

Victimization Discourse in Armenia: Turkey as the Other

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Abstract

Both practice and language are very crucial in the perpetuation of dominant discourse. In order to impose the preferred meaning to the population, binary oppositions should be created. These oppositions aim to construct identities on the basis of "us vs them". Binary oppositions have also played a crucial rule in Armenian national identity construction. The representations of mythology, land pretensions (Great Armenia Project) and claim of Armenian Genocide ignited Turkish hostility in practice starting from 19th century.

In identity construction, two discursive shifts happened after the establishment of Armenian statehood. The first shift appeared during the first president- Ter-Petrosian's period who tried to minimize Turkish otherness in order to create good economic relation with Turkey by excluding the primordial elements of identity construction. With the new presidential period of Robert Kocharian, the second discursive shift occurred in national identity construction by combining both primordial and civic elements. Turkish Otherness again re-emerged through the new discourse of victimization. The new discourse's main representation was Armenian Genocide Claim which targeted Turkey as the Other not only in the minds of people, but also in the foreign policy of the country. To include again the Claim of Armenian genocide to political agenda, and recognition of this claim in the foreign policy was the primary aim of new discourse.

Considering the historical facts and discursive shifts, I aim to analyze how Turkish otherness have played an important role in Armenian nation-building and how the new discourse of victimization emerged and started to represent Armenian foreign policy by targeting Turkey as the other during the presidential period of Robert Kocharian.

Keywords: *Victimization, Otherness, Foreign policy, Constructivism, Armenia, Turkey*

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Ermenistan'da Mağduriyet Söylemi: Öteki Olarak Türkiye

Özet

Egemen söylemin sürdürülmesinde hem pratik hem de dil çok önemlidir. Topluma tercih edilen anlamı empoze etmek için ikili karşıtlıklar oluşturulmalıdır. Bu karşıtlıklar, "biz ve onlar" temelinde kimlikler inşa etmeyi amaçlar. İkili karşıtlıklar, Ermeni ulusal kimliğinin inşasında da önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Mitoloji temsilleri, toprak iddiaları (Büyük Ermenistan Projesi) ve Ermeni Soykırımı İddiası, 19. yüzyıldan itibaren pratikte Türk düşmanlığını ateşledi.

Kimlik inşasında, Ermeni devletinin kurulmasından sonra iki söylemsel kayma yaşandı. İlk değişim, kimlik inşasının asli unsurlarını dışlayarak Türkiye ile iyi bir ekonomik ilişki kurmak için Türk ötekiliğini en aza indirmeye çalışan ilk başkan Ter-Petrosyan döneminde ortaya çıktı. Robert Koçaryan'ın yeni cumhurbaşkanlığı dönemiyle birlikte, hem ilkel hem de sivil unsurları birleştirerek ulusal kimlik inşasında ikinci söylemsel kayma meydana geldi. Türk Ötekiliği, yeni mağduriyet söylemiyle yeniden ortaya çıktı. Yeni söylemin ana temsili, sadece insanların zihninde değil, ülkenin dış politikasında da Türkiye'yi Öteki olarak hedef alan Ermeni Soykırımı İddiası idi. Ermeni Soykırımı iddiasını yeniden siyasi gündeme almak ve bu iddianın dış politikada tanınmasını sağlamak yeni söylemin temel amacıydı.

Tarihsel gerçekleri ve söylemsel değişimleri göz önünde bulundurarak, bu çalışmada Türk ötekiliğinin Ermeni ulus inşasında nasıl önemli bir rol oynadığını ve Koçaryan'ın cumhurbaşkanlığı döneminde Türkiye'yi öteki olarak hedef alarak yeni mağduriyet söyleminin nasıl ortaya çıktığını ve Ermeni dış politikasını nasıl temsil etmeye başladığını analiz etmeyi amaçlıyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mağduriyet Söylemi, Ötekileştirme, Dış Politika, Konstrüktivizm, Ermenistan, Türkiye

Introduction

Michel Foucault mentions in his book – *Lives of Infamous Man* – the importance of language and practice in the perpetuation of dominant discourse. He further elaborates that binary oppositions have been created through the language to impose preferred meaning to the wider population by elites. Following this argument, he claims that the most common binary opposition – us vs them aims to establish different identities and groups (Foucault 1954).

Binary opposition has also played a crucial role in Armenian national identity construction. This binary was hostility against Ottoman Empire and then Turkey. The representations of mythology, land pretensions (Great Armenia Project) and claim of Armenian Genocide ignited Turkish hostility in practice starting from 19th century. However, before 19th century or starting from 16th century being geographically and religiously isolated between Ottoman and Safavi (Turkic oriented) empires, increased Armenians' fears about survival. These fears started to appear at the end of 19th century with insurrections against Ottoman Empire.

At the beginning of 19th century Armenians gained reliance of the Ottoman administration because of the successful adoption of social structure and culture. They have also adopted Turkish folklore and their socio-cultural structures, including their culinary culture, were also very close to the Turks. That's why some westerners used the term "Christian Turks" for Armenians. The Ottomans, on the other hand, named the Armenians "Loyal Nation" ("Millet-i Sadıka") because of their harmony with the Turkish people and their useful services for the state (Alp 2009).

However, at the end of the century, in the time of strengthening of national identity and state construction, there emerged notable reasons for resurgence and uprisings of Armenians against Turks. These reasons were about nationalist movement which started with French revolution, the Armenian Patriarchate's provocation of the people about increasing the enmity against Ottomans by the influence of the European Churches, Great Powers' provocation of small nations to separate

Ottoman Empire internally and acquaintance independence by Greeks under Ottoman rule (Akbulut 2014, 13-14).

Armenians first uprising started with the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War, as they fought in the Russian army against Turks. The defeated Ottoman Empire was obliged to accept making reforms for the Armenians, according to the 16th article of the Ayastefanos (Yeşilköy) Treaty dated March 3, 1878. As it was dictated by the Russians, England undertook the defence of the Armenians in order to thwart the Russians' ambitions in Eastern Anatolia and to ensure its superiority in the region. According to Ilker Alp, Berlin Treaty has strong importance to bring the Armenian question to the political agenda. Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin dated 13 June 1878, stipulated that the Ottoman Empire should make reforms in favor of the Armenians and especially protect them against the Kurds and Circassians. (Alp 2009) Thus, the Armenian issue became an international problem with the Berlin Treaty and the treaty played a crucial role in their resurgence.

Thus, the construction of Armenian national identity starting from the end of 19th century was completely based on primordial elements. The myth and Great Armenia Project were the main representations of primordial elements in national identity construction. The basis of all these mythologies and Great Armenia Project was the enmity against Turks (Barseghyan, Changing Turkish Other in Post-Soviet Armenian Discourse on National Identity 2007).

The crucial breaking point in Turkish-Armenian relations was when Britain, France, Russia and Italy made secret agreements to share the Ottoman Empire, attack there during the First World War. With the outbreak of war in 1914, Armenians started some activities against Ottoman Empire, as they evaluated the war as an opportunity. Their activities and attacks to Turks during the war was evaluated as a new front. Therefore, Armenians were exiled to Aleppo and Mosul from the battlefields with the outbreak of the First World War. After the war, they couldn't be successful in their territorial claims which strengthened Turkish hatred. They became successful to establish their first independent Republic in 1918 in

the “territory” of Russia which lost its statehood in 1920 with Soviets’ occupation.

This enmity has been reinforced during the Soviet time when Turkey was a part of NATO in 1955.

As this acceptance was not appreciated by USSR, Russians allowed Turkish counterpropaganda in the Soviet Armenia. Therefore, in the 1960s, Armenians embarked on many activities to attract the world's public opinion to their side. They put forward the day of April 24 as the “Genocide” day. In these dates, Van, Bitlis, Ardahan, Erzurum, Trabzon and Kars were shown as lands usurped by the Turks from the Armenians in various newspapers and magazines. Demonstrations and rallies were held in France and in front of the Turkish Embassy in London on 24-26 April 1969, demanding that eastern provinces of Turkey belong to Armenians. Since these years, we see that attacks targeting Turkish diplomats have started. It was observed that since the mid-1970s, these movements gained intensity.

However, after the fall of communism when Armenia declared its independence in 1991, Turkish Otherness was also transformed into a new form. There happened two discursive shifts in Turkish otherness after the establishment of Armenian statehood. The first shift appeared during the first president- Ter-Petrosian’s period who tried to minimize Turkish otherness in order to create good economic relations with Turkey. The attempt to exclude Armenian genocide claim from political agenda in this process, caused the wrath of both Armenian Diaspora and nation which resulted in his resignation. The second president- Robert Kocharian created the second discursive shift in national identity construction by combining both primordial and civic elements. His main aim was to re-emerge Turkish Otherness again by the new discourse of victimization. The new discourse’s main representation was Armenian Genocide claim which targeted Turkey as the other not only in the minds of people, but also in the foreign policy of the country. To include the claim of Armenian genocide to political agenda again, and recognition of this claim in the foreign policy was the primary aim of new discourse. The appearance of victimization discourse with highlighting genocide

in the Armenian foreign policy became the new form of Turkish otherness (Barseghyan, *Rethinking Nationhood: Post-Independence Discourse on National Identity in Armenia* 2003).

Considering the historical facts and discursive shifts, the research aims to analyze how Turkish otherness have played an important role in Armenian nation-building and how the new discourse of victimization emerged and started to represent Armenian foreign policy by targeting Turkey as the other during the presidential period of Robert Kocharian.

In the first part of the research, I briefly explained the historical situation at the beginning of the 20th century how Turkish Otherness became a crucial aspect of nation-building process. The main representations of nation-building like, mythology, Great Armenia Project has been mentioned. I gave particular attention to the claim of the genocide of Armenians due to its traumatic role in nation-building and Turkish hostility.

In the second part, I analyzed how discursive shifts changed Turkish otherness after fall of communism. Particularly, I gave attention to the second elite- Kocharian's victimized identity construction both in people's imagination and foreign policy. The impact of Diaspora has also been analyzed in the construction of victimization discourse.

Discourse analysis is used as a main methodology of the research. By using this methodology, I aimed to find how the enmity towards Turks has been shaped in 19th century and transformed into a new form after acquisition of independence. Discursive shifts in Turkish otherness and representation of Genocide in foreign policy as a part of victimization discourse were analyzed from constructivist approach.

Theoretical Inquiry

Constructivism was shaped during the conflict between positivism and post-positivism by siding post-positivism and anti-rationality. Constructivism, since the 1990s, has become an alternative to rationalist theories with its emphasis on identity politics, intersubjectivity, construction of social reality, the ontological determination of rules, language and culture. In

addition, constructivism states that human structure and social structure are in a positive correlation and it reflects this to the state identity. This identity construction process is formed by the creation of the other. It is not possible that nations can make sense of their own existence without the other.

While constructivists analyze the identities of states, it takes abstract and difficult-to-measure facts such as culture, norms, customs, beliefs, and mentality as data. Such a scientific method of study, which is in contrast to the positivist methodology, includes the constructivists in the group of post-positivist theories. In this context, constructivism attaches importance to the construction of reality at the “perception level” through discourses rather than the construction of the “concrete/material world”.

Constructivism sees states as social actors. National identity itself is not fixed and is shaped and changed by both international and domestic forces. All changes in national identity also affect national interests. Therefore, in order to understand the behavior of states in the international system and their foreign policy decisions, it will not be enough to look only at national interests and it will be necessary to focus on national identities as well. For constructivists, states' interactions play an important role in shaping identities. The important point here is that the identities are not fixed, but can be transformed. The construction of identities is a process in which “discursive practices” occur. With these discursive practices, meanings are attributed to events, people, policies and states (Hopf 1955 and 1999).

Constructivists analyze internal structures through identities and foreign policy, however, could not develop rational approaches like neorealists at the point of systemic analysis of international relations. They further argue that national identities determine national interests, national security and foreign policy strategies, on the other hand, norms and ideas can shape this identity construction. One of the leading constructivists, Alexander E. Wendt argues that individuals shape social identity and society shapes individual identities. That is, there is a mutual interaction process, not one-sided. According to Wendt, contrary to what realists claim, material capacities do not have the power to explain

everything (Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation and the International State* 1994).

Alexander E. Wendt increased the interest in constructivism theory. Alexander Wendt's understanding of constructivism is based on two principles: 1) the structures of human society are determined primarily by common ideas rather than material forces; 2) the identities are constructed by their common interests rather than given by nature (Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* 2012). In Wendt's constructivist approach, identity creates the social structure and organizes the interests of states.

The constructivist approach shows the social construction of national identity in Armenia in post-soviet era which was based on social antagonism. Discursive practices are important in the construction of identity which try to fix the meanings. Change in meanings enable the differentiation between outside and inside of people. Constructivist approach explains the impact of national identity on nation-state's explication of the self and other. (Barth 2003) Thus, the research will use discursive concept in constructivist approach in order to analyze the discursive changes in national identity construction in Armenia and how these shifts reshaped Turkish otherness.

Secondly, constructivist approach will also try to show the Diaspora's role in discursive construction of national identity and direct influence to the foreign policy of R. Kocharian. By discussing the influence of diasporas to foreign policy from constructivist approach, Aharon Barth argues the importance of diasporas in national identity construction by penetrating to the nation from inside and to the state outside. Therefore, the research will also analyse the influence of Diaspora in Armenia's identity construction and foreign policy making from the perspective of constructivist approach (Barth 2003).

We can also see constructivism in foreign policy decision-making. The paper will follow the establishment of victimized identity discourse which foreign policy had to follow from constructivist approach. Constructivism considers states as social actors. Therefore, it declares that to understand the foreign policy

of a state, we should focus on the way how interests of identity have been formed. (Barth 2003)

Historical background in Turkish Otherness

J. Derrida in his essay *“Writing and Difference”* argues that all identities have its other of the self. Identity can be defined together with the notion of belongingness to community. In the process of construction an identity, there is an important role of negation of the other (Derrida 1978). Moreover, social construction of an identity depends on space and time. The main historical perspective in identity construction has associated firstly with religion, then modernization process which started from French revolution (Ünal 2013).

If we apply the mentioned theoretical aspects to the Armenian nation-building process, we can see that the enmity against Turks was crucial in nation-building process within historical framework. Starting from 16th century, being isolated by two Islamic and Turkic Empires (Ottoman and Safavi) persuaded Armenians to preserve their religion from external powers. Furthermore, there was strong crusader mentality which was still alive in the imagination of people. (Akbulut 2014) After the modernization process of nation construction, Armenian nation-building was constructed on the hatred to Turks at the end of 19th century. So, even before the modernization process there was strong Othering of Turks due to religion. There were strong historical myths and events which caused this Othering.

First and foremost, stable myths caused strong antagonism. The myths started to be a crucial part of nation-building after the second half of 19th century. Movses Khorenatsi and his book- *History of Armenia*- caused main mythology about Armenian ancient history. As a writer from late antiquity, he claimed that Armenians were the first nation who accepted Christianity as a state religion (Tarzian 1992). Then he follows that the roots of Armenians come from Noah. The mythology about Ararat Mountain (national symbol of Armenians) shows this mountain as a destination of Noah’s Ark. (Boumoutian 2006) Another myth is the project about Great Armenia which directly targeted Ottoman

Empire. According to this myth, as the first comers to Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia, all historical “territories” of Armenians should be reunified under Great Armenia. The project constituted eastern Anatolian territories (Kars, Ardahan- Western Armenia) from Ottoman Empire, Russian Armenia (Eastern Armenia), landlocked territory of Azerbaijan- Nakhichevan and Karabakh, and Javakheti region from Georgia. The previous myth about Ararat Mountain was also related to the project of Great Armenia. Ararat is located in Anatolia and had crucial importance that Armenians wanted to include this territory to their future independent country. During nation-building process these myths have been accepted as truth as a part of discursive construction. It seemed impossible to regain historical lands and sovereignty from Ottoman Empire. Therefore, Turks became the principal obstacle to implement the project and prove the myths’ truth (Barseghyan, *Changing Turkish Other in Post-Soviet Armenian Discourse on National Identity* 2007).

Ottoman Empire annexed Armenia in 1514. Starting from the period of Mohammed Conqueror, non-Muslims were organized into communities (Millets) on the base of their religion. Under this rule Armenians were also allowed to follow their religious affairs. However, the rule of Millet caused a sharp segregation between inferior minorities and Turks.

The existence of sacred Armenian organizations also made a trouble for the Sultan. He believed that these organizations aim to create independent Armenia and overthrow him with the help of Great Powers. Some organizations (Hunchak was formed in 1887 and Dashnak Party in 1890) were created with the aim of organizing local self-government and revolutionary troops. These organizations have played a major role in nation-building process and ignited the enmity against Turks in this process. Moreover, Mangigian Tarzian argues that attainment of autonomy by Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Romania until 1894 caused first large massacres of Armenians in 1894-96. This was the last attempts to save the remains of stumbling Empire. These massacres caused a great support of people to the mentioned nationalistic organizations (Tarzian 1992).

After the revolution in 1908, Young Turks dethroned the Sultan and created constitutional monarchy. The new government declared that one of their main aims is to give each religion and each nationality its freedom. However, the promise of cultural liberty to all nationalities was short-lived. Young Turks have been embraced with nationalism. Hence, they started the movement of Pan-Turkism and assimilation of minorities. After the separation of Balkans, Turks became the most significant and homogenous ethnic group in the empire. This was another reason that assimilation process was accelerated for the remaining minorities, namely Armenians. The discourse of Turkification sharpened antagonism and improved Armenian self-identification. The culmination of the antagonism was the insurrections of Armenians and massacres of 1909 in Adana (Ternon 1990).

After the pressures of Armenian parties (Hunchak and Dashnaksutyun which were settled in Geneva and financed by Great Powers), Young Turks accepted to negotiate Armenian reforms. In 1914, they accepted to allow local administrative autonomy of Armenian provinces under the supervision of two foreign inspectors. However, directly after negotiations, Turkey's joining to World War I, made unsolved the reform of Armenian autonomy (Tarzian 1992).

The tension in Eastern Anatolia increased among Kurds, Turks and Armenians when the "Sick man of Europe" started to fail to deal with minorities. The revolutionary parties of Armenians also hardened the situation by encouraging Armenian villagers refuse to pay customary taxes. Turkish administration gave the control to Kurds to collect taxes and Kurds organized several massacres of Armenians through 19th century. The chaos between Muslims and Armenians in the region then peaked with Enver Pasha's Pan-Turkic state plans in 1915. As one of the leaders of Young Turk Revolution and main military officer in Balkan Wars, World War I and war in Caucasus against Russia, he decided to establish Pan-Turkic state stretching into Caucasus and Central Asia. Armenians were the crucial obstacle in this plan, therefore their elimination from Eastern Anatolia became a clear problem (Suny 1983).

When the tension peaked in Eastern Anatolia during the WWI, Armenians accepted the tension as historical opportunity for liberation. It wasn't the first case for Armenians that the war between Turks and Russians has been assumed as both opportunity and danger. When the war started in Caucasus, Armenians in Anatolia chose to be alongside with the Russians with provocation of revolutionary parties. Even before this, Armenian Catholicos asked tsar to take on the protection of Armenians in Turkey (Miller 1999).

The Sarikamish Battle started in December 1914 between Russians and Turks. Before the battle there were remarkable victories of Ottoman troops, however unpredictable uprising of Armenians just before the war, caused the victory of Russia. Because of this failure, Anvar Pasha lost three-quarters of his army. After the declaration Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov's plan to the State Duma about complete liberation of Armenians from Ottoman Empire, released the cooperation between Armenians and Russians (Suny 1983). As a result, Ottoman administration accepted the law of exile into the Syrian desert on 27 May 1915 (Canyurt 2016). According to Suny, at least 600.000 to 1.500.000 Armenians were exiled. He further argues that forced migration was a last solution to "Armenia Problem" and Turks' final attempt to save the Empire (Suny 1983, 36).

The mythologies and massacres have already ignited Turkish Otherness and caused to begin nation-building. However, Armenian genocide claim had a traumatic effect in people's mind which sharpened the image of Turk as an enemy. This image made Armenians to secure themselves in order to continue their existence. The bulk of sensitivity about survival accelerated the process of nation-building which Turkish hatred was the center of this process.

Discourse of victimization in Armenian Foreign Policy

Turkey considered the conclusion of "Armenian Problem" in its eastern border after Kars Treaty in 1921. Kars treaty has been signed between Turkey and three Transcaucasian Republics about mutual recognition. Especially in the early years of the Republic,

Turkey considered that Armenian problem was solved due to the Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union (Lachiner 2003). Between 1923 and 1950s Armenian propaganda continued but it was very passive. However, after Turkey's acceptance to NATO, Russians increased pressure on Turkey by denying to renew the Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality. When Turkey allied with Western powers and joined NATO in 1955, USSR tolerated Armenian nationalism which has been centered against Turks (Canyurt 2016).

Turkish Otherness continued until the fall of communism and was the basis of Armenian nationhood. However, after emergence of independent country, the questions about political and economic relations with Turkey emerged. During the first president- Ter-Petrosian's presidential years (1991-1998), the new discursive shift happened in Turkish Otherness. During his seven-year presidential period, he tried to construct a new national identity which had to be solely based on civic elements of identity construction. He started to pursue the interests of the new independent country and tried to create good political and economic relations with Turkey. Considering the isolation between Azerbaijan and Turkey and Karabagh war, he was interested in improving economy of Armenia and security in the region (Astourian 2001). To create good economic relations with Turkey also depended on the attitude of the nation. That's why he decided to reconstruct national identity on the base of civic elements by excluding claim of Armenian Genocide and other previous Othering projects from political agenda. The attempt to create imagination of independent statehood clashed with another strong and ethnic discourse of Armenian Genocide claim. As the claim was the main ethnic element in nation-building and memories were fresh, it wasn't an easy task. This resulted with resign of Ter-Petrosian in favor of Robert Kocharian (Barseghyan, *Rethinking Nationhood: Post-Independence Discourse on National Identity in Armenia* 2003).

With velvet coup in February 1998, the first post-communist elite was replaced with new elite. The new president returned to the old concept of national identity construction which was based

on Turkish otherness. The elimination of discursive antagonism stopped and genocide was added to new discourse. The new elite tried to construct new national identity by merging both primordial and civic elements. The continuation of Armenian Genocide claim was the main ethnic element in new social construction. Genocide claim was also included to the foreign policy as a main representation. Besides, the Genocide claim, Karabakh war has also been a crucial part of foreign policy representation. The main aim to include primordial (claim of Armenian Genocide) and civic elements (Karabagh war and Genocide's representation in foreign policy) to the imagination of people was to produce victimization discourse. Victimization discourse aimed to continue the discourse of Turk as an enemy in people's imagination and include otherness to foreign policy as well. The discursive construction of victimized Armenian identity due to Genocide by Turks and its representation in foreign policy was the essence of victimization discourse.

The role of Diaspora in Discursive Shift

Through the last century, the preservation of national identity has been the major concern of Diaspora. It aimed to acquire international recognition of Genocide, and independence of Soviet Armenia. Particularly during 1980s, lobbying activities of Diaspora grew in order to get international recognition of Genocide. After adopting a resolution about Genocide by European Parliament, their initiatives significantly increased. When Armenia became an independent country, Diaspora's agenda enlarged with focusing to create one national Armenian identity including all Armenians all over the world (Markarov 2016).

When the Diaspora was organized, it was mainly based on the belief of mythologies and the dream about returning historic homeland. After the second generation of Diaspora (starting from 1960s), the discourse of homeland decreased. Instead, it started to focus on united nation with emphasizing of victimization due to Genocide. Considering Armenians' different language constructions and belonging to different sects of Christianity and using different alphabet, Genocide was more appropriate for the

discourse of homogenous nation. Thus, Diaspora's main aim was the construction of united (with all Armenian identities in the world) national identity in newly independent Armenia by rejecting the role of a state in this identity construction process. Diaspora was supporting the social construction of national identity only on the basis of ethnic elements - Genocide- which focused on social antagonism (Barseghyan, *Rethinking Nationhood: Post-Independence Discourse on National Identity in Armenia* 2003).

The first post-communist elite tried to eliminate primordial elements from identity construction and create smooth economic and political relations with Turkey. They also aimed to limit Diaspora's involvement in Armenia's foreign and domestic policies. These steps were not supported by political parties and increased the tension significantly between new government and Diaspora. The decision of Ter-Petrosian going to compromise over Karabakh conflict was the last step which ceased Diaspora's support. After losing its support, the former government had to resign.

Ter-Petrosian's successor – Robert Kocharian allowed Diaspora's ideological intervention. He reconstructed national identity and satisfied Diaspora by adding key primordial elements (Genocide and mythologies) to the discourse of victimization. Diaspora required development of Armenian nation through both Diaspora and independent Armenia. Reconstruction of new discourse of victimization required the representation of ethnic elements, i.e., Genocide in foreign policy. We can see the strength of Diaspora in all areas of foreign and domestic policies. For example, when Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Committee was set up in 2001, Diaspora was against the commission by declaring that it can endanger Diaspora's lobbying activities, as Markarov mentions (Markarov 2016).

Construction of victimization discourse in foreign policy: Turkey as the Other

The construction of victimization discourse in foreign policy aimed to merge nation (in the name of Diaspora) and state into

one project which should re-target Turkish Otherness. To follow this aim R. Kocharian started to show Turks as historic enemies of Armenians not only in domestic policies, but also in different conferences and meetings.

When Kocharian came into power, a harmonious operation occurred with the diaspora and the number of countries that accepted the genocide allegations increased with the efforts of the diaspora. After Kocharian's reelection as head of state in 2001, genocide has been turned into a state policy. He chose to eliminate international community's criticism due to Karabakh war by disposing Genocide (Lachiner 2003). During several meetings in parliament, Kocharian called Turkey's eastern provinces as "Western Armenia" which caused the closing of border by Turkey. After France's recognition of Armenian Genocide in 2006, Armenian Parliament has passed a law that will punish those who refuse, support or justify the Armenian genocide with 4-years imprisonment. Another major element of Turkish otherness was that starting from Kocharian's presidential period, "Armenian Genocide" as expression was included to even draft budget of the country (Lachiner 2003).

According to Caykiran, Kocharian built foreign policy on two basic principles. Firstly, rights and interests must be seized and protected within rigidity in foreign policy. According to this, the policy of reconciliation (with Turkey) during the first president should be abandoned and followed by active and thrusting policy. The second principle was called as "complementarity policy" which aimed to engage with regional and great powers (Caykiran 2011). Through this policy Kocharian followed the construction of victimization discourse in several political meetings and platforms.

Firstly, we can see the discursive construction in Diaspora conferences. Robert Kocharian decided to establish good relations with Armenians abroad and therefore, organized showy conferences with special attention. Conferences (in 1999 and 2002) emphasized vital importance of three elements for homogenous identity - common language, the so-called genocide and the Karabakh conflict. It is reflected in the reports as the most striking decisions that the recognition of the genocide will be given

priority and the genocide allegations in the Turkish-Armenian relations will not be abandoned. (Armenia Diaspora Relations: 20 years since Independence 2010) Diaspora conferences are also important to analyze due to considering Diaspora's ethnic requirements in new discourse:

"Armenia should be a holy motherland for all Armenians, future - their future. We have to realize that a nation, the understanding the value of its combined force, can never be defeated." (Kocharian 1999) (Barseghyan, Rethinking Nationhood: Post-Independence Discourse on National Identity in Armenia 2003).

Another example for discursive construction of victimization in foreign policy is the attitude towards Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission. It was considered as an important step in terms of bilateral relations and aimed to improve relations between the two communities, including the diaspora. On 9 July 2001 the Commission was created and consisted of four Armenians and six Turkish representatives. Through the reports Karabakh and the so-called Armenian genocide claim issues would not be raised. However, according to the Armenian National Committee of America, Reconciliation Commission was organized to serve the American interests, not Armenians. After disappearing Diaspora's support for Reconciliation Commission, Kocharian announced in 2001 that they didn't support the commission by publishing a joint statement with ten Armenian parties together. Kocharian argued that relations should be discussed at the state level and Armenia can't go any compromise for its historical enemy in Genocide issue (Yapıcı 2013).

The conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh has been the peak to place Turkish otherness in the new discourse. The demands to include Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia are based on the past. Astourian stresses in his article that on the 50th anniversary of the 1915 event, Armenians in 1965 raised their claims on Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1987, Armenians sent the petition to Gorbachev with 75 thousand signatures via Karabakh Committee, requiring the inclusion of Karabakh to Armenia. The first clashes in the region began in 1988. In 1994, Bishkek Protocol was signed between

representatives of Azerbaijan, Karabakh Armenians and Armenia (Astourian 2001). Turkey has always been blamed for the support to Azerbaijan in this conflict and this stance of Turkey has also been one of the major reasons for othering in foreign policy. For example, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in his visit to San Francisco in 2005 stated that Armenia should leave the occupied territories in Nagorno-Karabakh and give them back to Azerbaijan (Poghosyan 2005). All these kinds of statements were considered as geographical segregation again by Turks in Kocharian's government.

Another tension happened in NATO Summit in 2004. Armenian president- Kocharian was invited to the Summit by Erdoğan. However, Kocharian refused to participate in the summit which was held in Istanbul. On the eve of the summit Armenian president declared that Armenia can develop without Turkey. In his speech he further mentioned that they can establish diplomatic relations without prerequisites and also blamed Turkey for supporting deadlock. Following this, Foreign Ministry's spokesman did not neglect to mention that Armenia hasn't changed its policy on the issue of genocide and gave priority to international recognition of the genocide allegations.

In 2005, Erdoğan proposed a Commission for Investigation of 1915 Events. Research Commission should be organized with the participation of historians and other experts from both countries to investigate the facts about the events of 1915. However, Kocharian didn't respond positively for the proposal (Caykiran 2011). In his speech about refusal, he claimed that Yerevan administration will always work for recognition of the alleged genocide, but they never put forward territorial claims from Turkey. Referring to the Karabakh conflict, the head of state stated that concessions for the solution were inevitable, but that they depend on various factors. He showed his position by claiming "we are strong and therefore; we should get more" (NTV 2005).

During ten-year presidential period, Robert Kcharian has always blamed Turkey for Genocide, occupation of their territories and their support for Karabakh. His administration refused any initiatives from Turkey for normalizing relations. The othering of

Turkey in international arena increased with claims about recognition of Genocide. The impact of Diaspora in the implementation of victimization discourse and inclusion of Genocide as a main primordial element to the discourse hugely impacted on Kocharian's foreign policy formulation against Turkey.

Conclusion

Through the discursive shifts in Armenia after the fall of communism, the image of Turks in national imagination has been changed. Victimization discourse starting from Robert Kocharian's presidential period, was a successful initiative to suit the social imagination in foreign policy decision-making.

As Armenian nation-building was based on anti-Turkish primordial elements (mythology, Great Armenia project and Genocide), the first elite tried to substitute ethnic elements with civic ones. Considering the influence of Diaspora, there occurred a new need for construction of national identity. Following constructivist approach, states consider significantly identity issues in its politics, as identities determine the interests of the states (Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation and the International State* 1994). So, the second elite decided to construct homogenous Armenian identity by satisfying the interests of Diaspora and provide its representation in foreign policy through new discourse. The only way for the construction of new discourse was to set national imagination with Turkish hatred. All Armenians could get together by the resurgence of the discourse of Genocide. After the independence in 1991, the new discourse of social construction of national identity should also include civic elements. The representation of Genocide in foreign policy was added as a civic element of new discourse- victimization.

Analyzing discursive shifts in national identity construction, research tries to examine changes in Turkish otherness. Othering in foreign policy was the new form of Turkish otherness after independence. Primordial elements have always played a crucial role in national identity formation, however the main civic element

– Genocide’s representation in foreign policy was added to othering.

The failures of several initiatives in order to normalize relations between two countries have been studied. Being out of the important energy routes and economic initiatives in the region have already been harmful for the country. However, considering the security problems in region and Armenia’s economic situation, the discourse of othering and victimization should be abandoned there. At least, the civic element – representation of Genocide in foreign policy should be transformed into the project of past and changed with discourse of normalizing relations.

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