The Clash of Myths:
Two Myths of Armenian Genocide and Possible Role of the Logic of Appropriateness in Armenian Question

Eduard Alan Bulut
Middle East Technical University
eduardalan@gmail.com

The myth of Armenian Genocide has been central not only to Turkey and Armenia, but also other international institutions, such as the US Congress and EU. According to the Turkish version of the myth, there is no room for such genocide; therefore, the Turkish national identity has been forged over the years in a way that it is considered to be a fabrication and now it is a red line. According to the Armenian version of the myth, there is no room for doubt in this case; so the Armenian national identity and foreign policy has been shaped with this historical experience, and Armenian diaspora has spent great efforts to make the other foreign powers recognise their version of myth. In recent years, the discourses and discussions at intergovernmental and supranational levels have shown that a clash of myths will take place in close future. As Turkey has been in the process of accession to EU, the Armenian version of the myth has been brought up to the agendas of most EU members and even passed their parliaments. In this regard, it is highly probable that Turkey, as a candidate country, will face the issue anyhow. Bearing in mind the Croatian experience, in which the “national identity” played an important role in non-compliance with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, it would not be surprising to experience a similar outcome in Turkish case, too. As far as the Turkish national identity moulded with her own historical myth is considered, the logic of appropriateness or sociological institutionalism will reveal itself and “identity test” will filter and evaluate the myths. Likewise, rational choice approach or the logic of consequentialism will be put in test to question the rationality of the myths in Turkish case.

Key Words: Armenian Question, Genocide, Ottoman Empire, Tehcir Law, Political conditionality, logic of appropriateness, Turkey

1 Eduard Alan Bulut is a Graduate Researcher in the Middle East Technical University (METU), Graduate Department of Asian Studies. His recent publication is “A Focus on Greek Christian Community in Turkey: A Frightened Society and Deep-rooted Institution under Crucifixion” from the Athens Institute for Education and Research, Greece. (eduardalan@gmail.com)
The Clash of Myths: Two Myths of Armenian Genocide and Possible Role of the Logic of Appropriateness in Armenian Question

"Reality can be beaten with enough imagination."

Mark Twain

Introduction

Though the science of history is considered to be the record of past events, it is not always accepted as the only source of general knowledge. Apart from written records, oral sources passed down from generation to generation or disseminated easily among people also play an important role in forming opinions in a society about past events. Of them, myths as unproved or false collective beliefs are one of the most common stories disseminated under the disguise of reality. In some societies, myths become so prevailed over reality that it can be impossible to remove any misinformation to make amendments or correction due to profound conviction. Therefore, unintended results can be overwhelmingly inevitable, as the myths become an integrated part of cultural capital in that relevant society.

In every nation, there are such myths and it is possible to see their traces in most spheres, including politics, history, and social/ethnic identity formations. Turkey and Armenia are only two of these nations where such myths got off the grounds in the past and predominate the current international affairs and politics. In this paper, two different version of the myth ‘Armenian Question’ is discussed and the politicisation of it over years is elaborated. Besides this background, the case is considered as a ‘possible future political conditionality’ for the European Union. Bearing in mind the Croatian experience in recent years regarding political conditionality, two different myths of Armenian Question in Turkey and Armenia are considered from the perspective of ‘logic of appropriateness’ theory, which played a significant role when the political conditionality of the European Union came into conflict with the national identity and values. However, before moving on the theoretical point and possible future conditionality, it would be helpful to give a brief historical background of the issue in dispute.
Historical Background

Concerning the longstanding Armenian Question, the whole story began on the 24th of April in 1915 in Constantinople, the capital city of Ottoman Empire, when approximately two hundred and fifty intellectuals and leaders who had influence in their own communities were arrested and then consumed. On this very date, Talat Pasha the Ottoman Minister of Interior then instructed the arrest warrant to collect the prominent community leaders and notables lest they became a serious threat against the empire’s security and public order. In the following month, Tehcir Law\(^2\) (*Law on Deportation*) followed and thousands of Armenian subjects were systematically displaced and deported from their homes. In addition, on the 13th of September in 1915, Law on Expropriation and Confiscation passed the Ottoman parliament. Primary goal of this law was to remove masses and to take possession of goods and properties, i.e., land, livestock, immovable estates, which were ‘abandoned’ by the Armenians. In spite of the fact that Armenian subjects were forcibly deported by law, the properties and goods left behind were announced to be ‘abandoned’ and confiscated by the authorities later. It was not then known that this historical deportation and confiscation would be a critical point of an international hot issue.

Following to these baseline preparations, the plight that is still vague and controversial took place. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives in deportation and it resulted in a real chaos. Because of the fact that Armenian subjects were forced to leave their homes as required by Tehcir Law, they did not have the chance to take their belongings nearby or to confiscate their assets, which were announced to be abandoned later. Even if they had done it, it would have been an exceptional case to make use their liquidated savings, as a majority of deported subjects were consumed en route due to harsh or insecure conditions. There is not a consensus about the number of tolls; it varies according to the storytellers. On the one hand, the Armenians claim it is on close one and a half million. On the other hand, the Turkish object to this argument and claim that it was not demographically possible to have such high number of tolls.

Depending upon this high number of deaths and upon the policy of Ottoman Empire against Armenian subjects, the Armenians prefer calling 1915 incidents as ‘genocide’, but the Turkish

\(^2\) The Tehcir Law (*Law on Deportation*) passed the Ottoman Parliament on May 27, 1915. This law was temporary, so it expired in February 1916. The law authorised the Army to take necessary military actions against anyone opposing or resisting.
severely rejects this term and they prefer calling it massacre or killing, rather than genocide. The underlying reason of Turkish objection was the systematic execution of genocide plans, which was out of question in 1915 incidents, and Ottoman Empire did not put this large-scale relocation plan under the name of genocide. Based on such explanations, the Turkish do not classify these incidents as genocide. However, it is generally accepted that the incidents did not take place under the name of a genocide plan, but deportation, which resulted in the same tragedy. The Armenians, therefore, did not take the case from only terminological point of view, because they believe that the Law of Deportation was a crafty plan, and Ottoman Empire put its plan against Armenians into practice under the disguise of deportation. From Armenian perspective, displacing people disregarding their gender or age and driving them into jeopardy in chaotic geographies was an indirect act of genocide, which cannot be justified by terminological definitions.

Myths of Armenian Genocide Today

A monument, called Tsitsernakaberd, was erected in Yerevan and it was dedicated to those who lost their lives in the late Ottoman reign and especially in the exile following the Ottoman Tehcir Law. This monument was completed in 1968 and it is composed of twelve surrounding columns symbolising the twelve lost cities in Asia Minor. Even though the name of this monument literally means Swallow’s Fort, it is unofficially known as the ‘Genocide Monument’. This commemoration site hosts hundreds of thousands of people throughout the year, but 24th of April is a special day for the Armenians. Every year on this very day, the Armenians visit this site to stand in homage and to pay their respect to those consumed in exile.

Hundreds of thousands of people visit this site on the grounds of their absolute belief in their myth of genocide which has taken form according to their point of views and interpretation of their lowest point in Armenian history. It is inevitable that the generations since then have contributed much to this myth and oral narrative tradition has played an important role in creating such a myth. Briefly, the myth has been fictionalised over the years. It is evident from the monuments erected in different countries that the fictionalised version of their myth has been immortalised. Inasmuch as they have absolute belief in their own version, it would be useless to attempt to change it, such that any historical evidence or document refuting their version, if any, would prove inefficient, as they are profoundly convinced of it. Whilst this is the case on the Armenian side, the situation is more or less the same in Turkey. The Turkish
version of the myth differs considerably and does not accept such a hypothetical fabrication. According to this version, there is no room for any doubt in this regard, and the idea of ‘genocide’ is, by no means, acceptable. Even the use of word “genocide” has become a taboo-like word and it is not allowed to be pronounced in public anywhere, even when it is interpreted during a simultaneous or consecutive translation. The Turkish are also convinced of their version of myth that there is no tolerance to any reference to the “so-called Armenian Genocide”, which is the phrase used in response to Armenian Genocide arguments. The phrase itself reveals the opinion of Turkish government about this issue, as the adjective preceding the Armenian Genocide clearly states that claims are no more than assumption or supposition. Likewise, not any historical proof or finding can change this myth, as coming up with such a claim would be out of question.

Though the disclosure of historical archives and hidden documents is always on the agenda in Turkey, not any concrete step has been taken for years to pave the way for any research, as this call is doomed to be ‘oral’ and ‘unfulfilled’. More importantly, these archives are inaccessible. As far as these discourses are considered, there is reluctance in Turkey to open this longstanding issue to debate. In practice, it is hard to see the application of commitments made orally, which can be attributed to their mythic conviction.

In order to make this situation more comprehensible, it is necessary to exemplify it with a recent event. To illustrate, a conference titled “Ottoman Era Armenians during the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy” was going to be held in Bosporus University in 2005, but this conference was cancelled twice due to strict reactions and extremist critiques. The primary objective of the conference was to gather scientific and prominent figures from Turkey and Armenia, to come into view at international platform together so as to discuss an important issue and to bring up the 1915 incidents that Armenian subjects experienced during the last days of the Ottoman Empire. Even though it has been the orally-uttered policy of Turkish politics to leave the issue in question to historians, which is discussed in detailed below, and to facilitate the discussion of 1915 incidents openly without reservation, the organisers met with obstacles. What makes the case more interesting is that not only the Turkish media, but also some Cabinet Members criticised this event and severely rejected it. Turkish Minister of Justice from the party in power, Justice and Development Party, was one of the opponents who raised difficulty for this historical event. In its third

---

3 Academicians from Sabanci University, Bosporus University and Bilgi University.
attempt, the conference finally took place and it prompted heated debates in the aftermath. In consequence, this event proved the true colour of the authorities, which was more different than the expressed one.

From various circles, it has been put forwarded that it would be wiser and more appropriate to establish a committee consisting of historians with scientific background in order to shed light on the incidents happened in the late Ottoman reign. The basis of this idea was to prevent the continuation of non-scientific arguments and unsound claims about the issue in question; therefore, it is crucial for the ‘historians’ to handle the issue thoroughly by excluding the non-academic discourses at any level. Not only Turkey, but also other countries, including Switzerland and the US, brought up such a proposal to their agenda; however, this call was not appreciated much. Particularly the Armenians have been resistant to this idea and they have not come out in most events. The Armenian attitude, which seems to be uncompromising in appearance, has led to the assumption that the Armenians are afraid of confronting their historical fallacy and distorted facts. Indeed, it is still the prevailing idea in Turkey. The point not taken into account in this prevailing assumption is the social psychology itself. Even the idea of ‘cooperation’ and ‘collaboration’ sounds unpleasant for an Armenian and they severely reject to take part in any occasion that would touch a very sensitive point in their tragic history.

Nonattendance of Armenian scholars to the conferences\(^4\) is a tacit sign of their reluctance to cooperate; not only to the notorious conference held in Bilgi University in 2005, but also to another conference held in Istanbul University in the following year did any Armenian scholars attend to discuss historical arguments about Armenian Question. In the press, it was claimed that the Armenians kept away from factual arguments, but such news was sheer yellow journalism. It has not been fully comprehended by the Turkish that the Armenian do not take kindly to collaboration owing to the fact that it is futile for an Armenian to sit round a table in order to discuss counterclaims that contradict with his ingrained facts. Armenian scholars showed their reaction by not attending to events and they implied, in plain language, that ‘Hey look, most countries that have influence in global affairs have already passed my thesis from their parliaments and they respect for my historical tragedy, so why should I attend to your conference to hear your denial and disavowal about an internationally accepted

---

\(^4\) Another conference concerning Armenian Question was held in Istanbul University between the dates of March 15 - 17, 2011. Title of the conference was “New Approaches in Turco-Armenian Relations”.

Page | 5
plight. You do not even respect my deep grief and still try to deny it. I will no way collaborate with anyone who does not respect my tragedy.’ In Turkey, the case is not different at all. In the simplest term, the protests from the Cabinet, press and public against the Armenian Conference, colloquially, clearly showed how much Turkish people, from top to bottom, are open and willing to host the scholars and intellectuals to discuss, or to face the facts (with their own terms). Furthermore, this resistance, clearly uttered by high-ranking figures, has revealed how much sincere they were with their call for historians and scientific discussion. Inasmuch as, ironically, the lovers of scientific discussion unilaterally prove their own will. As far as these discourses are considered from a neutral point of view, one may come up with the conclusion that there is contradiction within the same political body; therefore, paradox of approach does not make any call for scientific discussion creditable and convincing.

Amidst of two myths, the international affairs of both countries have gone from bad to worse over years, and neither version has come out triumphant. In international arena, polarisation has already taken significant stride recently thanks to outstanding efforts and diasporic pressure of Armenians. Several parliaments have passed bills that recognise the Armenian Genocide. Germany, Canada, France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Russia, Poland are only some of the countries recognising it officially and 43 of 50 states in the US, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Catalonia, Basque, Crimea, Quebec and South Australia are the regions or provinces that officially recognise the Armenian Genocide. Along with the resolutions recognising the genocide, some of these states have passed bills. According to these bills of law making it a crime to deny the ‘genocide’, any person in opposition to this bill of law is fined or sentenced because of violating the laws.

Before this bill of law passed the parliaments, there had been some calls from various figures to establish a commission of historians to conclude the open question. It is essential to note that not only the Turkish officials, but also representatives from other countries and international organisations came up with this proposal to have a better insight with the goal of making a healthy decision. The very fallacy that most people fall into is the notion that history is an objective record of past. However, it is forgotten that history is recorded according to the perspectives of a particular nation, which can be best described with ‘historical scepticism’. It is undoubtedly assumed that the history is written objectively and there is no room for any relativist record. It is highly essential to re-consider this assumption and to take into account the relativity in historical records. Therefore, it would be also necessary to
reconsider to put absolute trust in historians, as, from an objective point of view, it would be wrong to claim that the historians come up with an objective conclusion. (Akcam 2006)

It seems that both Turkey and Armenia have long way to adopt an interrogational approach in questioning and learning their own history. Currently, apart from a small minority of readers, a significant majority of population is auditory learners who acquaint themselves with information that they hear from others without questioning its validity or basis. Therefore, the society learns its creeds, history, or any information by hearing instead of reading or searching. The idée fixe formed in this way is a real insurmountable problem and it stands as one the most essential impediments ahead in this regard. Any objection to collaborate or to any attempt to deal with the issue can be attributed to this idée fixe which cannot be changed with any evidential finding. As long as the number of people with idée fixe increases, it will be hard to think of a society questioning the preconceived norms and notions, as the cultural capital will continue this tradition accordingly. More importantly, as long as the prominent columnists in newspapers with mass circulation and the broadcasters in media means remain to be the vigorous followers of this trend, it will be always easier than expected to give large masses the bum steer and to manipulate them the way such provokers wish.

The aspersion that a noted scholar faced in 2006 fits well with this situation in Turkey. In his book, Taner Akcam came up with a reference to Ataturk’s speech in American Radio Press, which resulted in crisis. His reference was not welcomed and he became the focus of criticism by nationalist groups along with the so-called investigative journalists in Turkey. Akcam quoted Ataturk’s own utterance stating that “We hereby guarantee that no new Turkish violence will take place against the Armenians”. (Akcam 2006) Furthermore, another point that exacerbated the case was Ataturk’s assessment of 1915 incidents against the Armenians. In his assessment, he used the word ‘fazahat’, which means disgraceful or shameful act. These utterances led to a fierce argument in Turkey on the grounds that the so-called investigative journalists and some extreme nationalists, who are convinced of their knowledge, alleged that it was not probable for Ataturk to pronounce such a word or to assess 1915 incidents as disgraceful. Without questioning the case or having a look at the source of references in question, dogmatised criticisms arose against Akcam and he was accused of falsifying the facts. The critics were so convinced of their historical knowledge that they declared Akcam a traitor. Even after the confirmation of the accuracy of these references, the critics were not literally persuaded, which was not an unusual outcome. This specific experience, once again, showed that the idée fixe played a significant role and there was no
room for questioning, reasoning or evidential disclosures. The preconceptional ideas in any field are so internalised that not any other idea sounds plausible to their followers even if it is evidence-based.

(Non)politicisation of Armenian Genocide Myths

Recognised as a candidate for full membership to European Union in 1999, Turkey started negotiations in 2005. In accession process, Turkey has been making radical amendments and reforms in order to comply with the standards, regulations and procedures. Nevertheless, only one chapter, Science and Research, has been closed since then. It seems that Turkey still has a long way to go.

Along with the negotiations, it is probable for the EU to come up with some conditions that are expected to be met by the candidate states. These conditions may be economic or political, and they are termed as conditionality in general. The political conditionality includes respect for human rights, minority rights, equality, and so on. Besides, promotion of democracy and democratic governance is also essential. EU introduces such policies in order to “support the efforts of new political leaders to redefine national goals away from the nationalist enmities of the past and focus firmly on forging a path to a better future.” (Batt and Obradović 2009) So far, not any major political conditionality has been introduced for Turkey by the EU. More importantly, to date, the above-discussed topic has not been brought up to the agenda of accession negotiations with Turkey, but it does not mean that it will not be in the future.

Considering the fact that the EU locomotives have already recognised the 1915 incidents as genocide, it is highly probable for them to ask for a change of approach to Armenian Question. As far as their dominance in the European Parliament is considered, the picture becomes much more apparent. The countries with the most national apportionment of MEP seats are as follows: Federal Republic of Germany with the highest number of seats in the EP, 96 seats, passed a resolution that approves of Armenian Genocide and they clearly used the term ‘genocide’ in their resolution. In their resolution, it was especially stated that they came to this conclusion after numerous independent historians qualified the deportation of Armenian subjects in Ottoman Empire as genocide. There is one more statement with great importance. It is emphasised that “an honest historical review is needed and represents the most important basis for reconciliation”. It can be elicited from these statements that the German parliament has passed this resolution by depending on numerous independent historians’ decisions, and there is a clear call for revision of history. In other words, it is
expected from Turkey to revise her history again, as their conclusion is not on the same path with that of Turkey. Last but not the least; ‘special responsibility’ of Germany in this regard is another point that is worth mentioning. In the resolution, there is a direct reference to the incidents that took place in the WWI; according to this reference, it is implied that Ottoman Empire, an ally of German Reich then, undertook some unpleasant actions and German Reich turned a blind eye to these actions. In repentance, Germany now bears a ‘special responsibility’ for reconciliation.

Another part of locomotive is France with the second highest number of seats in the EP, 74 seats. French Parliament recognised the Armenian Genocide with a resolution in 1998 and a bill of law followed it. In 2006, the Lower House of the French Parliament passed the bill of law that penalizes the denial of Armenian Genocide with prison sentence and fine. In addition to this legalisation, there have been oral statements from the French politics in power. Former French President Jacques René Chirac and former Minister of Interior and current President Nicolas Sarkozy both stated that Turkey would have to recognise the Armenian Genocide before she joined the EU. In spite of the fact that this is not the official conditionality of EU ‘for the time being’, but oral statements, such discourses imply that Turkey will sooner or later be compelled to re-consider her past.

As for Italy, she is one the states with the highest number of seats, 73, in the EP. Concerning Armenian Question, a resolution passed the Italian Parliament in 2000 and the parliament recognised the killing actions and massacres in 1915 against the Armenian subjects as genocide. Besides recognition, the Italian Parliament called Turkey for acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and for ending her ‘failed’ denial policy. Drawing attention to the dialogue with Armenia, the parliament asked Turkey to lift the blockade and to take steps in this regard. Referring to the recognition of Armenian Genocide officially in other EU member states, Italy found the Turkish denial policy ‘failed’, because most members along with the EP had already came to the same conclusion; therefore, it was useless for Turkey to continue denying the genocide.

The case is more or less the same in the UK, another state with 73 seats in the EP. This state also has considerable influence on EP. A great majority the British Parliament has recognised the 1915 incidents as genocide. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales officially accepted the Armenian Genocide. Likewise, Basque Country and Catalonia are the two regions that have
officially voted for the recognition of Armenian Genocide. And this list covers the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Greece and others with fewer seats.

As far as the majority of seats in the EP and the dominance of these states in EU are considered, the case becomes more complicated. As stated by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ben Bot, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide is not a requirement for full memberships of the EU, but it does not mean that it will not be. Mr Bon uttered during his service that ‘this is a problem that we must emphasise in the future’.\(^5\) This statement is a clear sign of conditionality to be introduced to Turkey by the states recognising the Armenian Genocide. One may argue that this is not the official position of the EU concerning the Armenian Question, but Dutch Minister is not the only one supporting this idea. His French counterpart, Michel Barnier, is another figure who acknowledges that the ‘desired’ recognition is not a condition for membership of the EU, but he adds that it is Turkey’s duty to recognise the genocide if she wants to join the union.

With the goal of including the recognition of Armenian Genocide to the framework of accession negotiations with Turkey, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs has spent considerable efforts. In parliamentary meetings, he wanted the EP parliamentarians to acknowledge that the genocide was an integral part of the negotiations. Briefly, what he proposes is political conditionality: continuation of accession negotiations on the condition of recognising the Armenian Genocide, or leaving the Turkish version of the myth and accepting that of the Armenians. The motivation of both Dutch and French Ministers in political conditionality is their conviction that the tension between Turkey and Armenia will ease and the relations will improve.

Concrete steps have been taken by the EP in introducing political conditionality. Resolutions in favour of Armenian version of myth have passed the EP parliament and there are baseline activities to introduce the recognition of genocide as a precondition for membership. In plain words, the position of the EP has changed in due course of time and it has become clearer. The previous discourses about political conditionality proved to be right, as the EP openly proposes a conditional accession to the EU. The resolution adopted by the EU legislature with 356 votes in favour `calls on Turkey to recognise the Armenian genocide and considers this

recognition to be a prerequisite for accession to the EU.\textsuperscript{6} It is evident from these high-level decisions that Turkey is progressively drifted towards the flow that she wants to stay away from. What could happen if such political conditionality is officially introduced to Turkey for accession negotiations by the EU? This paper aims at answering this question from the perspective of ‘logic of appropriateness’ and ‘logic of consequentialism’ by taking into account the possible role of national identity as a filter in this process.

**Possible Role of Logic of Appropriateness**

In constructivism, national identity is an important term and it can serve as a filter in any case that concerns the national values or interests. It is not inborn, but acquired later externally from the society, institutions or family. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that ‘common point’ of most people in a society forms the national identity. Concerning Armenian Genocide myths, it is highly probable that Turkish national identity will play a critical role as a response to the EU’s political conditionality. On the condition that EU comes up with the conditionality of recognising the 1915 incidents as genocide, then Turkey will be at the fork on the European Union path. Making a decision about an issue that has been denied approximately for a century will be hard for Turkey, because there will be, on one hand, full EU membership that a great majority of Turkish people give their support to and, on the other hand, recognition of 1915 incidents as genocide that has been a taboo-like idea for years. Between Scylla and Charybdis, Turkey will have to take her next step by taking into account the pros and cons.

At this fork, there stand ‘logic of consequentialism’ and ‘logic of appropriateness’, according to which the decision will be considered at length. As far as the rationalist approach is concerned, the national identity will not have a major impact in this process and the interests along with national benefits will come to the fore. Provided that the overall benefits exceed the costs of EU’s political conditionality, recognition of 1915 incidents as genocide in Turkish case, then there can be compliance with the conditionality. If not, then there will be no compliance. Based on this benefit-based calculation, the rationalists do not take the possible role of national identity into account and view the point from ‘logic of consequentialism’ standpoint.

\textsuperscript{6} Available at http://www.armeniapedia.org/index.php?title=European_Union, last access on March 12, 2011.
However, this approach does not apply to all cases and it is necessary to take into consideration the other institutions and factors that may have considerable influence on national matters. As for the constructivist approach, sociological institutionalism may have an impact on this process and national identity may matter indeed. Provided that the EU’s political conditionality is not considered to be appropriate and in line with the nationally-supported values, then there may be no compliance with the relevant conditionality, contrary to the rationalist approach. (Freyburg and Richter 2008) In Armenian Question case, if the EU officially introduces this political conditionality for accession negotiations, it is certain that this conditionality will come into conflict with the Turkish version of Armenian Genocide myth. Evidently, discourses and recent actions indicate that the national identity will not allow complying with the political conditionality. Inasmuch as the conviction regarding the Turkish version of Armenian Genocide myth is profoundly embedded in Turkish society, it would be unusual to expect from Turkish national identity to leave its embedded conviction and adopt the opposite version.

How can one come up with such an argument and what is the basis of this specific situation? As far as the Croatian identity test is considered, political conditionality introduced by the EU to Croatia for accession negotiations stands as a good example in order to understand the possible role of national identity. Having signed the EU Stabilisation and Association Agreements, Croatia officially applied for EU membership in 2003 and the Croatians were supporting her membership in the EU. However, the negotiation process was more turbulent and challenging than expected. The EU wanted Croatia to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to judge the war criminals. However, those called war criminals by the EU were the national heroes, indeed, in Croatia and they fought for the Just and Holy Homeland War. The Croats thought that cooperation with the ICTY would undermine their national sovereignty and identity. Therefore, the rationalist approach did not pass the Croatian identity test and sociological institutionalism blocked the negotiations, as cooperation was not considered to be an appropriate action.

Conclusion

Bearing in mind the Croatian experience, it is plausible to argue that national identity will be central to the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey. Like Croatia, Turkey will have to make a decision on a critical issue: recognition of 1915 incidents as genocide to continue with accession negotiations for EU membership. The Turkish version of the myth of
Armenian Genocide is profoundly embedded in Turkish society and it is under no circumstances accepted as genocide, even the direct use of word ‘genocide’ is not welcomed. The notorious Article 301 of Turkish Penal Code still stands as an important impediment for those accepting the genocide claims or making (in)direct references, as the article considers any argument that clashes with Turkish national identity as an insult to Turkishness. For this reason, a great number of prominent figures, including Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk, have been charged with insulting Turkishness and Turkish identity under the Article 301 of the Penal Code. This list includes Elif Şafak, a Turkish author and The Guardian columnist, but the most outstanding of all is Hrant Dink, who was murdered in 2007 by a Turkish nationalist because of his statements about Armenian Genocide. Whist the case is too sensitive in Turkey, what will happen when Turkey gets in the same both with Croatia is thought-provoking.

The sensitivity of Turkish government and society about genocide is so high and it seems, according to existing circumstances and discourses, Turkish identity test will not allow recognising the genocide arguments. In this situation, there will be a ‘clash of myths’. It is hard to make any prediction about it, but it is definite that it will be a challenging task.
References


