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Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009

By Fatma Muge Gocek



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While much of the international community regards the forced deportation of Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire in 1915, where approximately 800,000 to 1.5 million Armenians perished, as genocide, the Turkish state still officially denies it.

In *Denial of Violence*, Fatma Müge Göçek seeks to decipher the roots of this disavowal. To capture the negotiation of meaning that leads to denial, Göçek undertook a qualitative analysis of 315 memoirs published in Turkey from 1789 to 2009 in addition to numerous secondary sources, journals, and newspapers. She argues that denial is a multi-layered, historical process with four distinct yet overlapping components: the structural elements of collective violence and situated modernity on one side, and the emotional elements of collective emotions and legitimating events on the other. In the Turkish case, denial emerged through four stages: (i) the initial imperial denial of the origins of the collective violence committed against the Armenians commenced in 1789 and continued until 1907; (ii) the Young Turk denial of the act of violence lasted for a decade from 1908 to 1918; (iii) early republican denial of the actors of violence took place from 1919 to 1973; and (iv) the late republican denial of the responsibility for the collective violence started in 1974 and continues today.

Denial of Violence develops a novel theoretical, historical and methodological framework to understanding what happened and why the denial of collective violence against Armenians still persists within Turkish state and society.



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Review

"At the heart of Fatma Müge Göçek's book is the claim that forgetting doesn't just happen. Rather, forgetting (and remembering) happens in a context, with profound political and personal stakes for those involved. And this forgetting has consequences. *Denial of Violence* looks at how this process played out in Turkey in the past 200 years. ...thoughtful and intellectually rigorous." -*New Books Network*

About the Author

Fatma Müge Göçek is Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan.

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