterns of denial and transformation. In the first step the newspaper neglects the existence and legitimacy of the Armenian language and in the subsequent step the composition of the Armenian language is altered in consistent with the Turkish language.

### 6.1.2. The Issue of Martyrdom

News discourse employed by *Zaman* in the following day also signals similar language and the ideological standpoint in relation to the murder. The headline on 28th April 2011 after the funeral is 'The Turkish private of Armenian descent killed by a stray bullet was buried with a Turkish flag'. In addition to the avoidance of using active voice in the sentence the headline states the prejudgement of the newspaper concerning the cause of death even though the court had not been finalised its decision at that time. The integration of the expression 'Turkish flag' into the headline also operates as a banal reminder of nationhood (Billig, 1995: 41) but brings no added value to the news content. Besides as the victim had been serving in the Turkish Armed Forces, the arrangement of a military funeral for the martyr is an ordinary procedure which includes covering the

coffin with the Turkish flag. Yet this ceremony routine for Sevag Balikci is taken out of its natural context and presented as an exceptional case.

Moreover CDA of the news story uncovers overlexicalization which is an excessive use of descriptive expression (Svetanant, 2009:231). As a result of overlexical preference of Zaman the phrase of 'the Armenian descent' is repetitively mentioned to define the victim that news audience might memorise only this information after reading this piece. According to Fowler *et.al* (1979 cited in Teo, 2000:20) it is typical that powerless people are over-lexicalized; for example since nurses are supposed to be female there is a certain stigma or markedness is attached to 'male nurse'. Thus 'overlexicalization often has a pejorative effect as it signals a kind of deviation from social convention and reflects perceptions and judgements from the essentially biased standpoint of such cultural norms or social expectations' (*ibid*: 20-21). Seen in this light the martyr funeral arranged in an Armenian Church contradicts with the conventional Islamic rituals so the discursive reflection of this funeral in the media representation draws on overlexicalization. The recurrent overlexical choices such as 'Armenian descent', 'Turkish flag' and 'Armenian Church' shape the meaning construction of the text.

The news coverage of the funeral also encompasses the declarations of Egemen Bağış-the Minister for EU Affairs (State Minister) and Chief Negotiator and Mustafa Sarıgül-the mayor of Şişli (one of the districts in Istanbul). Interestingly *Zaman* quotes only one sentence of Bağış from among his press statements at the end of the ceremony. This direct quotation is as follows: 'our brother Sevag died as a martyr during when he is on duty serving for our country's unity and integrity'. The expressions of 'our' brother and 'our' country are worth of mentioning as the national gesture is activated through both the inclusion of an Armenian into an understanding of the Turkish 'brotherhood' and fostering a shared national territory which needs protection from the enemies of the Turkish state. The reporting of the mayor's account is equally momentous. At the same time as Sarıgül expresses his condolences to the Balıkçı family and 'the community members' he emphasizes that the 'coincidence' of this 'unfortunate' event with the Easter holiday makes him more upset. By neglecting the importance of the day 24th April for both the motive behind the offense and further investigation of the case, the murder and its timing are rationalised through their predestined characters.

Furthermore the text involves the utterance of Balıkçı's father by employing reported speech that he said he would keep the flag forever while delivering the 'Turkish' flag on the coffin from the Gendarmerie Regional Commander. Although it is a matter of common knowledge that the coffin of a deceased soldier is wrapped in the national flag, the reporter additionally underlines the word 'Turkish flag'. Under the subheading of 'The news in the press have provocative aims' the reactions of the victim's family and friends to the news appeared in the press are highlighted. The main issue then becomes apparent that the interview done by a reporter from the newspaper *Aydınlık* with the 'alleged' partner of the victim is claimed to have 'provocative aims'. The adjective 'alleged' characterising the partner attempts to impose the conviction that this person is an unreliable source of information. This discursive effort gains meaning by the succeeding sentence shown as follows

> It was already announced that Sevag Sahin Balikci lost his life by a bullet mistakenly fired from his friend's rifle during a practice of loading-unloading while 23 days left for his demobilization on the date of 24th April which is accepted as a remembrance day of the so-called Armenian genocide.

It is implied that the death of the victim is an isolated incident and more interestingly the reporter seeks to refute the comments of the victim's partner without even citing or mentioning them. However it is detectable that the partner claimed that this offense had been committed deliberately and the perpetrator had also picked out the date specifically. As a result it might be argued that the news story makes an implicit differentiation between 'good' and 'bad' Armenians through these discursive strategies. The representation of the victim's father and family as committed to the Turkish state by internalising the components of both official ideology and national symbols also overlaps with the national goal of creating 'congruent' Turkish citizens despite their different descents.

The funeral of Sevag Balıkçı has relatively wider news coverage in *Cumhuriyet* on 28th April 2011 and the title 'The Funeral of a Martyr in the Church' appeared on the front page. Before redirecting the reader to the fourth page where the article is continued, three key pieces of information are provided by the news story which reflects the

standpoint of the editorial policy of the newspaper. Although the reporter refrains from stating the ethnic identity of the fallen soldier both the heading and the text draw attention to the religious affiliation of Sevag Balıkçı. The usage of the word 'church' seems to be considered as explanatory enough to make news audience understand that the mentioned person is not Muslim. Despite his non-Muslim identity the text underlines that he is accepted as a martyr and finally informs the readers regarding the participation of the military authorities in the funeral. These discursive preferences might be read as the methods of stigmatisation that embrace the classification of a minority group member by a peculiar trait, the so-called recognition of his contradictory status and the ability to 'tolerate' the different national subject. The main news coverage on the fourth page is also predicated on these schemes. Once again the religious ceremony in the church, the condition of martyrdom ascribed to the deceased soldier and the attendance of both the state and military authorities picture the skeleton of the news discourse. This time yet the paper calls of naming Sevag as Sevak without adding any revision note. Besides *Cumhuriyet* takes part in the same discursive sphere constructed by *Hürriyet* and *Zaman* and draws on the expression of 'the coffin covered by the Turkish flag' and the identical photo published by Hurriyet as a visual representation.

Although one of the chief goals of journalism is to seek an answer for the question of 'When did it take place?' *Cumhuriyet* fails to offer any information regarding the time of the incident in the news stories. It reports the murder of Sevag Balıkçı as happened at any time recently with no specified date. As meaning in news discourse is also determined by what is absent, not selected, discursively repressed (Hartley, 1982:117) the journalistic strategy of *Cumhuriyet* to disregard the date of the murder proves how it also looks through the lens of the official ideology. By decontextualizing the incident news reporting in *Cumhuriyet* presents the murder as an 'ordinary' criminal case. In other words the significance of the timing, the concerned parties, and the criminal intent of the perpetrator are removed in the news discourse. This deliberate tactic naturally prevents the readers to grasp the determining factors of the murder. More remarkably biased news coverage constrains the perceptual field with respect to the current status of Armenians in Turkey and the tangible evidence for the ongoing effects of the genocidal mentality. From this point of view the media representations of Armenians

are not limited to the 'ideological square' which consists of positive self-representation and negative other representation (Van Dijk 1998 cited in Shojaei *et.al*, 2013: 859). They also divulge the ways in which news discourse contributes to the repression and silencing of the attitudes, experiences and reactions of Armenians as an ethnic-religious minority group. In other words the othering of Armenians sometimes becomes visible in the national newspapers as in the case of *Cumhuriyet* via their invisibility.

### 6.1.3. Sacrifice for the Nation

The symbolic meaning attached to the flag and the portrayal of sacrifice for the nation as an honorary act are also integrated into the news coverage of *Hürriyet* on 28th April 2011. The title 'Kissed the flag as he took it' on the front page is deprived of an active subject and the accent is on the flag as a respected national value. In order to intensify the effect of the news and convince the readers regarding the action, a photo of the victim's father kissing the flag facing Istanbul Gendarmerie Regional Commander is printed. This photo on the one hand displays the deep-seated structure of the power relations between the state governmental authorities and the citizens. On the other hand this visual image leads the consumers of a national newspaper to comprehend sacrifice for the nation as an inseparable part of patriotism. The frequent phrase 'Turkish flag on the coffin' in the text along with the photo also glorifies the idea of suffering for the permanence of the state.

Moreover the ethos of the patriotic sacrifice is claimed to be closely connected to modern nationalism and 'individuals' readiness to die for their nation is a social and moral act that defies their instinct for personal survival in the name of the future of the collectivity' (Zerubavel, 2006:73). It might be claimed that in a time of crisis such as the murder of a soldier by another soldier under the protection of a national army, the discursive construction of 'the ethos of the patriotic sacrifice' overlooks the 'will' of a national subject. The media representations of Balıkçı in *Hürriyet* seem to suppress the distinction between the will and willingness to sacrifice for one's nation in which 'willingness is passive; one expects to respond if and when asked to sacrifice whereas the will to sacrifice is the already established desire to do so' (Axinn, 2010:63). This moment of crisis even might be regarded as an occasion for news discourse to (re)produce and negotiate with Turkish nationalisms under the name of patriotism. For

instance *Hürriyet* publishes the title 'Sevag was bid farewell as red and white' via the device of metonymy to give the message that the Turkish flag was the major constitutive element of the funeral. Since red and white as the colours of the Turkish flag are featured the heading merges this national emblem with a 'sacrificed' citizen for the nation. Due to the positions of the sacrificer and the sacrificed the indebted nation expresses its gratitude through this military funeral in which the fallen soldier becomes a national symbol. Patriotic sacrifice also results in sophisticated routines of obligations between the bereaved family and the state that the state supports the family to cope with the death whereas 'the bereaved family reaffirms the importance of the nation by its participation in official commemorations'. Consequently it is presumed by the patriotic ethos that the families of the deceased soldiers and the state come to an understanding concerning the importance of sacrifice (Zerubavel, 2006:73-4).

The case of Sevag Balıkçı additionally presents how discursive framing still nurtures the idea of the sacrifice for the Turkish nation as expressed by the degree of martyrdom even when the soldier belongs to a different nation and is 'sacrificed' by his soldier friend. Yet at the same time the incompatibility between Sevag's religious identity and the notion of martyrdom defined as one of the highest titles in Islamic belief challenges the national themes in the news discourse. Thus the national newspapers appear to be compelled to underline the participation of the Turkish military officers and the State Minister in the ceremony and the arrangement of the funeral at the Armenian Church as novel practices. Unexpectedly only one of the columnists of *Hürriyet*, Mehmet Yılmaz mentioned the national newspapers' ways of reporting the funeral of Sevag Balıkçı in his column on 29th April 2011.[25] In order to indicate the similarities among the dailies concerning the funeral of Balıkçı, Yılmaz listed the names and the headlines of some national newspapers which are shown below.

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[25] Retrieved from: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/17663750.asp

| Sabah | The Priest Officiated the Ritual: 'Today is the day to get to understand each other' |
|---|---|
| Milliyet | He was Bid Farewell by the Turkish Flag. A Great Number of TAF (Turkish Armed Forces) Personnel Attended the Ceremony in the Church |
| Akşam | A Martyr Private Sevag was Bid Farewell by Church Bells. Many Soldiers Attended the Ceremony. |
| Vatan | The Funeral of a Martyr in the Church |
| Radikal | The Soldiers Bid Farewell |
| Habertürk | The Minister and the General in the Funeral at the Church |
| Posta | The Military Ceremony in the Church |
| Star | The Funeral of a Martyr Soldier in the Church |
| Yeni Şafak | He was Bid Farewell in the Church |
| Taraf | The Funeral in the Church for an Armenian Martyr |

After asking the news worthiness of the participation of the soldiers in the funeral and doing a funeral ceremony for a Christian at the church, Yılmaz then poses the questions 'When the deceased is a Muslim soldier do the newspapers put emphasis on holding a funeral at a mosque? Is the involvement of great number of soldiers in a martyr funeral not a normal situation?' He claims that news reporting through such an attitude manifests how discrimination and racism penetrate to 'our' marrows and concludes his column by saying that this has not been a good test for 'our' newspapers as they stress their difference and report the news on the basis of difference.

The issue of difference also becomes evident when *Hürriyet* recounts the statements of the partner of Sevag Balıkçı. The subheading 'The Fiancée Upsets the Family' declares not only an opinion but also stereotypes both of the parties without providing any supporting information. Following the quotation of a single sentence 'I do not believe that his cause of death is accident' uttered by the fiancée the news story highlights that

the people from the Armenian community who are close to the family said that the Balıkçı family had not approved their son's marriage with his fiancée. It is also claimed that as the declarations of the fiancée after the death of Sevag upset the family, they do not even want to see her. Since the views of anonymous informants are taken into account as news source this news story is unable to go beyond speculative claims. It however sets an example of one of the discursive mechanisms of the newspapers to deal with the counter arguments such as the potential link between the murder and the victim's ethnic-religious identity. It might be alleged that the opposite contentions with respect to the motive of the murder and its capacity to revitalise the genocide discussions challenge the claims of nationalism which in return affects the discursive strategies. The binary opposition between the family and the fiancée is entrenched in the news stories that echoes the differentiation between 'good' and 'bad' Muslims in the US context (Mamdani 2004) and 'Muslims in Europe' and 'Muslims of Europe' in the European setting (Marranci, 2004:112). News story in *Hürriyet* also employs this intragroup distinction in order to consolidate the bonds of nationhood.

## 6.2. More than an Accident: the Death of Sevag Balıkçı

This part focuses on the readings of the interviewees with regard to the murder of Sevag Balıkçı in 2011 during his compulsory military service. I aim to address emergent themes which capture overlapping or divergent standpoints of Armenian interviewees. To begin with the gender of the interviewees plays a decisive role in influencing the responses unlike the Hrant Dink case. Particularly the male interviewees underline that the experiences of discrimination at some point in the military service are not unusual for an Armenian soldier. Notably the young male Armenians who had not done military service yet seem more worried about their future and striving to find a way to postpone or avoid the compulsory military service. The youngest male interviewee (22-year-old) determinedly refuses to do military service and asks 'Why do I sacrifice myself for the country?' In addition to the concerns related to his Armenian identity which might affect his experiences under the control of Turkish Armed Forces the opposition against the centrality of the military in the Turkish state appears as a driving factor. The reactions of the Armenian families to the death of Sevag Balıkçı also affect the opinions of young males. A 32-year-old male interviewee quotes his family's response as follows: 'you definitely cannot join the army; we will not send you off to the army'. This resistance in

return leads him to seek a solution and his own words below elucidate the reason behind his quest.

> The murder of Sevag made us realise once again we are not normal people. They will never consider us as normal. That is why we are faced with a threat at every turn.

This statement indicates the image of the Turkish army as another public sphere in which the feeling under threat comes into prominence for male Armenians. On the other side the members of the Armenian community as a perceived threat by the Turkish state along with other non-Muslim citizens are not hired into the military. Thus the encounter between the thought of an internal enemy by the state and threat perception by Armenians gains a new meaning in the course of compulsory military service. The army is perceived by some respondents as just another site to confront Turkish nationalism and to conflict with the intolerant nationalist sentiments. A 33-year-old male interviewee who had finished his military service points out how some Turkish soldiers adopting a nationalist and racist attitude pose a threat for male Armenians during the military service. As both of the parties are allowed to bear arms, he claims, the ethnic and religious differences become more visible under the pressure of official duty. Given that the increasing significance of different identities in Turkey, another male interviewee (34-year-old) who benefitted from paid military service touches on the impact of generation gap. The survival strategy of the preceding generation according to him is to keep silent and be assimilated and yet new generation is claimed to be different. He elaborates this difference as follows: 'We proudly want to say our names; I do not want to hide the cross in my neck and I want to give an answer to someone who does/ says something wrong'. What he intends to say is that if he did his military service in the same way as Sevag Balıkçı did and made his Armenian identity visible he might have been dead or experienced humiliating treatment. It is argued however by some respondents that Sevag's being an Armenian is a sufficient reason for the murder and the timing of the murder is put forward as evidence to substantiate their argument. Unlike the official declarations of the Turkish Army they claim that this was an intentional assault as it took place on the Genocide Remembrance Day and in the Easter time. The excerpts below demonstrate the ways in which the interviewees consider the death of Sevag as a wilful murder.

**Interviewee 2 (33-year-old female):** Since the day I heard Sevag's case I am sure that this must not be an accident. But it is almost impossible for the authorities to admit that this was a pre-planned murder. Because this will directly mean that Armenians are still being killed in this country.

**Interviewee 21 (59-year-old male):** It is very difficult to believe that this was an accident as the event took place on 24th April and during Easter and the victim is an Armenian whereas the killer is a nationalist Turk.

**Interviewee 22 (37-year-old male):** He shot Sevag because he was Armenian. Some protests began to be organised on 24th April in Turkey and according to the perpetrator's logic the choice of this time to shoot Sevag has a meaning. It is very evident that this is a racist murder.

**Interviewee 24 (39-year-old female):** It was definitely no coincidence as the perpetrators of such murders are represented as heroes in this country.

**Interviewee 30 (62-year-old female):** To make it look like an accident is easier than anything else. Of course this is not accepted as a deliberate action. Such events are not new; they dated back to prior to 1915.

These narratives also reflect the scepticism of the interviewees towards the official claim of the murder as an isolated event; instead they seem to believe in the historical continuity of the attacks, the negligent attitude of the authorities, the effects of newly started commemoration events in Istanbul and the temporality of the event as a signifier for a biased motivated crime. Furthermore two female (28 and 48 years old) respondents allege that the victim's ideas concerning the genocide must have been incited the perpetrator. His Armenian identity as well as his approval of 1915 events as genocide is regarded as the driving forces behind the murder.

Nevertheless another group of interviewees disagrees with the thoughts of purposeful homicide and the army as an exceptional public sphere to experience different forms of discrimination and violence. Based on his military anecdotes a 33-year-old male interviewee insists on the personal matter between two soldiers as the main reason for the murder. According to another male respondent (43-year-old) the problematical system embedded in the military service mistreats both Muslim and Armenian individuals so Sevag's Armenian identity comes to be perceived as a neutral element. By providing the categories 'Muslim' and 'Armenian' instead of 'Turkish' and 'Armenian',

this view gives prominence to a structural explanation in which the army as an important power of the Turkish state commits violence towards its own subjects regardless of their ethnicity and religion. Although the murder of Sevag is considered from a different angle due to his ethnic identity and the date of 24th April, 33-year-old male respondent states, Sevag's death is an unexceptional case among many other cases of deceased soldiers in which the authorities pretended as if they were accidents or suicides. Yet again the ethnic and religious differences among male citizens throughout their military services are claimed to be eliminated as the difficulties they face in the Turkish army are identical.

The discussion over the possible effects of the Armenian identity on the military experiences of racially motivated assaults in both physical and psychological terms takes on another dimension by the ideas of other respondents. The public visibility of the Armenian identity along with the relationship with the state and the influence of national education on the understanding of different groups come to light through the narratives of the interviewees. First with the transition to the public sphere the othering/exclusion of Armenians becomes crystallised. Since the national media and the political power holders impose a particular mindscape about non-Turkish and non-Muslim actors in the society as implied by an interviewee (32-year-old male) Armenians are subjected to discrimination in the Turkish army and the judicial system. The projection of a 26-year-old female respondent concerning the potential risks for an Armenian male in the Turkish Armed Forces indicates the detectable feature of Armenian names. Although this might sound a minor concern she underlines that at first step an Armenian is 'identified' by his name which might later trigger new problems between Armenian and Turkish soldiers. From a more critical perspective a 44-year-old male respondent expresses his views as follows

> If an Armenian is killed anywhere in Turkey the state seeks to close the case. We also heard that just after the killing of Sevag the commander made a meeting in order to ensure that the witness soldiers will testify in the same way. The incidents may change but the reflex of the state remains the same. There might be the young raised by hostile feelings and the state utilises these young ones to kill Armenians and then tries to cover the incident.

This severe criticism of the attitude of the Turkish state towards Armenians is also found in other narratives of the interviewees together with the dominant unreliability on the lawsuits against the perpetrators. Particularly the similarities between the cases of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı in terms of the intentions of the attacks and the inefficiencies in the criminal justice process in Turkey are stressed. The need for an independent and transparent judiciary system is thus recited many times. On the basis of the statements of a 24-year-old male interviewee the underlying reasons behind the murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı are alike since both the dominant official ideology still fails to confront its history. Thus he comments on this mind-set along these lines

> The issue is not only to solve this crime but we need to scrutinise 'why this crime was committed'. This racist and fascist mentality is the reflection of the policies of Turkey aiming at homogenisation and standardisation of the citizens since the foundation of the Republic.

Moreover other interviewees who might be defined as 'politically active' maintain that both murders exemplify their constant suffering and experiences of discrimination. A 34-year-old female respondent identifies both of these acts of violence as the perpetuation of the 1915 events and the political mentality of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The concept of 'mentality' is repeatedly used by the interviewees to explicate prejudiced frame of mind in Turkey with regard to the issue of difference and continuing effect of the right-wing political parties. Great Union Party (BBP) as a far-right Islamist political party in particular is criticised by some interviewees as the perpetrators of Hrant Dink, Sevag Balıkçı and the priest Andrea Santoro have strong partisan attachments to this party. The correlation between CUP and BBP is suggested by a 55-year-old female respondent due to their emphasis on Turkish-Islamic synthesis. This understanding is regarded as one of the core elements of the official ideology and according to a 53-year-old male interviewee the murder of Sevag also indicates how the state instils nationalist thoughts in the minds of its soldiers. More remarkably the killing of an Armenian is viewed as a taken for granted right from a nationalist perspective, he argues, and this murder aims to give a message that 'an Armenian can be killed even in the army if needed'. Another interviewee (33-year-old male) carries the argument a step

forward as he asserts that apart from the setting 'people with this mentality possess rifle in the army and a knife in the civilian life'.

Four respondents predicate this mentality argument on the effects of national education in Turkey. As the citizens receive education at a very young age under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education and national curriculum in the schools follows the doctrines of the official ideology, the socialisation process of citizens begins with a biased training. The interviewees correspondingly draw attention to the significance of national schooling as a state policy to impose one-sided knowledge concerning the historical and recent developments. According to two female respondents it is not so difficult to perceive an Armenian as an enemy in the case where national education nurtures nationalist and hostile sentiments and even the word Armenian is employed as a swear in the daily life. As the image of an Armenian identity is formed within predetermined stereotypes in the minds of non-Armenian citizens by the state, a 25-year-old female tells that one of her Turkish friends said 'you are not as I thought'. This is a simple but also an enlightening instance of the imaginary cognitive distance between two communities despite the spatial proximity.

Almost one third of male respondents told me about their military memoirs when they heard the question about the murder of Sevag Balıkçı. A personal experience told by a young male Armenian exemplifies the continuation of national training in the army as follows

> One evening we were watching a special video which looks like a national security course in the schools. As the video said that 'Greeks are our enemies, Armenians betrayed us', all the soldiers in the military unit started to stare at me. Because they knew who I was and I said before that I am an Armenian, I did not hide it from anyone. The commander warned them but not because he liked me.

Although this account might appear 'normal' for a person familiar with the Turkish context, it is still striking to find out constant encoding of Turkish nationalism based on racist assumptions through the agency of military and state authorities. In a similar vein the short conversation between a 25-year-old male interviewee and his commander during his military service epitomises the verbal expression of ethnic prejudice along with a form of ignorance. The interviewee told me that the commander asked 'Why are

you doing your military service here?' and he replied 'I am a citizen of the Turkish Republic but I am an Armenian'. However he was dissatisfied by the answer and said 'Why do they enrol you into military service in the first place?' Once again this anecdote sheds light on the problematical relationship constructed between the state institutions and the Armenian inhabitants. In order to make me comprehend 'why Sevag is not the last one' a 33-year-old male interviewee narrated the story of his Armenian friend who lived in America and decided to go back to Turkey. But the last month of his military service coincided with the death of Hrant Dink. His friend told the interviewee that 'on the day of the assassination the Turkish soldiers in the same military unity were dancing in front of him as they were happy with the death of an Armenian'. The interviewee claims that the effects of a trauma as such cannot be overcame and the experiences of Sevag might resemble the experiences of his friend.

The experiences disclosed by senior male respondents also show consistency in terms of the exposure of discrimination, humiliation and intimidation during their military service. The extracts below illustrate the conditions of their treatment in the army in their own words.

> **Interviewee 19 (50 years old):** Although I had to do my military service under equal circumstances, there were some issues that I was troubled with. For example while I was in the army I frequently heard the word 'infidel' used against me even though I had a religion.
>
> **Interviewee 21 (59 years old):** I also went through unpleasant events. I think there is no Armenian that had no problem during the military service.
>
> **Interviewee 25 (45 years old):** I did my military service as a blacklisted soldier like every Armenian. As I was Armenian and was good at shooting I was accused by being an ASALA militant but luckily a Muslim lieutenant protected me.
>
> **Interviewee 27 (64 years old):** I suffered oppression in the army. I argued with another soldier over the cleaning works as he tried to goldbrick. We started to fight as he told me that 'you are not guilty but the one who let you in here is guilty'. He distorted the subject and said many things about my Armenian identity.
>
> **Interviewee 32 (53 years old):** When I was doing my military service my commander told me 'I know you are an Armenian, watch your step! I can give you a headache in any minor mistake you make.' In short I was threatened.

The picture drawn by male interviewees provide important insights to understand the historical background of the martial atmosphere in which Sevag was murdered. However some parts of the narratives appear ambiguous such as the expression of 'unpleasant events' or the form of assistance provided by the superior. In contrast to my findings with respect to the ideas of Armenians about army as well as their experiences in this institution Örs' (2010) study provides more optimistic results. The survey based on 228 interviews with Armenians in Istanbul between November 2004 and May 2005 in Örs' (2010) study points out the Turkish Army as the most credible and trustworthy institution in Turkey. More remarkably around 70 % of interviewees consider the duty of the army as to save the country from internal enemies; this is read by Örs as evidence to the success of the Turkish Army to lead the majority of Armenians to internalise its own discourse (*ibid*: 611-613). It is also maintained that Armenians in Turkey view the army as a guarantor of protection for their community against Islamic or ultranationalist groups (*ibid*: 617). As Örs conducted her study before the assassination of Hrant Dink and the murder of Sevag Balıkçı the interviewees expectedly fail to integrate these turning points for their communal ties and their relationships with the state institutions into their interpretations. Besides the snowball technique to gain access to the interviewees might result in similar circles of Armenians with comparable views of the army.

Finally I would like to finish this section by briefly highlighting the point raised by a 29-year-old male interviewee. He criticises the limited involvement of the Armenian community in the cases of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı. As he is personally interested in these cases and keenly engages in the protests, he draws attention to fear as the dominant mental state among Armenians in Turkey which leaves Sevag's family alone in their psychological and legal struggles. By admitting the difficulty of 'being a politically active Armenian' in Turkey he believes that 'many things could be changed if the Armenian families refused to send their sons to the military service after this incident.' As different from other accounts this perspective recommends an alternative approach in which Armenians are not positioned only as ultimate victims but also as agents who can make a difference.

## 6.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed discursive strategies in which three national newspapers developed to cover the murder of Sevag Balıkçı. First of all news stories put specific emphasis on the 'Armenian descent' of the victim; yet simultaneously they preferred to overlook the point that this murder was committed on the genocide remembrance day. While ethnic-religious differences of the injured party were presented as newsworthy items, this assault was though decontextualized from its profound socio-political circumstances. In contradiction to this discursively repressed aspect the martyrdom status of a non-Muslim soldier and the Turkish military funeral customs, in the second place, were prominent issues in media representations. My CDA disclosed the ways in which the incompatible Armenian identity of Sevag Balıkçı with the understanding of national martyrdom and official martyr funeral ceremonies was insinuated in news stories. In addition it shed light on discursive manoeuvres that described the incident within acceptable nationalist terms. In parallel with this argument news frames particularly in *Hürriyet* highlight the significance of the idea of sacrifice for the Turkish state and nation. More notably my analysis showed that strong nationalist themes in news discourse were represented as if they were essentials of patriotism. Unlike the Hrant Dink case this examination also demonstrated the emphasis on the personalisation and particularity of the killing in news stories which gave details about the victim's personal life and previous experiences but refrained from mentioning the perpetrator. The underlying cause for news discourses to particularise this incident might be considered as a journalistic attempt to report this assault as an ordinary criminal case.

In the following part of the chapter I scrutinised observations of Armenian interviewees concerning the Sevag Balıkçı case and found out that gender differences were determining factors for respondents' commentaries on this instance. Particularly young male Armenians challenged the idea of sacrifice for the nation which was proliferated in media representations. Furthermore this investigation crystallised two distinct standpoints among the interviewees. On the one hand a cluster of respondents claimed that being a soldier has significance in terms of one's relation to the Turkish state regardless of one's ethnicity and religion. On the other hand according other group of interviewees the distinguishability of the Armenian identity was recognised as a

satisfactory reason for any act of violence against Armenians. Particular responses of the interviewees also allowed me to conclude that this case considered as an example for historical continuity of the attacks towards non-Turkish and non-Muslim citizens in the military might be identified with the indulgence of the state. Despite the official declarations that strive to downplay the severity of the situation, analysis of the interviews elucidated that the murder of Sevag Balıkçı was not perceived as an isolated incident; but instead was assessed through the socio-political setting that paved the way for nationalist sentiments. Therefore the findings of CDA of news stories and responses of the interviewees enabled me to point out divergent production and consumption processes of this particular incident.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## The PROTEST AGAINST the KHOJALY MASSACRE
## (26th February 2012)

In addition to the analyses of the assassination of Hrant Dink and the murder of Sevag Balıkçı, my research also focuses on the protest organised in Istanbul vis-à-vis the Khojaly Massacre in 2012. During the Nagorno-Karabakh War, which took place between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the years between 1988 and 1994, hundreds of Azerbaijanis in the village of Khojaly were massacred by Armenian forces on 26th February 1992. According to Human Rights Watch, this massacre resulted in the killing of approximately two hundred Azeri villagers, women and children, and was the largest massacre in this war up until that point (Companjen, 2010:236). The Azerbaijan authorities officially recognised the Khojaly Massacre as genocide in 1998 and subsequently considerable efforts have been devoted to the international recognition of this tragedy as genocide. In order to institutionalise the genocide, the Azerbaijan authorities declared the 31st March as the official commemoration day on which special ceremonies are organised in both Azerbaijan and in states with Azerbaijan's diplomatic representations. For instance, in 2008 special events for the commemoration of the Khojaly Genocide were arranged in 60 cities around the world. In addition to the official efforts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Turkish state and Turkish Diaspora groups have played important roles in promoting the vision of the Khojaly Massacre as genocide. This is not simply related to enhancing fraternal relations between the Azeri and the Turkish nations, but also due to Turkey's attempt to minimise the salience of the political battles and pressures over the recognition of the Armenian Genocide (Finkel, 2010:58-9).

It should be noted that in some political and public debates in Turkey, the Khojaly Genocide is put forward as evidence to indicate the 'inhumane' nature of Armenians, their 'capability' of causing physical and psychological damage, and the 'invalidity' of their claims about the Armenian Genocide. In other words, two human tragedies in the 20th century are opened up for discussion by comparing their magnitude and consequences. In addition, the subject goes beyond the international recognition of the Khojaly Massacre as genocide and turns into an encouragement of anti-Armenian

sentiments in Turkey. For the purposes of this research, one of the most appropriate examples through which to observe this problematic situation is the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in Istanbul. On 26th February 2012, thousands of people gathered in Taksim Square for the 20th anniversary remembrance of the victims of the Khojaly Massacre. During the protest people shouted the slogans: 'We are all Khojalians, we are all Karabakhians!', 'You are all Armenians, you are all bastards', which were disparaging manipulation of the phrase 'We are all Hrant, We are all Armenians' used in the protest after the assassination of Hrant Dink to express solidarity with the Armenian community in Turkey. The nationalist tone in the protest also manifested itself through banners with slogans such as: 'We are all Turks', 'Call for an end to Armenian lies', 'Today, Taksim, Tomorrow, Yerevan: We will descend upon you suddenly in the night' and 'We are all Ogün Samast' (the convicted murderer of Hrant Dink). More notably, Guillaume Perrier, a correspondent for the French daily *Le Monde*, argued that 'this protest has been supported, promoted and financed by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs'[26]. In addition to this claim, the approval of the AKP government of this protest became obvious as Turkish Interior Minister - İdris Naim Şahin- was one of the speakers at the demonstration. In his speech, İdris Naim Şahin said

> Twenty years ago on this day, blood-thirsty murderers, merciless, heartless and covert aggressors claimed the blood of 603 people in Khojaly. That day, blood was spilled, but the case is not over. As long as the Turkish nation stays alive that blood will be answered for.

Concerning this speech and the protest as a whole, the Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul branch called for the initiation of an investigation of the organizing committee for the slogans, the placards and the speeches, as well as an investigation of the Interior Minister for the content of his speech under Article 216 of the Turkish Penal Code[27]. This commemoration in Istanbul was also harshly criticised by the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and its executive director declared that:

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[26]  Retrieved from: http://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/21966/protests-in-istanbul-you-are-all-armenian-you-are, LBC International, 26 February 2012

[27]  Retrieved from: http://www.todayszaman.com/columnists-272789-khojaly-massacre-and-racism.html, Today's Zaman, 28 February 2012

> Today's anti-Armenian demonstrations in the streets of Istanbul—with the interior minister and prominent political parties at the helm—were clearly aimed at inciting increased racism and renewed violence against Turkey's own Armenian citizens and neighbouring Armenia. These are not simply the violent echoes of a post-genocidal state, but the determined actions of a pre-genocidal Turkish society that is angrily lashing out at its imagined enemies and seeking out its next target.[28]

As this statement makes apparent, on-going feelings of hatred in society and potential attacks towards Armenians are emphasised along with the involvement of the government in a commemoration that was marked by nationalist and racist themes. Although the announced goal of the commemoration was to remember the victims of the Khojaly Massacre and share the sorrow of the survivors, the members of the Armenian community became the target of hate speech and threats and were held responsible for the Khojaly Massacre.

My main rationale behind the selection of this protest for this research is its capability to indicate how the image and representation of Armenians as an 'internal enemy' intersect with their counterpart, that of an 'external enemy' within the discourse of Turkish nationalisms. The inquiry into the news stories concerning the protest of the Khojaly Massacre is important for two reasons; first, designated national newspapers might point out the ways in which the Khojaly Massacre becomes a tool in the discursive sphere to put pressure on the Armenian community in Turkey; second, the participation and support of the government in this protest might raise issues of the self-censorship and autonomy in newspapers and lead to different and/or similar coverage depending on the relationship between the owners of newspapers and the government.

## 7.1. Critical Discourse Analysis of the Protest against the Khojaly Massacre

The CDA in this research lastly concentrates on the news stories concerning the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in Istanbul. In this section, I investigate news coverage of this problematic case and identify both overlapping and divergent themes that appeared in the dailies, namely *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. Starting from the period before,

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[28] Retrieved from: http://www.armenianweekly.com/2012/02/26/anca-condemns-anti-armenian-protests-in-turkey/, Armenian Weekly, 26 February 2012

and continuing for the period during the protest, my CDA distinguishes three prominent themes which are elaborated in the following sections.

### 7.1.1. 'Do not remain silent against the Armenian lies'

Although the time frame for the CDA of the news stories includes the week after the protest, the calls for the protest published in *Zaman* and *Hürriyet* before the protest are equally important. *Cumhuriyet* also announces the time and place of the commemoration on 26th February 2011. The ad published in *Zaman* reads as follows:

> Do not remain silent against the Armenian lies!
> We are gathering together in Taksim on 26th February Sunday at 2 pm.
> What happened on 26th February 1992?
> The Armenian army swept away the city of Khojaly in one night. The genocide took place in Khojaly. The soil of Azerbaijan the Turkish land Karabakh is under the occupation of Armenia. 1 million people were exiled from their lands. Thousands of innocent were slaughtered.
> If you say Khojaly, Srebrenica, Hama and Homs should not happen again, let's be in Taksim on 26th February Sunday at 2pm.
> We did not forget the Khojaly Massacre, and we will not let it be forgotten.
> 63 innocent children were slain.

This ad was put in the newspaper by the 'We are all Khojalians' platform and the photos of some deceased children were printed underneath the statement. It is evident that all the views and claims expressed in this ad are those of the parties who made payment to the newspaper in order to reach the mass audience and who do not necessarily represent the standpoint of the newspaper. However, the decision of both the administrative and editorial committees of *Zaman* to publish this ad, which has the capacity to incriminate Armenians living in Turkey and cause their social exclusion, needs to be taken into consideration. In a similar way, *Hürriyet* gives publicity to the same advertisement under the news story entitled, 'To Taksim for Khojaly'. The daily also cites particular quotations from the announcement made by the organisers of the event shown as below.

In the statement indicating that the occasion will be held in order to share the tragic event which tears the hearts of all Turks out and strengthens the friendships through the understanding of 'One nation with two states', it was told that 'we are waiting for everyone from Azerbaijan, the Balkan Peninsula, the entire Turkic world and every part of Turkey and the ones who say no to the massacres to the Taksim Square'.

The phrase, 'Do not remain silent to the Armenian lies', as the motto of the call for participation in the protest, also appears in the news story. It might be suggested that *Zaman* and *Hürriyet* disseminate this call as if they approve of the content of the advertisement and follow the same ideological line as the coordinators of the event. On the other side, following the identical content of the announcement for the protest and the core knowledge concerning the Khojaly Massacre, *Cumhuriyet* gives coverage to the statement made by the Human Rights Association. Regarding the posters that read, 'Do not remain silent to the Armenian lies', the statement proclaims as follows:

> To condemn all the attempts against human life anywhere in the world, including the Khojaly, is a human right. But these posters target Armenians as the citizens of the Turkish Republic. They target a society and its members as if they are enemies.

Given the magnitude and the dominant nationalist posture of the components of the protest, the presence of this counter account in a challenging form within the news discourse of *Cumhuriyet* is significant. After that, the criticism of Bahçeli, the leader of the Nationalist Action Party, is included in the text under the subheading 'The Chorus of we are all Armenians'. Although the subheading speaks for itself, briefly, it is claimed that 'the chorus of we are all Armenians' and the ones attempting to overcome taboos through the Armenian opening are different faces of the same coin. Despite the extended press release of Bahçeli, *Cumhuriyet* draws attention only to this part of citation, which conflicts with the efforts to develop empathy towards Armenians and recognition of their disadvantaged positions. When viewed from this aspect, the discursive strategy employed in this news story points out the ambivalent positioning of *Cumhuriyet* in between the two competing standpoints.

### 7.1.2. Language of Homogenisation

The protest against the Khojaly Massacre appeared in the front pages of all the newspapers under analysis on 27th February 2012. The headlines of *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* are indicated below.

| Zaman | Thousands gathered together in Taksim for 20th year of Khojaly Massacre |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hürriyet | Khojaly March |
| Cumhuriyet | Khojaly was Commemorated |

*Zaman* portrays the number of participants at the protest as 'thousands', whereas *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* delete the subject through nominalisation. A CDA of the headlines and news stories concerning the protest unsurprisingly reveals the dominant representation of Armenians as the perpetrators of the massacre and Azerbaijanis as the victims. Three papers thus perpetuate the pan-Turkic understanding of 'one nation with two states' in their news stories through the emphasis on the fraternity that exists between the Azeri and Turkish nations. In constructing the particular media images of the communities, a simple binary opposition of 'us', including Azerbaijanis and Turks, versus 'them', denoting Armenians, is utilised.

The use of the pronoun 'we' as one of the central features of the newspaper discourse stands for the combination of the newspaper and its readership in an 'implied consensus' (Fowler, 1991:189). It is possible to claim that the tendency of the newspapers under analysis to standardise the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Turkish communities resembles the 'discourse of homogenisation' (Nickels *et. al*, 2012). As Nickels *et.al* address the CDA of British newspaper coverage of the Irish and Muslim communities between 1974 and 2007, they identify a discourses of homogenisation, innocence/threat and inclusion/exclusion. In their study, the discourse of homogenisation operates through essentialist terms like 'the Irish', 'the Irish community', 'Muslims', 'the Muslim community' (*ibid*: 348). In a similar vein, in my CDA of the news coverage of the Khojaly protest, the terms, 'Turkish nation', 'Azerbaijani nation', 'Armenians', and 'Armenian forces' are commonly used in the national newspapers. Following the argument of Nickels *et.al* (2012) that 'using such terms

without elaboration elides significant differences that exist within these communities', the newspapers under analysis seem to fail to notice the distinction between the Armenians in Turkey (Western Armenians) and the Armenians in Armenia (Eastern Armenians).

This notable generalisation also displays itself in the news stories using the broad term 'Armenians'. For instance, *Zaman* reported an exclusive story about a Turkish citizen of Azeri 'descent' whose grandmother had been killed in the Khojaly Massacre, and the headline selected for this story was: 'Armenians killed my grandmother when she was praying'. The sentences below are extracted from the news published in *Zaman* on 26th February 2012.

> Atmaca stated that it is impossible to forget that atrocity and the ones who committed this atrocity could not be humans.
> The pains of the bloody pogrom committed by Armenians in the city of Khojaly in Azerbaijan retain their clarity.
> Atmaca indicated that many people were killed brutally without treating children, the elderly, and women and men unequally and claimed Armenians need to be penalised due to this massacre.
> She finished her speech by saying that Europeans who speak with authority regarding the human rights did not impose any sanction against Armenians.

In addition to the denunciatory language and the explicit allegations about Armenians as the offenders of the massacre, this news story justifies any defamatory attitude towards this group of people. In other words, insulting slogans, placards, and statements about Armenians before, during or after the protest are able to find their reference points in the news discourse of a national newspaper.

### 7.1.3. Our vs. Their Nationalism

During the protest, people shouted slogans such as: 'we are all Khojalians, we are all Karabakhians!', 'You are all Armenians, you are all bastards', which are disparaging manipulations of the phrase 'We are all Hrant, We are all Armenians' used in the protest after the assassination of Hrant Dink to express solidarity with the Armenian community in Turkey. The nationalist tone in the protest also manifested itself through the banners,

with slogans such as:' We are all Turks', 'Call for an end to Armenian lies', 'Today, Taksim, Tomorrow, Yerevan: We will descend upon you suddenly in the night' and 'We are all Ogün Samast' (the convicted murderer of Hrant Dink). Interestingly, the reporter in *Cumhuriyet* mentions none of these slogans or posters but speaks of the warnings of the organising committee against the slogan 'revenge!' shouted by Alperens. *Hürriyet* also employs a selective reporting technique for the slogans and publishes only: 'We are all Turks, we are Khojalians', 'Karabakh is ours and will stay as ours' and 'one nation with two states, justice for Karabakh'. In the news story of *Zaman*, the placards such as 'Do not forget Khojaly', 'one nation with two states' and 'Stop to the Armenian lie' are emphasised.

In addition to the selective reporting practices of the dailies, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman*, in particular, make an effort discursively in order to label or imply 'some' groups of participants as (ultra) nationalist. The group described as 'Alperens' in the news story of *Cumhuriyet* might be identified as the youth branch of an ultranationalist party. The slogan of this 'ultranationalist' group is recounted as if the other slogans and placards during the protest had no nationalist or racist connotations. Under the subheading of, 'The Placards consisting of insults drew reaction', a part of the news story in *Zaman* also reports on 'some marginal nationalist groups' who 'attempted to sabotage the demonstration'. It is narrated additionally that 'the members of the group drew reactions from the other participants as they were shouting racist and libellous slogans'. Although the prevailing vague news language blocks comprehension of the precise characteristics and acts of these 'marginal nationalist groups', it is obvious that *Zaman* draws a line between these extreme groups and other participants.

Crawford (2012) explores what selected newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Herald* and *The Scotsman* in UK mean when they label a political party or an individual as nationalist. He looks at the strategies of the newspapers that disseminate the idea of the naturalness of existing nation states in contrast to the movements and individuals identified as nationalist. According to Crawford's study, the newspapers employ the term 'nationalist' to describe various stances: someone who supports/opposes a secessionist movement; a religious segregationist; a defender of national or group culture; a racist. The journalists under

analysis also depict the notion of 'nationalist' as not respectable and 'alien to the world of nation states and in particular as a means of identifying others' (*ibid*: 635). The labelling of particular groups as 'nationalist' in the news discourse brings about a discrepancy between nationalisms, of which some forms are recognised as 'normal' and tolerable. The portrayals of the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in the dailies also construct this rhetorical distinction. They present 'our' nationalism not as a nationalism which is dangerously irrational, surplus and alien', but as a 'patriotism which is beneficial and necessary' (Billig, 1995: 55). 'Our' nationalism, along with the 'Azeri' nationalism manifested through anti-Armenian sentiments in the protest, is packaged in an acceptable format in the news discourse that is recognised as patriotism. However, other forms of nationalism, just as in the case of news reporting in *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman*, cannot be justified in the name of patriotism; they are just positioned as being opposite to 'our' patriotism.

Furthermore, the discussion concerning different representations of nationalism and patriotism in the discursive domain with regard to the protest against the Khojaly Massacre brings about the issue of new racism. By dissociating itself from thoughts of biological or cultural inferiority, the new racism has established a link between race, nationhood, patriotism and nationalism (Gilroyi 1992 cited in Faimau, 2013: 22). Anthias (1995 cited in Faimau, 2013:22) also alleges that 'others are endowed with fixed, unchanging and negative characteristics and subjected to relations of inferiorisation and exclusion'. However Faimau (*ibid*) considers that the notion of fixedness is exaggerated in Anthias's claim, due to the flexible processes of ideas and discourses; but he agrees with the idea that when a certain group is excluded from the discourses of national belonging and identity, that group tends to be inferiorised and negativised.

As this conception underlines the incompatibility of the different social or ethnic groups, the day after the event, the degrading and dehumanising aspects of the protest, with respect to Armenians representing the other of Turkish and Azeri identities, were featured in news discourse of the dailies. However, when the Human Rights Association, Istanbul branch, called for the initiation of an investigation into the organizing committee, the slogans, the placards and the speeches, as well as an investigation of the

Interior Minister for the content of his speech under Article 216 of the Turkish Penal Code, news discourse evolved into a more critical outlook. For example, on 28th February 2012 the selected title for the news story in *Cumhuriyet* was: 'No to Racism', which in fact was a quotation from the press release of the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party concerning the protest. On 4th March 2012, *Hürriyet* also cited the statements of the general vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate, in which he says that some of the placards and slogans are insults against Armenians.

### 7.1.4. The Creation of a Collective Narrative

As the ingrained denial of the Armenian genocide at both political and public levels is taken into account, newspapers' usage of the term 'massacre/genocide' without hesitation in their coverage of the protest needs to be underlined. In addition to the announced goals, the protest aims to put forward this tragic event as evidence of the 'inhumane' nature of Armenians, their 'capability' of causing physical and psychological damage, and the 'invalidity' of their claims about the Armenian Genocide. In other words, the recognition of one human tragedy that occurred in the 20th century is shown as a reason for the denial of another human catastrophe.

At this juncture, news media plays an important role in terms of acknowledging and presenting the magnitude and legitimacy of a mass execution and its relevance for the current political system in the eyes of the public. As the newspapers become sites for collective memory, news coverage of the protest against the Khojaly Massacre reminds us of the repressed 'national' memory of the Armenian Genocide. The memory construction and reproduction concerning the identification of Armenians as a mutual national enemy for both Turks and Azeris, becomes materialised in news discourse. As Leavy (2007:2) underscores for the American press, the media takes a part in selecting 'which events are to become staples in collective memory' and affects the interpretations of these events. In addition to the construction of very particular and limited narratives about these selected events, the interpretations are often based on mythical concepts such as patriotism, martyrdom, heroism and evil (*ibid*). Media representations of the protest in the national newspapers correspondingly perpetuate the idea of the Khojaly Massacre as an indispensable component of collective memory in Turkey. To remember this massacre, along with the collective violence committed

against the Azeris by the Armenians, becomes a discursive tool for patterns of denial concerning the Armenian genocide, which also serves for Turkish national identity building.

At the governmental level, the support of the AKP government for the protest came to light as the Interior Minister -İdris Naim Şahin- was one of the speakers at the demonstration. The extract below is only a part of his speech:

> Twenty years ago on this day, bloodthirsty murderers, merciless, heartless and covert aggressors claimed the blood of 603 people in Khojaly. That day, blood was spilled, but the case is not over. As long as the Turkish nation stays alive that blood will be answered for.

This short piece even exemplifies how collective memory is operationalised through nationhood, national 'others' and national remembrance. *Hürriyet* and *Zaman* carried the notorious speech of the Interior Minister in their headline. For example, *Zaman* quoted the phrase, 'The blood that spilled over in Khojaly will be called to account within the legal system'. The newspapers underline the efforts of the Turkish Republic towards gaining international recognition of the Khojaly Massacre as genocide, and the moral support of the 'Turkish nation' to the 'Azerbaijani nation' through this protest. More importantly, it might be asserted that they attempted to make the audience understand and/or feel that censuring the Khojaly Massacre is a part of the national mission that needs to be fulfilled by every responsible Turkish citizen. As was later realised, the police intervened in the protesters' urge to walk towards the building of the *Agos* newspaper, on 1st March 2012. *Agos* commented on the racist and abusive slogans, placards and speeches targeting Armenians in the protest and also called for defending lives and not blood. Interestingly, *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman* published Agos' criticism without adding subjective evaluations; only *Cumhuriyet* used the phrase 'hate speech' to mention *Agos*' point of departure for the declaration.

## 7.2. The Comparison between the Massacres

In this section I analyse the ideas of forty-five Armenian interviewees regarding the protest in Istanbul against the Khojaly Massacre in 2012. In addition to the cases of

Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı I specifically focus on this protest as a third incident in the designated national newspapers and in the interviews with Armenians. To seek the views of the respondents, I addressed the question: 'What did you think when you saw or heard the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in Taksim Square and the slogans/posters targeting at Armenians?'. First of all, the phrases, 'unsurprising' and 'expected', are recurrently employed by the interviewees to point out their familiarity with anti-Armenian discourse and actions in Turkey. In particular, senior Armenians explained how they have become accustomed to derogatory speech and marches against them. Some of these respondents relate the political and social atmosphere in Turkey that gave consent to this protest to the interrelated attitude of preceding governments and overriding prejudices in Turkish society against Armenians. According to the claim of a 53-year-old male interviewee, two different Prime Ministers in the Turkish governments employed the terms 'Armenian bastard' and 'Armenian sperm' to denigrate Armenian identity. More notably, he draws attention to the change in the descriptions of Armenians, from 'the loyal community' in the Ottoman Empire towards 'the community of traitors' in the Turkish Republic. The offensive slogans and placards in the protest against Armenians are claimed to reflect the historical shift in the perception of the state towards its own citizens.

The idea of the continual influence of the official attitude on promoting anti-Armenian sentiments in Turkey is also supported by another interviewee (49-year-old male), who exemplifies the lawsuit brought by the 11th president of Turkey to refute the claim of his Armenian roots. As an Armenian who has lived in Istanbul for years and in the social context in which the word 'Armenian' is perceived as a swearword, he describes the protest as 'normal'. Obviously, what is defined here as 'normal' is not insulting language and a discriminatory mind-set, but the political and social circumstances in Turkey which normalise racism against Armenians and present this form of racism as the inevitable consequence of the claims for genocide recognition. In order to show the connection between the contemporary political milieu and the structure of the protest, a 62-year-old female respondent recalls a part of Erdoğan's speech on TV before the general elections in 2011. While he was explaining that 'there are lots of conspiracy books written about himself and President Abdullah Gül', he stated that '[i]n those books we were nothing more than Jews, Armenians and, excuse me, also Greeks. Can you think

about it?'[29] By calling attention to this statement, the interviewee said: 'Our prime minister talks in this way, why don't the protesters do the same thing?' As she implies the impact of the political discourse on the stigmatization of Armenians, she depicts the biased attitudes of political figures as incentives for other discriminatory attempts.

Based on the explanations of some younger interviewees, it becomes apparent that they associate the predictability of this protest with the murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı, which are their primary traumatic experiences. As witnesses of the chain of killings of Armenians in the recent years, the younger generation also seems to be prepared for further acts of violence. Yet the striking point here is that these three cases -the killings of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balikci and the protest- are not perceived per se, but they are viewed as interdependent consequences of the negligent attitude of the Turkish government. The overt involvement of the Turkish government in the protest through the participation of the ministers and the notorious speech given by the Minister of Internal Affairs is cited by a group of young respondents. The quotations below demonstrate the reactions of the interviewees concerning the intervention of the government.

> **Interviewee 39 (26-year-old female):** The support of the statesman -Idris Naim Sahin- for this protest is very terrifying. This is as significant as the killing of Hrant Dink. The killing of Sevag is also normalized through this protest. It was a very pessimistic day for me.
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> **Interviewee 14 (24-year-old male):** The protest done with the government support lays things out straight. Although the government claims to solve the murder of Hrant Dink and even if it succeeds in solving it, there is no point in solving that murder unless it comes to terms with the underlying fascist mentality. This is because people will be killed again. I left home after the end of the protest. But I saw the placards in the hands of the participants. I got angry but was not able to say anything. This is the reality and you just get used to it.
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> **Interview 2 (33-year-old female):** Unfortunately Idris Naim Şahin made a speech in front of those banners. The thing that I get used to comes up time after time and disappoints me. The biggest disappointment for me was the murder of Hrant Dink. He was killed blatantly on one of the busiest streets in Istanbul and then an

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[29] http://www.bianet.org/english/politics/157632-erdogan-excuse-me-but-they-called-me-armenian

Armenian soldier was killed on 24th April. How can I send my child to the military service? I do not want give birth to a boy because I do not want him to leave here. He might be treated badly in the army. After all that the Khojaly commemoration did not shock me.

**Interviewee 20 (29-year-old male):** I think the speech of the Minister of Internal Affairs was a telling sign. His talk of revenge ignited the existing Armenian hostility. I did not find the speech strange because he has always talked in this way and his words are so familiar. I mean this attitude does not sound unfamiliar to us.

The attempts of some senior and younger respondents to explain the protest on the basis of their preceding experiences, the everlasting anti-Armenian attitude of the state, along with the ties to other cases, also becomes manifest in other skeptical opinions about the actual aim of the protest. Despite the stated goal of the protest, which is to commemorate the Khojaly victims, it is argued that the protest seemed to reinforce hatred towards Armenians and reproduce prevailing racist reviews in Turkish society. The protest is specifically portrayed as a provocation, by a 33-year-old female interviewee, to instigate enmity and violent attacks on Armenians. Under the guise of remembering the victims and condemning the acts of Armenian perpetrators, she touches upon the possibility of a large-scale opposition movement against Armenians in Turkey.

From an international perspective, the issue of the political and financial support of the Azerbaijan state for the protest is also introduced. For instance, a 36-year-old male respondent argues that the protest goes beyond targeting Armenians as it also aims to protect the national interests of the Azerbaijan state by creating public opinion in Turkey on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As can be easily understood, this inference belongs to a relatively well-educated journalist, particularly interested in these topics. However, few interviewees also elucidate the contribution of the Azerbaijan state to the protest on the grounds of the political cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan. In order to carry out the protest, a 53-year-old male interviewee claims that the Turkish state derives its financial power from the Azerbaijan state and creates an image in which Armenians in Turkey are despised and are exposed to swearing. That is to say, the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in Istanbul turns out to be both an ideological and psychological struggle against the Armenian community in Turkey.

The posters saying, 'Don't remain silent against the Armenian lies' that were placed throughout Istanbul before the protest, and the slogans such as 'you are all Armenians, you are all bastards' and 'One nation with two states' that appeared during the protest might be read as the verbal manifestations of the struggle. In particular, the posters on the billboards appear demoralising for some interviewees as they claim these intervene in their everyday lives. Although they had the right to choose not to attend or watch the protest, the posters hung in different spots in the city became a part of their daily routine. The first reaction of some interviewees to the question concerning the protest is to unveil their thoughts and feelings about these posters. Two respondents express their states of mind as follows:

> **Interviewee 12 (28-year-old female):** In fact long before the protest the posters 'Don't remain silent against the Armenian lies' that hung everywhere frightened me very much. It caused a feeling like, 'Do I not belong to here or to this society? Does nobody want to do something when they see these posters? Am I in this much of an excluded situation?
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> **Interviewee 20 (29-year-old male):** We do not legitimise the massacre in Khojaly and of course it needs to be condemned, but it is worrying to see that it is used on this side. The reflection of this incident on the billboards was the final point. The genuine fear was these billboards. As I got on the underground I could see them. The fear entered into our homes.

From my point of view, in the first extract the fragility of the Armenian identity comes to light through the thin line between the sense of belonging and exclusion. More importantly, her inquiry about the unresponsiveness of other members of the society to the posters gives the impression of a call to defend the rights of different ethnic and religious groups. In the second extract, the interviewee seems to feel obliged to indicate the recognition of the Khojaly Massacre on behalf of the Armenian community. Moreover, he draws attention to the situation in which the massacre is used against Armenians in Turkey. It should be also underlined that the motto 'Don't remain silent against the Armenian lies' has a double-edged meaning. It stands for an attempt to compel the Armenian perpetrators to accept responsibility for the Khojaly Massacre on the one hand, while, on the other hand, it intends to recall the Armenian genocide, which is marked as a fictitious incident by the use of the word 'lies'.

Using the commemoration of the Khojaly Massacre as an opportunity to deny the Armenian Genocide and oppress Armenians living in Turkey is also realised as the occurrence of Turkish nationalism by some interviewees. While the organisational form of the protest, the calls for the march, the posters on the billboards and the newspaper ads, are described as 'fascistic' and 'extreme nationalist', it is interesting to discern the difference between 'reasonable' and extreme forms of nationalism that appear in some responses. For example, a 53-year-old male interviewee maintains that he started to consider nationalism as a predominant force in Turkey, along with the effects of religious fundamentalism, particularly following the protest. However, notably, from his point of view, nationalism as an essential mechanism develops into a 'harmful' form when it is excessive. For another interviewee (38-year-old male), the predominant nationalist tone in the protest is closely related to a political strategy of the AKP government to pull votes from nationalist circles in Turkey. As the rightist and nationalist discourse is so ingrained in Turkish politics, he implies, the protest is just an additional tool to protect the sovereignty of the government.

Regarding the way to commemorate the Khojaly victims and glorify their memories, the problem of generalisation is also brought up on the agenda. According to a few interviewees, the speeches and the placards/slogans incriminate Armenian identity and leave Armenians in a difficult situation. The protest once again strengthens the argument that, as stated by an interviewee (29-year-old male), Armenians in Turkey are held responsible for any action of an Armenian in any other part of the world. This view implies that the Armenian perpetrators in the Khojaly Massacre should not be equated with all other Armenians, particularly the Armenians of Turkey. By using strong language, a 34-year-old female respondent also recommends that the protesters should 'vent their spleen on Caucasian Armenians', since Armenians in Turkey are unaware of the happenings in Khojaly. This viewpoint captivatingly resembles one of the official claims of Turkey, which highlights the distinction between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, as well as the Turkish perpetrators under the rule of the Empire and the current Turkish administrators. The Turkish state therefore objects to genocide accusations, due to regime change, along with the shifting nature of the Turkish identity. Furthermore, another interviewee (37-year-old male) attempts to see the issue in a new

light and asks: 'Why do I need to defend the massacre because of my ethnic identity?' More notably, he implies that there is no remarkable difference between the state mechanisms for committing crimes. Thus, the issue of state violence instead of the effect of ethnic identities comes into prominence.

Finally, the state-sponsored organisation of a far-reaching protest for the first time to commemorate the Khojaly Massacre in Istanbul is claimed to be a part of larger plan of the Turkish state. Since the year 2015 is the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the state aims to use the Khojaly Massacre as an antithesis to deny the allegations and unsettle the image of Armenians as the injured party. Therefore, the link between the official preparations for the action plans in 2015, and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in 2012, is underlined by a few respondents. According to a 46-year-old male interviewee, the protest seems to be 'normal' if the Turkish state decides to carry on its official denial discourse in 2015. In very simple terms, he explains that the protest confirms the idea that 'we did not do anything to you; in fact you, Armenians, committed crime against humanity'. In a similar vein, another respondent (44-year-old male) interprets the protest as a countermove of the government to cast aside the international pressure for genocide recognition. The sincerity of the protest on the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly Massacre is also questioned, as there was no protest until 2012. The comparison between the massacres put forward by the government might be considered as a pre-emptive manoeuvre to invalidate the legal claims of Armenians for the genocide, as well as their demand for equal citizenship status.

## 7.3. Conclusion

This chapter discussed how explicit encouragement and involvement of the AKP government in the protest against the Khojaly Massacre were naturalised in news coverage of designated newspapers. The lack of critical attitude in media representations also epitomises the ordinariness of an-Armenian demonstration in the Turkish context. Accordingly I claim that self-censorship mechanisms and limited autonomy of national newspapers under review resulted in the selective reporting which raises the controversial issue of objectivity in printed press. In particular the effects of the AKP government in the regulation of news spectrum played a pivotal role in the application of similar discursive strategies to recount the protest. My CDA also

highlighted the construction of opposition between 'normal/tolerable' and 'extreme/intolerable' forms of nationalism in the same way as the cases of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı. This dichotomist interpretation similarly reveals itself in portrayals of Turkish and Azeri nationalisms as 'our' nationalisms and Armenian nationalism as 'their' nationalism. I consequently allege that news coverage of the protest against the Khojaly Massacre was utilised in order to refute genocide 'claims' of Armenians due to their past atrocities against Azeris. The lack of compassion towards the fragile status of Armenians in news discourse was also a revealing finding as it is completely different from the attention devoted to the construction and reproduction of Turkish national identity.

The following section of the chapter also provided important insights into the discussion of the protest. It came out from the interviews that the protest was considered as an ideological and psychological struggle that promoted hatred against the Armenian community. Senior interviewees once again underlined the routineness of ethnically antagonistic discourse in Turkey, which was similar to their views on two other incidents. This protest additionally led some interviewees to spotlight the transition from the understanding of 'loyal community' to the 'community of traitors' in the course of history. It was yet more salient to observe that some accounts drew attention to the 'fascistic' and 'extreme nationalist' characteristics of the organisational form of the protest, the calls for the march, the posters on the billboards and the newspaper. This signified an equivalent line of reasoning with the newspapers, that the distinction between 'reasonable' and 'extreme' forms of nationalism was put into words. My analysis of interviews thus pointed out the extent of the internalisation of inferior status amongst Armenians in relation to the constant process of othering of Turkish nationalisms. In other words the Turkish nationalist discourse partly incorporates Armenian concerns and partly resists and stigmatises them.

# CHAPTER EIGHT
## ANALYSIS of the INTERVIEWS

### 8.1. The Sediments of the Past

In this part I present the particular findings that focus on the interviewees' narratives concerning the Armenian Genocide. As the respondents are not survivors of the genocide, the transfer of knowledge and experiences across the generations shapes the patterns of memory at both individual and communal levels. In other words, the interviewees' tendency to remember and forget the genocidal process or to associate their current status with past encounters also depends on the life experiences related by elder family members and/or acquaintances. The basic questions regarding personal information, namely date and place of birth, educational background and the number of generations of their family that have lived in Istanbul also assisted my inquiry into the forms of memory transmission among the Armenian generations in Turkey. In addition, knowledge sharing between the generations of the Armenian community, especially in terms of cultural trauma and suffering, sheds light on the forms of suppression and the coping strategies developed in the aftermath of the genocide. Against the backdrop of the ongoing official denial of the genocide and the repressive mind-set propagated by the Turkish state, the existing interpretations of the Armenian interviewees with regard to the preceding atrocities provide important insights about the linkage between past and present.

The role of memory in assisting individuals to establish a sense of their past, present and future (Fentress and Wickham 1988; Tugal 2002) also explains the efforts of nation-states to create a sense of imagined community for the nation through institutions of memory such as museums (Bennet 1995; Duncan 1995 cited in Özyürek, 2007:11), monuments (Savage 1994 cited in *ibid*), commemorations (Bodnar 1992 cited in *ibid*) and founding myths (Ben Yehuda 1995 cited in *ibid*). In the name of constructing a homogenous identity, religious minorities were massacred, deported or encouraged to migrate during the process that led to the foundation of the Turkish nation- state and national identity. More importantly, the memory of the traumatic events, namely the massacre of Armenians in 1915 (Akcam 2004; Dadrian, 1999), the deportation of Orthodox Christians in exchange for a Muslim population from Greece in 1923 (Hirschon

1998) and the Wealth Tax in 1943 (Akar 1999; Bali 1999; Aktar 2000) prevail 'in the silenced memories of individuals who experienced them' (Yalçın 1998 cited in Özyürek, 2006:11-2). It also needs to be underlined that the attempts of the Turkish nation-state to disentangle itself from its 'undesirable' past are still prominent. In response to the refusal of the state to confront its history, studies on the memories of Armenians, as well as their transmission to succeeding generations, provide important insights. For instance, the Hrant Dink Foundation has recently published three books which are the end products of an oral history project. The first book, 'The Sounds of Silence: Turkey's Armenians Speak' includes the stories of 15 Armenians living in both Istanbul and other Anatolian cities. In the second book, 'The Sounds of Silence II- Diyarbakir's Armenians Speak' with the intent of 'reimagining or reconstructing the cultural presence of Armenians in Diyarbakir' 81 Armenians are interviewed; accordingly, the last book , 'The Sounds of Silence III-Ankara's Armenian Speak' draws attention to the unique experiences of Armenians living in Ankara, which is an overshadowed issue.

Drawing on this perspective, which emphasises the acts of remembrance and forgetting by a minority group, the memories of Armenians in this research are also significant in indicating the conflict and negotiation sites between the nation-state and its citizens. In her analysis of how the memory of the historic presence of Jews disappeared in Poland, Irwin-Zarecka (2007) opts for the notion of the 'memory void' to highlight the near absence of Jewish heritage. This mainly denotes the disappearance of parts of the past in collective memory and their replacement with other versions of the past. According to Irwin-Zarecka (2007 cited in Keene 2011: 1097) 'when we set out to listen to historical silence, we are forced to listen to a great deal of noise'. Regarding the case of Armenians in Turkey, I thus aspire to uncover these 'noises' along with the congruent 'silences' which seem to admit the replaced versions of the past.

In contrast to my expectations, only 17 out of 45 respondents stated that they were told about the genocide and the experiences of their family elders. However, the memory accounts of the interviewees have very limited scope and fail to present meticulous narratives of the past. Given the manifest impossibility of obtaining eye witness reports, due to the period of time elapsed, these accounts point out partial remembrance as well as expression. In light of the affirmative answers of the interviewees concerning the

transfer of genocide stories across the generations in their households, two types of attitudes might be identified. According to one point of view, the experiences lived through by their predecessors were not recounted by positioning Armenians as genocide victims. The excerpts below illustrate the frame of this perspective.

> **Interviewee 15 (33 year old male):** My family's telling me about the genocide is not all that important. This happened for certain, there would not be this much polemic if it did not occur in the first place.
>
> All in all the genocide took place on both sides because if someone hits you then you will also hit him. For example, now there is a Kurdish issue but there is no Armenian who can show his teeth like in the case of the Kurdish issue. The Armenian community does not have a vengeful mentality which claims 'they took my lands now it is my turn to appropriate theirs.' But Kurds have such a state of mind.
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> **Interviewee 12 (28 year old female):** Of course, I was told during my childhood but these were not narrated within the framework of the genocide. I know the individual stories such as the things that happened to the families of my grandmother and grandfather and their inability to find anyone when they returned from Istanbul to Van. Due to fear I guess I have never been told that 'Turks are denying but there is genocide as such'.
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> **Interviewee 8 (39 year old male):** I was told about the genocide. In fact I am a little lucky because my family did not hide it from me. It is wrong to generalise but 80% of the current generation does not explain these things to their children in order to prevent them facing problems outside. But my family did tell me and when I was listening to them I asked what Armenians did in return. Did they bow to the inevitable? I found out the reason behind the claim of Turkey that 'Armenians actually slaughtered Turks'. Then I said 'yes, Armenians also killed people'. For example, an incident occurred in Sivas and Armenians in the eastern part of Sivas bore arms and killed Turks as a defensive reflex but I am not saying this to legitimise it. In short these were told to me about the genocide.

It might be argued that in these narratives it is possible to observe slight traces of the formal approach of the Turkish state and the Turkish national collective memory. The interviewees' ideas supporting or legitimising the Turkish side of the genocide story also signify hints of the Turkish national collective memory rather than a thorough account of their ancestors' experiences. In addition, the emphases on the avoidance of describing

the 1915 events as genocide and the efforts of the contemporary generation to protect their successors by disrupting the flow of information about the genocide are worthy of mention. This standpoint bears the stamps of the remembrance boundaries set by the dominant national ideology for the citizens of the Turkish Republic. Moreover, the first passage indicates how the interviewee makes a connection between the present status and claims of Kurds and the past situation of Armenians. It is implied that due to the lack of a 'vengeful mentality' the Armenian community dissociates itself from past occurrences so the willingness to forget and selective remembrance becomes evident. This attitude might also be explained by the typology of victim responses to massacre delineated by Miller and Miller (1982) who did thirty-five in-depth interviews with Armenian survivors in California. It resembles the 'rationalization' victim response to a massacre, in which plausible explanations are invented as reasons for the massacre and in general to justify the outcomes of events (Miller and Miller 1982: 62). Although in Miller and Miller's study there is only one instance in which the 1915 events are justified by the survivor, the common rationalization technique refers to the 'latent benefits of the massacre', such as the rise in Armenian nationalism and Armenians becoming more personally religious. More importantly, from the perspective of the survivors, the experiences of suffering and pain caused by the genocide are not legitimatised by these 'positive' outcomes (*ibid*: 63). As the quotations suggest, the focal point of rationalisation for Armenian interviewees who are not genocide survivors residing in Istanbul is reciprocal suffering and defensive purposes.

The other viewpoint held by the interviewees with recollections about the genocidal process puts forward the counter arguments against the official history. Even if the respondents admitted that they were informed about the genocide by their family members, most of the respondents abstained from giving details about the events. The short extracts below exemplify the veiled and cursory narratives of the interviewees with regard to their confrontation with the past.

> **Interviewee 1 (41 year old female):** I had no chance to meet my grandparents as my family had been struck by the genocide. There were not so many people left in the hometown of my mother's family and the survivors were rescued by Muslim families.

**Interviewee 18 (52 year old male):** A cook used to work in my grandmother's house and one day he was taken away by the state officials as he was from Van and he was never able to come back.

**Interviewee 25 (45 year old male):** My family told me about the genocide and I also searched by myself. My father's mother is the only one who could survive among eight siblings and she was looked after by a Muslim family.

**Interviewee 28 (41 year old male):** We always heard things about the genocide. The events took place in 1915 but I was born in 1972 and the events conveyed by the others may change over time. We only listened to the stories about the 'big disaster' in 1915 from the viewpoint of our side.

**Interviewee 40 (26 year old female):** If I am not mistaken one of the relatives of my father's grandmother had no family connections because they were murdered or lost during the deportation. There are such cases but I do not know in detail.

**Interviewee 42 (48 year old female):** My grandmother is a survivor of the genocide. I do not know in detail and am not particularly interested in this issue.

It might be claimed that these accounts challenge the official rewriting history of the Turkish state as they serve as testimonies of an intentional deportation and massacre. Yet it is apparent that the interviewees seem to conceal some central parts of the anecdotes. Collective trauma as such also may possibly result in the choice of what to remember and what to forget. In addition, as genocide is still an unrecognised tragedy in Turkey, different forms of recollection and evocation emerge in the status of being an Armenian. Following Freud's argument that melancholy is the inability to narrate the mourning process, it is possible to mention 'a process of unexpressed mourning for the experiences caused by the catastrophe in 1915' among the members of Armenian society (Tataryan, 2011: 29-30). In addition to the influence of 'unexpressed mourning' on the interview process, my position as a 'Turkish' researcher identified with the image of a stranger might also have an effect on the narratives of the interviewees.

In addition, only 5 out of 17 interviewees who stated that the elder family members transferred their genocide memories to the younger generations elaborated on the stories that had been told in their households. At this point I need to admit that to maintain my role as a researcher when I heard about these distressing recollections was one of the most challenging aspects of these interviews. On the one hand, they showed

me how traumatic experiences carried through the generations are beyond mere remnants of the past; but this heritage also plays a role in the construction of Armenian identity, as well as in the confrontation with an imposed national collective memory. On the other hand, these reminiscences made me realise once again the power of the repressive national education, along with the other national spheres of socialization, in terms of overlooking the alternative historiography. Although I was aware of the fact that I had never had a chance to cross over to the 'other' side of the 'story', I had not expected to encounter such clear-cut accounts. Both the narratives and non-verbal gestures of the interviewees led me to question yet again the so-called glorious national history and the effects of ingrained state denial on the current problems of Armenians. The passages below illustrate both the physical and psychological wounds that penetrated into the memories of Armenian interviewees.

**Interviewee 5 (22 year old male):** I heard many things about the genocide particularly from my grandma and dad. For instance as far as I recall there had been a 90 year old woman, the cousin of my dad's grandpa. My dad used to live in their home in Istanbul when he was a child and this woman was deaf mute but this was not an inherent defect. In 1915 when she was four or five years old she saw her sister beheaded; since then she never spoke to anybody or heard anything.

**Interviewee 7 (53 year old male):** In our family we have relatives who lived through the genocide, for instance my mom's dad. He was born in Erzurum and this incident took place when he was too little. He had many memories about the genocide and told us that he was tortured. He had a very big adze scar in his head. While we were watching a TV programme in which there was the discussion over the genocide denial he showed us the scar in his head and said 'Genocide is here'. As in all Armenian families we have also the marks of the genocide in our family.

**Interviewee 26 (55 year old female):** I have relatives who were killed during the genocide. My dad's uncle was killed when he was only 21. My grandma told me that she had hard times. After she got married to my grandpa, he was exiled to Adana. As she was an expectant mother she could only travel after giving a birth. In her journey to Adana with two children they converted to Islam and became Muslims in order to survive. They also had to change their names for some time but then returned to their own identities. If you did not convert to Islam then you would be slaughtered. Most of the survivors were the ones who were Islamized during that time.

**Interviewee 38 (34 year old female):** My mom's grandma experienced the genocide first-hand. She was looking for someone to share her past and the entire extended family was tired of listening to her past sufferings. I agreed to do listen to her memories and am glad that I listened to her and imprinted her memories on my memory.

During the deportation her mom was buried under avalanche and she also lost her dad as they were forced to walk 17 km between two villages during the winter time. As the soldiers realised that there were too many orphan children they decided to dig a pit to slaughter the children and my mom's grandma somehow was able to run away. Certainly the ones who stayed there were killed. Three years ago my mom and I went to this place and walked all the streets to find this pit.

**Interviewee 39 (26 year old):** My mom's family went through the genocide. My grandma's siblings were adopted by other families and then an Armenian family took them. That is why some members of the family are in Argentina now. Since my grandma was traumatised she was very timid. When I became interested in this issue I was able to understand my grandma's silence.

Even though my dad's mom did not experience the genocide she was more eager to talk about it. She witnessed the Wealth Tax and the 6-7 September riots. As she was traumatised by these incidents she kept telling me about them.

These narratives concerning 'the marks of the genocide' disclose the ways in which tortures, deportation and slaughter became genocidal tools and the conversion to Islam was enforced. The ties with the past also seem to act as a reminder for successive generations in order to raise their consciousness of their own identity and history.

In addition, these memories provide an opinion about the silence of other interviewees and the avoidance of their families to share their ancestral knowledge. 28 out of 45 interviewees expressed the fact that they were not informed about the genocide in their households. First of all, different parenting styles are mentioned to explain the attitude of the families. For example, according to some of the interviewees, their families did not want to raise their children in an environment of hatred and this is the reason behind their reluctance to rake up the past. One of the youngest interviewees (23 year old female) explained that her family deliberately abstain from using the word 'genocide' and attempt not to dictate this attitude. In a similar vein, another young interviewee (24 year old male) said that knowledge of the genocide or history is not a part of the

education that he received in his family. He also further claimed that this is the general approach of Armenians in Turkey.

In a similar vein, the research of Miller and Miller (1991) that explores the ways in which the trauma of the Armenian genocide has affected the memory and identity of survivors, their children and grandchildren, draws a parallel conclusion. In spite of the variety in terms of the personal responses of the survivors to their childhood tragedy, quite a few respondents said that they had never spoken with their children about the genocide (*ibid*: 28). Although Miller and Miller conducted their research between the years 1974-1986 in America, the reluctance of the preceding generations to pass on their memories is a predominant tendency also in my research. In fact a particular quote, 'My story is too sad; I didn't want to burden my children with it', of a genocide survivor in the analysis of Miller and Miller (1991: 28) bears a resemblance to the concerns expressed, particularly by middle-aged Armenian interviewees. For instance, a 53 year old male interviewee explicitly stated that even at the present time the elders are unwilling to speak of the genocide because of intimidation and fear and for the purpose of protecting themselves from potential hazards. He alleged that the understanding based on the premises 'What is in the past is in the past' and 'there is no point in digging in the past' still dominates the frame of mind of some Armenians. It might also be inferred that the main motive for Armenian families' endeavour to protect their children from the burdens of the past is their persistent feeling of insecurity within the Turkish nation-state borders. By  employing 'chosen amnesia' as a coping mechanism (Buckley-Zistel 2006) some Armenian families intentionally prefer to exclude particular aspects of the past or a traumatic event from their discourse in order to live peacefully and prevent antagonisms in their quotidian lives. More notably, as Buckley-Zistel (2006: 134) underscores, 'to choose amnesia serves a particular function deriving from particular needs of the present', which is 'the immediate benefit of not remembering'. When considered from this point of view, the citizenship ties with the Turkish nation-state, along with cohabitation with the 'heirs' of the perpetrators of the genocide, the tendency among Armenian interviewees to internalise a 'chosen amnesia' takes on a new meaning.

The direct consequences of this deliberate preference can be observed in the younger generation of Armenians. Interestingly, it became evident that the generation born around 1970-80 is more likely to be unfamiliar with the word genocide until they go to the university or hear it on TV programmes. However, it might be argued that even though the pains brought about by previous experiences are not put into words in the households, as one of the interviewees (37 year old male) precisely describes, there is sediment of the past which can be sensed. Connerton (2008: 68) portrays such acts of silence as a form of survival, as well as a type of repression, and in that process of survival the desire to forget becomes a crucial component. By challenging the assumption that promotes remembering and commemorating as virtues Connerton (2008) posits seven types of forgetting which have different meanings. The interruption of memory transfer among Armenian households might be considered as an example of 'forgetting as humiliated silence' (Connerton, 2008: 67), which reveals itself as the unwillingness to remember or narrate the occasions of humiliation. As it is a covert form of forgetting that puts traumatic and difficult collective memories beyond words, it is inaccessible (Waterton, 2010: 133). However, the interviews enabled me to recognise how this type of forgetting, regardless of its hidden character, leaves its marks on the perceptions and experiences of Armenians. The tone with which they express their thoughts, non-verbal gestures (i.e. paying attention to other people when using the term genocide, long pauses or tears) and the usage of striking words unveil the remnants of both personal and collective history.

## 8.2. The Armenian Issue vs. the Armenian Genocide

The denial of the Armenian genocide and the categorisation of its components, such as torture, deportation, expropriation, and assaults as 'Armenian allegations', are integral parts of the official historical narrative of the Turkish nation-state, as well as forms of Turkish nationalism. One of the most visible consequences of this dominant mentality might be suggested by the expressions 'the Armenian issue' and 'the Armenian question'. These phrases mainly imply that by no means was any systematic slaughtering and maltreatment against Armenians planned by state officials and that Turks were also killed by Armenians during the war; thus, 1915 incidents should not be called genocide. From the perspective of the Turkish side, Armenians are also accused of collaborating with Russians against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. More

importantly, what makes genocide an issue or a question for the Turkish state is the international pressure for the official recognition of genocide. By refraining from using the word genocide and evading responsibility for its role in the atrocities, the Turkish nation-state intends to reframe the experiences of Armenians and undervalue the impact of such a human tragedy. Furthermore, this 'issue' is associated with the political strategy of foreign powers such as US and France, along with the Armenian Diaspora, to undermine the national development of Turkey.

In this context, I seek to explore what Armenians as citizens of the Turkish Republic understand by the idea of 'the Armenian issue' and how they define, challenge and restructure this foremost mind-set. The primary objection to this phrase is based on the linguistic formation which gathers the Armenian identity and the words 'issue' and 'problem' side by side. The interviewees thus criticise the negative meaning ascribed to the state of being an Armenian and the quotations below are the manifestations of this critical standpoint.

> **Interviewee 5 (22 year old male):** When it is called the Armenian issue it develops a perception as if Armenians are evil, Armenians made something bad and they cause trouble for you. I do not agree with this Armenian issue discourse. In fact it needs to be referred as the problem of the perpetrators of 1915 events.
>
> **Interviewee 11 (33 year old male):** Do we cause trouble, are we a problem, what are we? Now it is called as the Armenian issue but nobody from my side names it as the Turkish issue.
>
> **Interviewee 12 (28 year old female):** In the first place it is very disturbing that it is accepted as the Armenian issue. This means that your identity is identified with a problem.
>
> **Interviewee 14 (24 year old male):** The phrases of the Armenian issue and the Armenian problem irritate me. I mean the people who use them are also from the other side. I think this is the opposite side's literature. I think this word is employed by more rightist conservative people or official historians or the people acknowledging the official view of the state.
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> **Interviewee 23 (46 year old male):** Up until last year I used to call it the Armenian problem but I made a decision that I will not use the word 'Armenian' along with the word 'problem' any longer. If I need to name it I call it genocide.

**Interviewee 33 (27 year old female):** This is not the Armenian issue; this is the perception of the ones who name it. Sometimes I consider it as the Turkish issue.

**Interviewee 37 (38 year old female):** We are not a problem. I am so disturbed that we are represented as a problem. It is meaningless to regard a community that cannot be counted on the fingers of one hand as a problem. There is no such thing as the Armenian issue; you [the state] make an issue of Armenians. The one thing that Turkey needs to do is not to turn it into a problem. It needs to accept the events of the past.

In addition to the explicit content of these statements, the style of self-expression might be taken as evidence of their fervour. The reactions might arise from the nature of their unique experiences, the continuous exposure of political debates on 'the Armenian issue', as well as tendentious news discourse in print and visual media. Although I had expected such direct responses, it was novel to witness how the unrest concerning the usage of the term 'Armenian issue' transformed into the Turkish issue by following a similar discursive path. The expression 'the Turkish issue' also adheres to the same line of reasoning that homogenises Turkish identity and depicts it as a problem. As the official authorities and the denial mentality are focal points of some of the criticisms above, the personal pronoun 'we' is used to refer to all Armenians as if they were a single entity. The sayings 'my side' and 'the other side' also epitomise the tendency to dichotomise 'the issue'. The debate over recognition and denial surfaces through the binary opposition between the expressions 'genocide' and 'issue/problem' in the first place. The interviewees' reactions consequentially reflect this enduring tension in both social and political spheres.

Moreover, the views of other groups of interviewees depend on the importance they attach to their past and/or contemporary experiences and the historical developments following the 1915 events. The perception of time thus becomes a determining factor in the way they outline their views of the Armenian issue. According to a 32 year old male interviewee, Hrant Dink and *Agos*[30], are the key points today for the Armenian issue. Thanks to the personal attempts of Hrant Dink and the presence of *Agos*, he thinks it has

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[30] It is an Armenian bilingual weekly newspaper published in Istanbul. It has a symbolic meaning for the visibility of the Armenian community in Turkey as well as the preservation of the communal ties among Armenians.

become obvious that Armenians and their experiences deserve an apology that might solve the current problems. In a similar vein, a male respondent draws attention to the significance of the official apology; but more notably, he underlines the recognition of the events of 1915 in Turkey both by the society and the state without necessarily calling it genocide. The interviewee redefines the Armenian issue as an issue coming from the past and carried into future.

In contrast to the official narrative that restricts the Armenian issue to 1915 and eclipses its wider temporality, few respondents challenged this understanding and exemplified recent events and their personal experiences as evidence for the continuous impact of this issue. From the point of view of a 53-year-old male, the identification of the issue with genocide, deportation or massacre, and the number of the victims, is significant to a certain extent, as he is concerned with the recurrence of these incidents. He asks rhetorical questions such as, 'Was not Hrant shot? Was not Sevag murdered when he was serving in the military?', and draws a conclusion that these planned events aimed to force the emigration of Armenians in the same way as during and after the genocide. That is to say, the genocidal process and mentality come to light again through these latest incidents, which are now constituents of the Armenian issue. Furthermore, based on his personal concerns, a 50-year-old male respondent connects the Armenian issue to the current prejudices against Armenians. For instance, he complains about the reactions of the Turkish people concerning his Armenian name and their insistence on finding out its meaning. He also tells the story in which some people say, "I have never seen an Armenian during my whole life" when they meet him, and he replies "You have no idea about our characteristics. We have tails!" This ironic narrative at the same time indicates how the myth of the tail used to insult Armenians is employed to counteract a biased attitude. The views of two female interviewees born in the 1970s also epitomise the identification of the Armenian issue with the approach of non-Armenian individuals. The excerpts below clarify the implications of this issue for these respondents.

> **Interviewee 24 (39 year old):** The traumas which had been actually lived through still affect our lives and thus we don't want to say that we are Armenians. Because I refrain from being perceived differently and when they ask 'why your name is such' I tell them different things. When I say 'I am from Malatya' they ask from 'where did

Armenians or Christians come to Malatya?' and I reply 'We had been already there before you came'.

**Interviewee 38 (34 year old):** The nation that is called as Armenian causes trouble for this [Turkish] nation. Even the breath we take is a problem. We are a nation that was unable to be exterminated neither in 1915 nor in 6-7 September. We come out by our buildings, our cultural structure, our [Muslim] converts but at the same we cannot become visible because we are low in number. For whom it is a problem? Are seventy thousand Armenians now a problem?

The clearly distinguished defensive tone in the narratives appears as a sign of the articulation of a collective identity and history with the refusal of the official ideology and Turkish nationalist claims. From another angle, two interviewees address the Armenian issue as a question relating to the Armenians who 'stayed behind' in Turkey. According to a 29-year-old male interviewee, the question "How will the state be reconciled with the ones who remained in this land?" needs to be taken into consideration to sort out this issue. The murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı and the forms of everyday racism against Armenians for another respondent (37-year-old male) substantiate the argument that the hidden experiences of the past still haunt the lives of Armenians in Turkey today.

In order to point out that what is called the Armenian issue today has multiple layers, one interviewee gives the example of the books, 'My Grandmother: A Memoir' (2004) by Fethiye Çetin, also the attorney in the Hrant Dink case, and 'The Grandchildren: The Hidden Legacy of 'Lost' Armenians in Turkey' (2009) by Fethiye Çetin and Ayşe Gül Altınay. He recounts that thanks to the interviews done for the latter book, one of his friends had discovered his/her Armenian identity and his/her story as a grandchild of an Armenian was also given space in the book. As these volumes provide both a historical overview of adopted and Islamised Armenians after the genocide and their hidden identities, the meaning of this legacy for the Armenian community, as well as for Muslim families, is also embedded in the Armenian issue today. Despite these attempts to overcome the taboos around Armenians and their identity in Turkey, other cases recalled by the interviewee signify prevailing prejudices in both official and public domains. The first example is a lawsuit brought by the 11th president of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, when the Izmir deputy of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Canan

Arıtman, claimed that the mother of Gul is of Armenian origin. The lawsuit, along with the official statement of the president to testify his Turkish and Muslim identity, is an explicit symptom of an attitude that regards being an Armenian as an insult. As a second example, he mentions the street interviews in a TV programme in which as a response to the question, 'How many Armenians do you think live in Turkey?', the man on the street said a population between three hundred thousand and twenty million. As stated by the interviewee, the reason behind the exaggeration of the numbers lies in the fact that the Armenian identity comes into existence as an image of the enemy for Turkish people.

In contrast, some interviewees characterise the Armenian issue as a part of the intra and interstate political problems, rather than part of the problems among the nations. According to a 33-year-old female respondent, the national education system based on rote-learning catalyses the stereotypes concerning the Armenian community. She further claims that "[i]f the image of an Armenian is introduced as a bogeyman to a child, he/she will recognise all Armenians as a foe without even knowing a single Armenian." She proposes dialogue between the communities in order to cope with these imposing instructions. In a similar way, a twenty years older male interviewee agrees with the idea that the Armenian issue is unrelated to the two communities, particularly among the new generation. By criticising any effort to reawaken the 'old' events, however, he implied that my intention to explore the Armenian issue would only prevent the wound healing and would lead it to bleed.

Some interviewees also find the involvement of the government policies of other states, particularly US, unsettling, as the Armenian issue is seen as being 'politicised'. A 41-year-old female interviewee refers to the insignificance of the genocide recognition by the US and the preference of Obama to use the term 'Meds Yeghern'[31] instead of genocide. This is interpreted by another interviewee (23 year-old-female) as an instance of how politics in other states is fed by the Armenian issue. Correspondingly, a 28-year-old female respondent expresses how she is uncomfortable with the debates about whether Obama will use the term genocide or not on every 24th April as the remembrance day of Armenian genocide. In addition, the Armenian diaspora, as recounted by the interviewee, is represented as dehumanised and homogenous and exploiting Armenians

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[31] It is an Armenian phrase meaning 'great calamity'.

in Turkey, along with the US and EU states, to weaken the state power of Turkey, especially in the Turkish media. More importantly, she evaluates this situation as a disrespectful act towards the sorrow of Armenians. Another interviewee (54-year-old female) also considers the Armenian issue as an end result of the demands of the Armenian diaspora and Armenia for genocide recognition. As other states enact laws concerning the recognition of genocide, she argues the issue goes beyond a conflict between Turks and Armenians, and the Turkish government is troubled by the intervention of other states on such a delicate topic.

## 8.3. The Discourses of Nationalism and National Identity

This part presents a discussion of the various meanings ascribed to the notions of nationalism(s) and national identity in Turkey by the Armenian interviewees. The semi-structured interviews based on the perceptions and experiences of Armenians provide significant insights concerning the debates on these issues. The analysis of the responses to the questions: 'As a citizen of Republic of Turkey, do you think there is a prevalent discourse of nationalism and national identity in Turkey? If yes, how do you describe/experience it? Do you think it excludes Armenians?' brings out four main interpretations. These consist of the role of Islam within Turkish nationalism(s); the comparative analysis of Kurdish community and its relationship to the forms of nationalism; the issue of state-sponsored nationalism and the ideologies of the political parties; and the positioning of Armenian identity with regard to Turkish national identity. Before moving on to the analysis of the responses, it is important to highlight that the notions of 'state' and 'government' are employed interchangeably by many of the interviewees. The emphasis on the AKP government is particularly worthy of mention as the effects of current government policies and the political strategies and electoral concerns of AKP are associated with the rise and decline of nationalism.

First of all, almost one-fourth of interviewees point out the increasing influence of Islam on the construction and reproduction of Turkish nationalism(s) under the rule of the AKP government. Although Islam has been always a constitutive element of Turkish nationalism(s) throughout the history of the Turkish Republic, it might be argued that the visible negotiation between Islam and the strong secular state tradition in the public space is perceived as a threat to their existence by Armenian interviewees. A 36-year-

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old male respondent explains his encounter with Islam by giving the example of the censorships of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) that compels TV channels to blur images which are assumed to be opposed to Islamic belief. At the moment when he feels that Islam restricts his freedom and has an impact upon his private life, he holds particular religious practices responsible for the constraint of his living space. In other words, he underlines the ability of Islam to make its presence perceptible and adapt itself to different situations through the means of the state. The criticism over the interference of Islam in the private and public spheres is also emphasised by a 64-year-old male interviewee who explicitly said, 'I am not afraid of nationalism or national identity. But I am terrified of Islamic discourse.' He expresses his fear of the power of Islam by giving the example of the ban on the sale of alcohol and its consumption in university campuses. The correlation, between Islam and conservatism, he implies, and its scope of application in the political and social fields, might be regarded as one of the significant components of the ideology adopted by the AKP government. More importantly, based on the views of this senior interviewee, the survival of Turkish nationalism is questionable as Islam has the potential to dissolve nationalist elements and impose its own principles.

Following a similar line of reasoning, a younger interviewee (23-year-old female) draws an analogy between Turkey and Iran and cites the film 'Persepolis' to call attention to the potential 'threat of Islam' in Turkey. The power of Islam, instead of national identity and even nationality, she argues, has become more authoritative in Turkey. More importantly, she criticises the discourse of 'so-called' tolerance in practicing Islam under the name of a positive approach to other religions. The scepticism about the recognition of any other religion except Islam, specifically in the public sphere, reveals the idea of the shifting roles of Islam and Turkish nationalism for the exclusion of non-Muslim and non-Turkish citizens. The suppression of nationalism in Turkey is claimed as being related to the religious conservative ideology of AKP, which brings the Islamic brotherhood into prominence. In terms of the understanding of Islam as a political tool, a 53-year-old male interviewee makes a thought-provoking comment as follows:

> The threat of Islam depends on how they employ Islam in the political arena. If this
> government instils Islamic discourse and Islamic way of life in the general public

more than ever then you might be also obliged to wear a headscarf. But if Turkey turns its face to the West rather than the Middle East then Islam will no longer be a threat.

This remark underlines the politicization of Islam from above by the AKP government. This effort, though, is different from the entrenched state tradition which aims to secularise the entire Turkish society, homogenize the different religious communities and thus proliferate a republican, laicist and ethno-nationalist state Islam (Karakas, 2007:i). In particular, a state-led Islamization 'from above' is aimed at by the military leadership (*ibid*: 17); and it complements the 'nationalism from above' perception of the reforms and policies enacted during the early Republican period of Turkey and the successor governments. According to Keyder (1997: 42-3), Turkish nationalism is the extreme example of a condition in which the masses remained as silent partners and the passive recipients of the nationalist messages and the modernizing elite did not attempt to accommodate the popular resentment; thus, the constitutive element of the founding ideology of the new Republic was 'nationalism from above'. In other words, Islamisation and nationalism from above imposed by the state, government policies and the military mainly target the standardisation of national subjects. It might be argued that the current policies of the AKP government have overturned the ingrained political order in terms of promoting Islam and blurring the distinction between secular and religious elements in the public realm. This might be also the underlying reason for the interviewee to warn me about the prospective government policy with regard to the legal obligation of wearing headscarf. The stance of the interviewee thus epitomises a typical controversy between the Kemalist secular perspective and religious conservative standpoint of AKP over the headscarf issue. The attempt of the AKP government to represent excluded Islamic values and 'create a perception of resemblance between the lifestyle of the nation and that of those occupying political power' (Saraçoglu 2011 cited in Kaya, 2014:8) is read as a challenge to the republican state ideology.

In line with the claims associating the prominence of Islam with the changing forms of Turkish nationalism, some Armenian interviewees draw attention to the nature of the relationship between other minority groups and nationalism/national identity. Since the official understanding of an ideal citizen corresponds to a Turkish and Muslim national,

the Turkish state also perpetuates religious commonality depending on political interests. A group of interviewees thus underscores how the Islamic fraternity between Turks and Kurds is activated as a unifying force for the solution of the 'Kurdish problem'. This repetitive theme in the interviews is voiced by a 32-year-old male respondent as follows:

> The Armenian issue is the intersection point between Islam and nationalism. The most important factor that prevented Kurds from getting into trouble is their being Muslim.

In this regard, the concern about the collaboration between religious and nationalist elements entails a threat for the permanent exclusion of Armenians, which is repeated by several interviewees. Nonetheless, alleging that the religious identity of Kurds has resulted in a harmonious relationship with the state and the rest of the society constrains the discussion to Islam only. By adhering to the idea of Islam being a means of conflict resolution, a 29-year-old male interviewee claims that:

> The state has a policy that says 'Turkish identity is no longer able to fulfil all the demands. Kurds are also Muslim. Then let's meet under the roof of Islamic fraternity". However, when it comes to the Armenian issue all the political and social actors unite against Armenians.

This allegation postulates the religious affiliation of Armenians as the main obstacle for the recognition of the Armenian identity in the eyes of the state as well as other agents in society. Moreover, the approach taken by the government toward the Kurdish community recently is read as verification for the decline in the importance of Turkish national identity. The most notable point to be underlined here is the tendency of some Armenian interviewees to interpret their own social and political status with regard to Turkish nationalism in terms of their religious identity and a comparison with the conditions of the Kurdish community. However, the overemphasis on the Islamic brotherhood seems to miss the point of prolonged armed and political conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), as well as the problematic status of the Kurdish community. It should also be noted that the relationship between Turkish nationalism(s) and the Kurdish question has been far from stable. According to

Yeğen (2007:121), the relational and historical nature of these two subject matters has equipped Turkish nationalism with various lenses for looking at the Kurdish question. His historical analysis indicates that Kurds are considered as future-Turks by the Turkish nationalism of the republican era; but at present the possibility of achieving the status of Turkishness for Kurds seems to have been abandoned by Turkish nationalism. The principal cause for the questioning of the Turkishness of Kurds is the recognition of the non-Muslimhood characteristics of some Kurds, such as being Jewish or Christian. This shifting image of Kurds in the eyes of Turkish nationalism suggests that the members of this community now bear resemblance to the other non-Muslims of the country 'who have been traditionally perceived by Turkish nationalism as those who fall outside the scope of Turkishness' (*ibid*: 137-140).

Thirdly, some interviewees address the issue of state-sponsored nationalism. A 27-year-old female interviewee maintains that 'the foundation of the Republic is built on nationalism and the emphasis on the supremacy of the Turkish nation had never changed'. Two other senior respondents (53-year-old male and 65-year-old female) also believe that the dominance of Turkish nationalism and national identity has been always present. In a more clear-cut way, a 65-year-old female interviewee relates the implementation of nationalism by the state to the country's prevailing lack of self-confidence. Due to the unsuccessful attempts of Turkey to belong to Europe or Arab countries, she contends, it is now in a 'mixed-up' condition in the international arena. In other words, Turkey's poor international image is put forward as a reason for the reinforcement of nationalism at the hands of the state in order to preserve solidarity and unity within the national borders. From another perspective, a-24-year-old interviewee expresses that

> It is impossible to come to power in Turkey without escalating nationalism because there is a well-designed national identity in terms of Turkish and Sunni Muslim identity. This formula is acceptable by almost all actors such as conservative, Kemalist or fascist standpoints. Some of them associate this with Islam, some of them merged this with rightist Kemalist elites and some of them combine this with moderate political Islam model like the current government. Namely, it suits every identity in Turkey.

It suggests that identities are 'situational' rather than 'fundamental', which denotes the articulation of identities in specific contexts in Turkey. In a similar vein, a 38-year-old male interviewee criticises the usage of the concept of 'Turkish-Armenian' even among Armenians. From his point of view, this situation signifies the success of republican ideology in terms of suppressing different identities and consolidating Turkish identity concurrently. In contrast to other interviewees who are critical of the Kurdish community and their advantageous position within the Turkish nation-state thanks to their religious identity, he underlines that the Kurdish movement paved the way for the recognition and visibility of other ethnic identities. As a result of the revival of ethnic consciousness he asserts that some members of the Armenian community have started to say:

> 'We are not Turks, we are Armenians. We have an identity, we have customs and we want to live these customs and maintain the cultural heritage.' But when these demands are uttered, this led to a conflict with the state. This is mainly because the state persistently dictates that '[y]ou have no idea about being an Armenian'. Thus we are thrown in a schizophrenic condition.

The clash between the Turkish state and the Armenian community, as noted above, might be interpreted as a consequence of the assimilative and discriminatory state policies founded on an ideal citizen typology. It is also appealing to see how the ambivalent attitude that the state holds towards its citizens brings about a lack of confidence and devotion. Moreover, the stress on the Armenian identity, culture and cultural heritage in the responses, brings to mind the question of to what extent these claims share a similar mind-set and discourses to Turkish nationalism(s). At this point it is vital not to fall into the trap of romanticizing minority nationalism and introduce it as an alternative to other forms of nationalism.

It is equally interesting to observe that some interviewees directly associate the discourse of nationalism and national identity with the ideologies of the political parties. The excerpts below exemplify how the political climate in Turkey is assumed as the focal point for the proliferation of nationalist thought.

**Interviewee 9 (36 year old male):** I think nationalism is on the rise in general even though the stress on the Turkishness has been reduced. All the big political parties are nationalists. I will not think the opposite unless they declare that they are not nationalists.

**Interviewee 19 (50 year old male):** I voted for Republican People's Party but I will not support them in the next elections. I witness serious nationalism in this party. I cannot say anything about other parties after even Republican People's Party appears as nationalist.

**Interviewee 32 (53 year old male):** Nationalism is now repressed in Turkey. The democratic initiatives launched by Erdogan inhibit nationalism. He knows that if nationalism starts to rise other parties such as Republican People's Party and Nationalist Movement Party will also make use of it as well as himself.

**Interviewee 36 (44 year old male):** Nationalism is always present in Turkey but changes its form all the time. In 1999 elections Nationalist Movement Party became the second party as nationalism appropriated this party; in 2000s nationalism also did not disappear but supported Welfare Party. Nationalism is liquid in Turkey. It changes its mentality, its discourse but its general standpoint never disappears. Sometimes it brings Muslimhood to the fore, sometimes Turkishness.

In addition to the link constructed between the political parties and nationalism, the opinions above also signify how the conceptualisation of nationalism is confined to a particular form of understanding. Since one of the goals of this research is to interrogate how Armenians in Turkey perceive and interpret the constant encounters with the symbols of the nation and nationalism, these accounts seem to ascribe a political role to nationalism and underline the effects of socio-political conjuncture on the practice of nationalism. It might be argued that they support the 'tidal wave approach to nationalism, which treats it as a force hitting on particular occasions or as a temporary aberration' (Özkırımlı and Uyan-Semerci, 2011: 60). This perspective identifies nationalism as an ephemeral force which 'desensitizes us to the continual nature of nationalism' (*ibid*: 61). That is to say, the accounts look as if they turn a blind eye to the idea of the everydayness of nationalism as an ideology embedded in everyday life through the constant flagging of nationhood (Billig 1995). Rather than the daily reproduction of the nation based on all unnoticed, routine practices, ideological habits, beliefs and representations (*ibid*: 8), these interviewees portray nationalism as an ideological tool that can be adapted to the fluctuating political conditions and electoral

strategies of the parties. Thus, the selections of phrases such as the rise of nationalism or its repressed form, are noteworthy as they stand for the understanding of nationalism that 'waxes and wanes in particular historical moments' (Özkırımlı and Uyan-Semerci, 2011: 61). The interviewees' choices to label the political parties as 'nationalist' straightforwardly, and restrict 'nationalist' thought to only the ideological stances of the parties, also give the impression that nationalism is depicted as a spatial and temporal force that is utilised for political manoeuvres.

Furthermore, the interviewees' observations suggest multiple forms of Turkish nationalism. According to Bora (2003: 436), Turkish nationalism is not a homogeneous discourse but as a series of discourses and a vast lexis; and he distinguishes five nationalist discourses in the Turkey of the 1990s. These are: official nationalism, Kemalist nationalism, liberal neo-nationalism, Turkist radical nationalism and nationalism in Islamism. In brief, official nationalism firstly aims to construct and to preserve the nation-state and it is 'the root-language of Turkish nationalism' (*ibid*) ; secondly, Kemalist nationalism as a left-wing nationalist discourse understands 'nationalism as the advocate of the process of secularization and modernization'(*ibid*:440); thirdly, liberal neo-nationalism 'defines national identity in terms of its fervour and ability to attain the level of the developed or wealthy countries of the world'(*ibid*); fourthly, Turkist radical nationalism as a 'perverted branch of official nationalism' expands the conception of 'homeland' which includes all the territories inhabited by people of Turkish descent (*ibid*: 445); and finally, the ideology of nationalism in Islamism 'envisages Turkey as the potential leader of the Islamic world and union' (*ibid*: 449). Based on this taxonomy, it might be alleged that interviewees' ideas concerning nationalism in Turkey overlap with the discourses of official nationalism, Turkish radical nationalism and nationalism in Islamism. For instance, the emphasis on Turkishness in the political domain as expressed by the first interviewee might be interpreted as a reflection of 'the state-centred conception of nationalism' (Bora, 2003: 438). By referring to the Nationalist Movement Party and its electoral success in 1999, two interviewees also draw attention to the ideology of pan-Turkism which struggled against the Kurdish national movement along with the reactionary nationalistic wave  and 'rehabilitated its relationship with official nationalism and drew closer to the political centre' (*ibid*: 446). Lastly, by referring to the prominent role of

Muslimhood, a 44-year-old male interviewee refers to nationalism in Islamism, in which a certain religious identity becomes the determining feature of an ideal citizen.

Finally a cluster of the interviewees interpret the discourse of nationalism and national identity by taking into account their own rights and experiences and the status of Armenian identity with regard to Turkish national identity and other citizens. In very explicit terms, a 59-year-old male comments as follows:

> We get used to live with it and will continue to live with it. If the minorities are approached with empathy, of course some people will disapprove and raise their voice. These are normal. But people will have to learn live together no matter what views they hold. They will also learn how to live by accepting like us. They will learn to put up with us even if they do not love us at all.

As the interviewee speaks on behalf of the Armenian community, the usage of the personal pronouns and thus the binary opposition between 'us'(Armenians) and 'them' (Turks) is very apparent in this remark. More importantly, he depicts the experiences of nationalism as a social force that leaves the entire community no choice but to become accustomed to its rules. While the discriminatory reactions of some majority group members to the equal treatment of Armenians are presented as 'normal' by the interviewee, the stress on the ability of living together can be read as an implicit criticism of the failure of nationalism in terms of managing diversity in Turkey. The assumption that insinuates the distinction between 'tolerant' and 'submissive' Armenians and 'prejudiced' Turks is worth mentioning. The prospective efforts of Turks to develop a new point of view concerning their resistance to different identities are believed to be the solution for the challenges posed by nationalism.

According to a 41-year-old female respondent, the presence of Armenian churches, hospitals and schools substantiates the inactive role of nationalism in Turkey. From this point of view, the protection of citizenship rights specifically for the Armenian community by the Treaty of Lausanne, is put forward to refute the claim vis-à-vis dominant nationalist state tradition and policies. In contrast, a 22-year-old male interviewee identifies public spheres, especially schools, as the central sites to nourish the 'disguised' rise of nationalism. He recounts a lived experience in which a history

teacher in an Armenian school told the students, "Here is Turkey, do not speak Armenian, speak Turkish!" Linguistic oppression in this case interestingly resembles the 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' campaign in the 1930s in Turkey. As speaking Turkish was a 'key determinant that distinguished the 'real' Turks from Turkish citizens' in the 1930s, and by means of linguistic homogenisation the boundaries of Turkishness were hoped to be drawn (Bayar, 2011:120), non-Turkish speaking groups were targeted by the Turkish state to achieve a commonality of language. However, the sufferings of these particular groups during the nation-building process in Turkey through language policies now take a new turn. Although the only exception to the constitution that restricts the teaching of any language other than Turkish as a mother tongue to citizens are the educational institutions of the Greeks, Armenians and Jews who are legally authorised to run their own schools (Oran 2004 cited in Bayar, 2011: 125), the implementation of these education rights is still challenging. Nonetheless, in the international arena they are presented as a testimony of the tolerant, respectful and hospitable attitude of the Turkish state towards its citizens from minority groups. The choice of the interviewee to recount this biased form of education thus uncovers how linguistic oppression still operates as a part of the politics of nationalism in Turkey. According to the report of Minority Rights Group International, for instance, both Armenians and Greeks face procedural difficulties for the approval of their school textbooks (Kaya and Baldwin, 2004:10), as well as bureaucratic obstacles concerning students' enrolment restrictions and budget shortages in Greek minority schools (The Constantinopolitan Society, 2014: 4). As stated by May (2001: 57), the best and worst case scenarios for minority groups respectively correspond to the preservation of their ethnic habitus in the private sphere, despite the strong attempts of the state to assimilate their language and culture, and the active suppression of minority language and culture which is a common feature of modern nation-state policy. In addition, he refers to the suppression of Kurdish in Turkey up until the early 1990s as an example of the state-sanctioned linguistic suppression of minority languages. Unlike the explicit discriminatory treatment of Kurdish and Kurdish culture, under the guise of giving authorisation to the teaching-learning process of the Armenian language and culture, the Turkish state still maintains a surveillance role. The determining factor at this point is not the rights granted by an international treaty for the minority groups in the nation-state. The issue at stake is: 'How and under what conditions are these rights 'given' by the state?' More notably,

analysing Arendt's felicitous saying 'the right to have rights', Benhabib (2004:57) points out the dependency of the rights-bearing status on the recognition of membership and pertinently asks 'Who is to give or withhold such recognition?'

## 8.4. The Official Ideology of the Turkish State

In this section I aim to reveal research findings on the perceptions of interviewees with respect to the continued denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish state. Although the Armenian Genocide is acknowledged as the first genocide of the twentieth century by many states and international bodies, 'the denial of this part of the nation's founding history has become a fundamental (if silent) part of Turkey's national identity' (Dixon, 2010: 106). Turkey's resistance to admit its responsibility for the massacres also reveals itself in the usage of terms such as the 'Armenian issue/question/allegations', '1915 events', 'relocation', 'deportation', 'forced emigration' and 'ethnic conflict' in the official narratives. Briefly stated, from the standpoint of the Turkish state, the 'civil war' between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenians caused many deaths on both sides and the 'loyalty' and the claims of the Armenian subjects at that period of time are open to discussion; thus, the 1915 events are not recognised as genocide in the eyes of the state as well as its institutions. This belief is also held by much of the Turkish public, which has been convinced by 'decades of silence, limited access to historical material and more recently active propaganda campaigns' (Cooper and Akçam, 2005: 84). As Turkish national identity played a pivotal role in the formation of the Turkish Republic rising from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, it is also the determining cause for the understanding of the Armenian Genocide as a taboo issue within Turkish society. More importantly, 'the reason for the Turks' deafening silence (at best) or categorical denial (at worst) of the Armenian Genocide is that Turkish national identity has made the subject utterly unapproachable' (Akçam, 2004:59). Consequently, the questioning of this officially forbidden or silenced part of the national identity and history from the perspective of Armenians as citizens of the Turkish Republic may provide new insights into the debate on the ongoing implications of the official ideology.

It is thus crucial to disclose how the descendants of the victims of the mass killings of Armenians comment on Turkey's policy of denial with regard to collective violence and the way it reacts to officially enforce forgetting and/or silencing the past. By asking the

question, 'As you might know the official narratives in Turkey still deny the Armenian genocide and regard it as an 'ethnic conflict' 'deportation' or 'forced emigration', what do you think about this claim as a citizen of Turkish Republic?', I also intend to find out the current impression of the interviewees towards the Turkish state. Unlike other parts of the analysis of interviews, it is possible to talk about the integrity of the responses in terms of competing with the state ideology by using strong language. The central argument of the interviewees involves objection to state-led amnesia and its effects on their experiences. Moreover, the dominant feeling of mistrust among the interviewees towards the state along, with its policies in all other issues, shows the interdependency of their past and present encounters with the state.

To begin with, the shifts in the self- perception of the Turkish state lead some interviewees to raise an issue of (dis) continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. The ambivalent discourse employed by the state is criticised by a 41-year-old female interviewee in this way:

> When it suits the state's purpose it is said 'the Ottoman Empire is our past'; but when it does not it is said 'the events took place during the Ottoman time we have nothing to do with the events'

On the one hand, the will to embrace the Ottoman legacy recalls the narratives of the nationalists comprising the themes of the golden age, the superiority of the national culture, the periods of recess from which the nation is destined to 'awaken', and the national hero, pointing out the representation of the nation as a mystical, a temporal and even transcendental entity (Özkırımlı, 2010:50-52). With regard to the themes of antiquity and the golden age, the Turkish Republic puts forward the 600-year-old national and cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire and the sovereignty of the empire in three continents as evidence for its entrenched national power. By excluding the status of the Ottoman Empire during the recession period (17th and 18th centuries), and its situation as the 'sick man of Europe' in the early twentieth century, from its national narratives, the official ideology attempts to robustly acclaim the Ottoman heritage and nostalgia. On the other hand, the historical incidents that might cast doubt on the nation's image and the state's credibility result in the detachment of the Turkish state

from its predecessor. In particular, the evasion of responsibility for the Armenian Genocide epitomises the selective historical reading of the state. Avedian's (2012: 797) scrutiny of the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic reveals that the issue of state responsibility is the 'fundamental obstacle for genocide recognition'. By applying some of the legal principles and theories of international law, he demonstrates 'how the Turkish Republic not only failed to cease the wrongful acts committed by its predecessor but also continued and fulfilled the very same internationally wrongful acts, committed against the Armenians and other Christian subjects of the country' (*ibid*: 805).

The repercussions of the official ideology's constant genocide rejection unveil both different and overlapping coping strategies and interpretations amongst the Armenian interviewees. The extract below belongs to a-28-year-old female interviewee and can be considered as an example of the accusatory approach:

> These discourses make me feel like a second-class citizen. The Turkish state still denies the genocide because to carry out massacre is something that might damage the Turkish pride. In Europe in the history textbooks Turks are called barbarian but Turks definitely deny it. But Turks are barbarian. You tried to destroy the problem instead of trying to solve it. I do not want to make you-we distinction in the language but it exists. If one person is killed due to his/her nationality or is denigrated because of his/her race and there is a hate crime, no one can talk about the war conditions or the mutual killings. To recognise the genocide or to reinstate the people's rights will damage the perception of Turkish pride and the belief that Turks are excellent; thus no any Turk wants to admit it.

This inference implies that the reason behind the denial policy is the deep-seated image of the Turkish nation and thus not only the state but also Turks disapprove of the presence of genocide. She also does not believe the official declarations that put forward the state of war as a reason to refute claims of genocide. The contrasting aspect of her argument seems to be the simultaneous ascription of 'barbarian' feature to Turks and the stress on the stigmatisation of people due to their nationality or race. The aggressive tone correspondingly becomes explicit through the use of the personal pronoun 'you' in

the sentence to draw attention to the responsibility of Turks for the genocide and their negligence in seeking a legal remedy.

In response to the continuing denial of the state, a group of interviewees asks similar questions which are shown in the passages as follows:

> **Interviewee 13 (53 year old male):** Non-Muslims constituted 21.5-22 % of the population according to census results in 1913. Now the sum of all the Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians in Turkey is not even 1% of the total population. Do I need to say anything else? What happened to these people? Did they vanish into thin air?
>
> **Interviewee 29 (25 year old male):** The question of 'Where are so many people now?' has no answer. For instance my grandpa's dad did his military service for 24 months. When he returned to home he couldn't find his wife; because she committed suicide not to be raped. Could you imagine this? A person who did military service for this country could not find his wife due to this reason. After all we continued to live in this country. The state needs to admit it and fight against genocide in other parts of the world.
>
> **Interviewee 30 (62 year old female):** Why are the relatives of our family elders not alive? Why do our family elders try to memorialise them and cry for them? What is the story that has been told us? It was not a science-fiction story. Why the experiences are still denied persistently?
>
> **Interviewee 38 (34 year old female):** If the genocide didn't occur why are we only seventy thousand people now? Where are all the people that used to live in Anatolia now?

The importance of these reactions lies in the fact that there is an incompatibility between the experiences and memories of the members of a particular community and the attitude of the state with regard to one and the same historical phenomenon. Although the historical interpretations may diverge, the ways in which the Turkish state decides to face the past come under criticism for its efforts to distort the historical facts. The interviewees' responses highlight the fact that the official denialist stance not only seeks to conceal the tragedies of the genocide, but also restrains the persecuted people from receiving convincing answers to their basic questions. The rhetorical inquiry concerning the deceased Armenians inevitably evokes the idea that the decrease in number of the Armenian population was a consequence of the deliberate policies of the

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state. Therefore, the minority status of the Armenian community in the present day is accentuated by the interviewees because this is regarded as the most visible evidence for the state-led destruction of a particular ethnic-religious social group.

In order to 'survive' within the national borders and have a problem-free relationship with the Turkish state, it might be argued that the interviewees develop their own coping mechanisms. It is thus possible to make a distinction between reconciliatory and critical standpoints. One group of interviewees emphasise the sufferings of both Turkish and Armenian sides and the need to move beyond the past failures of the state. The motto of this understanding can be basically summarised as 'what is in the past is in the past'. Since 'there is nothing left to be fixed now', a 33-year-old male interviewee claims, the important question is 'Are we going to continue with the mentality based on the distinction between Turk and Armenian from now on?' When I asked whether the recognition of the state is important to the interviewee, he said hopelessly that 'I accepted the genocide refusal of the state. It is not unimportant but the state didn't acknowledge genocide and it will never do'. This form of 'despairing acceptance' of state violence and denial also becomes evident in the remark of a 23-year-old female interviewee. She even agrees with the use of the term 'so-called genocide' in the official narratives, as long as the state is able to reassure the Armenian community about preventing prospective collective violence against them and thus ensuring the past events never occur again. Her account also seems to uncover a profound feeling of insecurity about the treatment by the Turkish state of its citizens, especially non-Turkish and non-Muslim ones.

From another perspective, the interviewees who might be considered as more critical recurrently draw attention to the deceptive structure of the official ideology in Turkey. It is equally interesting that the word 'lie' in both noun and verb forms is employed twenty times by the interviewees to express their opposition to the state's foremost line of reasoning about the massacre of Armenians.

> **Interviewee 8 (39-year-old male):** In the present day there are few states which are able to come to terms with their history. The official ideology always tells lies and there is such a truth here.

**Interviewee 9 (36-year-old male):** The official ideology in Turkey is completely based upon lies. It is an invalid contention in the outer world. It is just a discourse and standpoint which aims to align the public opinion in Turkey with a certain understanding of 1915 events. But it becomes less and less persuasive as the people know that 'the state tells lies' from other examples.

**Interviewee 25 (45-year-old male):** First of all there is no such thing as official ideology but the state is miserable. I don't believe in its ideology, its regime, its orders or anything that belongs to it. I am a citizen of the Turkish Republic but I am the man of this land not of the rulers.

**Interviewee 33 (27-year-old female):** The official history is something that was fictionalised and fabricated depending on the demands of the state and presented to the citizens. The official ideology is a system and mentality that was built upon these elements.

**Interviewee 36 (44-year-old male):** I am a person who believes that the state tells lies in every issue. The official ideology is altogether a fantasy. It is the act of telling lies to society in order to create a society. This is the same everywhere but in Turkey it is the attempt to create a Turk from Alevis or Kurds.

Although it is unsurprising to see the judgmental comments above regarding the nation-state's official ideology, what makes the case of these Armenian interviewees peculiar is that they abstain from restricting the problematic mind-set of the official ideology to historical events or the issue of minority rights. Instead they point out the deep-rooted crisis of the understanding of citizenship in Turkey. In particular, during the creation of a Turkish nation-state 'the conceptualization of citizenship' synchronised with the formation of 'a unique, unchangeable and historic Turkish identity' that was enabled by a new monolithic culture disregarding ethnic and sub-cultural identities. Thus, the paradox of the official definition of Turkish identity and citizenship derives from the Turkish state's continuing respect towards the common historical heritage shared with non-Turkish groups despite their rejection of Ottoman and Islamic heritage. Although the non-Muslim groups were considered as Turkish citizens as a continuation of their community status in the Ottoman Empire, there were debates about their citizenship status, particularly related to their equal treatment and assimilation (İçduygu *et.al*, 1999: 195-96). The exclusionary outlook of the political elites towards non-Muslim communities, under the cover of protective citizenship rights, has also remained

throughout the succeeding governments. Since citizenship rights in Turkey are based on a 'ruling class strategy' whereby rights are given from above (Mann 1987 cited in Arat, 2000:275), the interviewees' highlighting the fabricated and deceptive nature of the official ideology also comes into prominence. The criticisms of the interviewees with respect to the genocide denial of the official ideology thus indicate two significant points. On the one hand, the Turkish state aims to dictate to its Muslim and Turkish citizens how they should perceive, remember and also legitimate the Armenian genocide. Through its official ideology and institutions, on the other hand, the state draws the line for the Armenian community as 'tolerated citizens' (non-Muslim and non-Turkish) in terms of what to tell and claim about the genocide and also 'advises' them to suppress their memories and experiences in order not to obfuscate the national narratives.

## 8.5. Under the Rule of the AKP Government

As this research concentrates on more recent shifts in the understanding of the 'Armenian issue' and the status of Armenians with reference to the debates on nationalism, national identity and media representations, the developments under the rule of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government since 2002 have become relevant for a comprehensive analysis. The incidents selected for this research, namely the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre, have taken place during the AKP government's period in office. The government's project of 'democratic openings' has also given a new impulse to the treatment of ethnic religious minority groups. Although these attempts mainly target the solution of the 'Kurdish issue', the government has taken steps to negotiate with Alevi and Armenian communities and other marginalised groups in order to rehabilitate their rights. However, the AKP government's equal fulfilment of the recognition of religious freedoms and rights through the discourse of a conservative democracy in every social setting, especially in the case of religious minorities, is debateable. It is argued that the policies of AKP 'to stimulate social sensitivities toward toleration and recognition of religious minorities and the protection of religious right were confined to the Sunni conservative and Islamist segments' (Kaya, 2013:86). In order to understand the reverberations of the ambiguous approach of the AKP government to the position of the Armenians, in the course of interviews I asked the question, 'How do you evaluate the

eleven years period under the government of Justice and Development Party regarding the position of Armenians in Turkey?'.

First of all, it needs to be stressed that every single interviewee declares the political sympathy towards the AKP government among the Armenian community. Despite the different voting preferences uttered by some interviewees, they touch upon the increasing support for the AKP government by the majority of the Armenian population. 31 out of 45 interviewees refer to the return of the seized properties of Armenian foundations and the official permissions for the restoration of Armenian churches as positive developments under the rule of AKP. Since the Armenian Genocide under the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire was a multifaceted process of destruction which embraced the mass executions of Armenian elites, expropriation of Armenian property and capital transfer to the state, deportations, forced assimilation through the conversion to Islam, the kidnapping of women and children, the construction of an artificially created famine region and the destruction of material culture such as churches and buildings (Üngör 2013), its lingering effects still haunt the lives of Armenians in Turkey. As the genocidal process for Armenians, including legal, economic and social difficulties, preceded another phase with the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the sanctions of the state aim for the Turkification in all spheres of life. From the beginning of the Republic, the policy of the Turkification of economic life confirmed that it is impossible for a non-Muslim to be accepted as a Turk. The main goal of the state was to reduce the influence of the non-Muslim minority population over the economy by following a nationalist economic policy and substituting them with Muslim Turks so as to create a national bourgeoisie. In addition, the desired consequence of economic Turkification was the decline in the numbers of non-Muslims as they were compelled to emigrate to other countries due to economic distress (Bayır, 2013:120-22). These historical developments, specifically the appropriation of Armenian properties and the legal regulations with the purpose of eliminating non-Muslim actors from the 'Turkish' economy, thus revive the issue of the reinstatement of rights. Accordingly, the recent attempt of the AKP government to return the seized properties of Armenians might be considered as a significant legal and political rearrangement of minority rights.

The excerpts below illustrate how some interviewees mention the government's steps to resolve the problem of confiscated possessions in the first place.

> **Interviewee 1 (41 year old female):** The most noticeable changes during the AKP period are the return of the seized properties of Armenian foundations and the official permissions to rent out these properties and make a profit from them. In fact these should have been done so far but this government made these developments willingly or reluctantly. On this subject I don't feel distant from the government.
>
> **Interviewee 11 (33 year old male):** Under the rule of the AKP government there have been uplifting developments concerning our foundations' properties. Because the state appropriated from us under the name of Wealth Tax and didn't give back anything. After the long years of waiting this change has given the message that 'you are not the other any longer; you also belong to here'.
>
> **Interviewee 21 (59 year old male):** The AKP government's support, interest and participation in our schools, associations and cultural activities are actually extraordinary compared to the other governments. Many of our foundations have started to retake their properties and the government has begun to cover the cost of the Armenian textbooks in our schools.
>
> **Interviewee 26 (55 year old female):** We used to have many foundations and the state appropriated all their properties. But these foundations have recently repossessed almost all their properties thanks to the AKP government.
>
> **Interviewee 37 (38 year old female):** In the past we had to fulfil many procedures to make repair and maintenance of the churches. Now we can make them easily. There had been properties belonged to the foundations and they were not allowed to make use of these and such types of obstacles have been removed.

Although the interviewees are aware of the historical delay in the political decision about the compensation of their assets, they appreciate the latest initiatives of the AKP government in comparison to the preceding governments. The probability of the government's unwillingness to implement this policy is interestingly put into words by a 41-year-old female interviewee in particular. She might read the electoral concerns and the impact of European Union criteria as the main motives of the AKP government to bring this issue to the agenda at this point in time. Yet another remarkable comment, voiced by a 33-year-old male interviewee, maintains that this economic amendment also paves the way for the disengagement of Armenians from minority status. The link

constructed between the sense of belonging and the prevention of the infringement of economic rights, also signifies how the enjoyment of fundamental rights and liberties might become a state of exception for the Armenian community in Turkey, as well as other minority groups. As noted by another interviewee (53 year old male), despite the relatively better rights and liberties 'given' by the AKP government for now, he has doubts whether these 'privileges' will be provided in the long term due to the aggressive policy of the government both in internal and external affairs. From a critical approach, few interviewees object to the assessment of the return of seized properties as a 'favour' or 'privilege' by other members of the Armenian community. It is chiefly alleged that Armenians had already been the owners of these properties and the current political strategy to remedy the illegal practices of the previous power elites should not be appreciated as this is considered as a natural extension of the ascribed status of Armenians. Moreover, a 53-year-old male respondent interprets this policy as one of the 'alleged' developments under the AKP rule and poses the question 'why does the government ask for the documents from the owners to prove their properties as if the appropriated chattels are outside the government's knowledge?' In fact the lack of legal papers and the complicated application process, he contends, might result in the rejection of the claims. In a similar vein, a younger interviewee (24-year-old male) criticises the challenging procedures for the validation of deeds and more specifically the enforcement of the statutory decree instead of a permanent law.

In addition, the comprehension of some interviewees regarding the recovery of rights at the governmental level relies on the attitude of the AKP government towards other incidents between the years 2002-2013. In contrast to my presumptions, only 11 interviewees evaluate the period under the AKP rule by taking into account the murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı and the participation of the statesmen in the protest against Khojaly Massacre. Although the commencement of major legal and political changes and democratic openings by the ruling party is admitted, a 33-year-old female interviewee spells out that 'I do not forget that Hrant Dink was killed when AKP was in power'. Similarly, the comments below reveal how the interviewees reflect on the socio-political context during the AKP years that laid the groundwork for these tragic events.

**Interviewee 14 (24 year old male):** While the government seems to make progress about our rights, on TV the Prime Minister says that, 'They have said we are Jewish, Armenian and, excuse me saying this, but Rum (Greek)'. At the same time the government organised the Khojaly protest and released the murderer of Hrant publicly.

**Interviewee 15 (33 year old male):** Due to the failure of the AKP government to solve the murder of Hrant Dink I don't think anything positive about this government. If the government really seeks to do something for Armenians, then it would have solved the murder long time ago.

**Interviewee 17(29 year old male):** The return of two or three ruined houses does not mean anything. What has changed in the social life of Armenians? Armenians are still being killed. The government doesn't consider the killing of Armenians as harmful and punish the murderers. The murderer of Hrant Dink was put on trial in the juvenile's court. The penalty for the murderer of Sevag will be probably between two to six years prison. Thus there is no punishment for killing an Armenian in Turkey. Nothing has changed in the period of AKP rule.

**Interviewee 30 (62 year old female):** The government speaks softly but carries a big stick. Both Hrant and Sevag were killed during the AKP rule. Nothing has changed. It is same as a hundred years ago.

**Interviewee 34 (33 years old male):** There might have been institutional developments concerning Armenians but both Hrant and Sevag were killed in the past ten years. We are talking about a government that kills its Armenian citizens.

The common point mentioned above is the inconsistent approach between different administrative bodies of the government. In particular, the reservations concerning the operation of the justice system, as well as judicial independence, seem to lead the interviewees to find the acts of the AKP government insincere. As a result of the exclusionary tone in the speeches of Erdoğan, the lack of fair trials inside the Turkish criminal justice system and the involvement of the government and the governmental or regulatory bodies in violent attacks against Armenians, the policy concerning the seized properties loses its significance in the eyes of some interviewees. The opinion concerning the uniformity among successive governments in the history of the Turkish state in terms of neglecting the issue of discrimination and abetting crimes against Armenians, is also significant. It bears a resemblance to the discussion of the (dis)continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic and state

responsibility for the genocidal process. This is also implied by a 62-year-old female interviewee who argues that the status of Armenians in Turkey under the AKP government is not very distinctive from their status during the twentieth century vis-à-vis being susceptible to state violence.

**8.6. Conclusion**

This chapter presented an exploration of the perceptions of forty-five Armenian interviewees with regard to their genocide stories, the notion of 'Armenian issue', the discourses of nationalism and national identity, the official ideology of the Turkish state and the developments during the AKP government. In line with previous chapters that dealt with the interviewees' accounts concerning three particular incidents, in this chapter I intended to point out interconnected aspects of the consumption side of the Armenian question. The first part on the transmission of knowledge and experiences across the Armenian generations regarding genocidal process revealed distinct patterns of remembrance and forgetting. More notably the interviews uncovered the differences among Armenians in terms of their ability and inability to narrate their loss and trauma. The next part correspondingly disclosed strong reactions of a great majority of the interviewees towards the artificial distinction between the Armenian issue and the Armenian Genocide. This particular analysis also supported my argument that the genocide is not confined to past acts of state violence yet it is an ongoing process for some interviewees.

As I consider the discourses of Turkish nationalism and national identity as integral facets of the genocidal process, in the third part I discovered that various forms of Turkish nationalism were also underlined by the respondents. This might be read as an important finding as it indicates that the shifting roles and discourses of Turkish nationalism are also recognised by some members of the Armenian community. The following part additionally put forward the incompatibility between the official ideology of the state based on the denial of genocide and the interviewees' experiences of state-led violence. In the last part of the chapter, however, I found out that the developments during the AKP government such as the returns of the seized properties of Armenian foundations and the official permissions for the restoration of Armenian churches led several interviewees to support the ruling party. It was also interesting to observe how

some interviewees assessed the AKP government period without referring to the incidents namely the murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre.

# CHAPTER NINE
## CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored how the 'Armenian question' in Turkey opens up a discursive space in which various forms of Turkish nationalism are constructed, reproduced and/or challenged and suggests multifaceted interpretations by particular members of the Armenian community. The problematic notion of the 'Armenian question' has itself been a political and linguistic tool for official genocide denial ever since the foundation of the Turkish Republic and has come to stand for the controversy between the denial and recognition of the Armenian Genocide at both national and international levels. However, by employing this term I have aimed to challenge the attempt to decontextualize the collective violence against Armenians and restrict it to the Ottoman Empire period, and have indicated how this issue goes far beyond the politics of genocide in today's Turkey. The study was thus set up to point out the discursive encounters between Turkish nationalisms and the recent incidents discussed in the previous chapters as the continuation of the genocidal process and mentality in the designated national newspapers. In addition to the investigation of news discourse, I also delved into the wider reverberations of the 'Armenian issue' and the latest events for Armenians in Turkey. As the successors of the victims of the Armenian Genocide as a form of 'foundational violence in the constitution of the Turkish republic' (Göçek, 2015: 19) and also as citizens of the Turkish state, the readings of Armenian interviewees additionally unfolded novel layers of debate on nationalism, collective memory, and experiences of suppression and discrimination.

Accordingly, the research has sought to answer two main research questions. First, I demonstrated how news discourse in particular national newspapers, namely Hurriyet, Cumhuriyet and Zaman, constructs, reproduces and challenges Turkish nationalisms in their reporting of the murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balikci and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre. Second, I analysed the perceptions, experiences and reactions of forty-five members of the Armenian community with regard to the selected cases, historical occurrences and present socio-political milieu in Turkey. Thus, by combining critical discourse analysis (CDA) and semi-structured interviews my goal was to provide a comprehensive examination of the specified 'production' and 'consumption' phases of

the 'Armenian issue' in Turkey. By doing that I also intended to move beyond the conventional discussion on the identification of 1915 events as genocide or as an 'issue' and the tendency of public opinion and legal arrangements to regard the official acknowledgment of past offences as an act that constituted 'insulting Turkishness'.

Instead, this research was concerned with the interplay between the discursive formation of Turkish nationalisms and the 'Armenian question'. It also engaged with the continuing and shifting patterns of confrontation and denial of past and present experiences, both in the media representations and the interpretations of Armenians. In order to offer a detailed assessment of this research, in this chapter I firstly highlight the distinctive empirical findings and then concentrate on the theoretical implications of the study. Subsequently, I point out the main theoretical arguments in the light of the data analysis and trace the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter ends with the final remarks and recommendations for further research on this topic.

## 9.1. Empirical Findings

In this section I briefly review the main findings illustrated in the data analysis chapters (Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight) and their contribution to the critical understanding of the Armenian issue in Turkey. As the first three data analysis chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) respectively focused on the cases of the assassination of Hrant Dink, the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the protest against the Khojaly Massacre, I integrated the analysis of the interviewees' responses concerning these incidents into each chapter. Thus, the last data analysis chapter (Chapter Eight) was dedicated to a thorough scrutiny of other themes covered in the semi-structured interviews with Armenians.

As has been previously stated, the key motive behind the selection of the cases was their capacity to exemplify the divergent forms of Turkish nationalism, the current status and experiences of Armenians as an ethnic-religious minority group, and both different and mutual insights concerning the 'Armenian question' in general terms. More precisely, the position of Dink as a public figure made his assassination a fundamental issue for this research, in particular for his reconciliatory efforts between the denialist ideology of the Turkish state and the Armenian Diaspora, as well as the Armenian community in Turkey, and with regard to the crucial roles played by various government agencies in

the crime, and the unanticipated large-scale protest after the murder, embracing the slogan 'We are all Armenians', as well as for the ongoing legal struggle for justice. Although Sevag Balıkçı was an everyday citizen doing his compulsory military service in the Turkish Armed Forces, his shooting on the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide by a Turkish soldier raised questions about the mistreatment of non-Muslim and non-Turkish male citizens under the protection of the army, which is one of the constituent elements of Turkish state and nationalisms. Furthermore, the lack of legal standards for the penalisation of offensive conduct similar to the Dink case and the discussions about the civil martyrdom law after the murder led me to enquire into the news coverage of this murder. As a third case, the protest against the Khojaly Massacre in 2012 was an important indicator to observe how this crime against humanity was ideologically used to refute the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide by both state officials and some members of society, since the perpetrators of the massacre which took place in 1992 were Armenians. What makes this protest worth examining are the political and public attempts to compare the two human tragedies in order to put forward 'unconvincing' claims with respect to the Armenian Genocide, the reinforcement of anti-Armenian sentiments in Turkey, and the solidarity between Turkish and Azeri nationalisms against a mutual enemy.

By taking into account these specific incidents I applied CDA to three chosen national newspapers which were assumed to have dissimilar ideological affiliations, publishing policies, journalistic ethics and relationships with the government. It should be first noted that it was hard to speak of significant differences among the newspapers under analysis as the discursive strategies were generally quite similar. In the case of Hrant Dink (Chapter Five), my research findings showed that Turkish national identity was characterised by a considerable degree of insecurity in the news reporting. The news portrayal of this assassination as a threatening move for national security also overlapped with the image construction of the Turkish state as an actual aggrieved party in the articles. It was equally interesting to observe that the killing was defined in nationalist terms, particularly through the word 'traitor' to label the offender. The death of a member of the 'enemy-within' community caused by a Turkish-Muslim citizen affected the narratives concerning fabricated enemies of the nation. In other words, this incident revived the national fear of being charged with the murder of another

Armenian and led the national newspapers to preoccupy themselves with both the self-image and the international image of the Turkish nation and state. I thus argued that the construction and reproduction of Turkish nationalisms in the papers centre on the discursive strategies that forestall any argument and/or feeling that the assassination was the result of dominant nationalist sentiments in Turkey and the fault of state organs. The emphasis on the cooperation between the internal and external enemies plotting against Turkey through this murder to damage the international image of the state, and the representation of the arrest of the perpetrator by the police forces as a matter of national pride and exculpation in the news stories, evidenced this argument.

Furthermore, my analysis of the newspapers' depiction of Dink's funeral and the mass protest against nationalist violence uncovered that the slogan, 'We are all Armenians' adopted also by Turkish protesters was decoded as a sign of national togetherness. Particularly, the use of the expression 'entire Turkey' in the headlines called attention to strident resistance to the recognition of any differences amongst Turks. Since the newspapers seemed to grasp the connotations of a slogan that questions the very foundation of Turkish nationalisms, the participation of individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in the protest was delineated as a sign of national unity against external pressure for the acknowledgment of genocide. This also meant that the newspapers under review instrumentalised the assassination in terms of how it facilitates the Armenian cause, especially in the international arena. The accounts in the interviews correspondingly enabled me to claim that Dink's killing allows the Armenian Genocide to be remembered, and is associated with the continuing genocidal mentality shown by the respondents.  The analysis highlighted the differences among the generations of the Armenian community in terms of their understanding of the assassination. The younger generation defined the loss of such an influential character as a 'trauma', whereas the older generation identified his death as 'expected' and 'usual'. This implied the contention that generational identity was being formed around the murder of Dink. The opinions and feelings of the interviewees also pointed out how the personalisation and dramatization of this incident was able to pinpoint a key moment for the lives of Armenians. On the one hand, this assassination was epitomised as 'sacrifice' for the visibility of an Armenian identity. On the other hand, the murders of other intellectuals and previous forms of state-led violence committed against different

ethnic-religious groups in Turkey was underscored to give an idea about the larger picture of the state and power relations. That is to say the peculiarity and ordinariness of this case referred both to an interruption and continuity in the treatment of the Turkish state against its citizens along with the position of the Armenian community in society.

Secondly, my inquiry with regard to the killing of Sevag Balıkçı (Chapter Six) reached the interesting conclusion that news discourse in the newspapers particularised the incident but simultaneously downplayed its seriousness. I discovered interrelated discursive strategies that reflected the (re)production and preservation of Turkish nationalisms and nationhood in the print media in relation to the status of Armenians and the Armenian issue. The recurring emphasis on the 'Armenian descent' of the victim in the news stories attached importance to the ethnic, religious and linguistic differences rather than immediate causes, the timing of the murder and the intent of the perpetrator. Although an Armenian soldier was shot by a Turkish soldier on the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day while serving in the Turkish army, interestingly the newspapers turned a blind eye to the contextual conditions and nationalist messages of this event. This might be inferred as a structured defence mechanism in the national media to detach the 'Armenian question' and its historical background from the current repercussions of Turkish nationalisms. In contrast to these discursively repressed themes, I found out that the narratives overstated the 'problematical' martyrdom status of the injured party and the martyr's funeral at the Armenian Church. As the notion of martyrdom stands at the intersection point between Islam, nationalism and martial configurations in Turkey, the incompatibility of the ethnic-religious identity of Sevag Balıkçı with the understanding and rituals of martyrdom was implied and at the same time cast in 'tolerable' and consumable ways.

Although the newspapers attempted to represent this incident as an ordinary criminal case and a human casualty among many in the Turkish army, they persistently employed national symbols and myths. From my point of view this was mainly due to the journalistic concern to convince the readers that an Armenian soldier deserved the status of martyrdom and that this murder had no organic link with anti-Armenian nationalist violence or with an enduring genocidal animosity. Thus, in the news

reporting, the Turkish flag as a 'banal reminder of the nationhood' (Billig, 1995: 41) and the conception of sacrifice for the nation as an honorary act were naturalised under the name of patriotism. However, some interviewees, especially young male interviewees, objected to the idea of sacrifice for the nation vis-à-vis the case of Sevag Balıkçı. A more remarkable finding was the description of the compulsory military service as another site to confront Turkish nationalisms for male Armenians. However, according to one group of interviewees, Sevag Balıkçı was one of the latest sufferers of deep-rooted violence in the army against soldiers, regardless of their ethnicity and religion. Yet a large number of respondents asserted that Armenian identity was an 'adequate' reason for this intentional assault. It was also shocking to realise how the historical continuity of the attacks in the military, along with the discriminatory frame of mind of the state, were voiced by some respondents to draw attention to the negligent attitude of the authorities towards this incident.

Thirdly, the investigation of the protest against the Khojaly Massacre (Chapter Seven) in the designated newspapers indicated that overt support of and participation of the AKP government in an anti-Armenian demonstration was not problematized and/or criticised at all. This outcome might be considered as revealing for issues of self-censorship and the autonomy of the national newspapers and the implementation of similar linguistic devices to get along with the government. Although this gathering went beyond its purpose, which was to commemorate the victims of the Khojaly Massacre, but which turned out to be an occasion to insult Armenians and reject the Armenian Genocide, the active sponsorship of the government was glossed over by the newspapers under review. Moreover, my findings have spotlighted how particular groups were categorised as 'nationalist' and particular forms of nationalisms were recognised as 'normal' in the news discourse. This selective news reporting became evident when the term 'ultranationalist' was employed to underline its discrepancy from 'nationalist' citizens and the understanding of nationalism. As Turkish and Azeri nationalisms as 'our' nationalisms in this case were depicted as essential components of patriotism, certain political groups were held responsible for 'extreme' and 'intolerable' manifestations of nationalism.

I also detected that the newspapers showed no awareness of the thoughts and/or reactions of the Armenian community in Turkey with respect to the protest. Additionally, they failed to notice the basic distinction between the Armenian community in Turkey as citizens of the Turkish Republic and Armenians in Armenia, and preferred to consider these groups equal in order to create a stereotyped representation of Armenians. I consequently argued that news portrayals of the protest mobilised prejudices against Armenians once again, but more importantly that this protest was deployed as a discursive tactic to make the readers discredit the genocidal claims of Armenians due to their own history of pogroms against Azeris. In a similar vein the interviews also revealed that the protest was perceived by Armenian interviewees as an ideological and psychological struggle to reinforce hatred towards their community despite the announced goal of the commemoration. Although some senior interviewees expressed their familiarity with anti-Armenian discourse and actions in Turkey's republican history, the protest was set as an example for the effects of current political discourse and figures, particularly Erdoğan, on the stigmatisation of Armenians. It was yet more striking to hear the claims of some interviewees who defined the organisational form of the protest, the calls for the march, the posters on the billboards and the newspaper ads as 'fascistic' and 'extreme nationalist'. They followed a comparable line of reasoning with the newspapers, that the distinction between 'reasonable' and 'extreme' forms of nationalism was recognised. This has also demonstrated the extent of the internalisation of inferior status amongst Armenians in relation to the constant process of othering of Turkish nationalisms.

In addition to conducting a CDA of particular cases along with the qualitative data provided by the interviews regarding these incidents, Chapter Eight critically dealt with questions of collective memory, the 'Armenian issue', nationalism and national identity, official ideology and the AKP government. By focusing on the transmission of knowledge and experiences across the generations concerning the traumatic genocidal process, I presented the patterns of remembrance and forgetting of the interviewees. This clearly showed the difference between those who were able to or chose to narrate personal stories of loss and trauma and those who kept quiet. On the one hand, the narratives marked by the remnants of genocide disclosed the means by which torture, deportation and slaughter became genocidal tools and the conversion to Islam was imposed. The

forms of remembrance and the confrontation with the past also called attention to the lives of Armenians permeated with sorrow and suffering in conjunction with a zone of contestation between the state and its citizens. On the other hand, the power of suppression and silencing was a noteworthy theme that the accounts of some interviewees termed 'chosen amnesia' (Buckley-Zistel 2006) and 'forgetting as humiliated silence' (Connerton 2008) and which served as coping strategies. Therefore, diverse memories and silences allowed me to indicate the linkage between the past and present as well as its meaning for Armenian interviewees.

In connection with this historical linkage, this research sought to address how Armenian respondents define, challenge and reframe the 'Armenian question'. My objective was to identify the alternative explanations of interviewees since this term is the basic tool of official ideology to overlook the existence of the Armenian Genocide and the unceasing problems of the Armenian community. An interesting finding was the redefinition of the Armenian issue as the Turkish issue by some interviewees, accompanied by a fundamental tendency to refuse to distinguish past from present. Moreover, some interviewees associated the issue with intra and interstate problems rather than the problems among the Turkish and Armenian nations. The interference of other states in the genocide recognition was also interpreted as the 'politicisation' of the Armenian question, as if it had not been politicised in both national and international domains. However, what this argument suggested was that the humane aspects of the catastrophic incident were to be removed and replaced by the political question of whether or not it was genocide.

Since the debates on Turkish nationalisms and national identity reconfigured the understanding of the Armenian issue as well as the experiences of Armenian interviewees, this study also touched upon this subject matter. Drawing on the responses with regard to the prevalent discourse of nationalism and national identity, I ascertained four main lines of argument. These were: the role of Islam within Turkish nationalisms; the comparative analysis of Kurdish community and its relationship to the forms of nationalism; the issue of state-sponsored nationalism and the ideologies of the political parties; and the positioning of Armenian identity with regard to Turkish national identity. It might be further claimed that the variety of opinions also

substantiated the fluid constitution of Turkish nationalisms instead of fixed arrangements according to Armenian interviewees. Besides the stress on Islam and the Kurdish community, the positioning of Armenians was crucial to see competing themes within debates on nationalism.

The views about the official ideology of the state predictably encompassed criticisms and the focal point of the criticisms was the state-led amnesia and its outcomes for the experiences of Armenians and the rest of the society. From my perspective the most striking finding was the tendency of some interviewees to elaborate the problematic sides of the official ideology and emphasise the innate crisis of understanding amongst the citizenship in Turkey. Yet the political support towards the AKP government among the Armenian community contradicted my presuppositions. As the murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balikci and the contribution of the government to the protest against the Khojaly Massacre took place under the rule of AKP government, I had expected more critical answers. However, the returns of the seized properties of Armenian foundations and the official permissions for the restoration of Armenian churches were put forward as positive and promising developments by a large number of interviewees. The disapproving comments mentioned the operation of the justice system as well as judicial independence, and the lawsuits of the cases of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı were cited to draw attention the insincerity of the AKP government.

### 9.2. Theoretical Implications

In line with the research questions, the theoretical framework (Chapter Three) of this research was predicated on three fields of scholarly debates. Firstly, I critically reflected upon the literature on nationalism with a specific focus on the conventional discussions on nationalism and national identity, the discursive and contested aspects of nationalism and the forms of Turkish nationalisms and their 'others'. Since the classic debate between the modernists (Gellner 1964), the primordialists and the ethno-symbolists (Smith 1986) shapes the theories of nationalism and national identity (cited in Sutherland, 2005:185-6), some of their arguments were essential to understanding succeeding research on nationalism and Turkish nationalisms in particular. My findings also demonstrated how existing theories of 'nationalism from above' (Breuilly 1993; Keyder 1997; Synder 2000) and 'nationalism from below' (Guibernau 1996; Smith 1998;

Hroch 2000; Horowitz 2004) explained different aspects of Turkish nationalism in relation to the Armenian issue. For instance, the state's assimilationist policies directed against ethnic and religious minorities, which were explicated in Chapter Two, and the ways of challenging the dominant composition of nationalism imposed by the state, which were addressed in Chapter Eight, exemplified the blurred distinction between these two standpoints. Furthermore, I positioned my research within the studies on discursive and contested aspects and the quotidian construction and reproduction of nationalisms (Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1992, 2000; Calhoun 1993, 1997; Puri 2004; Özkırımlı 2010) and attempted to indicate how Turkish nationalism as 'a series of discourses with a vast lexis' (Bora, 2011:62) positions itself with regard to Armenians in Turkey. More importantly, the research modestly contributed to the understanding of discursive, representational and exclusionary phases of Turkish nationalism by taking into account the 'Armenian question'.

Correspondingly, I delved into the topic of news discourse as one of the major institutions of the construction and reproduction of Turkish nationalisms. By taking Billig's (1995) seminal work as a starting point for the discussion on the interplay between nationalism and media representations, I endeavoured to suggest how the flagging of Turkish nationalisms became evident in the media representations of Armenians. Although Yumul and Özkırımlı (2000) and Köse and Yılmaz (2012) replicated Billig's study for the Turkish context and pointed out how the press generates nationalism in an ordinary way, I intentionally picked out extraordinary periods to specifically observe the ways in which the 'flagging of the Turkish nation and nationalisms' came to light in the images of the Armenian issue and Armenians. When considered from this point of view the portrayals of minority groups in the national newspapers became significant for the construction and reproduction of a national discursive sphere to promote a certain sense of national belonging or exclusion. Following Mahtani's (2001) critique of binary conceptual frameworks based on the under-representation or mis-representation of the minorities in the media, this research also attempted to understand why particular images of the Armenian issue and Armenians were 'tolerated' and produced at all. More notably, it sought to explore the involvement of the discursive formation of Turkish nationalisms in the dissemination of anti-Armenian sentiments. Finally, this research took a critical approach towards media-

centred assumptions that fail to mention 'subtleties of media meanings, the polysemy of media texts' (Jewkes, 2004:11) and tend to see the audience as 'empty vessels' that impulsively absorb media messages (Madianou 2005). Thus, the application of CDA to investigate the news discourse of particular incidents in the designated national newspapers and the semi-structured interviews with Armenians allowed me to transcend the limitations of media-centred explanations.

Moreover, the importance of the temporal and discursive dimensions of the Armenian Genocide for the construction and reproduction of Turkish nationalisms and Turkish national identity led this research to centre on the subject of memory. From my point of view it was crucial to scrutinise the efforts of the official ideology and historiography to fabricate past, present and future and to silence, disregard and/or distort memories of the victims and witnesses. In this respect, the examination of news discourse revealed how selective forgetting and remembrance of the past operated in agreement with imposed representations of Armenians despite the contemporary nature of the events. The choice of the Armenian interviewees to narrate or repress genocidal memory and their readings of current and prospective encounters with diverse forms of Turkish nationalism also substantiated the relevance of this theoretical inquiry.

## 9.3. Discussion

In this section I intend to briefly discuss how emerging themes from the data from the Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight resonate with some of the theoretical arguments mentioned in this research. According to the findings of CDA of the first substantive chapter (Chapter Five) on the case of the assassination of Hrant Dink the issue of national insecurity in the news media substantiates the idea of the Turkish nation-state as a 'nationalizing state' (Brubaker 1996). When the role of the national newspapers in 'the communicative space of the nation-state' (Schlesinger 1991b) is taken into account news stories about the assassination seem to fulfil the need of 'nationalizing' the Turkish state by depicting it as being under persistent internal and external threats. This is mainly related to the unfinished and imperfect condition of Turkish national identity which requires continuous self-referential discourses on a daily basis in order to justify and normalise its existence and also oppressive treatment of non-Turkish and non-Muslim groups. It might be further argued that the examination of media portrayals of

this incident reveals the symbolic power of 'the dominant representations of nationhood' which illustrates 'the nation as the *natural* political and cultural unit' and 'requires the denial of difference within the nation' (Brookes, 1999: 248; emphasis in original). However the reflections of the interviewees on the assassination of Hrant Dink challenge the main message conveyed in news discourse which read as follows: '...the nation as a mystical, a-temporal, and even transcendental entity whose survival is more important than the survival of its individual members at any given time' (Özkırımlı, 2010:52). Despite the differences among older and younger generations in terms of their insights concerning this loss, it is still significant to observe a common deep-seated sentiment of insecurity to the state and ingrained apprehension of state-sponsored discrimination and violence.

The data analysis elaborated in the subsequent chapter on the murder of Sevag Balıkçı also unveils the mismatch between 'encoding' and 'decoding' moments (Hall 1973) of the news media and Armenian addressees. On the one hand newspapers under review attempted to describe this case as an ordinary criminal case and employed particular discursive strategies in order to construct and reproduce the hegemonic language and the dominant representation of events (Erjavec 2001). On the other hand some Armenian respondents mainly concentrated on the contextual factors such as the timing of the murder, the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, and the larger socio-political setting that rationalises anti-Armenian attacks throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. In addition to the discussions centred on the interplay between nationalism and media representations and the implicit and explicit ways of flagging the nation in newspaper texts (Billig 1995), the gap between the production and consumption sides of this case is also related to the problem of freedom of press in Turkey. The stress on the issues of ethnic and religious identity of the victim, the martyrdom status of the deceased and sacrifice for the nation rather than the timing of the murder, the motives of the perpetrator, and the political and social implications of this attack for the Armenian community might be read as a manifestation of the self-censorship of media regarding the taboo topics. One of the main reasons behind this self-control mechanism is to be compatible with the official stance of the Turkish state on controversial subjects such as the 'Armenian question'. From this point of view Armenian interviewees as a part of news audience do not simply question the reliability and objectivity of news

reporting practices; but their awareness of their prejudiced or discursively repressed media representations plays a part in the construction of the Armenian identity.

In the third substantive chapter on the protest against the Khojaly Massacre my CDA correspondingly discovered that the status of freedom of expression is still debatable in the news media since meeting the ideological demands of the government remains as the main concern. Newspapers under review employed two discursive mechanisms with regard to the portrayals of the protest and the Armenian community. First they relied on the idea that those who exercise authority in political, social and economic or social institutions may speak authoritatively about issues and events (Ungerleider, 1991: 159). In the present case the declarations of the political elite concerning the Khojaly Massacre were allocated space in the news stories and they were presented as the ultimate comments on this human tragedy. Second the categories of heroes, villains, and victims are generated in the narrative structure of the news and the issues are framed as conflicts between these figures (*ibid*: 160). From this aspect a very rough dichotomy between Azeris as victims and Armenians as perpetrators was constructed and reproduced in the news stories in order to impose the idea of the Armenian community as the actual guilty part in the discussion over the Armenian genocide. Although this protest was read by the majority of the interviewees as an episode of ongoing anti-Armenian accounts in the public space, interestingly this form of hostility was taken for granted by some senior respondents similar to two other cases.

The last empirical chapter accordingly offers insights into particular contentions which were elucidated in the theory chapter. To begin with transmission forms of genocidal information and experiences across the generations of the Armenian community and their (in) ability of self-expression underline how memory acts 'as a counter-hegemonic site of resistance, a space of political opposition' (Bell, 2013: 66). This is mainly because those who were able to speak up about different modes of violence confronted with official ideology of the state as a pivotal 'memory maker' (Kansteiner 2002) and discursive sphere created in national newspapers as institutions of myth-makers. At this point however the capability of the Armenian community to influence the national memory is dependent on their means to voice their ideas and the compatibility of their vision with social and political objectives (Kansteiner, 2002: 187). As I intended to

demonstrate in the next section on the antagonism between the 'Armenian issue' and the 'Armenian Genocide' the access to political power also determines the prioritisation of myths over memories as well as the legitimacy of specific memories. While the thoughts of a group of interviewees were in conflict with the definition of the 'Armenian issue' by 'a nationalist governing mythology' which enforces a 'definite meaning on the past, on the nation and its history' (Bell, 2003:74); another group of interviewees generated their own 'subaltern myths' (*ibid*) which contested the governing myth. Therefore the Armenian question might be described as a discursive space in where different forms of nationalist governing mythologies are created and perpetuated and at the same time in where patterns of remembrance and forgetting as coping strategies cohabit and challenge these mythologies.

Similar to diverse types of nationalist mythologies and policies identified by the interviewees, their comments on the debates on Turkish nationalisms and national identity and official ideology of the state, as aforementioned in Chapter Eight, were multi-layered. Yet there are two crucial arguments that come out of forty-five interviews. Firstly continuous process of Turkish nation-state formation relied on 'state-led nationalism' (Tilly 1994:133) or 'state-building nationalism' (Hechter *et.al*, 2006: 89) still affects the treatment and representations of the Armenian community. In particular official historiography with respect to the past and present state-led violence against Armenians is predicated on and justified by the issues of national unity and security, the importance of ethnic and religious homogenisation, and the ideas of fabricated internal and external enemies. Secondly, despite the understanding of citizenship in Turkey as 'an uneasy marriage between ethnic and civic conceptions of national identity and belonging' (İnce, 2012:24), actual state practices indicate 'an ethnic nationalist view' (Aslan, 2007: 249). Although some legal amendments made during the AKP government were put into words by a group of interviewees, 'the paradoxical nature of Turkish nationalism' (Kadıoğlu, 2011:45) uninterruptedly impinge on the lives and experiences of the Armenian community.

## 9.4. The Research Limitations

As has been previously elucidated, the study draws on data from critical discourse analysis (CDA) and semi-structured interviews. Chapter Four principally concentrated on the methodological foundation of the research and the following four chapters, Chapters Five through Chapter Eight, offered a critical examination of data obtained from specific qualitative research methods. Certainly, the research encountered a number of limitations during the stages of data collection and analysis. In this section I sketch out an overview of the shortcomings of this research.

First of all, the issue of translation posed one of the core challenges for a CDA of the news stories written in Turkish and the analysis of the interviews conducted in Turkish. Since the interrelationship between language, meaning and discourse accompanied by power relations lies at the core of CDA, my translation efforts from Turkish to English played a pivotal role in content integrity and semantic loss and shifts. I preferred to avoid the use of third parties for translation as my 'own' words and reading as a researcher was vital in the production and representation of meanings. According to Temple and Young (2004: 168)

> The researcher/translator role offers the researcher significant opportunities for close attention to cross cultural meanings and interpretations and potentially brings the researcher up close to the problems of meaning equivalence within the research process. ... This researcher/translator role is inextricably bound also to the socio-cultural positioning of the researcher, a positioning, whether intended or ascribed, that will also give a meaning to the dual translator/researcher role.

Rather than depending on a translator I decided to be actively involved in the translation of news reporting, as well as in the interviews with Armenians. The texts were translated into English after I had agreed on the parts of the stories and interviewees' accounts which needed to be included in the study. This helped me to save time and reach a systematic picture of what was relevant for the research questions. Regarding the validity of my qualitative research I also adhered to Van Nes *et.al* (2010: 314)'s proposition that 'the findings should be communicated in such a way that the reader of the publication understands the meaning as it was expressed in the findings, originating from data in the source language'. Although there was no language difference during the data gathering process, I paid particular attention in the course of

data analysis to the preservation of the originality of narratives to prevent the loss of meaning.

In addition to my socio-cultural positioning that was influential on the dual translator/researcher role as stated by Temple and Young (2004), my research priorities and political standpoint with respect to the 'Armenian question' were decisive in the reflexive interpretations of the news stories and the responses of the interviewees. The decision of what to include and leave out was thus contingent upon my subjective filters as a researcher. This might be thought of as an indispensable aspect of a qualitative research, but I intended to achieve a degree of objectivity and minimise the factor of bias as far as possible in order to ensure reliability in this study. My non-Armenian identity also inevitably shaped the ways in which I as an 'outsider' to the Armenian community gave meaning to the perceptions and experiences of Armenian interviewees. In a similar vein, my assessment of the particular incidents that directly impinged on the lives of Armenians might lack a level of sensitivity and empathy and I am aware of the fact that this situation could have been different if this research was carried out by an Armenian scholar.

## 9.5. Concluding Remarks

The main contention of the research in very general terms was to highlight that the 'Armenian question' includes, but is not limited to, the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the compensation claims of Armenians and the international appeals of the Armenian Diaspora for the acknowledgment of the Turkish state's responsibility. I argued that the 'Armenian question' at the same time introduces the issue of diverse forms of Turkish nationalism, a discriminatory and oppressive state tradition against the Armenian community, the deep-seated problems of minority rights, as well as the freedom and diversity of the press in Turkey. However, it should be underlined that the instances of unequal treatment and representations which were expounded throughout the thesis also embrace other ethnic and religious minority groups in Turkey along with other 'non-ideal citizens' identified by the state and the current AKP government. By recalling Tolstoy's (1878) well-known first sentence in his novel *Anna Karenina*, 'Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way', I consider that the experiences of minority and disadvantaged groups

resemble one another in Turkey and also in other parts of the world, but their sufferings have their own 'stories'. My personal eagerness to learn more about the unique 'story' of Armenians was the starting point for this academic research.

At this point the study not only contributes to the growing body of knowledge about the perceptions and experiences of Armenians in Turkey who are described as 'the remains of the sword', but also provides insights into various forms of nationalism, collective memory, and news discourse as other fields of study. The research is also one of the first sociological explorations that employed critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews as data collection methods to unmask different underlying forces of the 'Armenian issue' in Turkey. Furthermore, the findings of the research might be regarded as the parts of a humble quest for a confrontation and reconciliation with the past; and they also intend to take the studies discussed in the previous chapters further and to extend the understanding of the 'Armenian issue' and its relation to Turkish nationalisms.

The discoveries of the research also signal the need for further research on three particular topics. Although the power of silencing and resignation was a salient feature of a number of interviews, the tendency among some Armenian interviewees to challenge Turkish nationalisms seemed to result in the promotion of Armenian nationalism. Therefore, the implications of Armenian nationalism as minority nationalism with the purpose of challenging Turkish nationalisms and its similar and/or different mind-set might be one of the areas of study. Secondly, the opinions of the interviewees with regard to the 'Kurdish issue' and their relationship with the Turkish state and nationalisms and the comparisons made between the Armenian and Kurdish issues might provide a fertile ground for additional research. Finally, given the increasing role of social media to mould public opinion in Turkey, the question of how the 'Armenian issue' and Armenians are pictured in different social media channels might be a point of departure for another study.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A
## Coding Scheme for the News Media

| Text Structure | Discursive Strategies |
|---|---|
| Name of the Case | Tone/Style/Attitude |
| Name of the Newspaper | Lexical Choices |
| Date of the Newspaper | Direct Quotations |
| Page Number | Nominalisation |
| Prominence of Article Position | Active and Passive Forms |
| Headline | Emerging Themes |
| Accompanied by photograph(s) | Absent Themes |

## A Sample of a News Story Analysis

| Text Structure |
|---|
| **The Case:** Hrant Dink |
| **Name of the Newspaper:** Hürriyet |
| **Date of the Newspaper:** 20th January 2007 |
| **Page Number:** 1 |
| **Prominence of Article Position:** Front Page, Capital Letters in Bold |
| **Headline: HRANT DINK WAS KILLED- THE ASSASSIN IS TRAITOR** |
| **Accompanied by photograph(s):** Yes- The photos of Hrant Dink, his dead body and his friends on the street, camera image of the perpetrator |

| Discursive Strategies |
|---|
| **Tone/Style/Attitude:** Labelling/ Accusatory |
| **Lexical Choices:** Was Killed/Traitor |
| **Direct Quotations:** Excerpts from the interview with Hrant Dink before his assassination, the Governor's press release and Prime Minister's condolences to the Armenian Patriarch |
| **Nominalisation:** Subtitles- 'In the Heart of Istanbul' 'Timid like a Pigeon' |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Active and Passive Forms:** Both active and passive grammatical features | |
| **Emerging Themes:** National Security and Unity/ Democracy under Threat/ the Turkish state as an Aggrieved Party/ An Anonymous Enemy Figure | |
| **Absent Themes:** Contextual Factors/ the Reasons behind the Assassination/ the Current Status of Armenians in Turkey | |

## Appendix B

### An Overview of Interview Data Analysis

| The Issue | Emerging Themes | Decisive Factor (if any) |
|---|---|---|
| The Assassination of Hrant Dink | • Pioneer<br>• Instil confidence in Armenians<br>• Self-criticisms: the responsibility of the Armenian community<br>• Routine hostility vs. Extraordinary incident<br>• The political structuring & state-sponsored violence<br>• Sufferings of other ethnic groups<br>• The visibility of Armenian identity | Differences between older and younger generations: Asymmetric experiences of violence & the patterns of remembrance and forgetting |
| The Murder of Sevag Balıkçı | • Reactions to the compulsory military service<br>• The timing of the murder<br>• Historical continuity of the attacks vs. an isolated incident<br>• Unreliability on the lawsuits against the perpetrators<br>• The effects of national education<br>• The exposure of discrimination/ humiliation/intimidation during the military service | The effect of gender: differences between female and male interviewees<br><br>Particular reactions of young male respondents |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Protest against the Khojaly Massacre | • Familiarity with anti-Armenian discourse and actions<br>• The transition from 'the loyal community' to 'the community of traitors'<br>• Normalisation of racism against Armenians<br>• Biased attitudes of political figures and the government<br>• An ideological and psychological struggle<br>• Reasonable vs. extreme forms of nationalism | Age-based differences |
| Genocidal Memories | • The lack of a thorough account of ancestors' experiences<br>• The counter arguments against the official history<br>• The transmission of genocidal memories<br>• The silence of a group interviewees<br>• Coping strategies: Chosen amnesia & forgetting as humiliated silence | The effect of the flow of information among predecessors and contemporaries |
| The Armenian Issue | • The negative meaning ascribed to the state of being an Armenian<br>• The focus on 'the Turkish issue'<br>• The perception of time as a determining factor<br>• The wider temporality of 1915 events<br>• Islamised Armenians and Armenians who 'stayed behind' | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • The involvement of the government policies of other states | |
| Nationalism and National Identity | • The role of Islam within the forms of Turkish nationalism<br>• The comparative analysis of the Kurdish and Armenian communities<br>• The issue of state-sponsored nationalism and the ideologies of the political parties<br>• The positioning of the Armenian identity | |
| Official Ideology of the Turkish State | • State-led amnesia and its effects<br>• The emphasis on the sufferings of both Turkish and Armenian sides<br>• The selective historical reading of the state<br>• Deep-rooted crisis of the understanding of citizenship | Distinction between reconciliatory and critical standpoints |
| The AKP Government Period | • The increasing support for the AKP government<br>• The return of the seized properties<br>• The official permissions for the restoration of Armenian churches<br>• The murders of Hrant Dink and Sevag Balıkçı<br>• The concerns about judicial independence | Differences based on political affiliations |

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