

# Conflicting representations on Armenian genocide: exploring the relational future through self-inquiring technique<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Major lethal conflicts (war crimes, genocides) between large social actors include many times opposing social representations, narratives and practical approaches to the events worked out by those placed on the aggressor or aggressed, perpetrators or victims' side. War crimes and genocides seem to be historically associated, mainly in the case of dictatorial regimes, with systematic repression not only of the information about such events but also of the interrogative potential of common people about the

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events. The study proposes that such conflicting representations cannot be approached only by questions pre-established by the researchers to which the participants are supposed to answer. Methodologically and theoretically it is justified to explore the assumptions and the questions that can be triggered by the presentation of conflicts to the participants who are supposed to look to the same conflict from both sides. Besides the use of national representative samples and of convenience samples before and after the 100 years commemoration of the 1915 Armenian genocide the study presents the findings based on self-inquiry technique applied at three levels of social complexity: (a) societal level, with questions directed to the general universe of discourse implied by the 1915 events; (b) at interpersonal level with questions directed to actors with leading roles on both sides; (c) at the individual level stimulating questions about 1915 genocide that are explicitly self-directed. We suggest, based on the findings, that the expression of the questioning potential on tragic events is useful for the relational future of the sides involved in the conflicts.

**Keywords:** accuracy of historical knowledge, alchemical language, conflicting representations, interrogative orientation. answer (knowledge) certainty

## Introduction

Tragic historical events triggered by human actions and specifically by massacres, ethnic cleansing and genocides are represented in various ways by the sides involved as perpetrators, victims, active witnesses, bystanders and interventionists in the conflict. The spectrum of the social representations about mega-tragedies varies from their relative convergence, when they are recognized by the main parts and by other major social actors to an extreme divergence of such representations that are marked on one hand by denial (the perpetrators side, their historical successors) and by relentless efforts from the part of the survivors for the recognition of their losses. The conflicts between opposite social representations on genocides are qualitatively different from other social representations that are focused on other kinds of conflicts such as territorial claims, priority, economic, cultural and financial litigious issues.

In the case of massacres and genocides the future of the existential relations between the two sides (victims-perpetrators) and even their post genocide co-existence the accurate representation of and the just attitude toward the past events are elementary pre-conditions for a minimal normalization of their relationships. The accurate representations of and the just attitudes toward massacres and genocides are difficult epistemic and political tasks especially when they remain also unfinished jobs. This is one of the reasons for the widespread view according to which “the past cannot be predicted”, its representations being under the distorting pressure of present economic and political interests that are changing. Research and educational publications (manuals) worked out within various countries, and by authors who have different identities belonging to one or the other side of a conflict frequently contain not only different accounts of the same events but opposite accounts. However, there are few basic questions that can be answered such as: who did initiate the tragic events? Who has been the aggressor and who has been the aggressed? What side has carried the role of perpetrator and what side has been the victim? Is the tragic event a genocide or something less than a genocide? Genocides, massacres and crimes against humanity are much older tragic realities than the conceptual and legal tools worked out to cope with them. Between denial of genocides and basic accurate historical knowledge on genocides there is a deep epistemic, political and moral tension that invites questions and answers. The approaches this tension taking into account the answer (knowledge) certainty and the questioning potential.

### **Opposite grand narratives and cognitive dissonance and social-cognitive conflicts within and between collective actors**

Individuals as well as nations are producers and consumers of narratives about themselves and their relations with other actors. The narratives have essential functions such as therapeutic, solidarity maintenance, identity formation and affirmation, at the various levels of social complexity.

For instance, Harvey et al.<sup>2</sup> suggest that in the case of personal and interpersonal traumatic events “completion of the story” is a necessary step for reaching closure and for the becoming of one’s own identity. However, at societal level the functions of narratives are much more complex because they are focused on collective actors and individual’s relation with the group identity and they encompass long historical periods that go far beyond one or a few generations. Assmann<sup>3</sup>, Leerssen<sup>4</sup>, and Rösen<sup>5</sup> underscored the importance of “grand narratives”, “macro-narratives” and iconic representations that involve different collective actors during long-historical periods. Many times mega-traumatic events such as massacres, genocides, crimes against humanity are represented in different ways by the perpetrators and by the victims, by the aggressors and the aggressed.

Frequently the aggressed are not allowed to tell their story, and the aggressors practice soft and violet forms of denial. For instance, the narratives of the oppressors and the oppressed of South Africa on the historical events are opposite. The narratives of the native Indians from the Canadian territories are radically different from most of the official narratives as it is suggested in the landmark research carried by Chataway. She mentions that aboriginal people in Canada often say that they have been “*researched to death*” and that this must change because “*it’s time that we [the dominated, the victims, the displaced, parenthesis added]*

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<sup>1</sup> J.H. Harvey, T.L. Orbuch, A. Weber, “Introduction: Convergence of the Attribution and Accounts Concepts in the Study of Close Relationships”, in: J. H. Harvey, T. L. Orbuch, A. Weber (eds), *Attributions, Accounts, and Close Relationships*, Springer, New York–Berlin 1990, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of Pharaohs*, Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt Company, New York 2002.

<sup>4</sup> J. Leerssen, “Imagology: History and Method”, in: M. Beller, J. Leerssen (eds), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction of Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey. Series Studia Imagologica* 2007, vol. 13, pp. 17–32.

<sup>5</sup> J. Rösen, “How To Overcome Ethnocentrism: Approaches To a Culture of Recognition By History in the Twenty-first Century”, *History and Theory* 2004, Theme Issue 14, Wesleyan University, pp. 118–129.

started researching ourselves back to life”.<sup>6</sup> Such situations, quite frequent, pose the question of the abuse by dominant groups of scientific research methods for macro-societal manipulations of present and past events and increases the need for the democratization of the social research process.<sup>7</sup> Such questions might emerge even in the cases of overwhelmingly documented and also legally assessed and recognized genocides. For instance, research on “divergent narratives” on Holocaust<sup>8</sup> suggests that such narratives pose difficult problems to the re-construction of inter-group relations. In all these cases the question of “acknowledgment after mass violence” becomes unavoidable and a necessary component of the wellbeing of those involved in such tragedies.<sup>9</sup> In their on line experimental study<sup>10</sup> that selected Armenian Genocide, Kielce Pogrom and Holocaust found out that the “effects of acknowledgement on willingness for reconciliation” are significant in all these cases.<sup>11</sup>

There are, unfortunately, many examples of contradictory narratives that deal with various forms of violent actions as aggressive wars (French against the –Vietnamese, Japanese against Chinese etc.) and such contradictory narratives are conflicting since ancient times to nowadays, as Abler<sup>12</sup>,

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<sup>6</sup> C.J. Chataway, *Imposed Democracy: Political Alienation and Perceptions of Justice in an Aboriginal Community*. A thesis presented to the Department of Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of Doctor in Philosophy in the subject of Social Psychology. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1994, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> C. Mamali, “Democratization of the Social Research Process”, in: P. Stringer (ed.), *Confronting Social Issues: Applications of Social Psychology*, Academic Press, London 1982.

<sup>8</sup> M. Bilewicz, M. Jaworska, “Reconciliation through the Righteous: The Narratives of Heroic Helpers As a Fulfillment of Emotional Needs in Polish-Jewish Intergroup Contact”, *Journal of Social Issues* 2013, vol. 69, pp. 162–179.

<sup>9</sup> J.R. Volhardt, L.B. Mazur, M. Lemahieu, “Acknowledgment after Mass Violence: Effects on Psychological Well-being and Intergroup Relations”, *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 2014, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 306–323.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 318.

<sup>12</sup> T.S. Abler, “Scalping, Torture, Cannibalism and Rape: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Conflicting Cultural Values in War”, *Anthropologica (New Series)* 1992, vol. 1, pp. 3–20.

Beevor<sup>13</sup>, and Lalumière, Harris, Quinsey and Rice<sup>14</sup> show it. Conflicts between grand narratives that refer to the history and identity of collective actors (communities, ethnic entities, nations, etc.) seems to be the most resilient especially if they are marked by tragic events, such as massacres and genocides. It is assumed, from the perspective of the present approach, that such narratives imply cognitive dissonance and social cognitive conflicts that are not limited to the individual or dyadic relations but are lived within large community and across the relations between communities. There is still a huge area of genocides that remains almost uncharted by theoretical and empirical research carried in social psychology despite the fact that there is a huge evidence provided by archival, historical, sociological, personal narratives inquiries that deal with the communist crimes against humanity that have some 110 million killed victims (as Applebaum<sup>15</sup>, Bacu<sup>16</sup>, Chang and Halliday<sup>17</sup>, Conquest<sup>18</sup> et al., Constante<sup>19</sup>, Courtois et al.<sup>20</sup>, Ierunca<sup>21</sup> and many others show. It remains a moral and epistemic puzzle why the de-humanizing technique designed by Makarenko<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A. Beevor, *The fall of Berlin 1945*, Penguin, London 2002.

<sup>14</sup> M.L. Lalumière, G.T. Harris, V.L. Quinsey, M.E. Rice, *The Causes of Rape: Understanding Individual Differences in the Male Propensity for Sexual Aggression*, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC 2005.

<sup>15</sup> A. Applebaum, *Gulag: A History*, Doubleday, New York 2003.

<sup>16</sup> D. Bacu, *The Anti-humans: The Student Re-education in Romanian Prisons*, Soldiers of the Cross, Englewood, CO 1971.

<sup>17</sup> J. Chang, J. Halliday, J. Mao, *The Unknown Story*, Knopf, New York 2005.

<sup>18</sup> R. Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990; R. Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, W. W. Norton, New York 2000.

<sup>19</sup> L. Constante, *L'Évasion silencieuse*, La Découverte, Paris 1990.

<sup>20</sup> S. Courtois, N. Werth, J.-J. Panne, K. Paczkowski, H. Bartosek, J.L. Margolin, *The Black Book of communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, trans. by J. Murphy, M. Kramer, Harvard University Press, Harvard 1999.

<sup>21</sup> V. Ierunca, *Fenomenul Pitești (The Pitești phenomenon)*, Humanitas, București 1990.

<sup>22</sup> A.S. Makarenko, *The Road to Life. An Epic in Education*, transl. with an introduction by P. Lichtenberg, Oriole Editions, New York 1929/1973.

under Stalin's regime and called "communist re-education" that aimed to change the identity of victim through a repeated alternation of suffering an revenge remains almost unknown (unmentioned) by the main-stream social psychological studies focused on violence, obedience, crimes against humanity<sup>23</sup>).

We consider reasonable to assume that conflicting narratives, attitudes, and representations of tragic events such as massacres, crimes against humanity and genocides pose high cognitive, political and moral challenges especially to those who have been involved in such conflicts and played opposite roles – the most distant and significant roles being those of victims and perpetrators. First, there is a cognitive challenge when one side might be in denial and the other side makes attempts for public recognition. Series of landmark psychological concepts and measures have been developed in order to assess the strength of what has been called "the need to know", i.e. "the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking".<sup>24</sup> Taking into account previous studies carried out by Cohen, Stotland, & Wolfe<sup>25</sup> who defined "the need for cognition to structure relevant situations in meaningful, integrated ways. It is a need to understand and make reasonable the experiential world".<sup>26</sup> Cacioppo & Petty worked out a reliable and valid *Need for Cognition Scale*. In addition, their studies on central and peripheral routes to persuasion (1979, 1981) strongly suggested that in the situation in which individuals are "personally involved" with the issue under consideration the rational processing of the information will

<sup>23</sup> C. Mamali, "Interpersonal Relationships in Totalitarian Societies", in: W.B. Gudykunst, S. Stella Ting-Toomey, T. Nishida (eds), *Communication in Personal Relationships across Cultures*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, London–New Delhi 1996; C. Mamali, *The Gandhian Mode of Becoming*, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad 1998; C. Mamali, "Lessons from the Epistemic, Moral and Social Richness of Stanford Prison Experiment", *Dialogue* 2004, vol. 19, no. 1, Spring, pp. 22–24.

<sup>24</sup> J.T. Cacioppo, R.I. Petty, "The Need for Cognition", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1982, 42(1), p. 116.

<sup>25</sup> A.R. Cohen, E. Stotland, D.M. Wolfe, "An Experimental Investigation of Need for Cognition", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 1955, 51, p. 291.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.



prevail. Cacioppo and Petty consider that this process could be influenced also by a “*dispositional* determinant of which route will be followed may be the extent to which recipients are motivated by their need for cognition to think about issues that they confront” (p. 130, italics in original). Studies focused on individual’s efforts to cope with tensions created by ambiguity and disorder, for instance identified “the need for cognitive closure” understood as a desire for “an answer on a given topic, any answer... compared to confusion and ambiguity”.<sup>27</sup> In the case of *the need for cognitive closure* the starting point is seems to be a situation that represents by its cognitive features (unpredictability, confusion and so on) a challenge that must be solved by the individual who faces it. Studies on the need for cognitive closure suggest that it has significant motivational consequences that are measurable in a valid and reliable mode.<sup>28</sup> Studies on “belief in evil”<sup>29</sup>) suggest that the need for cognitive closure predicts belief in evil and especially that “belief in evil in people and groups consistently predicted greater support for violent policies and lesser support for non-violent policies”.<sup>30</sup>

The significant theoretical and empirical advances in the study of genocides and the causes and long-term consequences of violence have a tremendous practical and political value. At the same time it becomes more and more necessary to include the perspective of the insiders, and especially of those who had a landmark contribution in the design and experiential application of non-violent approaches to lethal conflicts as it is the paradigmatic case of Gandhi. His contribution seems to be neglected by nowadays

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<sup>27</sup> A.W. Kruglanski, *Motivations for Judging and Knowing: Implications or Causal Attributions*, in: E.T. Higgins, R.M. Sorrentino (eds), *The Handbook of Motivation and Cognition: Foundations of Social Behavior*, vol. 2, Guilford Press, New York 1990, p. 337.

<sup>28</sup> A. Roets, A. Van Hiel, “Separating Ability from Need: Clarifying the Dimensional Structure of the Need for Closure Scale”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 2007, vol. 33, pp. 266–280.

<sup>29</sup> M. Campbell, J.R. Volhardt, “Fighting the Good Fight: The Relationship between Belief in Evil and Support for Violent Policies”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 2013, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 16–33.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 30.



social psychology while, in contrast, conceptions that promoted the use of violent means, such as that presented in *The Prince*, which also inspired crucial research on manipulation and violent behavior as is the Mach Scale and its theoretical basis<sup>31</sup>, receive by far a greater epistemic and political attention.<sup>32</sup>

Taking into account that the healing process at individual level of traumatic events depends on working out a comprehensive narrative that provides closure, as Harvey's research suggests, it makes sense to ask what might be the features of the need for cognition and the need for closure in the case of macro-social ambiguous and confusing situations while various collective actors are predominantly attached to conflicting narratives about the features, causes and consequences of tragic historical events that ended up with many victims. Also, these approaches, including the scales worked out to measure the need for cognition and the need for closure invite a question: what does happen with the interrogative (questioning) potential of individual and collective actors while they face cognitively, politically and morally dilemmatic situations that have existential importance, such as conflicts on assessing genocide? None of the scales include items regarding the tendency of asking questions and counter questions. Previous studies suggest that the interrogative potential is strongly associated with the strength and force of motivational vectors.<sup>33</sup> Questioning and counter-questioning are cognitive processes that at the same time could be loaded with power related features, especially in the case of societal dialogue or dispute.

Issues such as genocides are of the highest existential interests for individual and collective actors. In many such cases the need for cognition and the demands for recognition and reparations by all the involved have been, at least

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<sup>31</sup> R. Christie, F.L. Geiss, *Studies in Machiavellianism*, Academic Press, New York 1970.

<sup>32</sup> C. Mamali, *The Gandhian Mode...*

<sup>33</sup> Compare C. Mamali, "The Oracle-Sphinx Model: The Development of Questioning and Answering Abilities", *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* 2010, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 247–272.

in a minimal degree, satisfied. However, there are still such conflicts marked by contradictory representations that are powerful challenges for the need of cognition. In such situations knowing essential facts about a given tragic reality by one side is not sufficient to satisfy the need for cognition if the other side has opposite representations. Questions about the causes of denial, of possible errors, of bad will and so on could feed the need for reaching a decisive knowledge and intersubjective agreement among collective actors.

Research inspired by Piagetian conception shows that the individual cognitive development can be enhanced by a special type of conflict that is at the same time social and cognitive and it has been called social-cognitive conflict “socio-cognitive conflict”.<sup>34</sup> Taking into account Hinde’s model of levels of social complexity (1987; 1997) from individual, group, communal, up to the cultural level the conflicting representations on massacres and genocides pose a series of unexplored questions. What are the features of this socio-cognitive conflict that involves collective social actors including their official representatives? Are the conflicting narratives about genocide a specific form of “cognitive dissonance” (as defined by Festinger) but developed at macro-social level? At the individual level, as predicted by Festinger’s theory, the tension generated by the cognitive dissonance motivates the individual to reduce it. According to Festinger<sup>35</sup>, dissonance is produced between different “knowledges” of the same reality. These knowledges are called elements of dissonance. The theory posits that: “the reality which impinges on a person will exert pressures in the direction of bringing the appropriate cognitive elements into correspondence with reality”.<sup>36</sup> Crimes against humanity and genocides that are represented in distorted modes or even denied by one part (usually the perpetrating one) are, according to the present approach, able to nurture powerful cognitive dissonance

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<sup>34</sup> A.-N. Perret-Clermont, *Social Interaction and Cognitive Development in Children*, Academic Press, London 1980.

<sup>35</sup> L. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Row & Peterson, Evanston, IL 1957, pp. 9–10.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

within and between representations of collective actors on such events. By the mere social complexity this cognitive dissonance implies not only different “knowledges” but also opposite vital interests of the communities and strategies to cover, deceive or to reveal the facts. What might be the motivational consequences of a cognitive dissonance generated in relation with macro-social events for the individual and collective actors involved in the conflict? It seems reasonable to assume that the “socio-cognitive conflict” and cognitive dissonance related to such events and their representations do not engage only individuals but also collective social actors, ethnic groups, social categories and nations. As such these conflicts have a political and moral nature that mark not only the past, present and future relations between sides of the conflict but their identities too. We assume that the exploration of basic knowledge of violent events and of the potential questions generated by their conflicting representations, claims or denial are necessary steps for the unresolved disputes.

The theory of cognitive dissonance predicts that “If two elements are dissonant with one another, the magnitude of dissonance will be a function of the importance of the elements”.<sup>37</sup> If we look from this perspective to the dissonance created by opposite views (denial versus *affirmation*) on a historical event that has the magnitude of genocide it follows that such a macro-societal dissonance will be extremely powerful and will tend to exist till it is solved in an accurate and just mode. In contrast to the cognitive dissonance lived at individual level the macro-societal cognitive dissonance is marked by at least the following features: (1) there are conflicting public, even official narratives (claims) on the same facts, situations, events that are obviously affecting many people and groups who might be more inclined to accept one of the explanations; (2) the prevailing narrative (explanation) that solves the cognitive conflict has direct consequences on the economic, social, moral or combined state of each group; (3) the formal acceptance of a solution to the existing macro-societal cognitive dissonance becomes the new ground for the relations between the social sides of the conflict.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 16.

The long-term maintenance of denial in spite of the strong cognitive dissonance implied by it might be supported by an increased process of moral disengagement as it is defined by Bandura's<sup>38</sup> model.

The opposite accounts of mega-tragedies generate a complex social-moral-political and cognitive conflict that engages large collective actors with tremendous social energies and resources. If the need for consonance, as it is assumed by the theory of "consonantist psychology"<sup>39</sup> is a natural tendency for individuals, then it is reasonable to inquire if there is also a tendency to achieve consonance within and across-societies that have opposite accounts for the same tragic event. The dissonance between opposite accounts that different communities have on the same mega-tragedy that is in great part known to these communities might generate powerful macro-fields motivational forces that aim to solve this conflict. This is a macro-social (inter-nations) dissonance that implies cognitive, political and moral components with huge practical consequences. The motivational forces implied in this societal dissonance will be greater and more resilient as the opposite accounts are more relevant for the cultural identities of the two sides.

The present study considers this problem and assumes that a first step to approach it is exploring the accuracy of basic historical knowledge on such events and the questions invited by the events and by the ways in which all the engaged sides have coped and are coping with these events. The study considers that the uncovering and using the interrogative potential that might be associated with such unsolved conflicts has at the same time epistemic, political, moral and practical functions. Inconvenient questions, i.e., genuine and cognitively justified questions, on open macro-social wounds would not be an easy task due to many forms of repression, as Billig<sup>40</sup> uses this Freudian concept. The repression of the questioning potential of common people

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<sup>38</sup> A. Bandura, *Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves*, Worth Publishers, MacMillan Learning, New York 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Odoobleja, 1938.

<sup>40</sup> M. Billig, *Freudian Repression: Conversation Creating the Unconscious*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999.

and especially of the dominated social categories<sup>41</sup> is characteristic to dictatorial practices, regimes and mentalities. The repression of interrogative orientation that targets tragic historical events can happen even within modern democratic societies when questioning confronts the official representations on the same events. Previous studies used the technique of self-inquiry to uncover unused, possibly repressed, questioning potential in Romania, in working places and on political attitudes in the research on values on political attitudes.<sup>42</sup> It has been noticed that in communist societies (Romania, 1945–1989) the questioning potential has been strongly repressed even in relation with non-political issues, as work relations. Even in a well-established democratic society, as the USA, the inquiring potential of common persons remains dormant on explicit political issues as it is proved by a great number of critical questions generated toward Obama's administration in the cross-cultural study on values and political attitudes. Obviously, the democratic culture made possible such an investigation of the inquiring potential related to core political themes while such a study would have been unthinkable under the Romanian communist regime. The present research assumes that the presentation to common persons of the historic events of 1915 (including the official version of the Turkish government which treats it as a tragedy and denies that it has been genocide and the Armenian perspective that considers it as genocide) and asking them to generate questions will be associated with a "moral shock".<sup>43</sup> The moral shock

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<sup>41</sup> J. Sidanius, J. Liu, J. Shaw, F. Pratto, "Social Dominance Orientation, Hierarchy-attenuators and Hierarchy Enhancers: Social Dominance Theory and the Criminal Justice System", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 1994, vol. 24, pp. 338–366.

<sup>42</sup> S.H. Schwartz, G.V. Caprara, M. Vecchione et al., "Basic Personal Values Underlie and Give Coherence to Political Values: A Cross-national Study in 15 Countries", *Political Behaviour* 2013; also M. Vecchione, S.H. Schwartz, S.H. Caprara et al., "Personal Values and Political Activism: A Cross-National Study", *British Journal of Psychology* 2014, vol. 2, no. 6.

<sup>43</sup> See J.M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL 1997; J.M. Jasper, J. Poulsen, "Recruiting Strangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights

could be triggered in this case by the participants' self-discovery of their ignorance, by their bewilderment in relation with the silence of the major sources of information about these tragic events, and by the existence of the two conflicting narratives, one asserting and one denying the genocide. It is well known that up to 2017 there are only 28 countries that officially recognized the 1915 events as genocide, which places the question into a global perspective.

After an overview of the studies on the genocide suffered by the Armenians in close connection to the concept of genocide, based on Lemkin's work, as defined and used by UN, the study will present its theoretical framework, assumptions, methods and findings. This research belongs to a larger project on Armenian genocide and its long-term historical consequences.<sup>44</sup> On the empirical side the project includes *pre and post 100 years commemoration of the genocide* surveys carried out on convenience samples in seven countries, on two national representative samples in one country (in 2015 and 2016), *on qualitative research* on convenience samples through the technique of *directed self-inquiry*<sup>45</sup> in three countries applied in face-to-face sessions as well by the application of the technique of directed-self inquiry through the Facebook. The use of self-inquiry technique is justified by the fact that the conflict between the official denial of the genocide by the representatives of the Turkish side and the recognition of the genocide by the Armenian official representatives and by a series of governments (over 20). It is assumed that the *split of representations and attitudes on 1915 genocide* (i.e., 29 countries officially recognized it while Turkey denies it) *is a source of social, political and cognitive dissonance at macro-social and global level that generate questions in the minds of many people questions that are still unexplored area*. Within the cultural contexts of the countries that deny the genocide or do not express any official position it is expected that questions on the 1915 events

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and Anti-nuclear Protests", *Social Problems* 1995, vol. 42, pp. 493–512. DOI: 10.2307/3097043.

<sup>44</sup> C. Mamali, "Accuracy of Basic Knowledge of Traumatic Historical Events: The Armenian Genocide", *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 2017, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 99–109. DOI: 10.1080/15325024.2016.1187937.

<sup>45</sup> C. Mamali, "Democratization of the Social Research Process".

might be repressed. Stimulating the interrogative potential, as it has been observed in other studies, is a way to overcome such repressive forces.

During history humans have committed extended atrocities over other humans. Many of these atrocities, since ancient till modern and contemporary times<sup>46</sup> are well documented and entered in the public discourse of many societies, especially within the historical consciousness of democratic societies through research, history books, public sources of information, arts, educational institutions and political culture. World history has its own skeletons closet that poses a great puzzle not just due to its size and atrocity but to the possible long term-consequences of denial and of open macro-wounds. This is so because what some groups tend to cover or to keep silent other groups struggle to make public. What are the causes and also the psychological, political, cultural and moral consequences on the collective and individual social actors, victims and perpetrators of the denial of such events and of contradictory narratives? Do the resilient attempts of a victimized group that searches for official recognition and apologies for its collective suffering become a social movement even if such efforts involve many generations? As suggested previously<sup>47</sup>, the accuracy of historical knowledge and its societal transparency are necessary means to cope with old macro-social traumas, such as genocide especially if such tragic events happened long time before the concept of genocide has been developed. The present study explores further the issue of the accuracy of basic historical knowledge on the genocide suffered by the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire by adding the findings of a new national representative sample that has been surveyed at one year after the 100 years commemoration of the 1915 genocide. In addition

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<sup>46</sup> T.S. Ablner, “Scalping, Torture, Cannibalism and Rape...”; A. Beevore, *The fall...*; R. Bilali, “National Narrative and Social Psychological Influences in Turks’ Denial of the Mass Killings of Armenians as Genocide”, *Journal of Social Issues* 2013, vol. 69, no. 1, pp. 16–33; M.L. Lalumière, G.T. Harris, V.L. Quinsey, M.E. Rice, *The Causes of Rape...*

<sup>47</sup> C. Mamali, “Accuracy of Basic Knowledge of Traumatic Historical...”, pp. 99–109. DOI: 10.1080/15325024.2016.1187937.



to this the paper includes a study focused on the interrogative potential of the participants by using the self-inquiring technique. The self-inquiry opens to the participants the possibility to generate and direct questions to various targets from impersonal level, i.e., only the issue is mentioned, to various social actors and explicitly toward one's self. During a discussion with a small group of students after a social psychology class at the beginning of 90's in Iowa, USA it became evident that students had a genuine interest to learn more about the violence of authoritarian regimes and personalities. At the same time none of them had any knowledge about the "Armenian question", in fact genocide. This observation determined one of the authors to resort later on to the technique of self-inquiry. Later the lack of basic knowledge about these events became more evident through the use of a non-directive technique (self-inquiry) that asks participants to generate questions. The questions generated by the participants point out that the events are largely unknown: "*Does any person know anything about this?*" (Female, 22 years, white, 14 years of education); "*I have no knowledge about this event*" (Male, 23 years, black, 14 years of education); "*Who are the Armenians?*" (Female, 19 years, white, high school); "*I don't believe our generation knows much about these events. I consider myself fairly educated and yet I know near to nothing about the Turk-Armenian conflicts.*" (Male, 25, white, 15 years of education).

The study explores the accuracy of basic knowledge about the 1915 tragic historical events (victims and perpetrators, and size of the atrocities) prior and after the 100 years commemoration (April 24<sup>th</sup> 2015) and the questioning orientation that is stimulated by 1915 genocide. The research designed to last a few years to explore possible changes in time on national representative samples and on convenience samples from different cultural settings. Because different countries have different ways to refer to the violent events of 1915 – from denial, official silence, assessing them as terrible massacres up to national and legal recognition of these events as genocide<sup>48</sup> – the access to national

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<sup>48</sup> A. Alayarian, *Consequences of Denial: The Armenian Genocide*, Karnac, London 2008; H. Bozarslan, V. Dulcert, R. Kévorkian,

representative samples across the entire spectrum of these representations is necessary, but, unfortunately, problematic now. At the same time there are some social events that have a relevant epistemic potential as it is, for instance, the commemoration of 100 years of genocide (marking a limit prior and after a landmark public commemoration within a time of global communication) as well as critical international events that engage the old collective actors and might function as reminders of open collective wounds.

The accuracy of basic historical knowledge on 1915 genocide suffered by the Armenians is approached by taking into consideration the degree of subjective confidence in one's own knowledge about the events. Studies on "*attitude certainty*"<sup>49</sup> consider that the subjective sense of confidence one has on one's attitudes is an important component of the attitude itself. The present approach that considers that accurate, false and speculative knowledge could be important ingredients of attitudes assumes that the *certainty (confidence) in one's knowledge* about any event, and especially on events that receive contradictory accounts from the behalf of various social actors might have important cognitive, moral and behavioral consequences. This hypothesis is in tune with the findings of a study on the relationship between "attitude certainty" and "attitudinal advocacy"<sup>50</sup> that show that it has a "J-shaped" curve, i.e., advocacy intentions and behaviors peak high under high attitudinal certainty.<sup>51</sup> We expect that those who have *accurate historical knowledge about the 1915 genocide and at the same time have a high certainty of their knowledge* (in this study one's knowledge certainty about 1915 events has been assessed through a 6-point scale from almost 100% sure

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*Comprendre le génocide des Arméniens*, Éditions Tallandier, Paris 2015; Power 2002.

<sup>49</sup> D.D. Rucker, Z.L. Tormala, R.E. Petty, P. Briñol, "Consumer Conviction and Commitment: An Appraisal Based Framework for Attitude Certainty", *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 2014, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 119–136.

<sup>50</sup> L.B. Cheatham, Z.L. Tormala, "The Curvilinear Relationship between Attitude Certainty and Attitudinal Advocacy", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 2017, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 3–16.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 14.

to almost 0% sure) *will become active disseminators of this knowledge.*

The next sections will approach: (I) The concept of genocide, its theoretical developments, and applications to the Armenian genocide; (II) Historical, cultural, sociological, psychological and political sources and studies focused on the 1915 (some years before and after) atrocities against Armenians within the Ottoman Empire; (III) Findings of a research carried out before and after the one hundred year commemoration of the genocide.

### Conceptual frame of genocide

The genocidal reality has a long historical precedence in relation to the concept of genocide. Since the concept has been coined the attitudes and perceptive toward genocides changed. The definition of genocide, as it is has been adopted by the Genocide Convention of United Nations in December 9 – 1948, comes after world history faced mass atrocities that targeted large groups of people based on ethnicity, race, religion, political and class membership. Some ten years before the WWII Holocaust<sup>52</sup>, Lemkin who introduced the concept of genocide relating it to moral judgment, attempted to approach the issue looking specifically in 1933 to the crimes against Armenian people. Lemkin's work remains essential for 21<sup>st</sup> century while it started, as Power<sup>53</sup> strongly suggests, with the Armenian genocide and includes the trials from Constantinople and Berlin. It is a historical fact that after the trials failed to lead to an international recognition of the crimes against humanity some survivors of the genocide did resort to violent acts. This is the case with the young Armenian survivor Soghomon Tehlirian who killed in 1921 Talât – one of those responsible for the genocide. Power reveals that this violent reaction prompted Lemkin to ask an essential question that

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<sup>52</sup> R. Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposal for Redress*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, Washington, DC 1944.

<sup>53</sup> S. Power, *'A Problem from Hell'. America and the Age of Genocide*, Basic Books, New York 2007, pp. 2–3, 17–22.

points out a macro-social cognitive dissonance and the abuse of double standards. As reproduced in Power's study Lemkin asked: "*It is a crime for Tehlirian to kill a man but it is not a crime for his oppressor to kill more than a million men? This is most inconsistent.*"<sup>54</sup> This critical moment is partially the outcome of a painful dissonance lived by one person, the killer, who, on one side knew the denial discourse of the Turkish officials and on the other side he knew also information on the Armenian genocide. This critical moment, probably, played a significant role in the growth of cognitive dissonance at the level of the public discourse that deserves to be studied. The event is at the same time part of a sequences of post-genocidal events that enhanced the emergence of a long-term social movement that has manifest and latent sides, non-violent and violent sides aiming to the recognition of genocide. Its violent side has been mainly rooted in the denial practices. *Lemkin's question (as a legal expert) has been triggered by an obvious macro-societal cognitive dissonance and targets the moral and cognitive inconsistency of societal perspectives on 1915 events. Lemkin's question invites the question: does this MSCD stimulates questions on 1915 events and similar events in the minds of lay persons on the moral and cognitive inconsistency of societal perspectives?*

Genocide is an infernal reality that is prior to its concept, which did become a cognitive, moral and political imperative in order to punish, discourage and prevent it. The convention of UN (1948) defines genocide: "*genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish*" (Article 1). *It identifies as genocidal: "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group"* (Article 2 U.N.G.A., 1948).

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 17.

Chirot and Karell<sup>55</sup> achieved a constructive critical approach to this definition. Their criticism refers, among other issues, to: the ambiguity of the expression “in whole or in part” because it can mean anything ranging from the Holocaust to minor episodes of killing”; a policy is considered genocidal if it is intentional and premeditated. This “can be done in a case like Armenian genocide by Ottoman authorities in 1915, the Holocaust [...] but it is harder to demonstrate if there was no actual plan to kill all members of a particular group”.<sup>56</sup> Chirot and Karell argue that the definition leaves out any attempts “to destroy a group on political or economic grounds”.<sup>57</sup> Galtung<sup>58</sup> worked out a taxonomy that has as its peak “omnicide”, which includes genocide, and is considered as “sumum malum.”

The indicators of genocide should be followed on long-historical scale, because some acts might not be immediately lethal for a group or most of its members and their group identity but during long historical periods through the cumulative long-term effects that force a population to diminish dramatically or vanish after some generations and/or to be stripped off its linguistic and cultural identity, i.e., to dis-identify from its origin and become part of the perpetrator’s identity. In the history of the Ottoman Empire this is related to the *practice of janissary*: by the same token the dominated group loses social, military and reproductive energy that goes into the social reservoir of the invading group. This might belong, in certain cases, to a long-term genocidal pattern. *Mehmed II* demands to *Vlad Țepeș – Dracula* to pay the tribute of 10 000 “*galbeni*” (gold) and to “bring 500 boys”. Dracula paid the financial tribute but refused to give the boys as recorded by the Byzantin historian Ducas<sup>59</sup> (1461–1462). The “boys” had to become Sultan’s

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<sup>55</sup> D. Chirot, D. Karell, “Identity Construction and the Causes of Genocidal Mass Murder”, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 2014, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 484–499.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 486–487.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 486.

<sup>58</sup> J. Galtung, *A Theory of Peace: Building Direct-structural-cultural Peace*, Transcend International, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> See M. Berza, “Haraciul Moldovei și Țării Românești”, *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 1957, vol. 11, p. 27.

soldiers: this represents a *military adoption program* that weakens the occupied country and strengthen the power of the invader. The tribute (harâc) had long-term devastating financial and economic consequences<sup>60</sup>). The tribute in children has a distinct qualitative nature, which lasted, with intermittences, between 100 and 400 years in different Christian kingdoms, because of its demographic and cultural destruction. The imposed tribute in children is a genocidal practice. These children, as future soldiers, have great chances to become killers against the population they originate from. The practice of tribute in children is implied by Article 1,e (U.N.G.A., 1948).

This violence might be covered by a linguistic alchemy that excludes the process from some landmark historical analyses and in some cases even the meaning of basic terms is changed. This is the case with the concept of *janissary/janizary (yeniçeri, Turkish)* and the reality covered by it. First, its original meaning: the term *janizary* means “*a soldier of the old Turkish footguards (c.1330–1826) formed originally of renegade prisoners and of a tribute of Christian children*”.<sup>61</sup> The same definition is used by most British, French, German, Greek, Italian, Romanian dictionaries. Kinross refers to these troops that were assumed, after a long and harsh training, to serve the Sultan, as “*military slavery*” that “*shocked the Christian world. But it was familiar enough to the Islamic world, and particularly to the Turks themselves*”.<sup>62</sup>

Prior to it there are dictionaries that do not deal with the historical and social processes that are implied in the genesis of *janissary/janizary/yeniçeri*, which have been described only as guard of the Turkish King (Sultan!!) and as foot-guards. For instance, *A Complete Dictionary for the English Language*<sup>63</sup>) define it as: “*One of the guards of the Turkish king; one of the officers whose business it is to revise and correct the pope bulls*”. A dictionary edited

<sup>60</sup> B. Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500–2010)*. Polirom, Iași 2010, pp. 32–34.

<sup>61</sup> *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Edinburgh 1977.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 48–51.

<sup>63</sup> T. Sheridan, *A Complete Dictionary for the English Language*, vol. 2, Charles, Dilly, London 1797.

by Noah Webster *An American Dictionary of English Language*<sup>64</sup> define it as: “Janizary [Turkish, *yeniskeri*]: A soldier of the Turkish foot-guards. These were disbanded in 1826”. However, later on sources up to relatively recent sources treat in a very different way the content of the term and the practice of janissary and embellish it as “elite soldiers”. This is done by ignoring its meaning and especially by remaining silent about the ethnic and religious origin of “*yeniçeri*” corps and that they originate in the *social practice of tribute in children and forced assimilation*. Even works focused on the economic and social aspects of the Ottoman Empire (1300–1914), time frame that includes the reign of Fatih Mehmed II who asked Dracula to pay a tribute of 500 boys, do not mention this social practice with deep economic, military and demographic consequences. This is the case with otherwise the excellent work on Ottoman Empire edited by İnalçık & Quataert<sup>65</sup>: the work is silent on the question of *tribute in children*. It happens also with a very Dictionary, to all its editions since 1987. It says, janissary “1: a soldier of an elite corps of Turkish troops organized in 14<sup>th</sup> century and abolished I 1826 2: a member of a group of loyal or subservient useful work focused on the ‘Ottoman language’” that presents the terms *yeniçerilerden* and *yeniçeri* without revealing the origin of these soldiers.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, there are studies that strongly suggest that various forms of collective violence against populations from Ottoman Empire, mainly Armenians, did exist since long time as well as the practice of official denial.<sup>67</sup> These practices are in consonance with that of “slave soldiers”.

The above linguistic issue becomes more puzzling if we look to the Merriam Webster *troops, officials*”. The *American College Dictionary* since 1947 to 2000, does the same

<sup>64</sup> Harper and Brothers, New York 1847.

<sup>65</sup> H. İnalçık, D. Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996.

<sup>66</sup> V. Panaite, *Limbajul ottoman al războiului și păcii. Dicționar de termeni și expresii*, Editura Universității din București, 2014, p. 181.

<sup>67</sup> F. Göçek Müge, *Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence Against the Armenians 1789–2009*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014.



“A member of a group of elite, highly loyal supporters...”. The 2012 edition of *American Heritage Dictionary* does not contain this term. These definitions do not reflect the *social practice* to recruit (from whom? by what means) these soldiers who were children born in the families of the occupied nations (kingdoms), which had a different mother language and religion (Christianity) than the occupiers being forced into a new identity. Conceptually, these linguistics shortcomings achieve an *alchemical operation* that turns a brutal procedure into an appreciative assessment of its outcome; this is called *alchemical historical language*. The *alchemical historical language is used as a tool to reduce cognitive dissonance that might be contrary to the interests of the actors who have control over a form of public discourse, as that implied in universal linguistic tools such as dictionaries*. Because alchemy might have beyond cognitive and material goals also moral goals<sup>68</sup> it is assumed that in some cases language is used politically for embellishing appalling practices such as “military slavery” nurtured by forced adoption and assimilation of children of the occupied population. Are such practices crimes against an entire group? The long-term historical context suggests that “*Pax Ottomanica*” differs essentially from “*Pax Romana*” and had long term destructive effects.<sup>69</sup>

The forced assimilation of children and young women through abduction, rape, forced marriage, forced conversion, mandatory learning of the oppressor’s language and unlearning the mother tongue belong to deep cultural practice that did not end in 1826. It has been brutally re-activated during 1896–1923 against Armenians as proved by survivors’ testimonies<sup>70</sup> and by historical study on abduction and its partial reversal.<sup>71</sup> This practice damages the demo-

<sup>68</sup> Sivin, 1989, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> N. Djuvara, *Civilizații și tipare istorice* (French: *Civilisations et lois historiques. Essais d'étude comparée des civilisations*), Humanitas, București 2014, p. 185.

<sup>70</sup> V. Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors*, Gitoutyoun Publishing House of NAS RA, Yerevan 2011.

<sup>71</sup> L. Ekmekçioğlu, “A Climate for Abduction, a Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion During and After the Armenian

graphic capital of a nation (ethnic group, community) and its biological (genetic too) and cultural potential.

The tribute in children that had to be paid alongside other tributes is related to the question of *territorial rights*. In other geopolitical conditions it did take the form of Imperial taxes as it is so well documented for the American Colonies<sup>72</sup>, but again, under all its forms the “tribute” is supposed to be paid by a population that is settled and uses a defined territory. There are numerous historical situations when the invaders occupied the territories of the previous inhabitants, it means of those who, in most cases, have been the first historical settlers of the respective territories. The territory, the language, religion and common traditions are basic dimensions of cultural identity even when some populations are located in places that are very distant among themselves. Any collective cultural identity exists within space and time. Space and time might be continuous or discrete realities for cultural identity but they cannot be eliminated. The concept of “historical right” cannot be reduced just to a territorial area (including waters, and underground resources) as it sometimes happens with its definition within the political theory.<sup>73</sup> We have to take into account that the political features of the territory have old evolutionary roots and long trajectories that include “nests”, “*vatră*” (Romanian word that has the meaning of “abode” and a place for preparing hot food, representing the core of one’s own home and community as in “*vatra satului*”/village *vatra*), “homes”, “niches”, “ecosystems”<sup>74</sup>, national states, empires, transnational systems which, all have a *spatial-temporal structure* and are essential for the survival and development of its occupiers from the first ones to the most recent, including

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Genocide”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2013, vol. 55, no. 3, pp. 522–553.

<sup>72</sup> B. Franklin, *Writings*, Boston–London 1722–1726; idem, *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, 1733–1758; idem, *The Autobiography*, The Library of America, New York 1987.

<sup>73</sup> C. Gans, “Historical Rights: The Evaluation of Nationalist Claims to Sovereignty”, *Political Theory* 2001, vol. 29, pp. 58–79.

<sup>74</sup> I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt, “Interactionism, Content, and Language in Human Ethology Studies”, *Behav. Brain Sci.* 1982, vol. 5, pp. 273–274.

co-habitation, cross-mating, rejection, exclusion and/or decimation. For humans this spatial-temporal structure is the locus of producing, reproducing and growing various forms of capital (economic, cultural, social symbolic – as defined by Bourdieu.<sup>75</sup> Humans are aware of the fate of former populations, first occupiers of various spaces (territories) for a certain period, who vanished biologically, culturally or both. The genocide against the first occupiers of a territory poses an unsettling existential puzzle: if social actors (individuals, groups, tribes, nations, states) cannot be safe within the spatial and temporal limits of the territory occupied and, many times, constructively changed by their work, uncertainty of one's own existence and relations will increase and will feed the collective existential anxiety. *What might be safe on this earth for an individual or collective actor if one's original "vatra" is not safe?* The genocide of the first, or previous long-term settlers of a given spatial-temporal structure that has also specific cultural features (language, religion, traditions) that might be different from those of the perpetrators has a nihilistic uprooting character. In the case of Armenians who lived under the rule of the Ottoman Empire the question of territory, of land ownership and real estate is relevant since at least 1863 when conflicts between the Empire's administration on one side and Armenians and Kurds on the other side are well documented.<sup>76</sup>

The roles of victims and perpetrators, and the rights and duties after mass atrocities form a problem of high "complexity".<sup>77</sup> Based on historical evidence it seems that the dynamics of this complexity becomes more unpredictable due to a series of factors such as: acknowledgment versus denial by perpetrators and other collective actors (governments

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<sup>75</sup> P. Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction", in: R. Brown (ed.) *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education*, Tavistock, London 1973, pp. 71–112; also P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 1990; idem, *Pascalian Meditations*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto 2000.

<sup>76</sup> G. Minassian, *Le rêve brisé des Arméniens 1915*, Flammarion, Paris 2015, p. 29.

<sup>77</sup> J.R. Volhardt, "Interpreting Rights and Duties After Mass Violence", *Culture & Psychology* 2012, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 133–145.

especially), new military alliances, changes of demographic balance and military global forces. In Bourdieu's terms this complexity involves reproduction of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. However, there are at least two other forms of capital that should be considered: *demographic capital* (it is a core capital in the case of genocide that aims to annihilate an entire category of people) and *moral capital*: as the moral capital diminishes (and denial is a sure road toward moral bankruptcy) the level of mistrust among communities will grow. The worst scenario, which is also real, is that the chances of *immoral development* of individual and collective actors (Fig. 1) will increase as genocidal practices are denied, imitated, spread and increased through mechanisms of societal learning.

The Armenian genocide poses a hard socio-cognitive, moral and historical dilemma due to the long-term silence of the world political institutions, of many governments, and of course, of the way Turkish official politics approach the 1915 events as well as much older forms of collective violence practiced by the Ottoman Empire since 1789 as it is documented by Góçek Müge on the qualitative analysis of over 300 memoirs.<sup>78</sup> According to recent complex *models of denial*, as that worked out by Friedrichs<sup>79</sup>, the mode in which individuals cope with tractable and intractable long term or short-term problems implies *costs and benefits*. Friedrichs's model of denial versus avowal strongly suggests that the rationality of denial has intrinsic limits that could make the costs much higher than the possible benefits for the well-being. His model posits that: "the denial has both rational and irrational features"; the interplay between these features is best captured by "a utilitarian-rationalist framework stretched to its limits"; "*most of the mystery about denial disappears when we accept that it is premised on a twisted kind of rationality*".<sup>80</sup> However, the model deals mainly with denial at individual level (at the denier level) while she/he faces individual tractable or intractable problems (such as cancer,

<sup>78</sup> F. Góçek Müge, *Ottoman Past...*

<sup>79</sup> J. Friedrichs, "Useful Lies: The Twisted Rationality of Denial", *Philosophical Psychology* 2014, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 212–234.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 220.

or pimples, cheating to one's partner, even homicide) but does not provide a formal conceptualization for the situation in which denial implies a collective perpetrator (most of the time the denier) and a collective victim (who might be a denier or might try to obtain an avowal or apology), as is the case of genocides. The pattern of denial analyzed by Friedrichs is assumed to become more painful when the process takes place between collective actors. Finally, it seems reasonable to take into account that denial could work both in the case of evil acts, which are denied by the perpetrator and in the case of good acts, which might be denied by the beneficiary who does not express gratitude, and the worst, might display resentments against the helper.

The search for historical meaning of events that have long term consequences is associated with the development of "macro-narrative".<sup>81</sup> It seems that a cost-benefit analysis of long-term denial (over 100 year), as it is the case with the genocide suffered by the Armenians, should take into account that for such kind of macro-events the temporal dimension of denial might have consequences on the historical trajectory of collective identity. It is more and more evident that communities that have been denied to express their own identity, due to ethnic, religious, political and combined causes strive to search and affirm their long-term repressed identity, as explored by Kessel.<sup>82</sup> The very fact that denial blocks the construction of a cross-culturally shared macro-narrative of tragic events might have negative consequences on the continuity of collective identities. The present study assumes that the maneuvering social space for denial shrinks not only due to the advancement of professional (expert) historical knowledge but also due to the mode in which accurate basic historical knowledge enters into the common knowledge and social representations of more and more common persons. Denial, especially in the form of "WE", it means a well self-defined collective identity, against "THEY", it means an undifferentiated, amorphous "THEY" (Pagans, Gentiles, Infidels,

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<sup>81</sup> J. Rüsen, "How To Overcome Ethnocentrism...", pp. 118–129.

<sup>82</sup> B. Kessel, *Suddenly Jewish: Jews Raised as Gentiles Discover Their Jewish Roots*, Brandeis University Press, Hannover 2000.

Enemies of the People, Non-Communists) etc.) imposes one sided restrictions to the historically long-term identities of “Other(s)” and elevates, beyond any comparison, the status of “WE”. The problem is the incommensurable identity gap forced by an auto-centric dichotomy “WE” versus “NON-WE” Logically, historically and psychologically the division between a well-defined “WE” and an intentionally fuzzy and generalized “THEY”, which is without specific identities is the result of unsolved identity questions and a source of perennial identity conflicts. This puzzle has been approached by the research of “the need for collective self-identity that forms a unique basis for group identification”.<sup>83</sup> A series of studies<sup>84</sup> strongly suggest the uniqueness and significant function of collective self-continuity in contrast with other social identity sources. The findings of these studies show that “existential threat” enhances feelings of self-continuity which in turn leads to a stronger opposition toward the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands. The concept of collective self-identity approached as a historical continuity, developed as “perceived collective continuity” by Sani and colleagues<sup>85</sup> and as “trans-generational” group by Kahn and colleagues<sup>86</sup> has significant theoretical, experimental and practical ramifications helping to better understand and cope with complex inter-group realities across the world. The study assumes that also the need for collective self-identity might have specific features in the case of those collective identities for which the existential threat turned long time ago into a mega-tragedy, “great catastrophe”, i.e., genocide.

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<sup>83</sup> A. Smeeke, M. Verkuyten, “The Presence of the Past: Identity Continuity and Group Dynamics”, *European Review of Social Psychology* 2016, vol. 26, p. 162.

<sup>84</sup> A. Smeeke, M. Verkuyten, “Collective Self-continuity, Group Identification and In-group Defense”, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 2013, vol. 49, pp. 984–994.

<sup>85</sup> M. Sani, M. Bowe, C. Herrera et al., “Perceived Collective Continuity: Seeing Groups as Entities That Move through Time”, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 2007, vol. 37, pp. 1118–1134.

<sup>86</sup> D.T. Kahn, Y. Klar, S. Roccas, “For the Sake of the Eternal Group: Perceiving the Group as Trans-Generational and Endurance of Ingroup Suffering”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 2017, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 272–283.

For instance, this is the case of Eastern and Southern European countries that have suffered for centuries, under the Ottoman Rule, economic, demographic, cultural and spiritual damages. The denial of the Armenian genocide poses huge hurdles to the collective identity of all the actors involved in the conflict, inclusively to the political dimension of the global identity (humanity). A comprehensive study of the issue cannot set aside other collective identities that suffered in the same geopolitical space, as it would be the Greek identity. A few of these reasons are: (1) the denial of the genocide is associated with the birth of the modern (post-Ottoman) Turkish state; (2) the denial is tacitly accepted because of the errors made during it and mainly after it by a series of great powers (Germany, UK, for instance); (3) the denial is not directly confronted because are other nations that have been built on the territory (*vatra*) originally owned by former nations that have been the first settlers or previous settlers but declined under these demographic, economic and cultural invasions (Australia, North America, South America etc.); (4) longer the denial more difficult will be for its supporters to reverse positions especially if the present political interests are inclining the balance toward the former perpetrators.

**(II) Historical, cultural, sociological, psychological and political sources and studies focused on the 1915 genocide.** First, there are the sources provided by highly credible witnesses and survivors of the genocide and the press and the official declarations of the time.<sup>87</sup> Toynbee's work of 1917 uses in its title the statement made in the "Joint Note of the Allied Governments in answer to President Wilson" that says: The liberation of the peoples who

<sup>87</sup> A.P. Hakobian, *Armenia and the War. An Armenian's Point of View with an Appeal to Britain and the Coming Peace Conference*, with a Preface by the Rt. Hon. V. Bryce O. M., George H. Doran Company, New York, 1920; also H. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story. Henry Morgenthau former American Ambassador in Turkey*, Doubleday, Page & Company, New York, 1918; A.J. Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon*, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1916; A.J. Toynbee, *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*, with a Preface by Viscount Bryce. Hodder and Stoughton, London, New York, Toronto 1917.



now lie beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks”.<sup>88</sup> Morgenthau, the U.S.A. Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, does document in his landmark account the stages of the Armenian genocide including the positions of the main political actors revealing both the demographic destruction as well as the political intention and planning behind it.<sup>89</sup> Morgenthau reproduces his conversations with high rank Ottoman officials (Mehmet Talât, İsmail Enver or the Grand Vizir – Saïd Halim) that make obvious the political intention to destroy an entire nation. Field realities confirmed these intentions. For instance, he refers to Djevdet Bey, brother in-law of Enver Pasha who came to Van with “definite instructions to exterminate all Armenians in this province”. In April 1915, in district North of Lake Van only “in three days 24,000 Armenians were murdered”.<sup>90</sup> The Lutheran priest Martin Rades, provided records and referred to the previous atrocities against Armenians in 1896 in the Ottoman Empire: “It is impossible to assess what consequences will have on future generations the mode in which the society and the press are discussing today (1896) the atrocities suffered by the Armenians. Nowadays generations learn to obey to an idol of opportunism and of realpolitik, which, if it will become dominant, will eliminate all noble inclinations”.<sup>91</sup> Letters sent from Constantinople since 1895 indicated a clear increase of intolerance toward the Armenians. The French Ambassador, Paul Cambon in letters to his mother refers to “abominable” acts of violence against inoffensive Armenians, which announce “new massacres”.<sup>92</sup>

Toynbee<sup>93</sup> dedicated analytic studies to the Armenian genocide. His demographic overview has a great value for better

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<sup>88</sup> A.J. Toynbee, *The Murderous Tyranny...*, p. 1.

<sup>89</sup> H. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story...*, pp. 203–209, 301–312, 336–359.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 297.

<sup>91</sup> A. Meissner, *Martin Rades 'Christliche Welt' und Armenians. Bausteine für eine internationale Ethik des Protestantismus*, LIT, Berlin 2010, pp. 80–81.

<sup>92</sup> P. Cambon, *Correspondence 1820–1924*, Grasset, Paris 1940, p. 393.

<sup>93</sup> A.J. Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire...*

grasping the dimensions of the inhumane *loss of demographic capital*. There is strong evidence that the 1915–1923 genocide had devastating effects on various forms of capital (economic, social, cultural) and on their reproduction as this process is defined by Bourdieu.<sup>94</sup> The size of the economic as documented by Selian<sup>95</sup> is huge. Beyond and above these damages is the loss of demographic capital. In 1913 in the main vilayets<sup>96</sup> 1 016 000 Armenians have been living. The total Armenian population living in Ottoman Turkey by the same time being of approximately 2 000 000. The proportion of the two major communities was as follows: Moslems 45.1% and Armenians (Christians) was 45.2%, the rest of 9.7% were other religions (ethnic groups). Today Turkey population is 80 274 604, while the Armenian population in Turkey is between 50,000–70,000. Even if one would accept the number of 600,000 massacred Armenians, lowest number mentioned in the Turkish narrative, it must be noticed that the Turkish population increased six times (from some 13 170, 000 in 1915 up to 80 274 604 in 2017). Armenian population in Turkey decreased since 1915 dramatically even if we do not make theoretical extrapolations based on a similar population growth (6 times growth between 1915 and 2017 for the Turkish population). This decrease ranges between 10 times if one accepts the number of 600,000 victims and 25 times if one uses the number of 1 500 000 victims. The inhumane destruction of the demographic capital represents an essential comparative measure for an assessment of the pre-genocide and post-genocide balance across various situations. The demographic capital cannot be owned by any person, political power or government. Its nature is qualitatively different from that of economic and financial capital because it is produced and shared during historical continuity by a given community (nation, ethnic group, etc.).

Most of the saved archives, mainly in Western democratic countries, that contain information about the genocide have

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<sup>94</sup> P. Bourdieu, “Cultural Reproduction...”; idem, *The Logic of Practice*; idem, *Pascalian Meditations*.

<sup>95</sup> S. Selian, *Istoria unui genocid îndelung ignorat*, Ararat, București 2015, pp. 310–311.

<sup>96</sup> A.J. Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire...*

been closed up to 2000. In addition to this even landmark published reports and works, such as those of Morgenthau or Toynbee had a very limited circulation within cultures that are sensitive to this issue. For instance, Morgenthau's story (memoirs) has been published in Romania, a country that received Armenian refugees since 1896, only in 2000 (Ararat Publisher, i.e., a publishing house of the Armenian community) with a preface by James Rosapepe, the Ambassador of the U.S.A. in Romania.

Second, there are records produced by the victims, survivors and their direct descendants. Diaries and letters of the victims and those who escaped the genocide represent reliable sources as is the journal of Stepan Miskjian<sup>97</sup> (1897–1917), published in 1964–1965. His granddaughter, based on the detailed notes of Miskjian achieved, almost one hundred years later, a re-constitutive journey from his birthplace to the deportation place – Deir Zor.<sup>98</sup> The testimonies of the survivors of 1896 and 1915 collected in reliable and systematic mode<sup>99</sup> are essential sources for documenting the genocidal process. There are shorter recollections<sup>100</sup>). Such documents grasp the traumas lived by victims and their survivors. Psychosocial studies based on in depth interviews with survivors<sup>101</sup> reveal the long-term consequences of the traumatic events.

Third, there are the historical studies, starting with the classical sources<sup>102</sup> and a growing number of more recent historical studies that achieve a number of essential tasks:

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<sup>97</sup> S. Miskjian, *Yes Der Zori Tzhokhh'n Pakhadz Em (I escaped from the Hell of Deir Zor). Part 1 – 1916, Part 2 – 1916–1919*, Haratch, Paris 1964–1965.

<sup>98</sup> D.A. MacKeen, *The Hundred Years Walk: An Armenian Odyssey*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston 2016.

<sup>99</sup> V. Svazlian, op. cit.

<sup>100</sup> B. Dosar Horasangian (1915), *Observator Cultural* 2015; E. Kanterian, "Satul fără nume", transl. in *Observator Cultural* from *Tachles – Das Jüdische Wochenmagazin*, pe 24 aprilie 2015.

<sup>101</sup> L. Boyajian, H. Grigorian, "Psychosocial Sequelae in the Armenian Genocide", in: R.G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, Introduction by T. Des Pres. Transactions Publishers, London 2007, pp. 108–114.

<sup>102</sup> A.J. Toynbee, op. cit.; H. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story...*

(1) searching for and analyzing *historical evidence* regarding the genocide; (2) critical approaches of various *forms of denial* and of the mass production of false social representations about the events and the victims (blaming the victims, considering them traitors, etc.); (3) exploring the causes of *official resistance* of various countries, and first of all that of Turkish authorities, *to recognize genocide*; (4) revealing the *societal modeling role* of the Ottoman and Turkish authoritarian structures and procedures for totalitarian leaders and regimes. These are the main sources and research directions that have been used in the present study. These directions are strongly intertwined and are exposing the long-term denial of the genocide, the reluctance and the oscillations of many political, educational, and research institutions to approaching the genocide question. The attitude to this question seems to be influenced in a high degree by the dynamics of geopolitical situations and forces during the last 100 years. It means that we face a dilemma of coping with historical truth while being at the same time able to fairly assess and respect the achievements, the positive role played by the main collective actors (Turkish mainly) during such a long period relation toward a series of strong geopolitical crises. An important starting point for the global consciousness is the work of Carzou<sup>103</sup> followed by series of works that cover the various aspects of the genocide such as: its ideological roots, political organizations, inclusively the decisions of the Committee of Union and Progress Party (ITTIHAD, 1–12 November 1910), military forces, political leaders, procedures, inclusively deportations to some 2000 km distance (walked), rape, forced adoption, forced assimilation, mass killings, the destruction of cultural and religious landmarks (inclusively cemeteries), the transformation of language, relations among majority and minorities and the use of some minorities against other minorities in mass violence, the denial of genocide, its demographic dimension and the suffering of the victims and survivors.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> J.M. Carzou, *Arménie 1915. Un génocide exemplaire*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1975/2006.

<sup>104</sup> F. Adanir, “Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915”, in: D. Chirot, M.E.P. Seligman (eds), *Ethnopolitical Warfare. Causes,*

A turning point for the world consciousness is represented by the Common Declaration John Paul II and Karekin II: “*The extermination of a million and half of Armenian Christians, in what is generally referred to as the first genocide of twentieth century*” (27 September, 2001). In 2015, with the occasion of one hundred years commemoration of the genocide, Pope Francis delivered his message to Armenians and reinforced the previous evaluation with this occasion (April 12, 2015).

During time have been many attempts to organize public coherence on the genocide suffered by the Armenians. For instance, an academic conference in Turkey on the genocide

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*Consequences and Possible Solutions* (pp. 71–81). American Psychological Association, Washington, DC 1999; see also T. Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, Metropolitan Books, New York 2006; R. Bilali, “National Narrative and Social...”, pp. 16–33; L. Boyajian, H. Grigorian, “Psychosocial sequelae...”; H. Bozarslan, V. Dulcert, R. Kévorkian, *Comprendre...*; D. Chirot, *Modern Tyrants: The Power and Prevalence of Evil in Our Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 1994; D. Chirot, D. Karell, “Identity Construction...”; V.N. Dadrian, “The Armenian Genocide and the Pitfalls of a Balanced Analysis”, *American Forum* 1988, vol. 1, no. 2. pp. 730–130; V.N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. Third, revised edition, Berghahn Books, Providence 1997; R.H. Dekmejian, *Determinants of Genocide: Armenians and Jews as Case Studies*, in: R.G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (pp. 81–96), Introduction by T. Des Pres. Transactions Publishers Dictionaries, London 2007; N. Webster (1847), *An American Dictionary of English Language*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 2007; F. DüNDAR, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question 1878–1918*, Transaction Publishers, London 2010; F. GÖÇEK MÜGE, *Ottoman Past...*; S. HANIOĞLU, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2011; S. IHRIG, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2014; N. IORGA, *Byzance after Byzance*, Universitatea din București, București 1935/2005; R. KÉVORKIAN, *Les Arméniens dans l’Empire Ottoman à la seuille du génocide*, avec Paul B. Paboudjian, Arhis, Paris 1992; idem, *Le génocide...*; G. KUCHARCZYK, *Pierwszy Holocaust XX wieku*, Fronda, Warszawa 2012; J. LEPSIUS, *Rapport secrete sur les massacres d’Arménie*, Payot, Paris 1919; K. MOURADIAN, “Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria 1915–1916”, *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 2016, vol. 7, pp. 32–42; F. ULGEN, *Sabiha Gokcen’s 80-year-old Secret. Kemalist Nation Formation and the Ottoman Armenians (doctoral dissertation)*, University of California, San Diego 2010.

has been first cancelled in Spring 2005<sup>105</sup> but could take place a few months later.<sup>106</sup>

The field research has been hindered for a long time by dominant narratives that played a very important role in the denial and the justification of the violent events of 1915. Among these representations are: the conception according to which the denial is natural because the violence, i.e., genocide against the Armenian is embedded within the foundational process of the birth of Turkish Republic.<sup>107</sup> Bozarslan et al., mention also the resistance to open the Turkish archives, the destruction of documents and the very late (long after 2000) publications of some critical documents as the “*Cahier noir*” (The Black Notebook) of Talât directly involved in the genocide.<sup>108</sup> The genocide has been reduced to the problem of warfare during a large world conflagration<sup>109</sup> and even to the mistreatment by Western powers of Turkish autonomy.<sup>110</sup>

The denial of the genocide should be considered in contrast with the opposite orientation which takes its political leaders and the procedures as social models. Ihrig, in his landmark study of “*Atatürk in the nazi imagination*” provides strong evidence regarding the mode in which totalitarian regimes have used the Turkish experience. He refers to “Hitler’s admiration” expressed in his speech of May 4, 1941 given in Reichstag, when the dictator said: “The great

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<sup>105</sup> A. Labi, “Academic Conference in Turkey on Armenian Question Is Cancelled Under Government Pressure”, *Academe Today: The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Daily Report* 2005a, 27 May.

<sup>106</sup> A. Labi, “Despite Late Challenge, Scholars Finally Hold Meeting in Turkey on Armenian Genocide”, *Academe Today: The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Daily Report* 2005b, 26 September.

<sup>107</sup> F. Dündar, *Crime of Numbers....*; F. Ülgen, *Sabiha Gokcen’s 80-year-old Secret....*; Bozarslan, op. cit.; Dulcert & Kévorkian 2015, op. cit.

<sup>108</sup> H. Bozarslan, V. Dulcert, R. Kévorkian, *Comprendre....*, pp. 138–142.

<sup>109</sup> V.N. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of the Turkish-Armenian Conflict*, Transaction Publishers, London, 1999; R. Kévorkian, *Les Arméniens dans l’Empire Ottoman...*

<sup>110</sup> A. Zarakol, “Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan”, *International Relations* 2010, vol. 24, pp. 3–23. DOI: 10.1177/0047117809359040.



ingenious creator of the young Turks was the first to provide a *marvelous role model* for the uprising of the allies then abandoned by luck and horrible stricken by fate”.<sup>111</sup> Taking into account the warning of Rades, the research of cognitive theory<sup>112</sup> on social learning, and the studies on societal learning<sup>113</sup> (also confirmed elsewhere by C. Mamali), major historical actors (good or evil, good and evil) and major historical events have the potential to generate *long term societal learning cycles* that could be latent and manifest.

Studies prove that life stories have a great healing and learning potential because they enhance the coherence at the personal level.<sup>114</sup> At the same time at societal level they help post-genocidal generations to build an integrated macro-narrative regarding the suffering of the previous generations. However, the development of the macro-narrative accepted also by the larger communities is not possible if the victims face a long-term official denial of the genocide practiced mainly by the government that belongs to the other side. The deep traumatic consequences and the complex combination of negative feelings such as anger, sadness and desperation with positive feelings such as hope related to one's own survival, resilience and the birth of new generations of people with a strong Armenian identity are revealed by a 55 years long study of oral history with survivors of the 1915 genocide carried out by Svazlian.<sup>115</sup> The testimonies collected and recorded by Svazlian that include also folk songs are covering a huge chrono-spatial interval while the eldest survivor has been born in 1874 in Sansun. There are testimonies of later on generations of survivors that are living in the deportation area

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<sup>111</sup> S. Ihrig, *Atatürk...*, pp. 116–117.

<sup>112</sup> A. Bandura, “Moral Disengagement in the Perspectives of the Inhumanities”, *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 1999, vol. 3, pp. 193–209.

<sup>113</sup> J. Botkin, M. Elmandsjra, M. Malița, *No Limits to Learning. Report to the Club of Rome*, Pergamon, London 1979.

<sup>114</sup> Band-Wiinterstein, 2007.

<sup>115</sup> V. Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide and the People's Historical Memory*, Gitoutyoun Publishing House of NAS RA, Yerevan 2004; idem, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors*, op. cit.



of Deir-el-Zor.<sup>116</sup> A content analysis of these testimonies that is part of a different project has identified 30 major themes concerning the genocide. These major themes have intersecting areas due to the nature of harms inflicted on the Armenians. For instance, the major theme “means of annihilation” (fire on crowded churches where Armenian children, women and older men took refuge, beheading, impaling, cutting the belly of the pregnant women to bet on the sex of the child, water deprivation, starvation) intersects within some specific areas of a different major theme such as “crimes against children” (killing the child in front of the parents, rape of the young girls and drowning, burying alive, separation from mothers, leprosy, starvation etc.) or with the major themes of “physical and symbolic violence on human body” (playing football with decapitated heads, setting the piles of corpses in cross shape, etc.) all documented by testimonies of the survivors. For the present approach these themes are highly relevant and this why it is useful to list all of these 30 major themes present in the testimonies of the survivors of 1915 genocide:

(1) *Memories of the historic native cradle, peaceful family life within a generous natural environment and productive and friendly community.* These major themes include memories on all Armenian villages and cities and of villages shared in good neighborhood with the Ottoman Turks (testimonies 1, 35, 113, 118, 211, 268, 395, 626, 659, 677, 761);

(2) *Historical landmarks from ancient times to more recent past of Armenians roots and continuity on the land* (for instance, since Tigran the Great and also older roots or recent events);

(3) *Memories of previous massacres of the Armenians in 1896* and of waves of growing hostility against Armenians;

(4) *Recollections of a period of celebration and hope nurtured by the Turkish Constitution* that provided equal rights to Armenians and other nationalities (“Hürriyet”, that means freedom and the dethronement of Sultan Hamid II, 1908);

(5) *The anti-Armenians goals and actions ordered by the new Turkish government and by the high officials in 1915–1923 genocide* within the political context of WWI,

<sup>116</sup> Hakoub Moutafian, born in 1980, testimony 385, p. 545.

1917 Bolshevik Revolution and after WWI as reflected by the experiences and observations lived by the survivors. It includes *atrocities committed by Young Turks* (testimonies 2, 6, 11, 16, 19 83, 86, 105, 111, 117, 134, 145, 150, 152, 159, 187, 192, 194, 206, 241, 249, 251, 259, 267, 274, 288, 317, 327, 350, 450, 453, 460, 483, 507, 551, 556, 585, 687);

(6) *Consistent patterns of genocidal procedures directed against the Armenians* such as: officially disarming the Armenians, removal (under the pretext of drafts) of the young men from their communities; mass arrests; public atrocities and killings, forced deportations on foot of the remaining women, children and old people, repeated plundering, stimulation of other ethnic groups (mainly Kurds and Chechens) to harass, threaten, plunder and kill the Armenians” (testimonies, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26, 99, 101, 112, 114, 115, 118, 119, 132, 142);

(7) *Means used in the extermination of Armenians* such as: fire arms, cold steel arms, bayonets, swords (yataghans), axes, daggers, pouring kerosene through the roofs of crowded churches used as refuge by Armenians, mass-immolation, drowning, burying alive, burning older persons on bonfires, impaling, water deprivation, hanging, crucifixion, starvation, throwing into pits, dying of sunstroke” (testimonies 2, 6, 39, 42, 88, 112, 114, 147, 191, 228);

(8) *Physical and symbolic brutalities against human body* such as: “beheading, impaling, rape, cutting off women breasts throwing them to the dogs, cutting nipples, cutting the belly of pregnant women and betting on the sex of the fetus [also “to lay the woman in childbirth on the ground, to drop a paving stone on her head and watch the fetus dart out of her womb”, “to cut open their belly and their digestive organs in search of gold coins”], playing football with decapitated heads, the corpses piled up in the shape of a cross” (13, 17, 39, 59, 111, 121, 159, 170, 153, 155, 170, 171, 177, 192, 258, 307, 339, 445, 454);

(9) *Loss*, mainly: loss of the most members of the family [the witness being the only one survivor usually from a large family], separation of children from mothers, separation of siblings, loss of real estate and land, loss of personal property, loss of cultural and religious artifacts and symbols (testimonies, 1, 2, 3, 10, 64, 67, 113, 200);

(10) *Violence against children*: killings, tortures (some in front of the parents), to impale the baby on a stake [to fling him away], starvation [“grazed on grass like animals”, “drinking urine”], changes of names [“starting from now on you are a Turk”], selling children, children slavery, begging for food, forcing girls into Turkish marriages, placement into poorly administrated orphanages;

(11) *Cultural and symbolic violence* such as: killings of intellectuals (teachers, writers, priests, notables) forced Turkification (name-changing, interdiction of Armenian language and imposing Turkish language), Arabization, forced Kurdification, forced Islamization, circumcision, destruction of churches, converting churches into flour mills, jail, mosques, burning Armenian books, desecration of Armenian monuments (testimonies, 1, 10, 14, 16, 22, 13, 48, 210, 346, 348, 377, 378, 445);

(12) *Planned killings, deportations and atrocities during Armenian holy days*: in April 1909, during the Holy Week, Adana and its environs have been put on fire, vicious crowds attacked and plundered Armenian inhabited quarters, on 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1915 the *Sunday of Vardavar* (the transfiguration holyday in the Armenian tradition) Armenians from the Taron plain have been “slaughtered with swords, burned in fire, drowned” by Turks and Kurds, and the day has been converted into “*Sunday of Martavar*” (burning of people, in Armenian language, testimony: 1). Themes 10, 11 and 12 (also themes 29 and 30) are mainly focused on violence against children, women and symbolic violence. These themes reveal the lethal *violence against the demographic capital* and the efforts of the Armenians individuals, communities, churches and international organizations to reverse this loss by finding the Armenian children that have been denationalized (Turkified, Islamized) and returning them to their cultural matrix. For instance, Ekmekçiöğlü<sup>117</sup> explored in-depth the *forcible transfer of women and children from one ethnic group to a different ethnic group* and its partial reversal in the Armenians’ case. It has to be reminded that within the Ottoman and Turkish cultural framework the abduction of children and women

<sup>117</sup> L. Ekmekçiöğlü, “A Climate for Abduction, a Climate for Redemption...”, pp. 534–541.

(used in ‘harems’) who belonged to other nationalities, inclusively to the enemies’ countries, has been a long historical practice as it is also the practice of yenicization (for boys) discussed previously. The studies of Svazlian<sup>118</sup>, and the historical process of yenicisation strongly suggest that forced ethnic conversion, basically a brutal and systematic separation from one’s family and cultural roots and its possible reversal is much more complex, being in some cases impossible;

(13) *Forced labor camps, labor battalion (“amelé tabour”):* hard and forced physical work that ended with the killing of the workers after they finished the project (for instance 25 Armenian engineers killed after building a tunnel, testimony, 251);

(14) *Armenian armed resistance and self-defense groups;*

(15) *Help received by the Armenians from local people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds,* such as Bedouins, Christian Arabs, Greeks, Gypsies, Kurds (kirva, kurmandji), Persians, Turks, Yezidi (testimonies 12, 23, 27, 57, 106, 111, 139, 159, 164, 169, 220, 221, 247, 355);

(16) *Help received from foreign countries,* powers: America (The U.S.A), France, Russia (6, 26, 49, 84, 88, 174, 247, 281, 283);

(17) *Discontent and anger toward the great powers that cooperated with the Turkish government:* mainly Germany, Great Britain and Soviet Union under Lenin, testimonies 27, 51, 84, 77, 116, 203, 253, 652 – especially for the lost territories such as Kars, Ardahan, Iğdir due to Lenin-Kemal agreement). There is also the fact that the *Armenian Revolutionary Federation* joined in 1907 the *Second Communist International*.<sup>119</sup> A puzzling attitude on Armenian Genocide is that of a moral exemplar as Gandhi who designed and practiced ahimsa<sup>120</sup> and brought a historic contribution to the practice of non-violent resistance and refused to join the *Communist International*. However, Gandhi did not express opposition to the Muslim violence that was quite well known during his life<sup>121</sup>;

<sup>118</sup> V. Svazlian, op. cit.

<sup>119</sup> G. Minassian, *Le rêve brisé des Arméniens...*

<sup>120</sup> C. Mamali, *The Gandhian Mode...*

<sup>121</sup> Singh, 2004, p. 290.

(18) *Children orphanages*: mostly run by American charity organizations;

(19) *Repeated emigration in foreign countries* such as Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Irak, Lebanon, Romania, Soviet Armenia, the USA;

(20) *Participation of Armenian survivors to French Resistance against German occupation and to the Great Patriotic War* (Soviet Union) during the WWII;

(21) *Repatriation in Soviet Armenia, Sovietization and deportation of the Armenians survivors in Siberia under Stalin* (testimonies 4, 9, 13, 66, 75, 88, 114, 168, 24, 242, 297, 349, 683, 700<sup>123</sup>);

(22) *Life in exile, mainly in the Syrian desert*;

(23) *Diversity* of various Armenian organizations and of their various political orientation. There other sources that show the complexity of this issue, which disclose also the influence of communist ideology on some Armenian refugees<sup>123</sup>;

(24) *Armenians saving networks* during deportation, genocide, exile that helped to reconnect the survivors and return to a safer life;

(25) *Feelings toward the lost native cradle, family, cultural capital and homes*;

(26). *Relations with the perpetrators – (killing gavür, i.e. Christian, a sufficient condition of going to heaven)*: (testimonies: 1, 95, 97);

(27) *Emotions experienced during and post-genocide and related to its long term consequences, denial and/or under-evaluation by powerful international actors*: bewilderment, desperation, anger, sadness inclusively suicide by self-burning and throwing oneself into the Euphrates, resilience, hope: (11, 25, 42, 87, 95, 97, 147, 155, 189, 473, 481, 495, 505);

(28) *Reconstructive drive – demographic, cultural, political reconstructive trends*: most of the testimonies refer to a powerful demographic rebuilding tendency exemplified by the number of children (some 4.6 per couple);

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<sup>123</sup> See V. Arachelian, *Siruni: Odiseea unui proscris*, Editura Niculescu, București 2011; S. Selian, *Schiță istorică a comunității armenie din România*, Ararat, București 1999.

<sup>B</sup> V. Arachelian, op. cit.; P. Istrati, *Vers l'autre flame (The confession of a loser)*, Gallimard, Paris 1929/1987.

(29) *Identity resilience and development across generations urging the younger generations to remember the genocide (1915–1923) connecting the survival of the Armenian nation with the living memory, using the names of the martyrs as anchoring names for the new generations, striving for the complete recognition of the genocide.* This represents a strong theme across almost all testimonies. It is supported by other studies on the Armenian genocide that are focused on the forcible separation of children from their biological, social, cultural and religious cradle and the efforts to reverse this violent acculturation process<sup>124</sup>.

It is also supported by studies on “*perceived collective continuity*”<sup>125</sup> and “*trans-generational groups*”.<sup>126</sup> The collective solidarity during long historical periods that starts with the birth event of a collective actor (a nation) seems to be strongly activated by existential threats to the group bio-cultural survival. Due to the context of global communication it is assumed that any public presentation of a significant open collective historic wound as it is the Armenian genocide that is not officially acknowledged yet by the Turkish government and by at least some 80 major international actors (countries) will trigger other recuperating actions that will become more vocal on global scene. It seems that it is not by chance that only one single country with a significant Islamic/Muslim population recognized the genocide out of the total of 28 countries who acknowledge officially the genocide is Lebanon where it has been and still is a significant Armenian population. Studies on the causes and effects of *moral shock* carried by Wisneski and Skitka<sup>127</sup> are highly significant for historical issues too. Wisneski and Skitka<sup>128</sup> show that the effects of the moral shock are mediated by disgust

<sup>124</sup> L. Ekmekçioğlu, op. cit.

<sup>125</sup> M. Sani, M. Bowe, C. Herrera et al., “Perceived Collective Continuity”.

<sup>126</sup> D.T. Kahn, Y. Klar, S. Roccas, “For the Sake of the Eternal Group...”.

<sup>127</sup> D.C. Wisneski, L.J. Skitka, “Moralization through Moral Shock: Exploring Emotional Antecedents to Moral Convictions”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 2017, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 139–150.

<sup>128</sup> Ibidem.

and not by anger.<sup>129</sup> The question is: what might be the effect of the moral shock of common people who are exposed for the first time on history skeletons closet which existence is denied by many official political actors? According to the field information shared by Alak<sup>130</sup>, who attempted to collect data on attitudes on 1915 from Romanian Muslim population she faced a reluctance to participate that looked to be nurtured by fear. On the other hand the only one empirical research on Armenian genocide carried in Romania one of the authors (Mamali) could identify achieved between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 15 of April 2016 as a Master thesis in Political Sciences<sup>131</sup> on 10 members of the Bucharest Armenian community suggests that none of the interviewed individuals from the Armenian community “have any personal relationships with members of the Turkish community”.<sup>132</sup> The distance between the Turkish and Armenian communities revealed by the 10 interviews might be surprising if we consider two additional facts: (1) today in Bucharest are living soe1361 Armenians and some 2315 Turks; (2) the experiment carried by Travers and Milgram<sup>133</sup> on the number of moves (hops) necessary to reach a person at thousand miles distance suggests that in six hops (through indirect personal contacts starting with a known person) one could reach anybody located at a great physical distance. No personal contacts between members on the two communities, if this is going to be confirmed by other studies, indicate the huge gap between the descendants of those involved in 1915 events: denial is the obstacle that stands in the way of normal personal relationships

All these invite the question: what might be the situation when the moral shock is generated by a situation that represents a threat to the continuity of one’s own group, or to any other group? The history closet has a huge capital of skeletons that can be considered also a *moral global deficit*.

<sup>129</sup> Ibidem, pp. 146–147.

<sup>130</sup> A. Isac Alak, *Personal Communication*, Bucharest 2016.

<sup>131</sup> G.A. Grigore, *Percepția comunității armene din București asupra genocidului din anul 1915*. Sesiunea de licență iunie, 2016. Universitatea din București, Facultatea de Științe Politice 2016.

<sup>132</sup> Ibidem, p. 35.

<sup>133</sup> J. Travers, S. Milgram, “An Experimental Study in the Small World Problem”, *Sociometry* 1969, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 425–443.



These testimonies belong to oral history and reveal essential traits shared with later on genocides, as the Holocaust and more recent genocides. What makes the genocide suffered by the Armenians unique in human history is not its size, or the fact that some historians might consider it a tragic historical priority in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but *its long term (over 100 years) denial* by the officials representatives of Turkey despite the fact that even historical studies carried by Turkish historians<sup>134</sup> and iconic writers (for instance, Pamuk's public declaration<sup>135</sup>) recognize it. It has to be considered that the archives with documents on Armenian genocide have been sealed for long periods of time, a terrible secrecy in the realm of knowledge shared with the political secrecy of the design of the genocide. There are circumstances in which during elections campaigns when candidates to the presidency made the promise to recognize the genocide but once elected, they downgrade it to the level of massacre. For instance, even if the USA did work out a document in 1954 that recognizes the genocide, and the President Ronald Reagan, in his speech of April 22 1981, has been the first American President to recognize the genocide. The United States government first acknowledged the Armenian Genocide back in 1951, however still the American official recognition of 1915 events as a genocide remains a task for the future. This goal has met deeply disappointing decisions such as that of former President Barack Obama who promised during elections of 2008 to officially recognize the Armenian genocide but even after he received the Nobel Prize of Peace and after the 100 years commemoration still downgraded it to a tragic massacre. Such a broken promise is a powerful source of moral shock and collective discontent. An Armenian publicist, Harut Sassounian, considered that the "President Obama lost his moral ground" after he did not recognize the Armenian genocide.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> For instance T. Akçam, *A Shameful Act...*; idem, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2012.

<sup>135</sup> A. Edemariam, "Voices of Protest: 'I Want to Continue the Life I had Before'", *The Guardian*, April 2, 2006.

<sup>136</sup> D.A. MacKeen, *The Hundred Years Walk...*, p. 287.

As a direct personal experience, I recall that during the International Conference of Psychology (Berlin, 2008) I asked a colleague from Turkey, within a psycho-social symposium, about the conflict of 1915 between Turks and Armenians. The answer has been “I do not know about such a conflict”. Even so, some extremely useful field studies have been carried on. For instance, Bilali<sup>137</sup> carried an on line study of 93 participants (Turkish students in the U.S.A.) that suggests that in-group glorification and perceived in-group threat predicted less acknowledgment of in-group responsibility, while “Turkish participants placed most responsibility on Armenians”.<sup>138</sup> The study intentionally did not use the concept of genocide” in order to “avoid reactive responses and drop outs”.<sup>139</sup> The findings show also that 65% of the participants believed that both groups “harmed each other”, 25% that the Armenians have been the victims, and 10% that the “Turks were the victims and the Armenians the harm doers”.<sup>140</sup>

If we take into consideration other studies that look to historical figures (evil versus good<sup>141</sup>) it seems important to underscore that we have still not enough knowledge about what the participants know about major historical figures and events. I think that it is necessary to explore the accuracy of common knowledge about historical events, and mainly about tragic events. False representations about mega-violent events are caused, among other factors, by processes such as *moral disengagement*<sup>142</sup>, *social dominance structures and processes*<sup>143</sup>, system justification

<sup>137</sup> R. Bilali, op. cit.

<sup>138</sup> Ibidem, p. 26.

<sup>139</sup> Ibidem, p. 23.

<sup>140</sup> Ibidem, p. 25.

<sup>141</sup> K. Hanke, J.H. Liu, C.G. Sibley et al., “‘Heroes’ and ‘Villains’ of World History. Across Cultures”, *Plos One* 2015, pp. 1–21; J.H. Liu, D.J. Hilton, “How the Past Weighs on the Present: Social Representations on History and Their Impact on Identity Politics”, *British Journal of Social Psychology* 2005, vol. 44, pp. 537–556.

<sup>142</sup> A. Bandura, “Moral Disengagement in the Perspectives...”; idem, “Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency”, *Journal of Moral Education* 2002, vol. 31, pp. 101–119; A. Bandura, *Moral Disengagement...*

<sup>143</sup> See F. Pratto, J. Sidanius, L.M. Stallworth, B.F. Malle, “Social Dominance Orientation: A Personality Variable Predicting Social and

processes<sup>144</sup>, errors of “master narratives”<sup>145</sup>, “legal culture”<sup>146</sup> and inter-cultural images on national character.<sup>147</sup> There are also authors who think that the official recognition of the genocide has high chances to remain an unsolved problem.<sup>148</sup> However, because the individuals’ access to knowledge increased and because there is a democratization of the production and access to social knowledge supported by computing and Internet<sup>149</sup> far beyond the limits of classical social participative techniques<sup>150</sup> the exploration of the basic common knowledge about such events represents a necessary step.

The idea is that long term denial (one hundred year!) by the official representatives of the perpetrating social forces of a genocide and the timid and partial recognition by major international actors (governments) of the same genocidal reality hinders deeply the development of a healing macro-narrative that could help the surviving generations of both sides. This long-term delay weakens morally the side that is mainly responsible for the genocide but also decreases the moral standing of the silent witnessing social actors and at the same time stimulates the emergence of unpredictable long-term reactions from the members of the victimized community and other communities that identify with it.

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Political Attitudes”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1994, vol. 67, pp. 741–763; also J. Sidanius, J. Liu, J. Shaw, F. Pratto, “Social Dominance Orientation, Hierarchy-attenuators and Hierarchy Enhancers...”, pp. 338–366.

<sup>144</sup> J.T. Jost, M.R. Banaji, “The Role of Stereotyping in System-justification and the Production of False Consciousness”, *British Journal of Social Psychology* 1994, vol. 33, pp. 1–27; J.T. Jost, “Negative Illusions: Conceptual Clarification and Psychological Evidence Concerning False Consciousness”, *Political Psychology* 1995, vol. 16, pp. 397–424.

<sup>145</sup> J. Rüsen, “How To Overcome Ethnocentrism...”

<sup>146</sup> G. Bierbrauer, “Toward an Understanding of Legal Culture: Variations in Individualism and Collectivism between Kurds, Lebanese, and Germans”, *Law and Society Review* 1994, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 243–264.

<sup>147</sup> J. Leerssen, “Imagology: History and Method” (pp. 17–32).

<sup>148</sup> A.J. Boekstijn, “Turkey, the World, and the Armenian Question”, *Turkish Politics Quarterly* 2005, pp. 4–6.

<sup>149</sup> J.H. Witten, “A Stroll through the Gardens of Computer Science”, in: C.S. Calude (ed.), *The Human Face of Computing*, Imperial College Press, London 2016, p. 132f.

<sup>150</sup> C. Mamali, op. cit.

*The long delay of recognition and apologies for committing violent societal acts contributes to an increase of their long-term negative effects on all the sides being a fertile context for hatred, arrogance, societal cynicism and vicarious reinforcement of violence against others.*

## Research design

### Hypotheses and methods

**Hypotheses.** The study, which is part of a wider project, assumes:

(1) *there is a long-term trans-generational) societal learning progress that might feed mainly false representations, mixed representations and mainly accurate social representations on past events. It implies that both good and evil societal processes can be transmitted over generations;*

(2) *the repression of truth about historical events represents a long-term societal danger. Stronger the repression and the denial of historical truth about mega-violent events more dangerous will the reactions of collective actors and more unpredictable will they be;*

(3) *the stronger the repression and the denial (which is associated with the lack of apologies) the higher the chances for immoral development of individuals and collective actors (for the concept of immoral development see figure 1);*

(4) *it is expected that landmark societal events related to the Armenian genocide as the commemoration of 100 years will: (a) increase significantly the proportion of common people who have an accurate basic historical knowledge on the genocide (so this knowledge should be significantly greater after 2015 commemoration than the accuracy of the knowledge prior to 2015); (b) the accuracy of basic knowledge combined with the degree of certainty about this knowledge will be much greater after the commemoration than prior to 2015 commemoration;*

(5) *the questioning potential will be strongly enhanced by the accurate basic knowledge, i.e., those participants who possess a basic historical knowledge will generate more questions, on a wider significant problematic spectrum than those*

who lack basic accurate historical knowledge (the collective actors involved and the size of the lethal violence).

The first 3 hypotheses have been approached in previous stages of this project.<sup>151</sup> This study is focused mainly on the last 3 hypotheses (4a and 4b, and 5).

Also the study considers the wider political context despite the fact that this can be done at this stage through rather speculative assumptions as:

(1) The basic knowledge about the genocide suffered by the Armenians is going to be more limited within countries that suffered long-term repression;

(2) Public commemorations, which bring into the public discourse such events, might increase the number of people with basic accurate knowledge on such events. The centennial commemoration (April 2015 – inclusively the *declaration of Pope Francis*) is assumed to play a threshold role in expanding the basic accurate knowledge about the genocide suffered by the Armenians.

## Methods

The research uses two types of methods:

(1) a short questionnaire that presented 14 pairs of perpetrators and victims, 13 of them being not only false but with an extremely low probability for a credible “history scenario” for the year of 1915. Starting with the first waves of post 100 years commemoration survey (2016 and 2017) and intending to apply it in other countries on representative national samples the questionnaire added a few items (see Appendix 1);

(2) a non-directive technique, self-inquiry<sup>152</sup> that puts the participants in the position to generate questions instead of answering to the researcher’s pre-established questions. It keeps a balance between the two major actors (Turks and Armenians) by reversing their order in the two forms of the technique in order to avoid any possible influence of the order of the topics (actors included) toward which questions are oriented. The self-inquiry has three major

<sup>151</sup> C. Mamali, “Accuracy of Basic Knowledge of Traumatic Historical...”.

<sup>152</sup> C. Mamali, “Democratization of the Social Research Process”.

levels: (a) impersonal self-inquiring level, focused only on the problem that includes the two opposite representations on the vents of 1915; (b) interpersonal inquiry oriented toward specific social actors and roles. This has two distinct phases. In the first phase the instructions orient the questioning potential toward past political leaders (active during the 1915 events). In the second phase the instructions orient the questions toward political leaders who are contemporary with the respondents; (c) directed self-inquiry, self-addressed questions (Appendix 2). The self-inquiry has been applied in face to face situation (N = 268 respondents in the U.S.A. and Romania) on convenience samples. In the present study will be used only the first sample. Also the technique has been applied restoring to Facebook (N = 139).

### Participants

Participants and findings from the previous studies carried (since 2007) out as anon-funded research are used.<sup>153</sup> They include 24 convenience samples (N = 946 *prior* to the 2015 commemoration, N = 341 *post* commemoration, with almost equal distribution of male and female participants from 5 countries, plus 3 international conferences, participants in the convenience sample from 32 countries). Two waves (*prior*) on representative national samples carried out in Romania in 1915, N = 1231 *prior* to the commemoration, and in 2016, N = 1589 after commemoration (for both samples only the data form respondents of 18 years and older will be presented). Both samples are representative for gender, age, educational level, SES, and the historical regions of Romania). The data have been collected by a trained team from Mercury Research, a specialized institution in national surveys – Bucharest, Romania. The technique of self-inquiry has been applied after participants (N = 329) answered to the instrument designed to find out the accuracy of basic historical knowledge on the genocide after which all the participants have been asked to answer to the self-inquiry technique, and 268 completed the second task (self-inquiry).

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<sup>153</sup> C. Mamali, “Accuracy of Basic Knowledge of Traumatic Historical...”.

The wider project includes a study on far distant tragedies (*Titanic disaster, April 1912*) in order to assess comparatively the way in which time and media affect the long-term collective memory. This study uses an instrument that has an identical structure with that used on the accuracy of basic knowledge on genocide but replaces the 14 pairs of victims-perpetrators with 14 names of ships might suffered a tragic accident with many victims.

## Findings

The convenience samples are processed for three distinct periods: 1. *Before commemoration of the Armenian genocide, at great temporal distance from commemoration, over 4 years*) 2007–2011; 2. *Before commemoration, but short temporal distance to the commemoration* (a few months prior to the 100 years on in April 2015); 3. *Post commemoration of the genocide*: May – November 2015.

1. *The group at great temporal distance from commemoration* (2007–2011). In the “far temporal distance condition” from the – commemoration only 4.3% participants had been able to identify the pair Ottoman Turks versus Armenians as the accurate answer out of 14 pairs. The participants in the “short temporal distance” from the commemoration have been able in a much greater proportion (15.7%) to accurately identify the pair involved in the 1915 conflict. The difference between these two intervals, few years before and just a few months before the commemoration is significant  $\chi^2 = 36.297$ ,  $p < .001$ .

2. The difference between the answers collected few months before the commemoration of the genocide and few months after the commemoration of the genocide with the participation of Pope Francis and many public debates across the world and increased number of scientific and popularizing publications shows a significant increase of accurate answers: 15.7% accurate answers few months before commemoration and 30.8% after the commemoration of the Armenian genocide ( $\chi^2 = 24.017$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results strongly suggest that societal ignorance on macro-societal



violence can be relatively rapidly reduced by modern means of communication mainly if they are supported by moral authority figures. There are significant difference between participants who are social scientists (psychologists, included) and the other participants ( $\chi^2 = 91.519$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

3. The general findings on the two Romanian national representative samples show a very low level of basic historical knowledge about the Armenian genocide (wave 1 in 2015, pre-100 years commemoration only 8% identified accurately the pair of victims and perpetrators and wave 2 in 2016, after 100 years commemoration of the genocide 8.8% provided the accurate answer). Between the two waves there a small but insignificant increase of the answers that reflect an accurate basic historical knowledge even after the commemoration. So, an event such as commemoration did not have a significant effect, as predicted on the accuracy of basic historical knowledge. Because all the other samples that did show a significant change have been convenience samples these findings invite a challenging question. Why in other countries the change has been significant? A few factors need to be considered such as: the structure of the samples (convenience versus representative), major differences in the ways major news (as commemoration of 100 years of the Armenian genocide) are represented by mass-media in Romania and other countries, differences in which the 1915–1923 events are represented in history textbooks and the official position of the countries on the Armenian genocide (denial, downgrading to the category of massacre, silence, assessing the events as genocide). These findings on the Romanian samples are more surprising if one considers that Romania received Armenian refugees since 1896 and especially survivors of 1915–1923 events, has a historically old and significant Armenian population, and its territory has been a few hundred years under the dominance of Ottoman Empire till the independence war (1877) as discussed previously. The fact that Romania received a great number of Armenian refugees, with so called Nansen passports, does not mean that this wave of refugees did not face difficulties. There are studies that indicate that the loyalty to the Romanian state of these refugees has been questioned and also that some joined extreme political

organizations (communist or fascist) as suggests the archival studies.<sup>154</sup>

4. The findings on the two national representative samples reveal also significant differences between those participants who provided accurate basic historical knowledge on the 1915 events and have been at same time confident that their answers are correct and those participants who did provide accurate answers but declared themselves as being rather uncertain about the correctness of their answers, i.e., answer certainty increased significantly between the two waves (before and after commemoration). First, answer certainty is higher in the case of those who provided accurate responses. These results are significant at the level of each wave: wave 1, pre-commemoration (March 2015)  $\chi^2 = 19.580$ ,  $p < .001$ ; wave 2, after commemoration (March 2016)  $\chi^2 = 52,115$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, when compared the two waves it is obvious that this correlation is significantly stronger for wave 2 (after commemoration), which means that the degree of confidence of those who selected the accurate answer did increase significantly after the commemoration of 2015:  $\chi^2 = 45.248$ ,  $p < .001$ . These findings suggest that the public discourse, and especially relevant declarations on the genocide 1915–1923 influence the common representations on the event. It seems that this influence remains still restricted to a limited category. This invites further questions on the global “air-time”, “internet space”, “tv-space” for this event and possible competing news such as the celebration (inclusively with high profile representatives of the defeated armies who did commemorate/celebrated the fight) of the Turkish victory at Gallipoli. It is reasonable to assume that such competitive knowledges do have contradictory effects on the macro-social dissonance that exist within nations and across nations.

5. The findings based on the two Romanian national samples suggest that education and the types of sources (only in 2016 wave) are associated with a greater accuracy of basic

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<sup>154</sup> S.C. Ionescu, “Loyal Citizens or Dangerous Stateless Refugees? The ‘Armenian Question’ in World War II. Romania 1940–44”, *Journal on Genocide Research* 2017.

historical knowledge on the 1915 genocide. For instance, higher levels of education are associated with a higher accuracy of basic historical knowledge on the 1915 events. However, a surprising trend is revealed by the convenience sample in Poland (N = 56, out of which 44.6% participants). Comparatively the proportion of accurate answers is some 5 times higher than the national representative sample, and some 3 times higher than the Romania convenience sample. In the Polish case the level of education makes no significant difference in the accuracy of the basic historical knowledge. These findings invite, besides the different nature of the samples, to consider wider social and cultural factors. It seems that within the Polish cultural context since a quite long time (old aggressions against Poland's territorial integrity, also the relatively recent experience of *Solidarność* movement) forged a stronger informed sensitivity toward past events at the societal level. This might mean that the basic historical knowledge regarding major events is relatively homogeneously shared by the entire population. This speculation deserves to be explored by a study on a national representative sample. The knowledge about the Armenian genocide may also be influenced by historical relations between Poles and Armenians, dating back to the Middle Ages and based on common faith and converging military interests (when the Ottoman Empire was a shared enemy). For centuries, Armenians served in the Polish army and were respected soldiers. Currently, there is a very active Armenian minority in Poland, whose representatives have carried out various activities since 2000 to commemorate the victims of the Armenian genocide, as well as to popularize knowledge about this tragic event.<sup>155</sup> What is more, in 2005, the Polish Parliament adopted a resolution in which it pays tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide in Turkey. This act was widely commented on by the Polish mass media.

6. The findings regarding the questioning potential activated by proposing to the participants to express their own questions on 1915 events point out that this is indeed rich (See annex). The invitation to generate questions has been

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<sup>155</sup> G. Tokarz, "Ludobójstwo Ormian w pamięci społeczno-politycznej III RP", *Wschodnioznawstwo* 2012, vol. 6, pp. 117–126.

accepted by 81% participants of a convenience sample (volunteer participation, without any material reward for the participation, and using a snowball approach). The procedure, as previously indicated, followed the following sequence: (a) all participants answered to the short questionnaire focused on basic historical knowledge about the event of 1915 to see if they can identify accurately the pair of actors involved in 1915 tragic events (Ottoman Turks vs. Armenians); (b) the two groups (accurate answers vs. wrong answers) received the self-inquiry techniques that have six different inquiring targets: impersonal (only the tragic events have been presented as the explicit questioning target); Turkish authorities who have been in power in 1915; Armenian authorities who have been in power in 1915; Turkish authorities and who are in power today; Armenian authorities who are in power today; explicitly self-directed questions. The findings do show that those who provided accurate answers expresses a strong inquiring tendency (higher number of questions) at least in three ways: (1) *total number of generated questions* ( $x^2 = 48.687$ ,  $p < .001$ ); (2) *number of questions directed toward specific actors* ( $x^2 = 52.779$ ,  $p < .001$ ); (3) *number of self-directed questions* ( $x^2 = 28.433$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Even those who did not provide basic accurate answers on the 1915 their questioning potential has been high (37.6% participants with wrong answers regarding the pair of collective actors involved in 1915 events generated over 10 questions). This seems to show that in the present cultural and political context the 1915 events created a strong dissonance in the minds of people who once they come in touch with the problem might look for information that can reduce the uncertainty, and provided some kind of cognitive closure. We take into account that this need might be very different for those who belong to the perpetrators' category and those who belong to the victims' category. As an anecdotic information regarding the attempt to accomplish this study on Muslim population that lives in Romania, research that is part of a future stage of this project, it is significant to mention that the preliminary observations indicate a resistance, even fear, of this category to participate to this study despite the fact that the main researcher involved in the data collection is a self-declared Muslim. At this stage of the research we are not even speculating about the reasons of these hurdles.

## Conclusions

The social representations on crimes against humanity might vary from groups to groups. However, according to the present findings it is essential that these groups should share accurate basic historical knowledge about such terrible events as those since 1915 to 1923. The findings on the Armenian Genocide strongly suggest that the basic accurate historical knowledge is extremely limited. Clearly this limitation is due to personal ignorance but also to the mode in which these events have been represented during more than 100 years up to present by major collective actors, media, and history textbooks. Theoretically, the 1915 events and their representations indicate a powerful societal, and inter-societal cognitive dissonance that involves moral, political and social-cognitive conflicts between those associated historically with the category of perpetrators and those associated with the category of victims. It seems that there is a strong need for closure (cognitive but also with political and moral motives) as it comes out from the 14 out of the 30 themes of the testimonies<sup>156</sup> provided by survivors of the 1915 genocide as well as from the questions generated by the participants in the present research. The need for closure, on both sides of this historic conflict, is marked by a deep cognitive, political and moral conflict. *The postponement of a closure is aggravating this open historic wound and represents a negative model not just for moral disengagement of various collective actors, more or less powerful, in relation to crimes against humanity but, hypothetically, increases the chances of immoral development at the global level.* The findings regarding the questioning potential that is activated in common person by the Armenian genocide suggests an important area for future participatory action research. The great number of questions generated by participants of all ages and walks of life, races, ethnicity and religions underscore the importance of “moral capital” and the costs of denial, as defined by Friedrichs.<sup>157</sup> The gap in the public knowledge, due to the time and space

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<sup>156</sup> V. Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies...*

<sup>157</sup> J. Friedrichs, “Useful Lies...”, pp. 212–234.

dedicated by media, between the information about the 1915 Armenian genocide (still extremely low) on one side and the information about the tragic accident of Titanic that happened 3 years before it due to honest human error that had a much lower number of victims (under 1500) which is globally well-known. This gap between the knowledge about the 1912 wreckage of Titanic, as tragic as it has been, on one side (as research in progress indicates) on one side and the basic knowledge on the Armenian Genocide on the other side is morally puzzling. Denial of crimes of such a magnitude as the genocide suffered by the Armenians (1915–1923, and the massacres of 1896) turns the problem of its costs into a global moral challenge. It might represent also a chance to increase what Volhardt<sup>158</sup> named “global mindedness”.

Even today there are conflicting social representations about the 1915 genocide as well as about the precedent homicidal practices within the Ottoman Empire. There are approaches of the 1915 Armenian genocide and of precedent massacres against Armenians (for instance 1896, 1909) that are focused mostly on the controversies (“different versions”) about these horrific events and avoid the issue of denial by the Turkish authorities of the genocide. Some of these approaches invoke the questions of reliable statistics on the number of victims. There is no doubt that detailed studies of all the events, based on reliable sources is necessary – and it has been carried out since those times by many observers and direct witnesses. Also, besides the resort to the statistics it is necessary to take determine if, besides number of victims, there are patterns of violent actions on large scale. The last issue is almost completely neglected by approaches that are limited to the perspective of “different versions” of the same events, which eliminates the distinction between perpetrators and victims. Regarding the statistics for the massacres of Adana, Boyajian<sup>159</sup> reports that 25,000 to 30,000 [Armenians] were “massacred”. This is

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<sup>158</sup> J.R. Volhardt, “The Role of Social Psychology in Preventing Group-selective Mass Atrocities”, in: S.P. Rosenberg, T. Galis, A. Zucker (eds), *Reconstructing Atrocity Prevention*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2016, p. 113.

<sup>159</sup> D. Boyajian, *The Case of the Forgotten Genocide*, Educational Book Crafters, Westwood, NJ 1972, p. 55.

a conservative estimation is confirmed by other researchers.<sup>160</sup> On the other hand, Yakut<sup>161</sup> focuses on the “death toll in the Adana Prefecture and come out with a much smaller number of Armenian victims (under 5 220). Even within this approach it is obvious that the proportion of the victims (Christians, and mainly Armenians) represents 81.6% while the casualties of Muslims is of 18.4%. If a group fights for its life one might expect that the aggressors will suffer too regardless the balance of forces. These data are reproduced by Sahara<sup>162</sup> (using the work of Kemal Yukut<sup>163</sup>). The table 2 reproduced by Sahara refers to deaths suffered by “Muslims” and “Non-Muslims” (p. 137) that implies a fundamental bias against Non-Muslims (Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians and so on who were also Christians of various denominations). This means all the Non-Muslims are deprived by this so-called descriptive statistics of their identity being a kind of “collective nobody”. Unfortunately, this custom, even among professionals, to identify just one category (let us say O) and to refer to all other identities of various ethnic and religious groups as Non-O is a structural bias that nullifies the right to one’s identity.

The second issue is that of violent patterns expressed along the history of the Ottoman Empire. Long before the events of 1896 and 1909 the forced conversion to Islam under the death threat has been a common practice of the Sublime Porte together with the violence against Christian communities perpetrated by Muslims from the Ottoman Empire who had different ethnic origins than the Turks but followed the pattern established by the Sublime Porte. For instance, this is the practice of the execution, mainly thorough decapitation of Christian rulers (kings) and

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<sup>160</sup> R.H. Kévorkian, *La Cilicie (1909–1921), les massacres d’Adana au mandat français. Revue D’histoire Arménienne Contemporaine, III*, Paris 1999.

<sup>161</sup> K. Yakut, *Adana isyanı bölgenin kalkındırıl yönelik Osmanlı Hükümeti’nin aldığı önlemler*, Ermeni Araştırmaları Türkiye Kongresi, Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, Ermeni Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, Ankara 2007.

<sup>162</sup> T. Sahara, *What Happened in Adana in April 1909? Conflicting Armenian and Turkish Views*, Baskı Isis, Istanbul 2013, pp. 137–138.

<sup>163</sup> K. Yakut, *Adana isyanı...*, p. 443.



of their heirs because they refused to be converted to Islam: the case of Constantin Brâncoveanu and his sons decapitated in Constantinople in 1714.<sup>164</sup> Same pattern surfaces in the case of the complete destruction of entire communities as the city of Voskopojë (1768–1788) which had over 12,000 houses, being a wealthy city with a large Christian population (many using a Romance language) with a “New Academy” all destroyed by Muslim Albanians, as documented by Peyfuss.<sup>165</sup> In 1970 the former flourishing city of Voskopojë was just a small village with only 500 inhabitants as Peyfuss witnessed while visiting the place. Such patterns of systematic violence across the Ottoman Empire long time before the 1909 events<sup>166</sup>, regardless their initial motives generated *a violent political mindset* that has been repeated and reinforced up to 1915 and beyond. This pattern remains active also in the form of denial and through deep neglect toward the historical vestiges of the victims<sup>167</sup>).

The fact that within nowadays the Internet offers access to previously inaccessible information while denial continues to function and the official acknowledgment of the genocide by many powerful nations remains yet to be completed creates a global risk for what might be called *the global moral capital*. If the moral deficit (could we imagine an International Moral Bank?) is going to increase we should expect that the immoral collective behaviors will increase.

## Discussion

The conflicting representations on the Armenian genocide (1915–1923) cannot be separated from macro-social and historical factors among which the following are highly significant. First, the natural rights of the first, or in any case the prior, settlers, in a given territory that becomes the physical

<sup>164</sup> See Şincai, Xenopol, Iorga, op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> D.M. Peyfuss, *Chestiunea aromânească. Evoluția ei de la origini până la pacea de la București (1913) și poziția Austro-Ungariei*, Editura Enciclopedică, București 1974/1994, p. 16.

<sup>166</sup> F. Göçek Müge, *Ottoman Past...*

<sup>167</sup> S. Iorga, op. cit.

field of atrocities, social injustices, cultural and symbolic violence perpetrated during long periods by the invaders (Turks, Ottomans) against the Armenians who did exist on most part of the land long time before the Turkish invasion. Second, the existence of secret plans to eliminate the Armenian population through killing, deportation, starvation and deprivation of property (individual as well as collective). Third, the use and abuse of various ethnic groups, as the Ottoman Empire had a multi-cultural structure, inclusively at power levels, as executors of the genocidal actions. Fourth, the existence of precedent atrocities, such as those committed in the Ottoman Empire since 1896, against the Armenians that have not been punished by international powers and institutions. Fifth, the explicit use of Armenian Genocide as a societal model for mass violence by other collective actors such as Nazis.

A main limitation of the present study is that despite the fact that the study provides data on a national representative sample, it is not reliable to compare with convenience samples from other countries and among them. This limitation is connected with the fact that the levels of recognition of the Armenian genocide varies across the world from “outright denial” to national and legal recognition. It is quite probable that the accuracy of basic knowledge on genocide might be influenced significantly by the cultural and political context of countries within which the Armenian genocide is nationally recognized versus countries that refuse to do so. To answer to this question national representative samples should be used for the entire spectrum, task that seems rather difficult today. At the same time it is reasonable to assume that while the basic knowledge on the genocide will increase the pressure on political actors to switch from denial to recognition will increase too. The costs of denial<sup>168</sup> should increase as the proportion of common people who have accurate basic knowledge on the genocide will increase.

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<sup>168</sup> R.S. Lazarus, “The Costs and Benefits of Denial”, in: R.S. Lazarus (ed.), *Fifty Years of the Research and Theory of R. S. Lazarus: An Analysis of Historical and Perennial Issues* (pp. 227–251), Erlbaum, Mahwah, N.J. 1998.

From all convenience samples, five stand with the highest accurate historical knowledge of 1915 events: a group of Croatian students, a group of Californian students participants to a course on cultural diversity, and a group of Czech and international researchers in liberal arts from a Czech University, a Bulgarian group, and a group of older professionals from Venezuela. In all cases it is evident that commemoration of the genocide contributed to an increase of basic public knowledge on 1915 events. The open question is: how long this positive impact is going to last? To answer that question, it is necessary to conduct more studies on representative national samples.

Panel studies on representative national samples (including the two sides of the conflict) carried out during 3–10 years are necessary. They could follow other critical social events (besides 100 year commemoration) to identify changes and might be combined with experimental design in which smaller groups might be asked (experimental group) to carry out a self-organized documentation via (books or/and internet) to identify changes of social basic knowledge on genocide to be compared with groups that do not go through such self-organized documentation stimulate by the experimenter.

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## ANNEX

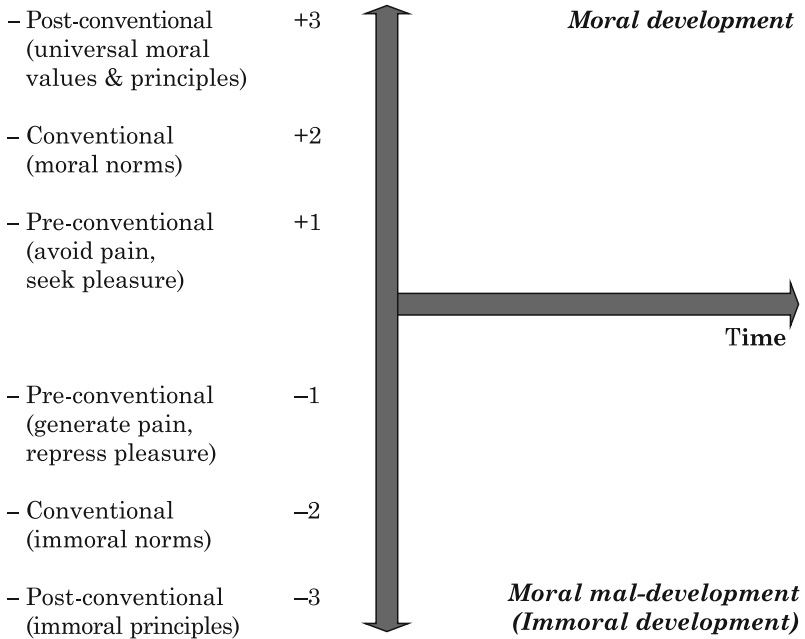


Fig. 1. Representation of the levels moral becoming from one guided by moral principles to one guided by immoral principles

Explanation: The first 3 levels are those identified by Kohlberg. In addition are the 3 negative levels of immoral development: (–1) Pre-conventional immoral level: one generates undeserved pain in others and blocks others attempts to obtain pleasure and achieve personal pleasure and benefits; (–2) Conventional immoral norms; one obeys to existing immoral norms such as ethnocentric superiority, racisms, class discrimination, religious exclusion etc. The mutual expectations are construed in an exclusionist mode (“if we/I do not terminate them, then they will not let us to live”); the respected norms are clearly unjust and legislation is dehumanizing; (–3) At post-conventional level individuals and/or group conceive auto-centric moral principles that promote their perceived well-being at the expenses, including cultural, financial, physical, religious annihilation of specific others.

Table 1. During history some people (groups, nations) have been **victims** to terrible atrocities that are named **genocide**. **Do you know which people has been victim of genocide in 1915?** Look to the following list and ***select just ONE pair that might represent the real answer***. You have a list of ***possible perpetrators and victims***. ***Only one possibility represents the true answer (circle item)***

Perpetrators	Victims	Time 1 – 2015 Prior to 100 years com- memoration (N = 1231)	Time 2 – 2016 Post the 100 years com- memoration (N = 1589)
Albanians	Yugoslavians (Croatians)	1.3	.7
Algerians	Tunisians	0.6	.3
Americans (USA)	Canadians	0.8	.2
Bulgarians	Ottomans (Turks)	1.2	.7
British (UK)	Maori (Noua Zeeland)	0.6	.0
Canadians	Americans (USA)	.2	.2
Hungarians	Slovenians	1.2	1.0
Ottomans (Turks)	Armenians	8.0	8.8
Yugoslavians (Serbs)	Romanians	2.6	2.1
Russians (Tsa- rists)	Georgians	4.7	4.4
Slovenians	Ungarians	1.5	.3
Spanish	Mexicans	0.8	.1
Tajikistanis	Russians (Tsa- rists)	1.2	.6
Tunisian	Algerians	.2	.2
NONE of these groups		17.4	2.9
I do not know		57.5	77.3

Table 1a. Right and wrong answers, by education degree

Education	2015			2016			Both waves		
	Actors	Magnitude	Both answers	Actors	Magnitude	Both answers	Actors	Magnitude	Both answers
Elementary	6%	6%	3%	6%	4%	2%	6%	5%	3%
High school	6%	6%	1%	7%	5%	2%	6%	5%	2%
University	16%	8%	3%	20%	11%	8%	18%	9%	5%

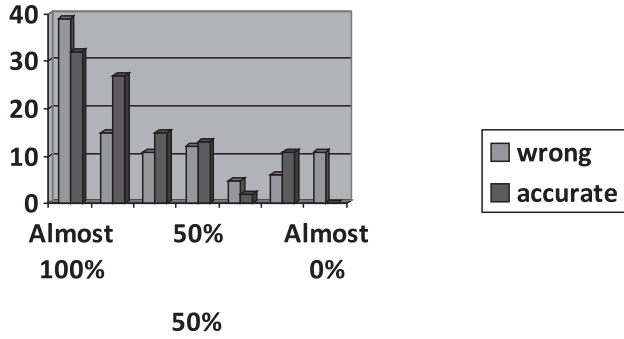
Table 2b. Information sources regarding the 1915 genocide (2016, multiple answers)

Source	%
Books	23
TV	22
School	22
Internet	14
People (friends, colleagues, teachers)	12
Printed Press	6
Radio	2

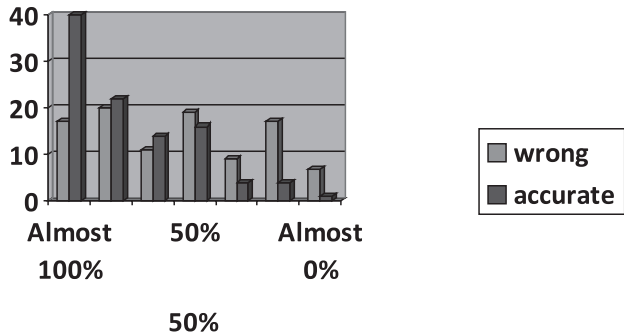
Table 3. Right and wrong answers, both waves

Question	Answers	2015	2016
During history some people (groups, nations) have been victims to terrible atrocities that are named genocide. Do you know which people has been victim of genocide in 1915? Look to the following list and <b>select just ONE pair that might represent the real answer</b> . You have a list of <b>possible perpetrators and victims</b> . <b>Only one possibility represents the true answer (circle it)</b>	<b>Ottomans (Turks) – Armenians (actors)</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
	Other pairs	34.5%	13.9%
	Do not know	57.5%	77.3%
If you did select any answer (1 to 14) try to estimate how many victims have been killed (magnitude).	<b>Approx. 1 milion</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
	<b>Approx. 1,5 milioane</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
	Less	19.6%	10.2%
	More	4.1%	5.0%
	Do not know	68.5%	79.0%
Combined questions (correct answers)	<b>Both (actors &amp; magnitude)</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
	One	10.0%	8.2%
	None	87.8%	88.7%

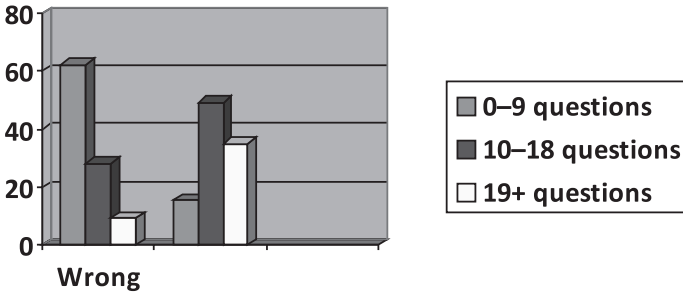
2015: Answer (knowledge) certainty on 1915 genocide



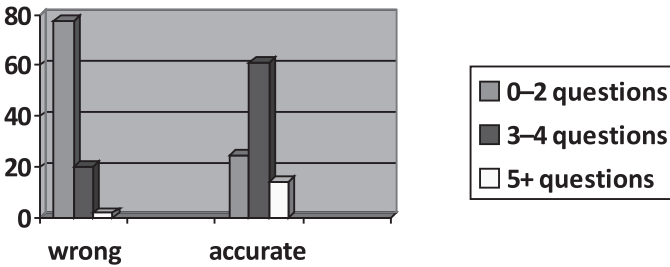
2016: Answer (knowledge) certainty on 1915 genocide



**Questions generated by those who accurately vs wrongly identified the two collective actors of 1915 genocide**



**Questions directed toward specific actors by those who accurately vs. wrongly identified the two collective actors of 1915 genocide**



**Self-directed questions generated by those who accurately vs. wrongly identified the two collective actors of 1915 genocide**

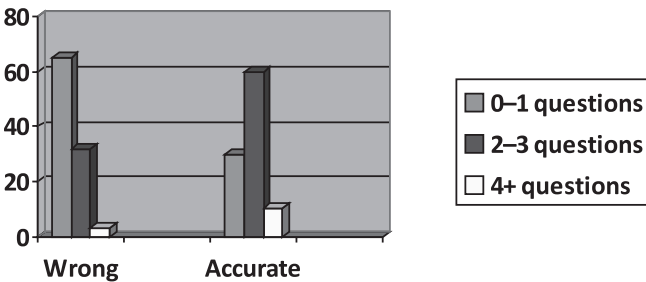


Table 4. Demographic data for the Ottoman Empire and Turkey and the genocide effects on Armenian demographic capital

Year	1915	2017	Dynamics of demographic capital 1915–2017
Turkish population	13,170 000	80,274 604	Real increase 6.09 times
Armenian victims accepted by most Turkish representatives	600,000	Between 50 up to 70,000 Excluding crypto-Armenians	<b>Real decrease:</b> 10 times (using 600 000 as the base number)
Potential growth of Armenian population, at the same rate as the Turkish population	600,000	Between 50 up to 70,000	Theoretical increase up to 3, 600 000. Theoretical decrease of 60 times
Armenian victims according to most documents & Armenian representatives	1,500 000	Between 50 up to 70,000 Excluding crypto-Armenians	<b>Real decrease:</b> 25 times (using 1,500 000 as the base number)
Potential growth of Armenian population, at the same rate as the Turkish population	1,500 000	Between 50 up to 70,000 Excluding crypto-Armenians	Theoretical increase up to 9,000 000. Theoretical decrease of 150 times



## Participatory research on accuracy of knowledge on historical events

### Self-inquiry method worked out by Cătălin Mamali (A)

*Dear participant you are kindly invited to participate to a research focused on the accuracy of historical knowledge especially about tragic events. In contrast with the studies you might have been asked previously to participate this time you are going to have an active interrogative role. This is to say that instead to answer pre-established questions designed by experts this time, you, based on your experience, knowledge, abilities to search are asked to generate, to produce questions. So, please be ready to ask any question that you might consider that it is important. Please go page by page. Do NOT read ahead.*

*Your answers are confidential and will be used only for research aims without any chance to disclose your identity. No money or other material rewards are provided for your free participation. Thank you for your volunteer participation.*

**1. Stage 1 (some 10–20 minutes): Impersonal (general level of self-inquiry, only the universe of discourse (the topic) is presented:** We are attempting to study and understand the series of tragic historical events that did take place since 1915 and the following years in the Ottoman empire. Among these historical events some of historic importance involve the relations between the Turks and Armenians. The goal of the present research is to achieve an accurate representation about these events and to assess also the accuracy of the common knowledge about these events. This is why we need your help and are asking you to generate questions about this historical reality. There are various representations about these historical events that can be ranged roughly between the following two opposite representations: (1) *one that posits that the violent events produced in 1915 and the following years can be characterized as a conflict between the violent uprising of the Armenians against Turkish (Ottoman) rule and the violent response of the Turkish forces for protecting the state (territory) integrity;* (2) *the other posits that the violent events of 1915 are a genocide against the Armenians who did attempt to protect their basic rights as a population that historically did live on those territories long time before the arrival of the Turks. (The order of (1) and (2) is randomly reversed)*

*Please be so kind and consider this difficult problem that concerns the accuracy of historical representations on major past events and think to any questions that are important for understanding this issue. Please, write down any questions that come to your mind because it could be of great help in our efforts to study the accuracy of representations on historical events.”*

## **2. Second stage – that of inter-inquiry that might include a few phases**

### **Stage 2, phase 1**

Please think to the same problem: “We are attempting to study and understand the series of tragic historical events that did take place since 1915 and the following years in the Ottoman empire. Among these historical events some of historic importance involve the relations between the Turks and Armenians. The goal of the present research is to achieve the accurate representations about these events and to assess also the accuracy of the common knowledge about these events. This is why we need your help and are asking you to generate questions about this historical reality. There are various representations about these historical events that can be ranged roughly between the following two opposite representations: (1) one that posits that the violent events produced in 1915 and the following years can be characterized as a conflict between the violent uprising of the Armenians against Turkish (Ottoman) rule and the violent response of the Turkish forces for protecting the state (territory) integrity; (2) the other posits that the violent events of 1915 are a genocide against the Armenians who did attempt to protect their basic rights as a population that historically did live on those territories long time before the arrival of the Turks.”

*However, now we ask you to direct your questions toward any Armenian (reversed Turkish) authorities, representatives, persons that have been involved in 1915 in those events. Please write down any question that comes to your mind and specify to whom it is directed/addressed.*

### **Stage 2, phase 2**

Please think to the same problem: “We are attempting to study and understand the series of tragic historical events that did take place since 1915 and the following years in the Ottoman empire. Among these historical events some of historic importance involve the relations between

the Turks and Armenians. The goal of the present research is to achieve the accurate representations about these events and to assess also the accuracy of the common knowledge about these events. This is why we need your help and are asking you to generate questions about this historical reality. There are various representations about these historical events that can be ranged roughly between the following two opposite representations: (1) one that posits that the violent events produced in 1915 and the following years can be characterized as a conflict between the violent uprising of the Armenians against Turkish (Ottoman) rule and the violent response of the Turkish forces for protecting the state (territory) integrity; (2) the other posits that the violent events of 1915 are a genocide against the Armenians who did attempt to protect their basic rights as a population that historically did live on those territories long time before the arrival of the Turks.”

*However now we ask you to direct your questions toward any Turkish (Ottoman) [reversed Armenian] authorities, representatives, persons that have been involved in 1915 in those events. Please write down any question that comes to your mind and specify to whom it is directed/addressed.*

### **Stages 2, phase 3**

Please think to the same problem: “We are attempting to study and understand the series of tragic historical events that did take place since 1915 and the following years in the Ottoman empire. Among these historical events some of historic importance involve the relations between the Turks and Armenians. The goal of the present research is to achieve the accurate representations about these events and to assess also the accuracy of the common knowledge about these events. This is why we need your help and are asking you to generate questions about this historical reality. There are various representations about these historical events that can be ranged roughly between the following two opposite representations: (1) one that posits that the violent events produced in 1915 and the following years can be characterized as a conflict between the violent uprising of the Armenians against Turkish (Ottoman) rule and the violent response of the Turkish forces for protecting the state (territory) integrity; (2) the other posits that the violent

events of 1915 are a genocide against the Armenians who did attempt to protect their basic rights as a population that historically did live on those territories long time before the arrival of the Turks.”

*However, now we ask you to direct your questions toward any Armenian (Turkish) authorities, representatives, persons that discuss today the 1915 events. Please write down any question that comes to your mind and specify to whom it is directed/addressed.*

### **Stages 2, phase 4**

Please think to the same problem: “We are attempting to study and understand the series of tragic historical events that did take place since 1915 and the following years in the Ottoman empire. Among these historical events some of historic importance involve the relations between the Turks and Armenians. The goal of the present research is to achieve the accurate representations about these events and to assess also the accuracy of the common knowledge about these events. This is why we need your help and are asking you to generate questions about this historical reality. There are various representations about these historical events that can be ranged roughly between the following two opposite representations: (1) one that posits that the violent events produced in 1915 and the following years can be characterized as a conflict between the violent uprising of the Armenians against Turkish (Ottoman) rule and the violent response of the Turkish forces for protecting the state (territory) integrity; (2) the other posits that the violent events of 1915 are a genocide against the Armenians who did attempt to protect their basic rights as a population that historically did live on those territories long time before the arrival of the Turks.”

*However, now we ask you to direct your questions toward any Turkish authorities, representatives, persons that discuss today the 1915 events. Please write down any question that comes to your mind and specify to whom it is directed/addressed.*

### **Stage 3 explicit self-focused inquiry**

Please think to the same problem: “We are attempting to study and understand the series of tragic historical events that did take place since 1915 and the following

years in the Ottoman empire. Among these historical events some of historic importance involve the relations between the Turks and Armenians. The goal of the present research is to achieve the accurate representations about these events and to assess also the accuracy of the common knowledge about these events. This is why we need your help and are asking you to generate questions about this historical reality. There are various representations about these historical events that can be ranged roughly between the following two opposite representations: (1) one that posits that the violent events produced in 1915 and the following years can be characterized as a conflict between the violent uprising of the Armenians against Turkish (Ottoman) rule and the violent response of the Turkish forces for protecting the state (territory) integrity; (2) the other posits that the violent events of 1915 are a genocide against the Armenians who did attempt to protect their basic rights as a population that historically did live on those territories long time before the arrival of the Turks.”

*However, now we ask you to direct your questions to your own self. Express questions that you might feel to be very important from your own viewpoint, knowledge and feelings about the 1915.*

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Additional research data available here:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.18150/repod.0005322>