Archive against Genocide Denialism? Challenges to the Use of Archives in Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation
Altanian, Melanie

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UN	United Nations
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
IAGS	International Association of Genocide Scholars
ICA	International Council on Archives
EU	European Union

Abstract

Considering the value of archives for dealing with the past processes, especially for the establishment of collective memory and identity, this paper discusses the role of archives in situations of conflicting memories such as in the case of the official Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide. A crucial problem of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation are the divergent perceptions of what to consider as proper 'evidence', i.e. as objective, reliable, impartial or trustworthy sources of knowledge in order to prove the Armenian genocide. The aim of this paper is to show how in a general atmosphere of distrust or prejudiced credibility judgments, even technically reliable archival records will be perceived as unreliable and biased, lacking any evidentiary status to factually prove a genocide which is categorically denied. Therefore, this working paper discusses how claims to reliability, objectivity and other similar scientifically and epistemically relevant attributes are understood in archival science as well as memory studies, and emphasizes the problems related to their instrumentalization by political actors within the context of genocide denialism. The Turkish-Armenian context promises many important empirical as well as theoretical insights on the uses and misuses of these attributes, suggesting that measures ought to be taken beforehand to decrease intergroup prejudice and distrust toward the 'other', so that archives can be effective in the truth-finding process.

1
Introduction

The paradigms of transitional justice and dealing with the past have put the role of archives into a new light. Not only are archives documenting massive human rights violations important for processing accountability, but also for the establishment of a collective memory insofar as they provide important sources upon which knowledge can be obtained, experiences remembered and rendered intelligible, ultimately to promote social justice (Harris, 2002; Schwartz and Cook, 2002; Jimerson, 2007; Jimerson, 2009). Memory work may also help in the process of conflict transformation: a shared memory of past experiences of mass violence is a crucial step towards long-term reconciliation between divided communities in the aftermath of genocide (Campbell, 2014; López, 2015). In turn, a conflict in memory is likely to foster new conflict and generally block dealing with the past. For when there is no common understanding of the past, there is no agreement on what it is that should be dealt with and how.

Considering the value of archives for the establishment of meaningful knowledge and memory, this paper discusses the role of archives in situations of conflicting memories such as in Turkish-Armenian relations and how this conflict inherently carries with it divergent perceptions of the reliability of knowledge claimants and the way in which knowledge can contribute to dealing with the past. A central problem within this process is that it involves conflicting perceptions of what can be considered as 'proper evidence', leading to diverging understandings of what counts as objective, reliable, impartial and trustworthy knowledge, respectively 'proof' for considering the Ottoman atrocities towards Armenians as constituting genocide. By identifying archives as well as collective memory as realms of social practices, it will be argued that in a general atmosphere of distrust and prejudice, even appropriate archival records may be perceived as unreliable, lacking evidentiary status to factually ground a genocide that is categorically denied. Therefore, this paper should especially clarify the way in which claims to reliability, objectivity and other similar scientifically and epistemically relevant attributes are used in the context investigated in this paper and emphasize the problems related especially to their misuse by political rhetoric.

The Turkish-Armenian context of genocide denialism promises many important empirical as well as theoretical insights on the uses and misuses of these attributes, since the debate around the Armenian genocide is crucially marked by claims and counterclaims of partiality, which are implicitly related to claims about the reliability of the knowledge and evidence at hand. This asks for a thorough examination of these notions and how they relate to both spheres, archival practices as well as collective memory. It will be argued that the fact that archives may not be considered as 'neutral agents' in the first place asks for prior specific measures that aim at reducing prejudice and distrust towards the 'other', at least if we want academic scholarship to have an effect on conflict transformation.[1]

2
Dealing with the Armenian Genocide

Based on the four pillars of the conceptual framework of dealing with the past that is grounded on the principles against impunity written by United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur Louis Joinet and later up-dated recommendations by Diane Orentlicher[2] (see Sisson, 2010: 15), this chapter will outline how these pillars have been addressed in the aftermath of the massacres, deportations and forced assimilations of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. The examples mentioned for each pillar are selected in order to illustrate how archival records may or may not be of use to the particular example.

2.1 The Right to Justice and the Guarantee of Non-Recurrence

The right to justice and the guarantee of non-recurrence refer to the right of victims to have the perpetrators tried and legally prosecuted, and the need for institutional change in order for a state to deal with, condemn and distance itself from its violent institutional legacy, thereby preventing recurrence of the crime. What happened, then, to the main perpetrators after the genocide, which was followed by the end of the First World War, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey? There were indeed efforts to prosecute Ottoman war criminals and those responsible for "excesses against Armenians", particularly members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, sometimes also referred to as "Young Turks"). The call for prosecutions was taken up by the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that led to the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, a peace agreement between the Triple Entente (Russia, France and Britain) and the Ottoman Empire. The agreement was signed under authorization of the last Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI. and the Ottoman government under Grand Vizier Damad Ferid Pasha. It was especially due to pressure by the former Allied Powers that as early as 14 December 1918, a military tribunal was established by a special decree of the Sultan (Akçam, 2011: 254). The establishment of military tribunals related to the investigation of Armenian massacres and deportations is mentioned particularly in Articles 226 and 230 of the treaty.[3]

Akçam (2011: 251–270) investigates the establishment and progress of such a tribunal, based on various important Ottoman daily newspapers of that time, among them Vakit, Sabah, Ikdam, Tercuman-ı Hakikat, Yeni Gazete, Takvim-i Vekayi, which covered the whole process and published the verdicts, as well as other archival material such as minutes of the Chamber of Notables, transcripts of the Grand National Assembly and sources from the General Directorate of State Archives of the Prime Ministry in Turkey, all located in Ankara. Akçam claims that a thorough and consequent prosecution of those responsible for the atrocities has particularly failed due to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal ("Atatürk") in 1923. While in the year 1920 a few successful trials and sentences took place, the military tribunal came to an end rather quickly especially since it also sentenced members of the National Independence Army (Kuvay-I Milli). These were indeed increasingly gaining support from the

2   UN Commission on Human Rights Final Report on the set of principles against impunity prepared by Louis Joinet, 26 June 1997: http://www.dealingwith-thepast.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/2013_Course/Readings_2013/1_Joinet-Question_of_the_impunity_of_perpetrators_of_HR_Violations.pdf; UN Document E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1, Report of Diane Orentlicher, independent expert to update the Set of principles to combat impunity – Updated Set of principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity.

3   Art. 226 states that "[t]he Turkish Government recognises the right of the Allied Powers to bring before military tribunals persons accused of having committed acts in violation of the laws and customs of war. Such persons shall, if found guilty, be sentenced to punishments laid down by law [...]," and Art. 230 states that "[t]he Turkish Government undertakes to hand over to the Allied Powers the persons whose surrender may be required by the latter as being responsible for the massacres committed during the continuance of the state of war on territory which formed part of the Turkish Empire on August 1, 1914. [...]"

population and were obviously against the decisions of the Sultan, especially with regard to his cooperation with the Allied powers. The military tribunal thus not only sentenced some of those responsible for crimes against Armenians and other non-Muslims. Further death sentences were handed down to Mustafa Kemal himself, as well as hundred defendants of the nationalist movement and sixteen of those attempting to assassinate the Grand Vizier (Ibid: 261). This obviously heightened the tensions between the nationalist movement in Eastern Turkey and the Istanbul Sultanate. The demands for a re-organization of the tribunals rose high, leading to the resignation of Grand Vizier Damad Ferit Pasha's cabinet on 17 October 1920 and his replacement. In order to establish peaceful relations with the nationalist movement in Ankara, efforts were made "to invalidate the prosecutions that had taken place during the Damad Ferit Pasha regime" (Ibid: 262). With the final takeover of Istanbul by the Ankara national government on 6 November 1922, the tribunals even ended entirely (Ibid: 265). The decisions of the tribunals were considered null and void by the Ankara National Assembly even before, but it was finally decided on 31 March 1923 that "all those imprisoned by decision from both civil and military courts were granted a general amnesty" (Ibid.). With the rise of the nationalist movement – or the "national liberation movement" – under Mustafa Kemal, the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres were perceived as a plan by the Allies to divide the Turkish Empire and obviously considered a threat to their nationalist objectives, since it indeed also entailed the drawing of new borders and autonomous regions for Kurds as well as Armenians. As a result, whoever supported the treaty was considered as a national traitor. The treaty would have covered many important provisions for victims of the massacres and deportations, including the responsibility of the Turkish government to undertake necessary steps to ensure their re-integration into society, acknowledgment of their equal civil, cultural and political rights.

Therefore, the treaty was supposed to provide a solution to the problem of institutional discrimination by granting Armenians and other non-Turks (or non-Muslims)[4] full civil and political rights, autonomy and independence in their cultural and religious expression. Article 145 of the treaty even foresaw that "within a period of two years from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Turkish Government will submit to the Allied Powers a scheme for the organization of an electoral system based on the principle of proportional representation of racial minorities." It can thus be considered as one of the first manifestations of the growing role of international protection of human rights, and more particularly a recognition of the special protection of national minorities (see Schabas, 2000: 16). However, because of the overthrow of the Sultanate in Istanbul, the Treaty of Sèvres was never ratified. With the "war of liberation", Mustafa Kemal intended the ultimate liberation from the control of the Allied powers as well as the Sultanate, and the foundation of an independent Turkish Republic. This also meant the defeat of any territorial demands on behalf of Kurds or Armenians, as it was foreseen in the Treaty of Sèvres: For example, Art. 62–64 demanded the drafting of a scheme of "local autonomy" for predominantly Kurdish areas and the possibility for Kurds to demand independence within one year from coming into force of the Treaty.

4   The genocide committed under the Young Turk regime constitutes a hybrid form: The modus operandi was in the tradition of a Muslim Jihad in which conquest, subjugation and forced conversions of so-called infidels was met with plunder and confiscation. This included as victims especially Armenians, Assyrians and Pontic Greeks. Most researchers, however, suggest that the genocide was primarily nationalistically motivated, aimed at the establishment of a unified nation state. See Hofmann, forthcoming 2017. This also explains why Alevi and Kurdish people were subsequently targeted as threats to national unity and subjected to ethnic discrimination and massacres due to their claim for autonomous rule – a conflict that persists to this day.

Art. 88–93 demanded from Turkey to recognize Armenia as an independent state, suggesting a frontier which granted Armenians more territory than was later determined by the Lausanne Treaty.

In 1922, after the Turkish victory in the Greco-Turkish war in Smyrna – where tens of thousands Greeks and Armenians were massacred – the Ankara government was recognized by the Allied Powers, and the Treaty of Sèvres was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne, which created and recognized the sovereignty of the Turkish state within the borders that remained mostly the same until today.[5] While the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923 also recognizes in its Articles 37–45 the protection and rights of minorities[6], other elements of the Treaty of Sèvres, such as military tribunals to adjudicate war crimes, and thus the recognition of massacres and deportations were no longer an issue. As can be seen from the preamble of the treaty, its main aim was now to "re-establish the relations of friendship and commerce," based on the consideration "that these relations must be based on respect for the independence and sovereignty of States." In terms of transitional justice, this was the death-knell.

All in all, the Ottoman courts-martial, active over nearly three years (1919–1922), proved to be unsatisfying at least with regard to punitive justice. Impunity became a reward for those perpetrators "who embraced the emerging nationalist movement and joined its ranks" (Akçam and Dadrian, 2011: 1). While some perpetrators were prosecuted and sentenced to death, the fact that these sentences were in retrospect considered null and void by the newly established government sent a strong signal to the remaining members of the Committee of Union and Progress[7] as well as nationalists supporting the new government. However, what the tribunals indeed achieved was to "assemble and classify a mass of documentary evidence affording the establishment of the facts of a centrally organized mass murder enacted against the Ottoman Empire's Armenian population" (Ibid: 2). These documents prove to be invaluable to historical scholarship especially because of the procedure of document verification that was part of the legal-criminal process:

> "First, [..] every one of them was examined and authenticated by competent officials, most of them holdover partisans of the defamed CUP regime attached to the Ministries of Justice and Interior; they then would affix on top or at the bottom of each document the formula 'It conforms to the original'. Second, in nearly all cases the defendants were asked to examine the documents bearing their signatures and verify their authenticity." (Dadrian, 2011: 16)

Despite these initial efforts to condemn and prosecute the CUP leaders, Ankara declared a general pardon for those who had been convicted by the courts-martial as well as by municipal criminal courts and ended all further efforts to bring about justice and reconciliation. In subsequent years, Kemalists even celebrated and memorialized them as "national martyrs" (Dadrian, 2011: 105). Considering the aforementioned political tensions within the shattered

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5   Kemalist nationalists continued to massacre Christians in the course of their "liberation war". For an overview of the victims during that time, see Rummel (1997) Statistics of Turkish Democide: Estimates, Sources, Calculations, Table 5.1A, Lines 316–358. Available at http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/SOD.TAB5.1A.GIF (last accessed 28 April 2016).

6   Ekmekçioğlu (2014) argues, however, that these minority protection clauses paradoxically entrenched the divisions that had already been formed in the Ottoman Empire during the preceding violent decades.

7   Some of the main perpetrators escaped to Germany, e.g. the Ottoman interior minister Talât Pasha, later assassinated in Berlin by Soghomon Tehlirian. Germany's refusal to deliver those who were sentenced for their crimes by the Ottoman military tribunals and ceasing international interest to deal with the Ottoman crimes led to a series of vigilante executions of former perpetrators (and later also Turkish diplomats), planned and carried out by a group of Armenian militants.

Ottoman Empire, standing between the control of the Allies and its own nationalist movement, the issue of the massacres and deportations was quickly buried after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne. In fact, just as the National Assembly in Ankara was informed about the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, it declared those signing the treaty as traitors, a crime that was subject to death penalty under Turkish law at that time. Thus, demands for adequate reparations or any acknowledgement of the atrocities committed were anything but recognized in the official narrative of the foundation of Turkey.

According to our present-day understanding of how to properly deal with past crimes against humanity and genocide, the punishment of some of the main perpetrators is certainly not enough to do justice and to promote reconciliation between the groups within society anyway. The principles against impunity developed by Joinet recognize in relation to the right to know a state obligation to preserve memory, which is intergenerationally transmitted and becomes part of the cultural heritage of the affected group. However, the creation of a new Turkish identity came with an official national history where the atrocities against Armenians and other Christian minorities are considered as necessary means to defend the empire from 'internal enemies' in the course of a 'liberation war'. This portrayal of Armenians as 'national traitors' mobilized and supported by Russia – thus legitimizing their annihilation and eviction from their homeland, while at the same time denying a genocidal intent behind the atrocities – has consequences until this day. Even a century later and in the context of the renewed aggressions towards Kurds, the issue of the Kurdish struggle for autonomy is brought into relation with Armenians.[8] Even though there is a relation in the sense that members of both groups have demanded their right to self-determination and organized political movements, in the heads of generations after the genocide, Armenians are still the projection surface of everything that threatens the alleged unity of the Turkish nation.[9]

2.2 The Right to Reparations and the Right to Know

The Treaty of Sèvres had foreseen reparations for "Turkish subjects of non-Turkish race" and called for the Turkish government to assist in the search for and deliverance of disappeared persons. For example, Article 142 of the treaty stressed that the enforced conversions to Islam were invalid, providing them the right to keep and live out their own religion. It further states:

> "[...] In order to repair so far as possible the wrongs inflicted on individuals in the course of the massacres perpetrated in Turkey during the war, the Turkish Government undertakes to afford all the assistance in its power or in that of the Turkish authorities in the search for and deliverance of all persons, of whatever race or religion, who have disappeared, been carried off, interned or placed in captivity since November 1, 1914. [...]"

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8 See article in Al-Monitor: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/10/turkey-armenian-kurds-minorities-forced-to-be-turkish.html#; in The Armenian Weekly: http://armenianweekly.com/2016/01/07/the-implications-of-turkeys-war/; as well as a posting from 22 December 2015 by Human Rights Watch mentioning Turkish police shouting "Armenian bastards" during the curfew in Cizre: https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/22/turkey-mounting-security-operation-deaths (last accessed 8 February 2016).

9 Only recently, a Turkish-Armenian journalist was fined because he called the mayor of Ankara an "Armenian". See article in Hurriyet: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/armenian-origin-columnist-fined-for-insulting-ankara-mayor.aspx?pageID=238&nID=92174&NewsCatID=339 (last accessed 8 February 2016).

With regard to returning the illegally seized properties of the deported, Article 144 states:

> "The Turkish Government recognises the injustice of the law of 1915 relating to Abandoned Properties (Emval-i-Metroukeh), and of the supplementary provisions thereof, and declares them to be null and void, in the past as in the future.
>
> The Turkish Government solemnly undertakes to facilitate to the greatest possible extent the return to their homes and re-establishment in their businesses of the Turkish subjects of non-Turkish race who have been forcibly driven from their homes by fear of massacre or any other form of pressure since January 1, 1914. It recognises that any immovable or movable property of the said Turkish subjects or of the communities to which they belong, which can be recovered, must be restored to them as soon as possible, in whatever hands it may be found. [...]"

The question of what should happen to the confiscated Armenian property is still a central one. In 2012, a research project of the Hrant Dink Foundation in Istanbul published a monumental work on the history and present status of the properties that once belonged to the Armenian charitable foundations in Istanbul – properties that were seized by the Turkish government during the last decades. The research is based mainly on the archives of Hrant Dink, Agos newspaper, Advocate Diran Bakar and Armenian foundations. The project, which was published as a book entitled "The 2012 Declaration: The Seized Properties of Armenian Foundations in Istanbul", includes digital copies of documents from these archives.[10] Nevertheless, despite many recent efforts to identify Armenian property and demands for reparations on behalf of descendants, Armenian organizations and political or religious institutions, actual reparations have remained practically inexistent – especially when addressed at Turkey.[11] However, the number of lawsuits against Turkey has increased, especially with regard to the return of confiscated properties. The most recent case that gained international attention was the Armenian Church's lawsuit to demand the return of the Armenian spiritual center in Sis.[12]

When it comes to such reparation efforts, archival records take on a crucial role. However, the issue of reparations in contexts of transitional justice involves not only the returning of, or compensation for, confiscated or seized properties to particular individuals and institutions. There are other losses that need to be addressed and repaired, which can be labelled 'symbolic' or 'societal forms' of reparations. Among those, we may consider memorials, monuments or museums that have been established in order to provide loci of remembrance and education in the public domain, but also official apologies. The Armenian National Institute has currently identified 200 memorials and monuments in 32 countries dedicated to the memory of the Armenian genocide.[13] Certainly, attempts to erect monuments or memorials in relation to the Armenian genocide have not always remained uncriticized by Turkey.[14] One recent example from Switzerland is the Turkish objection against the attempt

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10 See homepage of the project at http://istanbulermenivakiflari.org/.

11 Some lawsuits against financial institutions have been successful, such as for example a lawsuit against the New York Life Insurance Company in 2004 or the French insurance company AXA in 2005.

12 See http://www.agos.com.tr/en/article/17204/submission-to-echr-for-the-return-of-sis-catholicosate (last accessed 20 December 2016)

13 Database available under http://www.armenian-genocide.org/memorials.html

14 For a very insightful discussion of the political discourses around memory and monuments in Turkey, illustrated with the example of Aksoy's "Monument of Humanity", see Erbal, 2016.

to erect a memorial in Geneva.[15] After initial plans to erect the memorial in the old town of Geneva in 2011 were silenced by a Turkish intervention to the Geneva government and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, a new location was discussed for the memorial, namely the Ariana Parc, where the Palais de Nations is located. This fostered even more criticism by the Turkish authorities. According to Celâl Bayar, president of the association of Turkish unions in the Romandie, the new location was "a provocation". He claimed that it violates UN principles, and that there was no genocide against Armenians in the sense of the definition of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.[16] In addition, he considered the memorial as Turcophobic, contending that such a controversial topic had to be dealt with in an open academic debate and not by a one-sided view by one party.[17] This mirrors the decades old official stance of Turkey towards the Armenian genocide, which has ever since turned a blind eye on the already existing open, international and serious academic work that has been conducted by historians and other scholars, as well as the academic consensus established among genocide scholars with regard to the Armenian genocide.[18] However, in the case of the Geneva memorial, the Geneva city council eventually gave in to the Turkish demands and the project has not been realized since.

This recent case of a failed attempt of symbolic reparation through memorialization shows the continuing delicate situation and meandering between steps towards truth and reconciliation through memorialization, and denial, where any relation to the Armenian genocide is considered as treason and provocation, feeding the idea that it is still a debatable question. This brings us to the next pillar of dealing with the past, namely the right to know, which involves the idea that crimes ought to be known and recognized. This is a first crucial step to implement further mechanisms of transitional justice. To truly recognize the genocide is to recognize the fact that the victim group and their descendants have a right to keep the injustice in their cultural memory, as a source upon which they can make sense of their own history and identity which is bound up with their belonging to the group. These considerations are also mirrored by the Joinet principles to combat impunity, which declare that besides the victim's right to know, society as a whole has both a right to truth and a duty to preserve memory.[19] The right to know is thus also a collective right, for

> "[a] people's knowledge of the history of its oppression is part of its heritage and, as such, must be ensured by appropriate measures in fulfilment of the State's duty to preserve archives and other evidence concerning violations of human rights and humanitarian law and to facilitate knowledge of those violations. Such measures shall be aimed at preserving the collective memory from extinction and, in particular, at guarding against the development of revisionist and negationist arguments." [20]

Before taking a closer look at the role of archives within this process, a conceptual clarification with regard to the term 'collective memory' is called for.

15 See newspaper article of the Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) from 17 June 2016: http://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/aktuelle-themen/armenien-denkmal-ld.89652 (last accessed 20 December 2016).

16 See NZZ article from 8 May 2013: http://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/tuerkei-will-gedenkstaette-in-genf-verhin-dern-1.18077908. Own translation. The quotations can be derived from a statement by Bayar himself in his article from 3 March 2015 in Le Temps: https://www.letemps.ch/opinions/2015/03/03/memorial-armenien-geneve-attitude-responsable-didier-burkhalter (both last accessed 08 February 2016).

17 Ibid.

18 Sometimes, it is claimed that the consensus is on behalf of "Western academics". However, this is itself a narrow view that feeds a prejudiced narrative, since there have also been many Turkish intellectuals speaking out for genocide recognition.

19 Supra fn 2

20 Ibid., page 7

3
Memory as Social Construct

Memory – whether it is individual or collective memory – is dynamic because it involves both actual experiences and events as well as considerations about what meaning and significance they should have for our present and future lives. It is especially the selective nature of what to remember and the determination of its significance that allows the process of memory construction to be adaptive and open to change. However, acknowledging memory as subjectively (or socially) reconstructive does not mean that it is per definition unreliable and that the notion of truth is inapplicable. The next sections outline the general idea of collective memory as a social construct, and introduce accuracy and integrity as virtues of remembering by which we can approach the idea of "successful" memory, in the sense of memory being a truthful understanding of the past, thereby becoming responsible (viz. trustworthy) rememberers.

3.1 The Sociality of Memory

A socially dependent account of memory suggests that memory is only possible through reference points within social relations, and that precise, localized and dated memories are only made possible in the context of a social memory (see Halbwachs, 1985). In trying to apply individual psychological mechanisms of remembering to the collective realm, Assmann (2009: 134) identifies two spheres or types of memory: Storage memory functions as knowledge that is sunk in the background and is currently not addressed. Functional memory, in the foreground, is "inhabited memory" that is acquired, group-based, selective, normative and future-oriented. The unstructured, unrelated elements of the storage memory enter the functional memory as composed, constructed and connected. As an example of "uninhabited memory", thus storage memory, Assmann (Ibid.) considers historical sciences which she characterizes as "second grade" memory, the memory of memories, which incorporates whatever has lost its vital reference to the present. In order for stored or uninhabited memory to unfold its orienting strength, its elements have to be acquired, that is, chosen by importance, made accessible and be given a certain meaning. Functional memory is thus selective, which is why it always realizes only a part of possible memory content. According to Halbwachs, it is this conversion from neutral elements of memory into meaningful ones, whereby memory turns into collective memory (Assmann, 2009: 135, with reference to Halbwachs, 1985: 138f.). However, what does not fit into a meaningful configuration or narrative is not forgotten: it remains within the storage memory and offers the background for functional memory and further configurations, new connections and changes in conscious memory.[21]

     Collective agents such as states or nations constitute themselves through a functional memory, in that they pursue a specific narrative of the past. Among the different uses of functional memory are legitimation, delegitimation and distinction (Ibid: 138). Legitimation is the main concern of official or political memory. Legitimizing political memory has not only a retrospective, but also a prospective side: the rulers do not only want to appropriate the past as the origins of their rule, but want to be remembered, their deeds to be archived and memorialized. Such official memory is dependent on censorship

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21 Assmann (2009: 136f.) argues that storage memory as 'neutral' knowledge does not create meaning by itself or grounds any values, but it can build the either stabilizing or corrective background for such operations.

and artificial animation, for it only endures as long as the power that it supports endures. However, it also creates an unofficial counter-memory, which is a critically subversive functional memory. This leads us to the function of delegitimation: Such counter-memory, most obviously illustrated by the memory of those defeated, cannot be erased. In fact, the more the victors exclude or deliberately oppress and reject other voices, such as those of the defeated, of victims in general, oppressed minorities or women, the more their memory will be solidified. The symbol of the official memory will at the same time become the symbol of a counter-memory, and can be understood as the delegitimization of power structures, which are experienced as oppressive. It is just as political as official memory, since both are concerned with the legitimacy (respectively, illegitimacy) of power.

A further usage of cultural memory is distinction, i.e. symbolic expressions that serve to profile a collective identity. Within secular, nationalist movements, it is the reconstruction or invention of shared traditions that creates identity for the nation as a new political agent. This may also create responsibilities on behalf of citizens to remember their history and traditions. The establishment of a new national identity often comes with a selective view of its past that emphasizes and mythologizes one's own victimhood and, at the same time, instances of victory. The aim of establishing a national identity through shared collective memory is to promote a sense of togetherness and to provide cues for identification for members of the group, eventually to ensure a kind of 'internal stability'. Therefore, what is selected and maintained in the collective memory is reconstructed in a way so that members can sympathize with their membership and may consider the group as legitimate. However, what one official memory may do is to illegitimately exclude any opposed memory from the realm of accurate and reliable memory activity. It excludes the people holding up the counter-memory from the community of 'good rememberers', rejecting them as unreliable, or simply unworthy of having a voice that counts. Certainly, a rejection of counter-memories can be either based on valid or bad (viz. illegitimate or unethical) reasons. Particularly because of the normative relevance of memory, e.g. the important role it plays in the transfer of valuable knowledge, in constituting identity and processing trauma in the aftermath of atrocities, one can also assume there to be norms and standards which one ought to adhere to when constructing memory. It ought to be possible to accept memory to be reconstructive or functional in the sense described above, while at the same time being epistemically successful in the sense that there are good reasons to remember particular things in a particular way in order to approach the truth.

3.2 'Good Remembering': Norms and Standards for Successful Memory

An important contribution to the discussion of the social dimension of memory, or remembering as a practice of identification and its relation to truth has been made by Sue Campbell, who especially investigates the ethical and social epistemological implications of certain memory practices. The "reconstructivist model" of memory, as she claims, "resulted in widespread scepticism concerning the reliability of memory and the suggestibility of rememberers" (Campbell, 2014: xv). Campbell draws her considerations from the context of the "false memory debates" during the 1980s and 1990s, where "thousands of women were thought to have mis-remembered or confabulated a history of child sexual abuse under the influence of their therapists – the view prevailed that the sociality of memory distorts and contaminates memories" (Ibid.). In maintaining that memory is inherently relational and thus inevitably influenced by others and ourselves, Campbell urges us to rather look at ways in which such influence may either facilitate 'good remembering' or distort memory, and points out that the sociality of memory is no contradiction to its status as true or accurate. For memory to be successful (rather than distorted) means to remember in ways that aim at truth and are guided by the virtues of accuracy and integrity. An accurate recollection involves the concern to recall the facts, but also "to get their significance right" (Ibid: xvii). This claim carries, thus, an inherently ethical dimension. With regard to the distinction between successful and distorted memory, the norm of integrity comes into play, which is

> "a trait in virtue of which self-consciously fallible rememberers take a stand for their own account of the past, often in the face of compelling dominant narratives that circulate in communities with which they identify [...] integrity is a needed component of our faithfulness to the past; but any concern with integrity is also a concern with selves and their identities." (Ibid.)

As the idea of functional memory implies, whenever we speak of cultural memory, the process of memory creation serves a certain purpose. The fact that it may serve a political purpose does not per se discharge its truthfulness. There is nothing inherently unreliable or bad about political memory, for truth does not easily give way in identity projects. Rather, truth is crucial to our integrity and projects of self-constitution (Ibid: 66). We first have to acknowledge that 'responsible rememberers' care about truth, otherwise we cannot "credit particular individuals with caring about self-knowledge or integrity" (Ibid: 67). The case of the "false memory debates" particularly shows a failure of such credit, where women's care about truth was categorically denied. Such a failure of due credibility presents "a kind of epistemic injustice: 'the injustice of having [...] significant area[s] of one's own experience obscured from collective understanding' and from self-understanding" (Campbell, 2014: 68, with reference to Fricker, 2006: 100). Until we acknowledge the importance of truth in people's projects of self-knowledge and self-constitution, we may in fact not be able to identify injustices in the realm of our memory practices,

where some groups are oppressed with regard to their credibility, or capacity of accurate memory. The moral risks of such epistemic injustice for oppressed groups include "the risk of developing narrative resources that oversimplify the past and compromise the integrity of self-constitution" (Ibid: 68). Unless we believe that those who are oppressed are trying to get at the truth of their experience, "we cannot even get a grip on this distinctive kind of injustice" (Ibid.). There are countless cases in which memory is challenged in political contexts, also challenges that constitute a morally harmless, even desirable epistemic enterprise. However, in the context of Armenian genocide denialism we can observe particularly disrespectful challenges to memory that are "meant to undermine the credibility of those who testify to historic harms and thus disenfranchise their voices from participation in the collective endeavour of giving meaning to the past" (Ibid: 167). Surely, memory may fail to be truthful. The crucial point made here is that it is an ethical responsibility to learn "to share memory in ways that are respectful, reflective, and appropriately challenging [...] to distinguish respectful from disrespectful challenge, and that we make ourselves accountable for doing so" (Ibid.).

3.3 "The Armenian Question": Disrespectful Challenges to Memory and Disrespecting Rememberers

In the context of the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide, there are various reasons for the exclusion of voices that support the recognition of the genocide, as well as different strategies of genocide denial. Recognition of the genocide would not only mean admitting guilt and accountability, but also admitting that Turkish society had lived under a lie since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Kieser et al. (2015: 5) are convinced that the most important reason for Turkey's inability to accept culpability for the Armenian genocide is "the centrality of the Armenian massacres for the formation of the Turkish nation-state", where "any move toward acknowledging culpability will put the very foundations of the Turkish nation-state at risk and will lead to its steady demise". But the Turkish state has meanwhile not only a reactive attitude towards claims for genocide recognition. Rather, it has become very proactive in denialism through the institutionalization and professionalization of denial. This is done, for example, through the support of scientific research that tries to trivialize and relativize the genocide by telling 'the other side of the story'. Such works often lead to exculpating accounts of the atrocities. Another strategy is to divert attention from the remembrance of the Armenian genocide by creating other occasions for remembrance. For example, on the centennial of the Armenian genocide, the Gallipoli anniversary was moved from April 25 to April 24. In 2016, skywritings appeared above New York City on April 21 with slogans like "How happy is the one who says I am a Turk", a phrase coined by Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, as well as "101 years of geno-lie", "Truth = Peace," and "Fact check Armenia," which refers to a website aimed at countering alleged "Armenian misinformation". They also

engaged in a widespread ad campaign.[22] Further, there was a rally to "urge reconciliation on 1915 events" taking place on April 24, 2016 in Washington, D.C., which was rather a denialist protest march covered up as a "peace and solidarity" march.[23] In regard to the latter, it needs to be emphasized that urging reconciliation and peace in contexts of genocide denialism is a further tactic by denialists to undermine the integrity of the genocide victims and their descendants, since it implies that it is their fault that the conflict persists.

So while there are various reasons why Turkey still refuses to take responsibility for the genocide, and while there are many strategies to proactively deny the genocide, they usually consist in disrespectful challenges to memory, in the sense that Armenians are rejected from the community of 'good rememberers'. The emphasis on truth, facts and reliability either renders Armenians incapable of 'successful remembering,' or as opportunistic and ill willed towards Turks by propagating what they themselves allegedly know is a lie. Consequently, prejudices have to be considered as well when it comes to the discourse around the Armenian genocide. However, what does the role of prejudice mean for historians and other researchers, and the archives they work with? The Armenian genocide is the second most researched genocide after the Holocaust, and there is not only a consensus among historians, but also among genocide scholars (including legal scholars) that the crimes can be qualified as genocide.[24] These conditions leave one to wonder what we may do to counter such prejudiced perceptions about the credibility of 'the other'. If Turkish organizations continuously shout the slogan "let history decide" and claim that the real facts have not yet been established, can archives eventually help to set the records straight? Can archives as well as historians working with them be considered as the impartial and objective resort from this never-ending claim for facts and the truth?

22 See http://armenianweekly.com/2016/04/22/genocide-denial-ads/ (last accessed 20 December 2016).

23 The rally was organized by the Turkish American National Steering Committee, formed in March 2015. It was primarily advertised as a peace and solidarity walk for Turkey in its efforts to support Syrian refugees and for the achievement of security and stability in the Middle East. However, it has afterwards been misused to claim support for their denialist campaign: http://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2016/04/23/thousands-of-turks-people-from-other-nations-march-in-washington-dc-to-let-history-decide (last accessed 20 December 2016).

24 Even Raphael Lemkin referred to it as a case of genocide as he understood the term. See panel discussion on CBS from February 13, 1949: https://vimeo.com/125514772. See also the International Association of Genocide Scholars' (IAGS) Open Letter Concerning Historians Who Deny the Armenian Genocide, 1 October 2006, as well as IAGS Armenian Genocide Resolution, unanimously passed 13 June 1997, both available at: http://www.genocidescholars.org/resources/resolutions

4
Setting the Records Straight: Archives as Guardians of Impartial and Objective Historical Truth?

The problem with considering archives as the guardians of a kind of 'objective truth' about the past is that archival documents are also selected and interpreted according to their significance for a certain present purpose – either according to the institutional regulations or by the archivists working with the documents. To put information of archives into a narrative needs the active engagement of people who give meaning to the information provided by archives. However, reliance on human action does not just come about when the archives are used, but when they are created as well. While documentary evidence may help to verify, support or challenge testimonial evidence, to use it as evidence requires an assessment of authenticity and reliability with regard to the conditions under which they were created and preserved. What, then, could set the records straight? Perhaps the establishment of a "joint historical commission" of Turkish, Armenian and international historians, as has continuously been proposed by Turkish president Erdoğan?[25] Who will decide upon the particular historians involved in this commission?[26] And on the other hand, what are the criteria or rules that help in the assessment of archival records as authentic and reliable, so that they can be said to 'represent the truth'? These issues need to be clarified in order to see what role archives play in the establishment of an accurate and shared assessment of the past.

Besides the state archives as the key source of information about the actions of the state, further important archival sources include archives of other governments, intergovernmental bodies, private sector institutions as well as papers of individuals (Peterson, 2010: 123). However, the problems involved in accessing the archives of other governments have not only to do with their physical or digital availability or the restricted access to documents, but also with language barriers (see Akçam and Dadrian, 2011: 4). Records of governments other than the country in which the violations happened are also relevant, such as the official archives of the allied powers France, Britain and Russia, the United States, as well as the Central Powers Germany and Austria-Hungary as the main wartime allies of the Ottoman Empire. Since Armenia belonged to the Russian Empire following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (with a short period of independence, the First Republic of Armenia, from 1918–1920), it can be assumed that some historically relevant documents can be found in Russian state archives. Further potentially relevant sources are archives held by the Armenian Apostolic Church, the political and spiritual leader of Armenians within the Empire; archives containing repositories from the Dashnak Party (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) as well as the First Republic of Armenia, located in Boston; the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem; and the Catholicoscate in Etchmiadzin, Armenia. Another important source are the Zoryan Institute archives, where families of Armenian survivors deposited their private documents from the 1980s on.[27] Such personal records have become more and more important not only for scientific research, but for dealing with the past in general.

The previous lack of attention to testimonies of victims and survivors in historical research with regard to the Armenian genocide has, for example, been noted by Alexandra Garbarini. She has stressed that scholarly work,

25 See e.g. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-prime-minister-mr_-recep-tayyip-erdo%C4%9Fan-published-a-message-on-the-events-of-1915_-23-april-2014.en.mfa (last accessed 26 April 2016).

26 The political demand of such a historical commission is an illustrative example of the ignorance so pertinent in genocide denialism, for it ignores the many historians and other academic scholars that have already established 'the facts' as well as the normative framework supporting an assessment of genocide in an accurate way.

27 See http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/collections.html. The Zoryan Institute undertook a major oral history program in 1983.

especially the work of historians, has until a few decades ago too narrowly focused on official documents, leaving equally valuable testimonies of victims and survivors largely untouched. She illustrates the underlying problem of this phenomenon especially with the example of Bryce and Toynbee's volume The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915–1916, pointing to a problematic perception of victims as categorically unreliable testifiers:

> "On the one hand, incorporating victim testimony in the composition of [this document volume] proved essential in order to inform, convince, and awaken sympathy among readers. On the other hand, the editors assumed that they would be unable to overcome their readers' doubt and mistrust, their refusal even, to accept this type of source as valid and believable documentation." (Garbarini, 2015: 150)

This was due to the perception that any Armenian source would lack the 'neutrality' necessary to serve as a reliable source in terms of representing the facts of what happened. As Garbarini (2015: 125) notes,

> "the fact that they had experienced violence directly did not qualify them to be the privileged communicators of their experiences. On the contrary, their personal experiences rendered their testimony suspect because it made them more likely to fabricate stories in order to advance their political, emotional, or financial interests."

What can be observed here is a prejudice towards the victims, who are categorically rejected from the realm of reliable epistemic agents. Garbarini however points to the hypocrisy of such a belief that the addition of apparently 'neutral' sources would compensate for the perceived lack of unreliability of victim testimony, since in their own eyewitness accounts, missionaries, doctors, nurses, teachers, and even consuls "detail their feelings of terror, sorrow, helplessness, and anger, including avowals of their disgust for Turks and for Muslims in general" (Ibid: 127). Apparently, the "suffering and emotional investments of so-called 'neutral' eyewitnesses [...] had no bearing and only their political/national/ethnic/religious group belonging informed the writing and the reading of their testimonies" (Ibid.).

 Garbarini and Adjemian (2015: 18) note that is only since the beginning of the 1990s that historians "came to consider testimonies produced by victims and survivors of the massacres and deportations as sources worthy of serious scholarly interest." It can be assumed that it was due to the persistent genocide denialism that historians have hesitated to base "histori-cally objective analysis on sources that, by their provenance alone, appeared to be tainted by the subjectivity of the victims and the experiences they lived through" (Ibid.). This has eventually led to historians' focusing on proving the intention of the perpetrators and the organized character of the killings, in order to eventually provide the legal elements for a qualification of the facts as genocide. But to focus mainly on official archives means to restrict analysis to the more general nature of the political-military circumstances and the

conduct of the genocide, while "[i]t is the study of victim testimony, ultimately, that has made an essential contribution to establishing concrete knowledge of the implementation of Turkish policies in specific localities" (Ibid.). To categorically exclude victim testimony from the realm of reliable knowledge leads to a loss of valuable knowledge that would give more insights into the micro-level experience of the destruction of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, it is fortunate that oral history has become an important tool for historical research nowadays. Certainly, the most reliable result can be achieved in combining, respectively comparing information from different sources. In criminal law this is also referred to as 'corroboration' of evidence emanating from numerous sources in order to support a proposition already supported by some initial evidence. In this case, to complement victim testimony with other sources renders a more thorough picture of past events. However, to qualify the credibility of the various sources by reference to the 'neutrality' of the record creator (or the testifier) poses not only an ethical, but also conceptual problem: this assumed juxtaposition between 'neutral' records versus victims' testimonies, where the latter are judged as biased and unreliable from the out start, shall be further questioned in the next sections. It will be argued that archives as well as personal and collective memory do not grow naturally, but are the result of normatively structured social interaction – and in that sense never 'neutral'.

4.1 The Creation of Archives

The Assumed Neutrality of Storage Memory

While storage memory is considered as the main condition for change, Assmann also notes that storage memory is just as little naturally growing as functional memory. As with functional memory, the establishment of storage memory is dependent on being supported by institutions that store, conserve, index and circulate cultural knowledge. Archives, museums, libraries and memorials are part of this task, as well as research departments and universities (Assmann, 2009: 140). Still, according to Assmann, these institutions are warranted relief from immediate social needs, so that they are able to resist the unwilling repelling of the past as well as its conscious dismissal through functional memory. A society which cannot afford such niches and "free spaces" cannot establish a storage memory (Ibid.). Therefore, the purpose or intent behind the creation of either storage or functional memory is the crucial criterion for a qualitative distinction between the two. In the domain of storage memory, or in the institutions that support it, distance is embodied, i.e. they are usually barred from an immediate instrumental reference to processes of identification. Its purpose is first and foremost not to dictate a specific meaning, but to act as a source from which current meanings can be verified, supported or corrected.

In certain cases, perhaps, the request that the domain of storage memory should enjoy distance from societal needs might be normatively desirable. However, the postmodern turn has now long been acknowledged within archival science and the perception of archivists as passive or neutral keepers (or destroyers) of records has shifted to considering them as active participants in the creation, collection, preservation and choice of information provided by their archives (see Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 9ff.). Archives are no longer seen as neutral or impartial due to the active influence of archivists and the institutional legislation in which they are embedded. Rather, records and archives are "dynamic technologies of rule which actually create the histories and social realities they ostensibly only describe" (Ibid: 7), where some events are excluded and others are not. Just as with individual or collective memory, archivists – or the institutional rules accompanying their work – select and interpret the records that are to become 'the archive'. Archives, thus, are not only socially constructed institutions, but also have their own role in the production of knowledge about the past and "shape our notions of history, identity and memory" (Ibid: 8). So, what about the acclaimed objectivity, or 'neutrality' of archives? As Schwartz and Cook point out, objectivity does not mean disengagement (Ibid: 9f.). To consider archives as social institutions in which existing power structures are entrenched is mainly to say that they cannot be considered as neutral agents, but have to be acknowledged as "major players in the business of identity politics" (Ibid: 16). As one of the main examples for this finding, Schwartz and Cook note the "gendered nature of the archival enterprise over time", showing that "archives [...] have been willing agents in the creation of patriarchy by supporting those in power against the marginalized" (Ibid.). However, one could question the claim that archives, respectively archivists have "willingly" suppressed e.g. women's voices. After all, archivists primarily archive what they receive from dominant actors. Further, if we consider that archives simply mirror a society and its institutions, the voices of the marginalized will automatically be suppressed as well through documentation or rather non-documentation.

But there is no need to be pessimistic about the non-neutrality of archival work. To engage in it with a dedication to societal aims can be crucial particularly when it comes to the role of archives in dealing with the past. Here, archivists – as well as, of course, individuals and organizations documenting human rights violations – indeed have an important role in society and thus responsibility to consider its needs. Since archives that are considered important for dealing with the past help to address human rights issues after violent conflict, archivists may even become 'activists' in the sense that they ensure the preservation of records documenting human rights violations. In this regard, archives can be said to mainly have two roles within this process: they help in holding perpetrators accountable for their human rights violations, and they are relevant in preserving social memory and thus cultural heritage. To preserve, then, becomes an issue of preserving the "'right stuff' – materials that provide a tangible connection to the past, and memorialize and provide evidence of [...] ancestors and of yesterday's heroes and villains," (Dirks, 2004: 35f., with reference to Heald, 1995: 186) which is inevitably accompanied by a normative framework.

Partiality, Power and the Postmodern Turn

Putting a postmodern or critical approach at the heart of the archival endeavor is "not so much the relativizing of truth, but rather the multiplication of perspective" (Ketelaar, 2001: 132, with reference to van Sas, 2000: 172). A record does not tell everything per se, but "tells what the researcher wants the document to tell him or her," meaning that "scholars (including archivists) are not, can never be, exterior to their objects" (Ibid: 139, with reference to Harris, 2000: 96). Harris' (2000) approach to archival research has been especially influenced by the experiences in South Africa, where large amounts of public records have been destroyed in the final years of Apartheid. One of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandates was even "to determine what articles have been destroyed by any person in order to conceal violations of human rights or acts associated with a political objective".[28] This provoked the general idea that archival appraisal, collection or, in turn, destruction are exertions of power, involving institutional processes that shape public archives. Considering this power to shape the archives and respectively, a crucial basis for accountability and memory, Harris (2002: 79) stresses that archivists should be held accountable for their appraisal decisions and endorse a high level of transparency. Archival practices depend on active decision making on the part of archivists, whereas at least in states governed by rule of law, such decisions are made within the framework of archives legislation and archival policies. But this means also that archival records do not necessarily reflect the "full reality" (Ibid: 83), as the positive paradigm would suggest – for they cannot be said to have recorded everything there is, but everything that was considered as important and meaningful.

Harris' main concerns are the gaps within the documentation of the past, where the voices of the marginalized are usually left out. For subsequent memory processes, the gaps need to be filled by taking into consideration non-textual records as well. These include monuments, interviews, drawings and in the context of South Africa, "memory cloths" (Ibid: 86). Hence, print-based media or written archival records should never be the only basis upon which authentic memory rests. Thus, to consider archives not only as basis for accountability, but also memory, means to rethink traditional notions of evidence and authenticity. This is also of crucial importance to the context of genocide denialism. In the case of the Armenian genocide, family archives – including photographs, letters and memoirs, but also inherited carpets and other furnishings – have become very important sources for memory production. For example, recent photo exhibitions throughout Turkey have aimed at emphasizing the presence of Armenians in Eastern Turkey before the genocide[29], and victim or eyewitness accounts help to understand how the particular policies have been implemented in specific regions.[30] Another important source are Turkish and Kurdish descendants who are increasingly interested in their own Armenian heritage, for example by becoming aware of having an Armenian grandfather or grandmother, and by remembering their stories of survival.[31]

28 See Harris, "They Should Have Destroyed More": The Destruction of Public Records by the South African State in the Final Years of Apartheid, 1990–1994, paper delivered at the conference The TRC: Commissioning the Past, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, June 11, 1999.

29 Marsoobian has organized public exhibitions of his family archives, which contain many family photographs, memoirs and letters, throughout Turkey (and other countries). Some of the material is published in his book Fragments of a Lost Homeland: Remembering Armenia (2015).

30 For systematic collections with regard to the Armenian genocide, see e.g. archival collections held by the Zoryan Institute, the recently digitized Nubar Library available at http://www.bnulibrary.org/index.php/fr/, the Armenian Oral History Archive at Columbia University or the Armenian Film Foundation's testimony collection held by the USC Shoah Foundation.

31 This interest has especially risen since the publication of the book My Grandmother: A Memoir (türk. Anneannem) published in 2008, where Fethiye Çetin tells the story of her Armenian grandmother.

What can be learned from postmodernist considerations with regard to 'archival objectivity' is that "[t]he context behind the text, the power relationships shaping the documentary heritage, and indeed the document's structure, resident information system and narrative conventions are more important than the objective thing itself or its content" (Cook, 2001: 7). This is why the focus of analysis in archival work should be on "record-creating processes rather than on recorded products," that is on the analysis of provenance, original order, arrangements and descriptions as well as appraisal (Ibid: 21f.). However, the fact that archives are up to the author's determining of what is worthy to be documented, as well as up to the decisions of archivists in determining what is worthy to be archived, does not mean that the content of what is documented is unreliable, or may not be considered as legitimate evidence for a particular event that needs to be proven. In that sense archives are subjects of power relations, but they may still be brought about according to normative standards whereby the documents they contain can be considered as reliable evidence. This leads us to claim a "probative value" of archival documents (see e.g. Peterson, 2014). In this regard, what can then still be evaluated is the way in which the records were produced, which determines their reliability, authenticity, and eventually, their potential to serve as reliable or trustworthy evidence. When creating records, one can still adhere to virtues according to which they become more reliable, just as memory can be more or less reliable. Doing away with the notion of 'neutrality', we may just focus more transparently on the notion of reliability and authenticity of record, and the integrity of the record creator. Correspondingly, we may distinguish good from bad archival practices, as well as universal norms and principles according to which archivists should work. Therefore, whether we are dealing with the creation of documentary evidence or their use in creating a meaningful narrative, they are human creations and thus have the potential for conflict of interests: they are prone to be judged as biased or reflecting subjective beliefs. Archival documents always have to be contextualized, and thus can never lead to an 'objective truth' in the sense of a truth that exists beyond the realm of social reality. Still, archivists or appraisers should not per se be considered as a danger to the integrity of archives. The creation of archives would be meaningless unless it served a certain purpose. What postmodern thinkers shed light upon is that, just as in scientific research, where objectivity and truth are disputed concepts, it urges archivists to "reflect on the presumptions they bring to appraisal" (Eastwood, 2002: 62, with reference to Brothman, 1991). Since the decisions and actions of archivists have political consequences, they cannot regard themselves as impartial or apolitical, but automatically carry responsibility towards society.[32]

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32 It is therefore that a code of ethics also exists for archivists. See e.g. the ICA's Code of Ethics, formally adopted on 6 September 1996, currently available in 24 different languages at http://www.ica.org/en/ica-code-ethics (last accessed 20 December 2016). For a list of further codes of ethics for archivists, see also http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content/ethicarchi.html.

4.2 The Use of Archives

New Concepts, New Interpretations

A crucial example for this flexibility of meaning of archival records is the fact that the creation of new concepts of injustices, especially within the relatively new fields of transitional justice, human rights documentation and dealing with the past, have also influenced the way in which we re-approach archival records. These concepts have especially helped in the discovery that public archives are subjected to power relations. They include records of dominant groups and their own experiences and interpretation of the context, while excluding marginalized groups and their experiences. However, we only become aware of these power relations once we have established new concepts or epistemic resources, thus being able to adopt a new lens through which one views the information contained in archival records. Consider, for example, the concepts of trauma, sexual harassment or genocide. These concepts were created out of the need to find specific terms in order to be able to identify and name specific experiences of wrongful treatment. The fact that they are created within a specific historical context does not mean that before this very concept was created, the experience to which they refer to did not exist before. The urge to find names especially for experiences of injustice or human rights violations stems from the fact that persons need to make their experiences of wrongful treatment intelligible to themselves and others, so that they can be dealt with properly in the aftermath. Scientific as well as moral progress leads to the creation of new concepts of injustice that can only be applied in retrospective to render a certain event intelligible. It can take a long time until such concepts are created and until people have the urge to apply them in retrospect. After traumatizing atrocities, it usually takes some time until victims (as well as perpetrators), survivors and their descendants try to remember and deal with their trauma (or guilt). Remembrance comes usually after a sense of individual and social safety and stability, as well as regaining of power and emotional control have been established (see Herman, 2015).[33] All in all, I suggest that it is mainly our capacity of reason that makes the creation of such new concepts of justice respectively injustice possible, and they help victims of traumatic events to retrospectively reconstruct their trauma story. Were it not for the capacity of reason itself, without reducing it to mere relations of power, postmodern theorists would have difficulties to explain how sometimes people manage to break out of the power discourse in which they are. There would be no reason to consider ourselves as autonomous, rational and responsible subjects if our thinking were only influenced by relations of power.

Objectivity, Partiality and Responsible Activism

Besides the important question of whether archival science or other sciences (especially historical science) can in any way ever be impartial or objective, it is not self-evident why this should be a desirable way to go. Justice sometimes demands from us to take sides, at least to a certain degree, while of course such side-taking must be reasoned for. Nevertheless, what seems to be important, above all, is not to mix up objectivity with neutrality or impartiality.

[33] Thanks to many human rights organizations, human rights violations are documented and securely archived, not only to serve for the potential creation of a counter-narrative, but more generally to claim justice in the aftermath of violent conflicts once the time is right.

To make this distinction means to acknowledge the potential role of archivists as activists, in the sense that they should use their power for the benefit of society (see Jimerson, 2007). Archivists "can address social issues without abandoning professional standards of fairness, honesty, detachment, and transparency" (Ibid: 273). Considering that knowledge is power, archival records can for example overcome efforts to deny the past (Ibid: 255). Objectivity thus does not mean neutrality in the sense of remaining neutral towards the needs of society. We may hold on to the concept of objectivity, but it needs to get rid of connotations to neutrality, selflessness, and passivity (Ibid: 271). Further, when it comes to the use of archival documents, "historians (and others) can be objective without forsaking engagement in discussions of values, politics, or social policy […] The demand is for detachment and fairness, not disengagement from life" (Ibid.). Also, to try to get to the truth of something does not mean to remain neutral and passive, but to "set intellectually responsible limits to it," so that one cannot claim "the privilege of lying or obscuring the truth for good causes" (Haskell, 1998: 155). Intellectual and professional principles, including objectivity, respect for logical coherence, fidelity to evidence, honesty and the like "need not prevent us from addressing moral, ethical, or political issues" (Jimerson, 2007: 272). However, the view of the archivist as an 'activist' comes with further responsibilities. Both moral engagement and critical detachment are possible, if one uses the tool of "perspective" responsibly, for it is "only by means of these value-laden perspectives that the cultural world takes on meaning for us" (Haskell, 2004: 352).

Truth, Trustworthiness and Evidence

What is still missing from this discussion is the question whether there can be only one 'true' perspective on a past event: "To what extent can objective truths about the collective past or the rights and freedoms of individuals in a just society be sustained and justified within a historicist frame of reference?" (Toews 1999: 357). According to Toews, what binds ethical and political dimensions within an "intellectual community" together is trust. Individuals within the community must recognize each other as trustworthy – i.e. as indeed caring for the truth – if the institutions of mutual criticism and consensus building are to proceed without subjugation or rebellion, thus making the establishment of objective truth possible. The idea of recognizing others' care for truth – and in that sense considering them as trustworthy – has been elaborated in the previous chapter.[34] What is then the relationship between truth and evidence with regard to archival records? To speak of evidence always means evidence for something. Depending on the issue that needs to be proven, certain things may seem more relevant than others and thus serve as evidence for this particular issue. Thus, to consider a record as evidence is not to consider it as self-evident, in the sense of knowing the record's meaning without having to spell it out. This would be "a narrow con-ceptualization [of evidence] that inextricably links the notion with legal rules, accountability and corporate memory" (Meehan, 2006: 127). Rather, the concept of evidence is very "specialized and specific to the disciplines that explicitly engage with and make use of it […]" (Ibid: 130). Records are evidence

34 On the role of truth as an intellectual objective and a cultural value, see also e.g. Williams, 2002.

for something, and they may as well be used as evidence for memory, not just legal accountability. The legal rules for documentary evidence have certainly been helpful for archivists in providing them with a language for the articulation of standards for record trustworthiness (viz. reliability), since their key concern is also with the reliability, identity, and integrity of documentary evidence.[35] According to Meehan, these are especially the rules of

> "auxiliary probative policy (which are one category of the rules of admissibility) as they pertain to documentary evidence. These include: the rules governing reliability that are embedded in exceptions to the hearsay rule (particularly, the business records exception to the hearsay rule); the rules governing the authentication of documents; and the rule requiring the production of originals (the best evidence rule)." (Meehan, 2006: 132, with reference to MacNeil, 2000: 35–50)[36]

However, Meehan wants to suggest a broader understanding of evidence for archivists, which goes beyond the narrow rule-boundedness of the legal rules, by referring to Bentham's account of the general nature of evidence and its role in how we construct knowledge of the real world. Bentham broadly defines evidence as "any matter of fact, the effect, tendency or design of which, when presented to the mind, is to produce a persuasion concerning the existence of some other matter of fact: a persuasion either affirmative or disaffirmative of its existence" (Ibid: 135, with reference to Bentham, 1827: 17–18). To lose sight of this general nature of evidence and its applicability "leads to an impoverishment of the concept itself and skewed understanding of the nature of knowledge and reasoning in legal contexts" (Ibid: 136). The general understanding of the concept of evidence as "relation between a proposition to be proved and a proposition that proves" involves the study of relations between propositions, and the principles applied in this analytical process are not legal per se, but ordinary principles of inductive logic (Ibid: 137).

For an archival concept of evidence, we may therefore distinguish between two social acts: the making and keeping of records and the gathering and making of evidence. A record is, in the first instance, a physical object that can potentially serve as one part of a possible relationship with a past event, the tracing of which establishes matters of evidence. Neither containing evidence, nor facts per se, a record merely refers to events (or facts) outside itself. The process of arriving at an understanding of the events to which the record refers is one of inference:

> "A record is a meaningful communication, which means it consist of a physical object, plus an understanding, or representation of it. Some of what makes a record meaningful is inscribed within it, but often much of what makes it intelligible is not. Thus most of a record's 'recordness' lies outside its physical borders within the context of its interpretation." (Nesmith, 1999: 144)

35 See e.g. MacNeil, 2000, as well as Peterson, 2014.

36 The hearsay rule says that hearsay evidence, i.e. testimony or documents quoting people who are not present in court, is inadmissible because of the inability to establish their credibility, or to cross-examine the maker of the statement.

Such interpretation is also "bound up with our 'idea of the good'" and is therefore "connected to the wider intellectual and societal context in which it occurs" (Ibid: 142). An archivist helps in the creation or making sense of "the complex of internal and external relationships between records and events," involving an analytical process of decision-making (Meehan, 2006: 144). However, evidence and memory are both important concepts, for "without reliable evidence set in context, to be sure memory becomes counterfeit, or at least is transformed into forgery, manipulation or imagination. Without the influence of and need for memory, evidence is useless and unused."[37]

We may recognize that work with archival records is largely a matter of active social engagement and interpretation, while at the same time acknowledging standards and normative principles that should guide these activities. According to Peterson (2010: 128), "archival items must be subjected to the test of authenticity (they were created or sent by the person who seems to have created or sent them at the time shown), integrity (they are complete and unadulterated) and reliability (the information contained in them can be trusted as a full and accurate account of the transaction, action, or fact)." So for a record to be reliable, its "contents can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts to which they attest and can be depended upon in the course of subsequent transactions or activities" (Peterson, 2014: 3). With the notion of trust at the core of reliability[38], the next chapter will focus on distorted perceptions of reliability due to prejudice towards particular knowledge claimants or sources of knowledge. It will illustrate how the previously discussed scientific and epistemic attributes are used or misused in political discourse in the context of genocide denialism.

37 Terry Cook, Beyond the Screen: The Records Continuum and Archival Cultural Heritage, paper delivered at the Australian Society of Archivists Conference, Melbourne, 18 August 2000.

38 'Trust' is often identified with reliability, although in philosophical debates, trust as mere reliability is only one form of trust. It is e.g. argued that trust in politicians, institutions or technology can and should be distinguished from trust in people with which we have personal relationships, such as friends, family members or romantic partners. For a debate overview, see https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trust/.

5
Prejudice and the Claim to Objectivity: Crucial Elements of Genocide Denialism

Part of the professionalization of genocide denialism is its adaptation of scientific methodology.[39] However, there remains a difference between the phenomenon of denial and e.g. historical scholarship, as Karlsson contends: "While professional historical writing is concerned with evidence, source criticism, and impartiality, denial is rather concerned with provocation, deceiving, and giving the impression of objectivity and source criticism" (Karlsson, 2011: 20). With sophisticated genocide deniers indeed having touched upon methodologies and appearances of professional historiography, their works have become dangerous tools to confuse the general public.[40] This is especially because society tacitly acknowledges and authorizes academic scholars as experts and therefore as credible sources of knowledge: for the general public, appearing as a professional expert might suffice to trust in his or her words. By looking at it from an academic perspective, however, one can indeed distinguish reliable or responsible from bad or distorted scholarship. Whether we are dealing with the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Rwandan genocide, Srebrenica or any other genocide, the fact that so many sources have served as factual evidence for the assessment of the historical events as genocide has made it rather difficult for deniers to engage in sincere source criticism. Rather, the strategy involved by deniers are "distortions caused by the selective use or omission of crucial facts" (Karlsson, 2011: 30, with reference to Hovannisian, 1978: 381). Genocide deniers repeatedly call for others to engage in objective research and source criticism, while claiming that anyone supporting what deniers call the 'genocide claim' is engaging in the politicization of history and incapable of conducting research that is empirically grounded. By that, they neglect or misinterpret all evidence that had indeed been taken into account by these historians and genocide scholars. As Karlsson (2011: 37) mentions in the case of David Irving, a notorious Holocaust denier, he ignored or deliberately suppressed "material when it ran counter to his arguments. When he was unable to do this, he expressed implausible doubts about its reality." The point made here is that deniers can be identified by not adhering to the professional responsibilities and objectives of a historian, in that they, among other things, willfully disregard, discard and mistreat evidence in order to render a deceitful picture of the historical truth. However, what are the duties and responsibilities of historians? De Baets (2009: 188ff.) has proposed such a code of ethics for historians, where he mentions for example in Article 10 that "[i]ntegrity is the moral foundation of the historians' work. It shall be the intent of historians to honestly search for the historical truth, even if they are aware that their knowledge is provisional and fallible [...]" and "[h]istorians shall always oppose the abuse of history (its use with intent to deceive) and the irresponsible use of history (either its deceptive or negligent use)." Further, with regard to historical methodology, Article 13 states that

> "[h]istorians shall adopt a critical attitude and use a method based on: (1) accuracy (transparency; respect for evidence and argumentation; control of bias and anachronism; impartiality and objectivity) at the levels of statements of fact and description, and (2) plausibility at the levels of statements of opinion and analysis." (Ibid.)[41]

39 Smith et al, 1995, have revealed such a case of governmentally supported denialist research. See also Charny and Fromer, 1998, who also reflect on the thinking of academics questioning the reality of the Armenian genocide. For more recent essays on this topic, see Bayraktar, 2015, as well as Erbal, 2015.
40 See e.g. Akçam, 2005
41 See also http://www.concernedhistorians. org/content/ethichist.html for further codes of ethics for historians.

In what follows, especially two patterns of denial shall be discussed which both deal with the mistreatment of evidence in scientific (particularly historical) research. These are (i) rationalization and trivialization, involving the denial of evidence, as well as (ii) self-image and self-delusion, involving self-confirmation and denigration of others. These two patterns are interconnected, in that the perception of self and other also influences one's attitude towards evidence.

(i) Rationalization and Trivialization:

The rationalization of genocide considered here is not a professional attempt to explain genocide, but rather "point[s] towards argumentative strategies aimed at diminishing the extent, magnitude, and scale of [...] the Armenian genocide" (Karlsson, 2011: 41). The arguments of the rationalization strategy place

> "[e]mphasis [...] away from the planned, systematic process of mass murder, and genocide is explained in the context of general wartime casualties, the number of victims are minimized, and doubt is cast upon the reliability of the eyewitness testimony and documents relating to mass killings." (Hovannisian, 1999: 202)

While not denying that anything happened, rationalization goes as far as, for example, to maintain that "there is no/not enough valid evidence to conclude an event of genocide" (Karlsson, 2011: 41). Arguments of trivialization, on the other hand, claim that the number of victims is exaggerated (assuming that this would run counter the idea of an intent to destroy a group), that the presumed victims were mainly provocateurs and enemy collaborators, or that even though many people have died, there was no intent to destroy a group. In contrast to the 'nothing happened' kind of absolute denial, arguments of rationalization and trivialization can be seen to include "a much higher degree of historical detail," (Ibid.) where archival material is discussed and put into a coherent narrative.

A selective use of archival material, respectively willful disregard of evidence that runs counter one's prejudiced or otherwise illegitimately motivated research agenda seems to be at the heart of denial as rationalization and trivialization.[42] It is not only the selective use of archival material, but at the same time the denial of particular evidence – such as evidence provided by bystanders, or the evidence provided through the Constantinople trials, as discussed in the first chapter of this paper. With regard to the Constantinople (i.e. Istanbul) trials, Justin McCarthy contended that "[t]he government [...] held kangaroo courts in which officials and generals of the past government, usually tried in absentia and thus unrepresented, were convicted of crimes real and imagined" (Karlsson, 2011: 51, with reference to McCarthy, 2001: 129). The trials are generally dismissed as "show trials, conducted only in an effort to please the victorious powers of the war" (Karlsson, 2011: 51).[43] However, even if they would have been "show trials",

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42 "These forms of denial are intended to create doubts and cloak disinformation by appealing to a sense of fair play and of 'lending an ear' to the other side of a misunderstood and misrepresented issue." (Auron, 2009: 55, with reference to Hovannisian, 1999)

43 If we recall the thorough study by Akçam and Dadrian (2011) discussed in the first chapter of this paper, it becomes obvious that McCarthy is ignoring the vast evidence provided by the many Ottoman daily newspapers of that time which demonstrate that the Ottoman society generally condemned the Armenian genocide, as well as other sources which show the sincere manner in which the Sultanate tried to follow-up on the Treaty of Sèvres and bring all known perpetrators before a military tribunal.

this would not disqualify the records as such. Put into context and compared with various other sources (e.g. documents on the atrocities themselves), the records established by the trials can be considered as reliable evidence for the crimes and the responsible perpetrators.

The insincerity through which denialist research is conducted becomes apparent especially if one realizes that the rejection of evidence is often bound up with prejudice or conspiratorial ideas about how the evidence was created. For example, Heath Lowry has considered the eyewitness reports and memoirs of Henry Morgenthau, American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913–1916, and taken to be one of the most important witnesses of the Armenian genocide, as mere propaganda: "In order to disqualify the bystander memoir, and in effect the Armenian genocide as a whole, Lowry spotlights Morgenthau's Armenian connections, maintains that the memoirs in fact were written by someone else, and determines that the sole purpose of writing the memoirs was a 'short-term propaganda coup'" (Karlsson, 2011: 53, with reference to Lowry, 1990: 11, 14ff., 23 and 37).

Another strategy to shatter the reliability of records is the creation of conspiracy theories. Here, the Armenian genocide is considered as a myth that was created as allied war propaganda, as "Western attempts at raising public opinion against Turkey and Germany" (Karlsson, 2011: 59). While the latter is not a completely implausible interpretation, it does certainly not imply that what had been propagated was entirely made up (telling perhaps only a part of reality makes it nonetheless reality). However, as a very devoted denier of the Armenian genocide and acknowledged conspiracy theorist, Samuel Weems claims that the Armenians "played the Christian versus Muslim ethnic-card, and told stories about an imagined massacre to gain sympathy" (Karlsson 2011: 59, with reference to Weems, 2002: 115). Weems suggested that what he calls the "myth" of the genocide aimed at getting Christian nations to support the Armenian revolutionary cause and give them financial aid. In this manner, Weems even claims that he "uncovered facts that prove Armenian-Americans are spreading tales claiming a massacre and genocide in an effort to get mega-dollars out of both the Turks and American Christians" (Karlsson, 2011: 58, with reference to Weems, 2002: xi). This conspiratorial approach to genocide denial is also very well-known in the case of Holocaust denial, where Zionists are said to have been the orchestrators of the Holocaust "hoax", with the supposedly murdered Jews spending "their time hiding either in Israel or the US, receiving and demanding huge reparation payments from Germany" (Ibid., with reference to App, 1973: 3f.). The humiliating nature of this kind of claim is evident, for it reduces the victim group to immoral, opportunistic and greedy people who use a horrible lie only to get money.

(ii) Self-Images and Self-Delusion:

Another key pattern of denial employed by genocide deniers is their "wish to portray themselves as objective seekers of truth" (Karlsson, 2011: 65). What is of primary concern to genocide deniers is not the truth itself, but the

appearance of truth, reliability and objectivity: "In order to create this appearance of truth and professionalism, deniers both tend to confirm their own excellence, and constantly point out the inadequacies of 'traditional' scholars" (Karlsson, 2011: 66).[44] Concerning self-confirmation, the "common strategy is to portray yourself as fighting for truth against a rigid and corrupted establishment" (Ibid.). What seems as a noble scholarly aim, however, is a self-delusional and unprofessional way to turn themselves into "martyrs of history". For example, Weems mentions in the preface of his book the various hate mails and threatening letters he and other fellow colleagues received, which prove to him that "he is 'a teller of the truth'" (Karlsson, 2011: 67, with reference to Weems, 2002: xxiii). What makes this rather unprofessional is the way in which it goes along with a denigration of others – as has already been mentioned above. Welcome targets are, of course, Armenian scholars, such as for example Armenian-American historian Hovannisian, who is presented as one of many "Armenian spin-doctors" (Ibid: 68, with reference to Weems, 2002: xv). Those presenting the 'traditional view' are judged as pro-Armenian scholars who "tend to defend their positions from behind 'blinders' which allow them to see only what they want with no regard for the larger picture" (Ibid., with reference to Lowry, 1990: vi). The strategy of 'projection', namely accusing others of what they are accusing you of, is common among genocide denialists: No matter what arguments are brought forward in order to diminish the accuracy and integrity of what one side claims, the other side will use the same type of argument in return. For people not knowing much about the topic, or not being able to do their own research, this is enormously confusing and surely creates the impression that the genocide is still a debatable fact.

Karlsson is certainly not the only scholar detecting such general patterns of denial of known genocides (or other mass atrocities), especially by comparing denial of the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide. Important work in this regard has been done, to only name a few, by historian Hovannisian (1978; 1999), or Charny's work on the psychology of denial (e.g. 1998; 2001, where he focuses especially on cases of pretended 'innocence' of denial).[45] In general, literature on historical denial is prominent in the cases of the Holocaust as well as the Armenian genocide. However, these patterns of denial can be found in all cases of known genocides and other mass atrocities. In Denial: History Betrayed (2008), Taylor discusses four further case studies: the Japanese denial of war crimes; the British Communist Party's denial of Stalinist oppression; denial of Serbian war crimes and genocide; and Australia's denial of dispossession and massacre of the Aborigines.[46] In the introduction of his book, he aptly summarizes some of the patterns of denial involving the mistreatment of evidence as follows:

> "Deniers [...] adopt a common set of techniques, including falsely claiming scholarly or technical expertise; using straw-man reasoning (the attributing of false assertions to others to distract argument); [...] forcing the counter-denier into arguing about an event of minor significance in a manner that steers the debate well away from the larger mass of

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44 Karlsson also quotes Holocaust deniers such as David Irving, who "indicates that he goes to the bottom of things, leaving beside all biases of subjectivism and political motivations." (Karlsson, 2011: 66, with reference to Irving, 2001: vii-viii)

45 A list of selected bibliography on the denial of the Armenian genocide can be obtained at the homepage of the Zoryan Institute, see http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/bibliographies.html.

46 Further case studies include the Rwandan genocide denial, the denial of the Guatemalan genocide as well as the German responsibility for colonial genocide against the Herero and Nama, see e.g. Brehl, 2007. Germany has meanwhile acknowledged the genocidal nature of the crimes. However, what this means with regard to reparation efforts is still up to negotiations, see http://www.justiceinfo.net/en/component/k2/31554-germany-set-to-atone-for-its-african-genocide.html (last accessed 5 January 2017).

corroborated evidence; [...] contradicting widely accepted evidence or deriding it as a product of a conspiracy, thus placing opponents in the position of proving a negative; accepting evidence as proven or corroborated even when there is neither valid proof nor corroboration; misrepresenting the views of opponents [...] choosing to defy authorities or the law to gain publicity and martyrdom [...]." (Taylor, 2008: xvi)

To question the epistemic integrity of others is a common strategy, while it is often not based on reasonable argumentation, but either on prejudiced or politically, respectively ideologically motivated rejection of valid evidence. Those supporting the assessment of Ottoman atrocities against Armenians as genocide are considered as biased in their very nature: the Armenian genocide is considered as a political myth devoid of any empirical basis. Evidence is therefore rejected not because of reasonable argument and critique of the sources itself, but on the basis of distorted personal or political reasons and even conspiratorial ideas. For that matter, archival records kept in French, British or American archives may be perceived as biased or propaganda work. In a similar manner, every country that officially recognizes the Armenian genocide or has prepared parliamentary decisions to do so is considered as partial or even Turkophobic and/or Islamophobic (an assumption that suits well with the general claim of a Western conspiracy, although Turkish citizens who support genocide recognition are usually considered as traitors or "impure Turks").[47] The political claim that "it is impossible for Turks/Muslims to commit genocides"[48] does not help in the creation of a healthy, critical stance toward one's history and implies that only 'others' commit genocides. This is met by a double-standard policy of condemning and showing sincere upset for genocides of other peoples, such as the Holocaust or the Bosnian genocide[49] – or, after Germany's Armenian genocide resolution, the genocide in Namibia.[50]

Turkish history books continue to portray Armenians as the enemy and "a threat to national security," they are "traitors and societal elements that murdered Turks and are easily incited."[51] This portrayal in itself can be seen as an incitement to further crimes, especially when other crucial facts of the past are denied. Even if the acts committed by Turkish security forces were initially interpreted as military actions against an 'internal enemy', research as well as witness testimony show that the policies and their implementation indeed pointed to an intent to destroy the Armenian ethnic group as such, and civilian casualties were not mere 'collateral damages' of legitimate military operations. Crucial drivers behind the conflict related to the Armenian genocide seem to be such historically transmitted stereotypes, and the only way to break this vicious cycle might be to foster a culture of openness to counter-evidence and alternative narratives. To remain immune to counter-evidence means to cling to a prejudice, an irrational and emotionally motivated upholding of a negative stereotype against the other.

47 See e.g. Turkey's press release regarding the Armenian genocide resolution passed by the German government on 2 June 2016: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-125_-2-june-2016_-press-release-regarding-the-resolution-by-the-parliament-of-the-federal-republic-of-germany-of-2-june-2016-on-the-events-of-1915.en.mfa

48 See e.g. Freedman's article in The Guardian: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/nov/11/erdogan-muslims-turkish-sudan-gaza (last accessed 18 April 2016).

49 See http://www.turkofamerica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=818&Itemid=50 (last accessed 20 December 2016).

50 See http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/06/06/ak-party-deputy-to-submit-proposal-to-parliament-to-recognize-germanys-namibia-genocides (last accessed 20 December 2016).

51 See Akçam's article in The Armenian Weekly, "Textbooks and the Armenian Genocide in Turkey: Heading towards 2015" http://armenianweekly.com/2014/12/04/textbooks/ (last accessed 18 April 2016).

6
Concluding Remarks

When assessing the value of archives in the context of Armenian genocide denial, we become aware of the challenges posed to the status even of reliable and authentic records, valid interpretations and the collective memory derived from it. Genocide denialism involves strategies of relativizing or trivializing evidence, their willful rejection or questioning the trustworthiness of their creators by reference to their social identity – or by claiming a general conspiracy. Besides creating public confusion, genocide denialism illegitimately rejects a particular social group from the community of trustworthy epistemic agents, thereby humiliating them anew. While the concepts of 'objectivity', 'neutrality' and the like are scientifically disputed concepts, their political misuse in the context of genocide denialism makes denialist claims appear as scientific and guided by a dedication to the truth, while it is crucially distinct from responsible scientific research and actual respectful ways to challenge memory. These considerations do not imply that any historian questioning the authenticity of certain documents, or rejecting the reliability of certain victim testimony is a sign of politically and ideologically motivated distortion of the facts or an injustice done to the victim group. Rather, what I wanted to argue for is that there are certain strategies that engage directly in such undermining efforts, where ideology replaces logic. This includes, for example, dubious generalizations where the unreliability of one document is taken as proof not only for the unreliability of the document creator as such, but of an overall genocide lie fabricated by, e.g. Armenians or "the West". Perhaps, then, a scientific approach to end genocide denialism is not reasonable, at least not primarily. Denial of genocides – not only in the case of the Armenian genocide – must be considered in terms of a political conflict rather than a scientifically unresolved debate about the past.

However, reconciliation does fortunately not only rest with the government. Neither does it only rest with academics and historians in particular – even though they indeed carry a special responsibility with regard to educational aims. It is also civil society initiatives which prove to be crucial for reconciliation mechanisms, since not everyone is able to access and process information provided by formal or public archives or academic work. In community-based remembrance and reconciliation versus more formal, macro-level approaches, we may see a glimpse of hope where society can establish enough strength to influence the dominant political stance. A general increase in skepticism towards the government or even towards the idea of a "nation" may also foster interest and openness to question the official stance of the government towards its national history, thereby becoming receptive for counter-evidence.

The Hrant Dink Foundation is one of many important foundations within Turkey that aim at reconciliation of civil society, by supporting, among other things, "efforts to write histories devoid of nationalism and racism."[52] Memorialization and dialogue that aims at a shared meaning of the conflictual past may indeed help "to attenuate the development of identities based on victimhood and hatred of the other. Or identities based on guilt, which provide fertile ground for a culture of denial" (Bleeker, 2009: 13). This process rather

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52 See also the EU funded programme for "Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process" which financially assists, empowers and engages civil societies of Turkey and Armenia to "contribute to the enhanced regional peace and stability, democratic pluralism and social inclusion across and within their societies." http://www.armenia-turkey.net/en/home

aims at "social reconstruction" and "reclamation", since it involves less emphasis on legal accountability and truth-telling, and more emphasis on promoting "economic, political, and social progress, as well as identity transformation" (Barsalou and Baxter, 2007: 5). In the context of Turkish denialism of the Armenian genocide, identity comes before truth, i.e. it is a particular perception about oneself and the other that distorts what one considers as 'the truth'. The availability of archival heritage is therefore important in order to settle this controversy about the proper interpretation of the past, as well as a systematic political and institutional change in which there is a sincere commitment to democratic values and universal human rights. With regard to 'identity transformation', Turkey has to face and engage with its historical diversity and pluralism, rather than put all efforts into its neglection and suppression.

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About the Author

Melanie Altanian is currently pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at the University of Bern, where she focuses on the ethical and epistemological implications of genocide denialism. She holds a MA in Political, Legal and Economic Philosophy and a BA in Philosophy from the University of Bern. From October 2015 to March 2016, she worked as an intern at swisspeace's Dealing with the Past program, where she advanced her knowledge in the field of transitional justice, particularly the role of archives in dealing with the past.

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