WHICH ARMENIANNESS?
THE ARMENIAN YOUTH OF TURKEY AND THEIR SENSE OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING

by
RUDİ SAYAT PULATYAN

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ABSTRACT

WHICH ARMENIANNESS? THE ARMENIAN YOUTH OF TURKEY AND THEIR SENSE OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING

RUDI SAYAT PULATYAN

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Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Leyla Neyzi

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The purpose of this thesis is to explore what it means to be a young Armenian in Turkey. In order to surface the experiences of young Armenians, it examines the impact of a wide range of tools and methods on the process of "becoming" an Armenian utilized by the Turkish government, Turkish society, and the Armenian community. This study claims that the way that Armenianness is perceived and performed by Armenians of Turkey is changing and young Armenians are the bearers of this transformation as they become more comfortable to publicly affirm their Armenian heritage and more integrated into Turkish society. They did not only become aware of their Armenianness but also want to be noticed by the Turkish society. The most significant event that defined as 'milestone' or 'breaking point' by several interviewees and had far-reaching effects such as the revival of the trans-generational memory and created a rupture in the lives of young Armenians is the assassination of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. Interviews revealed that young Armenians are increasingly prefer to emphases the cultural aspects of the Armenian culture instead of the 1915 and the ensuing events. It should be underlined that the goal of young Armenians is not to minimize the importance of 1915, but to adapt to the realities of living in Turkey and the desire to create an alternative future. In other words, rather of focusing on a topic which the Turkish state and society prevent them from acting, young Armenians are attempting to forge an alternative Armenianness by emphasizing other components of the Armenian culture.

ÖZET

HANGİ ERMENİLİK? TÜRKİYELİ GENÇ ERMENİLERİN KİMLİK VE AİDİYET DUYGULARI

RUDİ SAYAT PULATYAN

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiyeli Genç Ermeniler, Hrant Dink, Postbellek, Türkiye, Gençlik, Etnisite

Bu tezin amacı, Türkiye'de genç bir Ermeni olmanın ne anlama geldiğini araştırmaktır. Bu çalışma, genç Ermenilerin deneyimlerini gün yüzüne çıkarırken; Türk hükümeti, Türkiye toplumu ve Ermeni toplumu tarafından kullanılan çeşitli araç ve yöntemlerin Ermeni "olma" süreci üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Bu araştırma, Ermeniliğin Türkiye Ermenileri tarafından algılanma ve uygulanma biçiminin değişmekte olduğunu ve genç Ermenilerin, Ermeni miraslarını kamusal alanlarda temsil edilmesi konusunda daha rahat hale geldikleri ve Türk toplumuyla daha fazla bütünleştikleri için bu dönüşümün taşıyıcıları olduklarını iddia etmektedir. Genç Ermeniler, yalnızca Ermeniliklerinin farkına varmakla kalmayıp Türk toplumu tarafından fark edilmek de istiyorlar. Görüşülen birçok kişi tarafından 'dönüm noktası' olarak tanımlanan ve kuşaklar arası hafızanın canlanması gibi geniş kapsamlı etkileri olan ve özellikle genç Ermenilerin hayatında bir kırılma yaratan en önemli olay Ermeni gazeteci Hrant Dink'in öldürülmesidir. Mülakatlar, genç Ermenilerin 1915 ve sonrasındaki olaylar yerine Ermeni kültürünün kültürel yönlerini vurgulamayı giderek daha fazla tercih ettiklerini ortaya koydu. Burada genç Ermenilerin amacının 1915'in önemini küçümsemek değil, Türkiye'de yaşamanın gerçekliklerine uyum sağlamak ve alternatif bir gelecek yaratma arzusu olduğunun altı çizilmelidir. Bir başka deyişle, genç Ermeniler, Türk devleti ve toplumunun hareket alanlarını kısıtladığı bir konuya odaklanmak yerine, Ermeni kültürünün diğer bileşenlerini öne çıkararak alternatif bir Ermenilik oluşturuyorlar.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1. Theoretical Background 4

1.1.1. Identity 4

1.1.2. National Identity 6

1.1.3. Subjectivity 8

1.1.4. Post-memory 9

1.1.5. Armenian Identity 10

1.2. Methodology 11

1.2.1. Oral History 12

1.2.2. Ethics 15

1.2.3. Notes on the research process 18

1.3. Thesis Outline 19

2. Historical Background **21**

2.1. The Transition Period: From Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic 23

2.2. Discursive Changes over Armenian Genocide through the Turkish Republic 26

2.3. Concise History of Turkification 28

2.4. Conclusion 32

3. Thresholds of Armenianness: Construction of the Armenian Identity and its Manifestations **34**

3.1. Encounters with non-Armenians 38

3.2. Speaking Armenian 40

3.3. Having an Armenian name 44

3.4. Gender and Subjectivization of Young Armenians 50

3.5. The Impact of Generational Differences 55

3.6. Educational Institutions and Perceptions of Young Armenians 58

3.7. Outside of the Armenian Schools: *Dershanes* 65

3.8. Conclusion 70

4. Identity in Transformation: The Sense of Armenianness among Young Armenians **73**
4.1. Getting to Know the Armenian Genocide 74
4.2. Young Armenians' Perception of the Genocide 80
4.3. The Day of the Assassination 88
4.4. The Perception of Hrant Dink in the Armenian Community 92
4.5. The Impact of the Assassination on young Armenians 99
4.6. The Issue of Belonging 106
4.7. Conclusion 115

5. CONCLUSION **118**

BIBLIOGRAPHY **122**

APPENDIX A **129**

1. INTRODUCTION

It's very hot outside. I have never been a fan of hot weather. But it's not that I hate summer. Especially with the sun shining in the sky and plums starting to appear on the trees. I love plums! Particularly the ones that grow in the garden of our apartment. I'm going to the balcony to take a look at the tree. Nope, they are not there yet. Meanwhile, someone, a boy around my age, is reaching out from the balcony and looking at me. I'm feeling anxious and trying to avert my gaze. It's not working, he is still looking at me. Then, he is starting to talk. He is inviting me to go out and play some football. I love playing football, but... Hadn't they moved a couple of days ago, how did he make friends so quickly? Oh, he is asking again, I have to answer. But no, I can't. It is not allowed.

This *autofictional story*[1] dates back to the very first years of my childhood and it marks the first instance in my life when I got in touch with a non-Armenian individual. To avoid the risks that communicating with that person might entail, I responded to the situation by running to my room, leaving the question unanswered. The little boy, not aware of the significant distinction between us, invites me to go outside to play football with him. What he does not and could not know is, to be on the outside has dangerous connotations for me, as I was constantly cautioned by my parents to be careful. Those warnings inevitably result in an awareness, along with a sense of unease, toward the symbols of the Armenian culture particularly on the outside.

The most prominent reflection of those feelings in my daily life is related to the difficulties that I experienced in communicating with non-Armenians. Although the story I mentioned above was the first encounter I had, it was not an easy process for

[1] Jason de León, in his book entitled The Land of Open Graves, investigates the consequences of US immigration policy by focusing on the lives and deaths of the thousands of migrants who cross the US-Mexico border every day. The most interesting of the research methodologies he used from many subfields of anthropology is semifictionalized ethnography, which is the combination of different stories of migrants into a single narrative to describe their experiences holistically.

me to go out and make new Turkish friends for most of my adolescence. I have always socialized and met with almost all of my friends in Armenian schools I attended, and my friends were exclusively Armenians for many years. The possibilities and the boundaries of my socialization have always been very clearly determined by my parents. Besides my parents' attitude, I also neither had a desire nor a capacity to envision the possibility of going beyond these limits.

When reflecting on those years, the most prominent reason for this sense of unease can be explained by the discomfort that my Armenianness evokes in my perception of myself. The reason why it evokes such negative feelings could be traced back to my childhood, as the very first memories of my childhood are related to the differences between the home and the outside. I was taught, for example, that I should not use the language I speak at home while outside. Even back then, I was aware that something was constraining my movements, even if I did not know what the cause was. During the period I attend dershane, which marks the first structured encounter that I had with non-Armenians, it was my main goal to blend in with the crowd by concealing all the features that might imply my Armenianness. For instance, I introduced myself not by my Armenian name but with a Turkish pseudonym that I fabricated or did not wear my cross around my neck when going to dershane. My endeavor to live in the shadows continued without any significant change until the assassination of Hrant Dink. That incident deeply affected me because it made me realize that someone could be murdered just for being an Armenian. The impact of the incident did not emerge immediately after the assassination, but it marked the beginning of a transformation. This transformation eventually steered me to develop an interest in my Armenianness which resulted in reevaluating my relationship with my Armenian identity and changing my perception of it.

As years passed, this interest eventually developed into a curiosity to examine the extent of the impact of Hrant Dink's assassination on myself, on society and finally on Armenians. I observed that it was not only me who was describing the assassination as a significant event that impacted their perception of Armenianness. How an assassination could have such transformative outcomes was the main question that was keeping my curiosity alive. This research is the most significant outcome of my curiosity as it examines the stories of 12 young Armenians of Turkey concerning their perception of Armenianness and the evolution of their perception throughout their lives.

The interest and accordingly the number of scholarly and popular works focusing on the past and the present of Armenians of Turkey are increasing in recent years. As Hülya Adak (2016) argues, many conferences and workshops have permitted research

on the Armenian genocide in the last few years, various panels have been arranged to promote awareness of the genocide, and plenty of testimony has been published. Particularly after the assassination of Hrant Dink, which, as Talin Suciyan (2015*a*) argues, shattered the habitus of denial, discussions, and publications concerning the fates of Armenians in and after 1915 have been proliferated. Lerna Ekmekcioglu's *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (2016) and Talin Suciyan's *The Armenians In Modern Turkey: Post-Genocide Society, Politics and History* (2015*a*) books are among the most prominent examples that examine the lives and coping mechanisms of Armenians of Turkey after the Armenian Genocide. In this regard, Hratch Tchilingirian's article entitled "The 'Other' Citizens: Armenians In Turkey Between Isolation And (Dis)Integration" (2017) where he examines the impact of denialist state policies on the Armenian community is also worth mentioning which, he argues results in the emergence of two schools of thought as isolationists and integrationists. Melissa Bilal's (2006) endeavor to examine the lives of Armenians in Turkey after the Genocide through lullabies is significant as it illustrates how stories of 1915 are transmitted through generations.

Despite the increasing number of scholarly works focusing on Armenians of Turkey, the stories of young Armenians have been overlooked up until this date. Although various works mention a changing attitude among young Armenians, the source of this transformation is not thoroughly examined. While underlining the impact of the assassination of Hrant Dink on young Armenians' transformation, those works fell short of conceptualizing the source of the transformation. Nevertheless, one could mention Hrag Papazian's article "Between Gezi Park and Kamp Armen: the intersectional activism of leftist Armenian youths in Istanbul" (2017), and the article of Fırat et al., "Remembering the Genocide: A Comparative Study on the Postmemory of Armenian Youth: (Armenia, Turkey, Lebanon, France)" (2021) among significant examples. Furthermore, the interest can also be seen in dissertations or MA theses as they are increasing in numbers (Baykal 2011; Kopşa 2008; Koç Gabrielsen 2015; Tataryan 2011).

This research, on the other hand, intends to portray an answer to the question of what it means to be a young Armenian in Turkey. It particularly examines the impact of various practices implemented by the Turkish state, by Turkish society and finally by the Armenian community on the process of 'becoming' an Armenian in a comprehensive way. In the first chapter, the emphasis is on the processes through which young Armenians discover the possibilities and limitations that their Armenianness brings about. Following Lerna Ekmekcioglu's conceptualization of encounters taking place in-side, mid-side, and out-side, this paper will attempt to pinpoint the implications of those spaces on the formation of young Armenians'

subjectivities. In the second chapter, the emphasis is on the processes that transform young Armenians' perception of their Armenianness. Particularly the impact of the assassination of Hrant Dink will be examined as it constitutes a crucial event on the lives of young Armenians. Furthermore, the chapter will also explore the young Armenians' sense of belonging and whether they can see a future for themselves in Turkey or not.

1.1 Theoretical Background

1.1.1 Identity

The constructivist approach to the concept of identity argues that starting from childhood, actively (learning to speak, walk, making choices) or passively (nurtured by parents, siblings or exposed to society, media, or state) individuals got influenced by various forces and the outcome of the influence forms one's identity (Tölölyan 2021). In other words, it rejects the existence of an ever-existing substance that determines the subjectivity of an individual. What is worth mentioning in this process is, the forces of socialization mentioned above do not affect everyone in an identical way (Tölölyan 2021, 21). This means that two individuals who are equally subjected to a particular national identity do not experience the same outcomes as they experience subjectivization processes in different extents depending on their gender, sexual orientation, or skin tone, etc. It is also important to underline that in addition to the aspects that are not preferential and inscribed on individuals by birth, such as skin tone or gender, the given name of an individual could also significantly affect the subjectivization process, particularly if it does not belong to the codes of the dominant ethnic group of a specific entity.

Even though the constructivist approach acknowledges the complex subjectivization processes, it still assumes a presence of a 'completed' entity and accordingly is criticized by various scholars. Among those, Stuart Hall describes the concept of identity as "never being unified and in late modern times increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiple, constructed across different often in-

tersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions." (1996, 4) In other words, identity, or 'identities,' as Hall (1990, 222) calls it, is a fluid concept that never receives a final formation and always in the process of continously evolving. Despite the complex and multilayered definitions of identity, scholars did not avoid employing the term in their works and it has been widely used in analyzing diverse topics such as race, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. While there are various possibilities to conceptualize identity, Khacig Tölölyan underlines two distinct aspects that are extensively utilized by scholars, namely, memory and difference.

According to Tölölyan, memory is significant because physical changes happening on the body are not deemed enough to underpin consciousness and thus identity. Particularly, when the topic is not individuals but collectives, such as family, tribe or nation, the importance of memory becomes evident as belonging to a particular community sustained by forms of memory (Tölölyan 2021, 19). Although these forms of memories could appear in various ways, one could mention historical incidents, songs or poetry among the prominent examples that create bonds between groups of people. In addition to the forms, it is equally important to mention how those memories are transmitted through generations.

Collective memory, coined by Maurice Halbwachs, examines the ways that individuals recollect the past and argues that "the collective frameworks of memory are not constructed after the fact by the combination of individual recollections," but they are developed by alteration and manipulation, depending on the context they are recalled (1992, 40). Furthermore, he argues that the memory, and accordingly remembering, is always relational to others' perceptions of the past. The effect of the present concerns on ways of remembering holds a significant place in the formation of national identities. As collective memory is "the cultural fabric of a society and its stock of significant stories and events," it is possible to argue that all groups whether they are sexual, ethnic, religious, or cultural, have some form of collective memory that separate themselves from the others (Azarian-Ceccato 2010, 12). The collective memories of these groups, in other words, are the sum of significant events in one's story which separates 'my story' from 'your story'.

In *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, Anthony Smith underlines the importance of the role of the past in the creation of the present, particularly concerning nationalism and national identity (1999, 180). In this sense, collective memory is one of, and arguably the most important foundational feature of national identity and nationalism. Following these discussions, it is possible to argue that the perception of the past and ways of narrating it has a substantial impact on the formation of identities. What is significant in the process of recalling the past is the extent of

it which heavily depends on forgetting and to some extent lying as Renan argues: "The act of forgetting, I would even say, historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for nationality." (2018, 251). Similarly, Tölölyan claims that the perception of time and its narration has been underestimated by many scholars as they were attributed as derivative components of identity. However, he states that narrative identity is the product of "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past, and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (Tölölyan 2021, 25).

Difference is another but equally important aspect of identity and has a powerful role in the formation of various identities. The significance of difference is also evident in the etymological roots of identity as it can be traced back to the Latin word *idem* which means, "the same". To be the same or similar with some other individual or a group of people takes place at the expense of differing from someone else. Following Charles Taylor, who claims recognition, non-recognition, and misrecognition are the foundational features of identity, identities develop in relation to the 'other' and always appear through differentiation (1994, 25). To have any kind of similarities with anyone, such as religious, racial, or sexual, brings about an imaginary expectation that those people also share at least some basic values with you. Those imaginary expectations were constructed, as argued by Gabrielsen, "on the basis of perceived and/or real differences based on cultural, social, sexual, and ethnic characteristics of an individual and related to her membership to a group, not in isolation but the relation to and based on contact with other identities in society" (2015, 27-8).

1.1.2 National Identity

Even though identities are constructed over differences as mentioned by Gabrielsen and there are various ways to formulate this process as discussed above, within the scope of this research I would like to focus on national identity as the research particularly examines the dimensions of Armenian identities. As discussed above, what has been told about identity is closely related to the concept of the nation as it is people who make the nation. Ronald Suny, for example, in the book entitled *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, where he examines the cultural and social transformations of Armenian nationality in modern times, argues that

"nationality formation is an open-ended process" (1993, 11). Similarly, Anthony D. Smith, in the book entitled *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, where he traces the evolution of nations and nationhood over time, argues that nation-building is more about endless "reinterpretations, rediscoveries and reconstructions," than establishing the appropriate institutions and necessary infrastructure (1988, 296). Accordingly, in his article entitled "The Past as Nation: Three Dimensions of Armenian Identity", Razmik Panossian argues that even the changes that take place in the very foundations of belonging within the same nation, do not necessitate the undermining of the group's sense of nationhood and people can still feel they belong to the same national collective (2002, 123). Nevertheless, Panossian argues that the creation and maintenance of national identity has three sets of factors: (1) Myths and symbols, (2) imagining themselves within the same national community, (3) structural realities which impact ideological processes (2002, 123-4).

The importance of myths, symbols and traditions are often conceptualized in opposing and even contradictory forms. Anthony Smith, for example, highlights the importance of 'myths of origin' and 'myths of ethnic election' as primary definers of the distinct existence and character of certain ethnic identities (1999, 15-16). Smith's examination of how different nations are attributing a sense of uniqueness to their presence through myths and symbols is significant as it shows the parallels of different national identities in their claims of superiority. However, although Smith illustrates the similarities among various national identities, he does not articulate the artificiality of the foundational elements of those identities but rather examines historical processes that led to their emergence. Eric Hobsbawm, on the other hand, while accepting the importance of myths and symbols in the configuration of national identities, put a strong emphasis on the artificiality of such traditions. In his article, he quotes several studies based on the transformation of national traditions over time and argues that existing customs or traditions are exclusively modern constructs as they were "modified, ritualized and institutionalized" in accordance with the needs of national purposes (Hobsbawm 1983, 6-7). As George M. Enteen mentions, a wide range of cultural attributes that are paired with particular nations, such as tribal identities for Africans or the imposition of kilts on Scots, occurred in modern times (1986, 310).

1.1.3 Subjectivity

So far, this paper has mentioned that the concept of identity has a fluid structure, that it is constantly constructed and deconstructed in active or passive ways since childhood, and that it is a never-ending process. While doing so, I have pointed out that in this endless process, symbols and myths, and the traditions built upon them, have had a significant impact, although they are also largely artificial. In the next part, on the other hand, I will talk about how the above processes transform individuals into subjects and how Armenians of Turkey, especially young Armenians, are affected by this process.

The symbols and myths that I discussed above based on Smith and Hobsbawm's arguments are very important for the perpetuation of the nationalist ideology. Through these symbols and myths, a bond is aimed to be created between people from very different backgrounds and characteristics, thus enabling these people to see themselves as parts of a whole, for example, a nation. Althusser analyzes the above-mentioned process using a conceptual framework he calls *interpellation*, which he utilizes to describe the processes that transform individuals into subjects (1994, 265). He argues that 'proper citizens' are created through subjectivization processes, which have multiple dimensions and are closely regulated by 'Ideological State Apparatuses,' in order to reproduce the conditions of production, thus the capitalist ideology.

It is possible to argue that the process of *interpellation* aims to remind individuals that they are part of an 'imagined community,' the well-known notion conceptualized by Benedict Anderson, and in order to belong to this community, they have to become *subjects*. Anderson utilizes the term 'imagined communities' to describe the artificiality of the foundational element of the nationalist ideology, that is the nation, by proposing that "it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (2006, 5-6). Anderson emphasizes the importance of print-capitalism, which results in the proliferation of books, newspapers, etc. printed in vernacular languages, and argues that it is the print-capitalism that laid the bases for national consciousness and enabled people to imagine themselves within a national identity (2006, 44). The imagination of an ever-existing political entity led to the emergence of a sense of immortal national identity, "with which otherwise anonymous individuals can identify" (Smith 1988, 10). In other words, as a result of these processes, individuals with diverse backgrounds are enabled to come together on an imaginary sameness and begin to define their existence through this very perception of sameness.

To be a part of an 'imagined community', and therefore a nation is not a laborless process and the most prominent condition for membership is not challenging the state and its ideology. However, even not challenging the state and its ideology is not deemed to be sufficient as subjects are necessitated to participate in the process of reproduction of the conditions. Accordingly, various state apparatuses constantly 'encourage' individuals to imitate the "unique and central other Subject" in their process of interpellation and instruct them (Althusser 1994, 267). At this point, it should be noted that the identity that Althusser defines as 'unique and central other Subject' actually has a rather exclusionary structure. In other words, an imagined community is not a structure that everyone can be a part of, and there must be some identities that should be kept outside in order for nations to exist.

The necessity to leave some groups or subjects outside for the formulation of a nation has also examined by Judith Butler in her book entitled *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* where she argues that theories of gender need to employ 'the body' as its main tool. In the introduction section, Butler argues that subjectivization processes are marked by an exclusionary matrix which requires not only the domain of subjects but also the domain of abject being, "those who are not yet "subjects," but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject" (2011, xiii). In other words, some people must exist in what Butler calls "constitutive outside" to affirm the existence and limits of the subject's domain. Furthermore, she emphasizes an important aspect of the subjectivization process by underlining the importance of the "constitutive outside," which does not only belong to the domain of abject beings, but it is also a founding element of the domain of subjects (Butler 2011, xiii).

1.1.4 Post-memory

Following Butler's conceptualization, Melissa Bilal argues that the Armenian Genocide, which results in the eradication of the non-Turkish elements from Anatolia is the "constitutive outside" of Turkey's sovereignty, and the possibility to imagine a homogenous Turkish national identity could only become possible through the forgetting of stories of violence experienced by Armenians (2006, 83). In other words, she claims that the denialist attitude of the Turkish state is among the essential components of Turkish subjectivity as it continues to repress the memories of the violence of Armenians to this date. Furthermore, she states that these policies do

not only define the Turkish subjectivity, but it also marks the very definition of Armenianness in Turkey by restricting the visibility of Armenian identity in public spheres as it is "still determined by the fear and the obsession of the "specter" of the Armenian Genocide" (Bilal 2006, 83).

While Bilal mentions the impact of the Armenian Genocide on both Turkish and Armenian subjectivities, the haunting effects of the process should be examined within the conceptual framework of postmemory. Coined by Marianne Hirsch, postmemory describes "the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before" (2012, 4). In brief terms, postmemory suggests that individuals can inherit "the secret psychic substance of their ancestors' lives" (Schwab 2004, 185). The history of the Turkish Republic, which is substantially based on silences and denials could be regarded as a great example to illustrate how collective silences are resulting in further traumatic occurrences. The denial of numerous traumatic incidents did not only reduce the non-Muslim communities in numbers but, as the Turkish state remained silent and preferred to protect the perpetrators and organizers, the guilt and shame that stuck to perpetrators and bystanders "migrated into the psyche and the cultural unconscious" (Schwab 2004, 180). The collective guilt, in return, has been transferred through different generations and led both children of victims and perpetrators of traumatic events to live the "ghostly legacies and secrets of their parents and parental generation" (Schwab 2004, 184). For Armenians of Turkey, those ghostly legacies necessitate them to interiorize fear in their everyday lives and perform their identity accordingly, by concealing the elements of their Armenianness, particularly in public spaces. The most striking portrayal of this feeling was made by Hrant Dink, in his last article before the assassination, where he described his sense of fear by comparing himself to the uneasiness of a pigeon as he was as obsessed as a pigeon about what is happening around him.

1.1.5 Armenian Identity

For Armenians, the impact of the Armenian Genocide and ensuing events did not only remain on the "psyche and cultural unconscious" but constitutes one of the significant events in the formation of Armenian national identity. Panossian, in his article names three moments that constitute the foundational elements of Armenian national identity. These are (1) Armenians being the first Christian nation, (2)

Armenians being a pre-Christian nation, and finally, (3) Armenians as a nation in exile (2002, 121). While the first two myths are related to the ethnogenesis of the Armenians, the last one is related to the elimination and expulsion of Armenians from their homeland. The Armenian Genocide is particularly important as it binds Armenians that spread over various countries and continents from Anatolia. Additionally, as the topic is constantly featured in media outlets especially during the anniversaries because of the Turkish state's denialist policies, it constitutes one of the most common knowledge regarding Armenians.

Gerard Libardian, for example, describes the Armenian Genocide as an "equalizer" for all Armenian communities around the world as it directly affected and continues to affect the lives of Armenians. Similarly, Panossian argues that the post-Genocide Armenian identity is associated with the 'lost homeland' and utmost priority is given to get the Genocide recognized by the Turkish state and the rest of the world (2002, 137). However, the way that Panossian defines the post-Genocide Armenian identity could not be applicable for Armenians of Turkey as it is almost impossible for them to struggle for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide when they are living under the shadow of denialist policies in Turkey. While Panossian does not hint at how Armenian identity is developed in Turkey, it is possible to argue that it is very different from the way that it was experienced in Armenia or abroad. It is predominantly based on silences and an urgency to conceal the elements of Armenian culture from public spaces. Nevertheless, the way that Armenianness is perceived and performed by Armenians of Turkey is changing and the bearers of this change are young Armenians. Leyla Neyzi argues that the younger generation does not becomes more comfortably publicly affirm their Armenian heritage but has also become more integrated into Turkish society (2010, 19). The transformation that is taking place in young Armenians' perceptions was also revealed during the interviews as young Armenians mentioned the ways they embrace elements of Armenian culture.

1.2 Methodology

The significance of utilizing oral sources in unearthing the silenced stories of disadvantaged groups has been mentioned by various scholars (Chamberlain 2006; Neyzi 2010; Portelli 2009). Within this context, conducting research with a focus on young Armenians of Turkey, Turkey did not offer many alternatives to researchers. Among

these, the importance of oral history methodology in accessing the silenced recollections of disadvantaged groups that have been expunged from official historiography as well as public spaces prompted me to use it. Through life story interviews, I intended to reveal how young Armenians of Turkey make sense of their presence, their perception of traumatic incidents, and the impact of those incidents on their lives. The fact that I am working on the transgenerational memory of young Armenians, in particular, has increased the importance of oral history as the stories of young Armenians could only be meaningful within the broader perspective of their ancestors' stories. However, sharing the same ethnic identity with interviewees complicated the process as my position significantly impacted the process. To reflect on these processes, in this part, in addition to the discussions regarding the emergence and evolution of oral history methodology, I would like to reflect on the merits and shortcomings of my position as a young Armenian throughout the research process.

1.2.1 Oral History

The emergence of oral history methodology frequently dated back to 1948, when Allan Nevins launched "the oral history project" at Columbia University. Nevins' decision to follow oral history methodology was based on his belief that it is the most convenient way of gathering knowledge "from the lips and papers" of living Americans who have contributed significantly to the nation's political, economic, and cultural concerns (Benison 1965, 72). According to Daniel R. Kerr, attributing the field's origin to Alan Nevins neglects the historical roots of the method. As Nevins emphasizes oral history's evidentiary value and prioritizes the stories of elites, following such historicization will be a misinterpretation of the field's evolution through time (Kerr 2016, 369). While Kerr follows an alternative genealogy, Alistair Thomson (2007), in his article, examines the evolution of oral history methodology thoroughly and describes four paradigm shifts that are crucial in both theory and practice.

According to Thomson, the first paradigm shift dates back to the period after the Second World War, where researchers have initially begun to accept the validity of oral testimonies despite their subjectivity. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, a seminary book by Paul Thompson, has played a crucial role in this movement since it challenged the Rankean tradition of using archival research and documented sources as primary tools while marginalizing oral evidence (Thomson 2007, 51). In

opposition to the traditional scholars who insisted on the unreliability of memory as a historical source, Thompson traces the roots of oral history back to ancient times and mentions the significance of historians like Herodotus and Bede who prepared their works by relying on eyewitness accounts (Thompson 2000, 31). Following a discussion of the historicity of oral sources, Thompson argued that oral history methodology has a transformative effect on both the content and process of history writing, because, on the one hand, it shifted the focus and opened new areas of inquiry by challenging some of the historians' assumptions and accepted judgments, and on the other hand, by bringing recognition to large groups of people who had previously been ignored (Thompson 2000, 8-12).

The second paradigm shift, closely related to the first one, took place against traditional documentary historians. The main criticism against oral history was the assertion that "memory was distorted by physical deterioration and nostalgia in old age, by the personal bias of both interviewer and interviewee, and by the influence of collective and retrospective versions of the past" (Thompson 2000, 53). Oral historians developed guidelines and adopted methodologies from other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology to respond to these critiques. Yet, the most significant transformation took place during the 1970s, when oral historians claimed that the subjectivity of the interviewee and the fallibility of their memory, which was attributed as the most significant weakness, is the most prominent strength of the methodology as different ways of narrating past occurrences reveal how interviewees are making sense of it. Accordingly, Luissa Passerini, in her influential article, argues that oral testimony's relevance may rest not in its fidelity to fact, but in its divergence from it, because even 'wrong' narrations are psychologically 'true,' and this truth may be just as essential as factually reliable testimonies (1979, 84). In other words, oral history is concerned not just with what happened, but also with what people thought about and how they perceived what had happened.

In reflecting on his own experience, Ronald J. Grele claims that testimonies reveal not only how interviewees internalized and processed what they have witnessed, but also how their personalities and social forces rebuild memory by facilitating or preventing the development of specific ways of interpreting the past (1991, 245). As political and social forces are directly interfering in what can be remembered and what should be forgotten in Turkey, Grele's experience reflected on the interviews conducted with young Armenians of Turkey for this thesis. A particular incident worthy of mention here occurred while interviewing Zabel. Because it is perilous and difficult to discuss the Armenian Genocide, when asked about her family's account, Zabel hesitated to talk about her grandparents' survival story because she was not sure if those memories could be shared. Even though she eventually decided to tell

her grandparents' story, she might not have mentioned the incidents has it been another young Armenian asking the questions.

Thomson defines the third paradigm shift in oral history as having taken place when practitioners increasingly became aware of the impact interviews brought on themselves which influenced their analysis. In addition to the impact on analysis, one of the major debates was concerning the researcher's positionality in an interview setting which affects the interviewee's self. In a similar vein, Lynn Abrams defines oral history as a "catch-all term," which, on the one hand, refers to conducting interviews to surface the significant incidents of the interviewee's lifespan, and on the other hand, is the very outcome of the interview (2010, 2). Regarding the discussion of selves, Abrams emphasizes the influence of the post-structuralist school which encouraged oral historians to conceptualize the self as an unstable entity and underlines the importance of considering self as a fluctuating entity, developed through the dialogic relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (2010, 45). Therefore, it is not only about the stories narrated by the interviewee but also about the process itself which directly impacts what is narrated during the interview.

Thomson argues that the fourth paradigm shift is currently taking place as a result of technological advancements that provide new instruments for recording, preserving, cataloging, interpreting, sharing, and presenting oral histories (Thompson 2000, 68). While it was the supplementary aspects of the technological developments that Thomson was mentioning in his article, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of technological tools greatly increased. Completing oral history research when sociability was prohibited, physical distance became more important and obligatory mask-wearing presented a number of challenges.

One of the most significant among those challenges was the inability to conduct face-to-face interviews as it entails significant risks for both the interviewer's and interviewee's wellbeing. The presence of such risks forced me to conduct the interviews to be conducted through online platforms and none of the interviews were conducted in a physical setting within the scope of this research. As it was the beginning of the pandemic when I started to conduct interviews, people were recently started to look for alternatives to their everyday routines and adapt to the changing conditions. The adaptation process was easier for younger people as they are already used to and more comfortable using technological tools. Conducting research focused on young people, on the other hand, benefited the research process as neither I nor interviewees experienced any problems during online interviews. The only problem that I can mention is the breaks in internet connection that occurred only during two interviews which complicated both the interviewing and transcription processes.

The second significant challenge is related to the impact of virtual interviews on the interview dynamics. Abrams, along with other practitioners, emphasize that oral history methodology is strongly tied not just to the testimony but also to the way it is delivered (2010, 22). In other words, deviations in the respondents' nonverbal communication skills, such as changes in body movements or pitch of the voice, reveal a lot of information that the researcher can use to analyze the interview. Accordingly, as it was not clear if the virtual setting would allow utilization of those aspects of interview dynamics, initially this caused some discomfort. However, after conducting several interviews, far from imposing limitations, the virtual interviews offer significant benefits to both interviewer and interviewee and eventually it is not very different from the traditional way of having interviews face-to-face with different merits and shortcomings.

Virtual interviews, for example, provides a focused environment to take notes to the interviewer as they do not lose eye contact with the interviewee throughout the interview. Then, following those notes, it becomes much easier to read between the lines and ask questions that might be unnoticed in face-to-face interviews. For the interviewee, on the other hand, as they join to interview from their safe spaces, such as from their homes or workspaces, it becomes easier for them to talk about their stories and feelings. Nevertheless, along with its merits, having an online interview has its set of shortcomings too. In addition to the impossibility of taking a glimpse of their private spaces, the control of the interviewer over the interviews is limited. In the interview with Rita, for example, when talking about the mixed relationship she is having and problems related to it, her mother jumped in the conversation and said that she would prefer her daughter to have a relationship with an Armenian.

1.2.2 Ethics

When beginning interviews, I was well aware that his position as a young Armenian studying other young Armenians would impact the outcome of the research. Starting from the first moment of finding suitable interviewees, there were various incidents that enabled this position. Preparing a list of young Armenians with diverse backgrounds for interviews, for example, as member of the very community being studied, was completed with ease. Furthermore, possibilities brought by having a common background with the interviewees were not limited to the phase of determining the interviewees. Being interviewed by someone who knows Armenian

gave interviewees a greater floor to act on, as it enabled them to utter some words and phrases in Armenian during the interviews. It is important to mention that this situation should not be reduced to the use of only some words in Armenian, and in a broader perspective, it should be evaluated within the context that being interviewed by a young Armenian also affects the extent of the stories that might be told. Arden, for example, did not hesitate to tell a story that might bring harm to their family, yet he asked if those stories will ever spread over.

> Arden: (. . .) I'm talking like that, but they're not going to spread around, right
>
> Rudi: No, it's just me. You can be relaxed.
>
> Arden: [laughs] Let's not destroy our family.[2]

In another example, when Verjin talks about her experience during the primary schools years, she states in a cynical tone that primary schools are the places where students have been taught to have great respect for Atatürk. Immediately after sharing her observation, she felt the need to correct her tone by mentioning that we are recording the interview and mentions her respect for Atatürk.

> Verjin: Umm, by the way, we're on record, don't get me wrong. Of course, I respect Atatürk, up to a point, you know.
>
> Rudi: Only I will listen the interview, so you can relax.
>
> Verjin: Huh, are you just going to listen, okay then. Maybe in case you do something somewhere...
>
> Rudi: No, no.
>
> Verjin: I'm a little nervous as it is on record.
>
> Rudi: No, no, only I will listen. You can be comfortable with it. I'm going to use a different name anyway.[3]

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[2] Arden: (. . .) bunlar bir yerde yayılmayacak dimi, ben böyle konuşuyorum ama.
Rudi: Yok yok, bende sadece. Rahat olabilirsin.
Arden: [gülüyor] Bizim ailemiz yıkılmasın.

[3] Verjin: Umm, bu arada kayıt alıyoruz yanlış anlaşılmasın tabi ki de Atatürk'ü saygı duyuyorum, bir yere kadar, hani.
Rudi: Ben dinliyicem sadece, rahat olabilirsin.
Verjin: Ha sen mi dinliyiceksin, tamam. Belki bir yerde şey yaparsın diye.
Rudi: Yok yok.
Verjin: Kayıt olayı olunca biraz gerildim.
Rudi: Yok yok sadece ben dinliyicem. Ondan olabilirsin. İsmini de farklı kullanıcam zaten.

Nevertheless, the merits of my positionality which enabled reaching out to interviewees with relative ease and to hear some stories that might not be told to someone else brought some limitations with itself. In his article, Antonius Robben (1996) critiques the notion of a "productive" interview based on a good rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee. He argues that establishing good rapport may lead ethnographers to overlook specific narrations that may negatively impact their assessment of the respondent. In other cases, he claims, it may 'seduce' the ethnographer by removing the "critical stance for an illusion of congeniality with the research subject" and making it difficult for the ethnographer to "maintain a degree of independence." In other words, while the researcher may suppose that they have "entered into the skin of the interviewee," what has happened is that the researcher has "introjected the informant's created projection" and has become nothing more than a mere listener (1996, 81-83). Although the cases are different and he was working on a community that he was not a part of and because of that he was being manipulated by the powerful people in that society, I had an experience that can be related to Robben's discussion. For instance, when interviewees talked about how the assassination of Hrant Dink impacted their lives or discussed the issue of belonging and the possibility of having a future in Turkey, I found their testimonies to be quite similar, and while working on the transcription, I noticed the missed opportunities to ask follow-up questions. In other words, the rapport that I established with the interviewees, although Kathryn Anderson underlines the importance, hindered me to hear the things that they implied or suggested but not explicitly uttered (2015, 163).

Another dimension of the dialogic relationship between the interviewer and interviewee that should be mentioned here was discussed by Alexander Freund. In his article, Freund compares and contrasts the practices of interviewing and confessing and evaluates how closely these acts resemble one another. He specifically challenges if oral historians should be seen as "creators" rather than "revealers" of interviewees' selves (Freund 2014, 1-26). Following in the footsteps of Freund, Erin Jessee expands on this idea, claiming that "the interview itself can be another form of violence" due to the "interview's roots in Western confessional culture." She uses an example from oral historian Amy Tooth Murphy, in which she discusses how her efforts to adhere to a chrononormative life history interview generated a narrative rupture between the lives of women and the heteronormative society in which they lived. Inspired by the discussions of Freund and Jessee, when conducting interviews, there were two principles that were adhered to; not forcing interviewees to tell their stories chronologically and asking open-ended questions as much as possible (Reeves and Tyler-Richards 2014, 318-9). Accordingly, instead of asking a question from child-

hood, which might force interviewees to follow a chronological order, they were that they could start from any point or event to tell their stories. It is remarkable that even in the absence of any instruction most of the interviewees started to tell their stories from childhood. Although this preference might have its roots in chrononormativity, it also demonstrates the importance of the childhood period in young Armenians lives, during which they realize their possession of a different identity from others.

1.2.3 Notes on the research process

Before reaching out to possible interviewees and starting to conduct interviews, I reflected on whom to conduct interviews with. My initial intention was to reach young Armenians with diverse occupational, social, and economic backgrounds which were including young Armenians who differ from the majority of their peers. For instance, I did not only try to reach out to Armenians living in different neighborhoods but also to the ones who did not attend an Armenian school, have Islamized Armenians in their family lineages, or have a non-Armenian parent. Accordingly, during August 2020 and November 2020, I have interviewed 12 young Armenians. Most of the time, I have reached out to young Armenians that I know which enabled me to complete the process in a short period. In this process, I avoid interviewing people that I have a close relationship and with the ones who already shared their intimate stories with me in different settings. While reaching out to possible interviewees, gender and age also played an important role. Accordingly, half of the interviews were conducted with the le respondents. Age-wise, the youngest interviewee was 21 and the oldest one was 35 years old, while the average age was 24. In addition to reaching out to interviewees, I have prepared a list of keywords and themes to follow during the interviews with a special focus on being a young Armenian living in Turkey. During the interviews, in order to provide the "space and the permission to explore some of the deeper, more conflicted parts" of their stories, I left the flow of the interview to the interviewee and only asked questions when I believe it was necessary (Anderson and Jack 2015, 159). However, in some interviews, I had to ask unrelated questions to hear what the interviewee is thinking about specific topics, primarily about the interviewee's perception of Armenia or the Armenian diaspora.

1.3 Thesis Outline

The introduction chapter explains the study's objective and primary points, placing them in the context of existing literature on identity, nationalism, post-memory, memory, subjectivity, and Armenian studies conducted in Turkey and abroad. Throughout the thesis, I want to emphasize the many facets of young Armenians' subjectivization processes, their relationship with Armenian identity and culture, and the shift in their perception of Armenianness. In the second chapter, I intend to present a historical background to the thesis which make it possible for the reader to follow and make sense of the discussions. Starting with a theoretical discussion regarding the factuality of the facts, which is frequently mentioned in the discussions regarding the Armenian Genocide, the chapter will particularly examine several significant events that impacted the lives and presence of non-Muslim communities in Turkey. Through these discussions, the chapter aims to portray the transition from multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire to Turkish nation state which is highlighted by the policies implemented to Turkify the population and create a homogenous Turkish nation.

In the third chapter, I focus on the subjectivization process of young Armenians and the consequences of this process. Before dwelling on young Armenians, the chapter discusses the position of the Armenian community of Turkey within the broader society and the changes that were occurred in the last several decades. The chapter claims that official policies surrounding the Armenian Genocide, as well as subsequent events aimed at eliminating Armenian traces from public spaces, led to gaps in family history transmission. Due to the risks it harbor, parents have avoided discussing the Armenian Genocide with their children but their intentional avoidance hinted young Armenians about those differences. Not being able to speak Armenian in the street and constant warnings young Armenians receive when they socialize with non-Armenians, among the most prominent examples that hinted the difference. In addition to those, having an Armenian name make it inevitable for young Armenians to face with discriminations and they adapted defense mechanisms to cope with the dangers entailed to having an Armenian name. Accordingly, the chapter particularly examines the encounters of young Armenians with Armenian and non-Armenian individuals starting from their childhood with stories from various periods of their lives. The chapter examines the impact of those encounters on the perception of Armenianness of young Armenians with special emphasize on gender, generational differences, and educational institutions.

In the last chapter, the emphasis is put on the impact of the assassination of Hrant Dink on the young Armenians and how did it transform young Armenians perception regarding the Armenian culture and identity. The chapter claims that it is possible to explain the impact of Hrant Dink's assassination on young Armenians as perceive the assassination as a continuation of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide was a mainly abstract catastrophe that young Armenians only learned about through family stories or textbook. After the assassination of Hrant Dink, however, the Genocide becomes a palpable reality to which they could relate. As a result of the transformation, young Armenians began to expand outside of the designated zones they had been told to keep in and to embrace elements of Armenian culture. The chapter examines the extent of this transformation and the impact of these processes particularly on young Armenians' sense of belonging.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Derrida begins his investigation of historical truth by tracing the archive's etymological foundations. He attributes the concept's origins to the Greek word *arkhē*, which means both *commencement* and *commandment*. The modern meaning of the word 'archive' originates from the Greek *arkheion*, which refers to the abode of senior magistrates: those who have the authority to command. This, according to Derrida, is a definite correlation because it emphasizes the often-overlooked relationship between the archive and the political authority that hides behind it. He accurately states that "the citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law. [...] It is thus, in this domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place" (1995, 9-10). Citizens with control over the archive not only maintain the security of the information they safeguard, but also have the power to administer what is and is not archivable. To put it another way, they have the authority to interpret the archive and, as a result, the authority to enforce the law based on their understanding of the archive (1995, 10).

Derrida engages in a lengthy discussion focusing on the archive, mostly employing a psychoanalytical notion, death drive, after looking at the etymological foundations of the concept. The death drive theory, first postulated by Sabina Spielrein and later expanded by Sigmund Freud, states that life begins with a lack and that everyone shares a shared desire to overcome that lack. It is a longing that can only be satisfied by returning to the commencement, which is the point at which one has not yet been separated from their mother. It is evident, however, that once the separation occurs, it is impossible to return to the mother's womb. The desire to return to the time of commencement, as Derrida argues in the article, is not very different for the archive which claims to contain the knowledge of historical truth.

In psychoanalytic terms, material truth refers to the very moment when an event occurred, whereas historical truth refers to how that event has been remembered.

They are fundamentally different things, and the death drive in the archive is tied to this distinction. As the memory of a particular event is not identical for people who witnessed it, the possibility to reach the material truth does not exist. However, archives, which are full of historical truths, are always on the lookout for the material truth. Nevertheless, this is an unattainable desire, and Derrida claims that the archive has always been haunted by the material truth as a result of this impossibility. By definition, an archive stores knowledge of what actually happened in the past, knowledge of the material truth. But the only truth that archive holds is truth "of the delusion, of the illusion, of the hallucination, of the hauntedness" (1995, 55), because the moment something has been designated as archival, some other thing has been left out.

Moving on from Derrida's archive fever, it is plausible to argue that history is more about "what is said to have happened" than "what happened." The archive is filled with manipulations, and as Trouillot points out, source collecting has never been a natural process, but rather it is based on unequal historical power that favors some events over others (1997, 48). In other words, only "selected" events have the potential to become "facts" and have the right to be archived. There is no archive "without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside" (Derrida 1995, 14). The ability to mandate a specific way of interpreting a historical event to its potential analyzer is the power of the archive: the ability to record some occurrences while removing others. If archives were created through power relations, then the notion of objectivity that has dominated discourse about the Armenian Genocide is nothing more than a delusion. It is impossible to depict any historical event objectively since power dynamics do not cease to exist at any point during the creation of archives. As a result, all narratives based on archival material unavoidably construct, shape, and distort their objects (LaCapra 2014, 10). The impression or illusion of the material truth is the best one can hope for from archival research. What I'd like to emphasize at this point is that during events motivated by genocidal will, the distortion of archival material becomes most desperate since these events structure themselves directly on the rejection of facts and of factuality.

Nichanian provokingly argues that "genocide is not a fact" but "it is the very destruction of the fact, of the notion of fact, of the factuality of fact" (Nichanian 2009, 1). Nichanian highlights a crucial distinction between the symbolic name (i.e., Auschwitz) and the generic name (i.e., genocide) of catastrophic events aimed at the extermination of a specific group of people while explaining how genocidal will works. Then he claims that calling the survivors by their generic names is a *realist insult* since it homogenizes and standardizes their experiences. By attributing a

more or less a unified survival story, it becomes possible to negate the historical presence of experiences. Nichanian claims that genocidal will successfully abolish the fact by the very act of establishing the fact itself (2009, 1). Derrida describes a similar process that he refers to as the "system of mythological violence." This system organizes the archive in such a way that it maintains track of its own destruction. This allows archives to reject and even obliterate victims' testimonies as well as perpetrators' crimes (2002, 296).

This is what Nichanian refers to as *historiographic perversion*, and it is via this perversion that any allusion to catastrophic occurrences is forced to conform to the executioner's logic; there is no way around it (2009, 95). Every attempt to portray the destiny of Armenians by focusing on a specific time period must fail because the genocidal will can and will falsify any narrative that claims to represent survivors' experiences. Historical perversion has already determined every possible form of representation from the moment of annihilation. This is the power of the genocidal will. It conceals its negationist intentions through the promotion of the very concept of genocide. As noted by Nichanian, "we are talking, after all, about nonexistent archives, about a nothingness of the archive" (2002, 13). By endorsing the generic name, it successfully sustains the invisibility of the emblematic aspect of the events (2009, 99). In other words, every attempt that focuses on the generic meaning will fail the represent the cumulative dreadfulness of the process which neither starts at a particular place and time nor has ever ended.

2.1 The Transition Period: From Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic

As it is discussed by Derrida and other scholars, archive instructs the future from the present about how a particular event should be analyzed and, in that sense, it is more related to the present and future than the past. The utilization of archives as a source for legitimation is not a new concept emerged with the nation-states. One prominent example dates back to the 16th century where Suleiman I have wittily altered the way his father was perceived as it was damaging the sultanate. As mentioned by Christine Woodhead, Selim I had a reputation for brutality and ruthlessness that could not be reconciled with the Muslim ideal of a righteous and generous ruler, despite defeating Shah Ismail and conquering Syria, Egypt, and the holy cities of

Mecca and Medina. To improve his father's image, Sultan Suleiman promoted the writing of a series of historical writings known as Selimnâmes, which portrayed Selim I in a more favorable light and, for the most part, exonerated him of the heinous crimes that had earned him the epithet Yavuz, 'evil, ruthless.' These works were so successful that by the end of the century, Selim I had gained a reputation as a hero, and the term Yavuz had taken on the more honorable connotation of 'harsh on justice'.(Woodhead 1983, 172)

Despite the fact that archives have always been a source of rivalry and legitimacy among many parties throughout history, the deliberate use of archives has taken on new dimensions with the establishment of nation-states. It is through the crafted ways of recalling the archival information that national myths and symbols emerge. The process was distinguished by forgetting or purposely not recalling some events while emphasizing others. Trouillot argues that remembering is not always about summoning representation of what one has witnessed (1997, 14). Correspondingly, nationalist ideology has vehemently opposed ethnic and cultural elements that could not be permitted within the new political framework. Accordingly, the historical knowledge has been shaped in accordance with official narratives that would serve the best interests of nation-states. As a result, deliberate efforts were made to erase or suppress these elements' physical and socio-cultural presence from collective memory and public spaces.

The Turkish nation-state was not immune to the aforementioned processes. As Çağlar Keyder argues, a shift in the legitimizing discourse of state power occurred, particularly during the transitional era from the multiethnic Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1997, 41). As mentioned by various scholars, the newly established Turkish nation-state has inevitably necessitated a 'Turkish' nation and various policies were implemented to create a homogenous nation (Baer 2007; Bozdogan and Kasaba 1997; Türköz 2017; Zurcher 2017). This homogenous "ethnicity", as argued by Rogers Brubaker, was based on exclusionary ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic grounds (1996, 86). Turkey, on the other hand, was far from being a homogeneous state. The census of 1935 provides complete information about this. In that year, the country's population was 16,157,450, with 15,838,673 Muslims. 125,046 Greek Orthodox, 78,730 Jews, 44,526 Gregorian Armenians, 32,155 Catholics, 8,486 Protestants, 4,725 Christians, and 12,965 others made up the rest of the population. On the other hand, while Turkish was the most widely spoken language in the country, with 13,899,073 people speaking it, Kurdish was the second most widely spoken language, with 1,480,246 people. In addition to Turkish and Kurdish, it has been noted in the survey that 153,687 Arabic, 108,725 Greek, 91,972 Circassian, 63,253 Laze, 57,599 Armenian, 57,325 Georgian, 42,607 Judeo-Spanish,

32,661 Pomak, 29,065 Bosnian (of whom 4,452 spoke the Serbian and Croatian variants), 22,754 Albanian, 18,245 Bulgarian, 15,615 (Crimean) Tatar, 12,424 Spanish, 10,099 Abkhaz speakers,7,855 Romani speakers, and 5,381 French speakers were also present.(Cagaptay 2004, 93)

Although the presence and impact of nationalist policies on the Early Turkish Republic's multiculturalism are undeniable, especially when compared to current demographics, it is difficult to identify a starting point to describe the Turkification processes. While laws aimed at eliminating non-Turkish components of the society were multiplied with the establishment of the Turkish Republic, there were already practices of violence dating back to the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Genocide[1], as argued by Taner Akçam, was the most significant step toward the Turkification and homogeneity of Anatolia, which eradicated the Armenian presence in Anatolia due to massacres committed during the expulsion of Armenians from Anatolia to the Syrian deserts (2004, 149). Furthermore, because of the link between the Armenian Genocide and the founding of the Republic, as the members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), who were responsible for the systematic expulsion and killings of Armenians in Anatolia played a crucial role in the formation of the Republic the Genocide was considered a taboo subject right after the Republic was established (2004, 8). However, the Armenian Genocide has not become the only incident that inflicted a significant blow on the non-Muslim presence of Turkey. Among those, one could mention the expulsion of Greek and Turkish citizens from respectively Turkey and Greece which occurred first during The Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922 and secondly, due to the Lausanne Treaty. The examples of mass violence did not end with the formation of the Turkish Republic and there were many more examples throughout its history which result in the depletion of the non-Muslim population in Turkey. Even though those incidents targeted the predominately non-Muslim population of Turkey, as the case of genocidal policies in Dersim in 1938 shows, the extent of the incident was not limited to non-Muslims but all identities outside the 'imagined community'. Although one could multiply the examples particularly with the stories of Kurdish people, as it would fall beyond the intention of this research to address all those incidents, within the scope of this chapter, the paper will examine incidents that affected the lives of, particularly non-Muslim communities. Nevertheless, before discussing the stories of those incidents, it would be prudent to examine the denialist policies of the Turkish state and the changes that took place in the state discourse, as it was the 'haunting' legacy of the Armenian Genocide that led to the emergence of other traumatic incidents.

[1]Various scholars have examined and constituted a detailed account of what have happened in 1915 and afterwards which makes it difficult to properly examine the incident within the scope of this reserach. Yet, one could mention Kévorkian (2011), Akçam (2012), Suny (1993) among prominent works.

2.2 Discursive Changes over Armenian Genocide through the Turkish Republic

The denialist policies regarding the Armenian Genocide were inherent in the formation of the new Turkish state and they acted as one of the main pillars of the state to this date. However, the scope of those policies has never been stable and subjected to changes throughout the span of more than a century. One significant change regarding the extent of those policies has taken place with the beginning of the assassinations of Turkish diplomats by ASALA in the 1970s. Prior to this date, the state's discourse was predominantly based on suppressing all information regarding the Armenian Genocide. Uğur Ümit Üngör illustrates the extent of the suppression by the prohibition of various publications, particularly prepared by the survivors. It was ordered by the state to confiscate and destroy all existing copies of Garabed Kapikian's, Marrie Sarrafian Banker's, or Armen Anoosh's memoirs as they are 'harmful texts' (Üngör 2014, 152). The state policies were not only restricted to memoirs, but several history books were also prohibited during the period. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that those policies were limited to the borders of the Turkish Republic, and no effort was paid to prevent the preparation and circulation of such publications outside of Turkey. The most significant exception in this regard took place when Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer announced that they will produce a film based on Franz Werfel's novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (1934). As the book was related to the Armenian Genocide, the state interfered with the process, and through strong diplomatic pressure, the idea was abandoned, and the project was canceled (Bloxham 2005, 204).

The state policies and its discourse underwent a significant change after the acts of ASALA as they introduced the topic of the Armenian Genocide both in Turkey and abroad. As Hülya Adak argues, the goal of the militants was to get Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, and from 1975 through 1985, their acts resulted in killing forty-six persons and wounding hundreds more (2015, 329). The Turkish state, to counter the claims of the organization, the impact of which reached the international arena but also became an issue of public attention in Turkey, had utilized various tools and methods. Consequently, as Doğan Gürpınar argues, the 'passive denialism' which was adopted until the 1970s, started to be reformulated and left its place to 'aggressive denialism" (2016, 218). Priority is given to the preparation of an official narrative, known as 'Turkish thesis', which could be utilized to 'defend Turkey', as Emre Can Dağlıoğlu argues, in the eyes of the world (Tölölyan 2021, 164). The responsibility was particularly given to Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı,

National Intelligence Organization, the General Directorate of Intelligence and Research (İstihbarat ve Araştırma Genel Müdürlüğü), and National Security Council (Millî Güvenlik Kurulu, MGK). Gürpınar analyzes the extent of the Turkish thesis by examining different variations of it, namely, the right-wing, left-wing, and a centrist version of the 'Turkish thesis'. According to Gürpınar, the right-wing version underlines the treachery of the Armenians while the left-wing version emphasizes the separatism and terror caused by Armenians as they were deceived by the imperialist Great Powers. The centrist version, on the other hand, is sponsored and promoted by the state itself and accordingly, has different aspects following changing state policies.(Gürpınar 2016, 221)

One of the most prominent policies implemented by the state particularly after the 1980s, as the Genocide was brought to the international agenda, was to circulate official historiography through as many mediums as possible. To this end, state television was utilized, and programs were produced where the 'mass graves' of Muslims, murdered by Armenian militants during 1915, were excavated. The excavation was accompanied by the testimonies of the elders of the region who told about the atrocities that Armenians committed when they were a child. Furthermore, the Armenian history which was not deliberately mentioned in the textbooks until this period started to be included in the mid-1980s through a sub-chapter entitled 'Armenian problem' where the claims of Armenians regarding the Genocide was confronted within the broader theme of the Eastern Question (Gürpınar 2016, 234). By the 1990s, the Turkish state started to utilize archival sources to confront the Armenian claims. The mobilization of archival sources coincides with the modernization of the Ottoman archives which was restrictively accessible to the researchers in the past. As Gürpınar argues, numerous research was conducted and dozens of books were published without a critical approach which took the Ottoman official documents as the sheer truth (Gürpınar 2016, 235). Furthermore, in this period scholars were encouraged to prepare academic publications and those works were published in state-sponsored outlets.

The dominance of the official historiography began to shutter during the 2000s as liberal and left-wing scholars began to produce critical works regarding the Armenian Genocide. The relative democratic political atmosphere in Turkey during this period was among the reasons that enabled scholars to publish their researches. Nevertheless, despite the proliferation of scholarly works, the denialist policies of the Turkish state did not undergo any significant change. The most prominent change in the state discourse is the emergence of a more flexible language based on the discourse of 'reciprocal pains'. Before this period, despite the changes in the extent of the discourse, official historiography was attributing sole responsibility for the

incidents of 1915 to Armenians. In 2014, the Turkish Prime Minister, for the first time, shared his condolences for the atrocities that took place in 1915 by sharing his hope and belief for a future where Turkish and Armenian people will be able to talk about their past with maturity and commemorate their losses together[2]. Despite this significant divergence from the official historiography, because of the backlashes and reactions along with the increasingly nationalist sentiment of the ruling party, the official historiography was restored and denialist policies started to be employed again in the following years.

2.3 Concise History of Turkification

The Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, as well as the population exchange between Greece and Turkey following the Lausanne Treaty, were two of the most notable examples that impacted the demographics of the Turkish State. As mentioned by Ali Tuna Kuyucu, during the Greco-Turkish war, thousands of Rum subjects of the empire were slaughtered or forced to relocate to Greece and other countries (2005, 369). With the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, on the other hand, as Ayhan Aktar stated, nearly 1.2 million Greeks were forced to leave Turkey and around 400,000 Muslims expulsed from Greece to Turkey as a result of an agreement between the Greek government and the Turkish delegation (2000, 7). Population exchanges, according to Michael Barutciski, generally emerge as a political alternative during times of crisis, and decisions to carry them out are taken fast, without full knowledge of the long-term repercussions they may have on the 'targeted minorities' (2003, 24-5). In the case of Turkey, it is conceivable to argue that the demographic changes that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century caused significant human suffering and resulted in decades of distrust towards non-Muslim communities of Turkey.

The policies that aimed to Turkify society initiated during the last years of the Ottoman Empire did not lessen with the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Even though the Turkish Republic's demographic structure was mostly purged of Armenians and Greeks through deportations, killings, and population exchanges, Istanbul managed to retain its diversity. The presence of such heterogeneity in Istanbul was not tolerable and to eradicate the non-Muslim presence in Istanbul, various mea-

[2]"Erdoğan'dan 24 Nisan mesajı," Deutsche Welle Türkçe, accessed August 2, 2021, https://p.dw.com/p/1BnJq.

sures have been taken at governmental and societal levels. Those measures aimed to alter the economic, political, and demographic structure of the society and thus, create a homogenous nation-state. During this process, the repressive tools that had been adopted by the Ottoman Government were slightly transformed and accompanied by the ideological tools with the formation of the Turkish Republic. In other words, instead of solely applying brute force, numerous legislations were accepted by the parliament and several campaigns initiated by the public to eliminate the 'dangerous' elements of the society. Although there are various examples both at societal and governmental levels, the most prominent is the campaign which is remembered with its motto Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş (Citizen, Speak Turkish), the "Surname Legislation," Wealth Tax, and Istanbul Pogroms of 6-7 September.

The campaign Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş (1928) which was initiated by the Law Faculty Students' Association of Istanbul University and supported by the Turkish state aimed to eradicate the public visibility of non-Turkish languages (Aslan 2007, 246). The society of Turkey, during the first decades of the Republic, was very heterogeneous. According to the national census of 1927, 28 percent of Istanbul's population did not regard Turkish as their native language which validates the existence of a multicultural Istanbul (Cagaptay 2004, 93). The existence of such a large number of non-Turkish presence in Istanbul could not be permitted in the context of a nation-state, and accordingly, the city had to be Turkified. As a result, law students, supported by teachers and journalists, declared that speaking in a language other than Turkish meant disobeying Turkish law, and launched a campaign to discourage the use of non-Turkish languages (Cagaptay 2004, 251). Several mottos were hung on the walls and repeated on public transit by students during the campaign, including "Citizen, Speak Turkish," "Speaking Turkish is a national duty," and "a Turk speaks Turkish," which ultimately led to public harassment of many non-Turkish speaking citizens (Türköz 2017, 159). Throughout the campaign, argued by Rıfat Bali, it became extremely difficult to use a language other than Turkish in public settings due to the significant risk of verbal and physical attack (2015, 136-7). This campaign was one of the most prominent initiatives carried out by Turkish society to remove the public visibility of non-Turkish languages. Even though the campaign was abandoned in the middle of the 1940s, its impact of the campaign had far-reaching effects on the perceptions of non-Muslim communities as they increasingly withdraw the reflections of their languages and cultures from the public spheres.

Surname Legislation, unlike the "Citizen Speak Turkish" campaign, was organized and enacted by the Turkish parliament in 1934, and it was the enforcement of "hereditary surname adaptation and registration in Turkish," as explained by Meltem

Türköz (2007, 893). Even though the legislation was not specifically geared for non-Muslims and addressed administrative as well as nationalist objectives, the 7th article prohibited the use of the Armenian patronymic *-ian* and the Greek patronymic *-pulos* as surname endings (Türköz 2017, 148). Furthermore, despite the 4th article, which implies that surnames taken prior to this legislation may be preserved, ethnic minorities felt compelled to neutralize ethnic traits and Turkify their surnames, arguably due to the fear and anxiety that surrounded them (Türköz 2017, 149).

In addition to those policies, the Turkish state supported and encouraged scholars to 'prove' the omnipotence of the Turkish nation in various academic fields. The *Turkish Review of Anthropology*, published between 1925 and 1939, for example, was utilized as the "official outlet of political power" to support the Turkish state's claims on the supremacy of the Turkish race as mentioned by Nazan Maksudyan (2005, 299). Similarly, the Sun Language Theory, developed in the 1930s, declared that all major world languages descended from Turkish which together with the 'History Thesis' was supporting the Kemalist claim to trace all major cultures in the world to the Turks (Cagaptay 2004, 91-2). Through these cultural and ideological endeavors, Turkishness has been produced as the principal racial category of the Turkish Republic, and institutionalization of the inferiority of non-Muslim communities inevitably led to the formation of a racialized worldview (Baker 1998, 1-13).

The Turkish government's policies were not only directed against non-Muslim communities' cultural components, but they also had financial consequences. Just as the newly formed Turkish state requires a nation, it also required that this nation become the sole proprietor of the country. This endeavor could only be realized if the Turkish nation established its dominance not only in the socio-cultural but also in the economic spheres. To this end, various policies have been implemented particularly until the 1960s to undermine the non-Muslim financial strength. Among those are the law mandating that Turkish be the only language used in corporate dealings, enacted in 1926 and another law enacted in 1932, restricted some vocations to Turkish citizens alone, effectively eliminating non-Muslims from these positions (Aktar 2000, 59-60). The main purpose of both laws, which resulted in around 9000 non-Muslims losing their jobs, was not to encourage non-Muslims living in Turkey to learn Turkish, but as Ayhan Aktar argues, to put pressure on foreign companies to employ Muslim Turks at an increasing rate (2000, 117). These legal actions were among the major steps in the nationalization of the economy and dealt significant damage to non-Muslim groups' financial capacity. However, these were only the initial steps of the nationalization of the economy and the most significant blow was inflicted through the Wealth Tax and 6-7 September Pogroms.

In 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, almost a million people were mobilized in Turkey which resulted in the withdrawal of five percent of the population from economic activities. The Turkish state found the initial solution as printing money but soon it led to an inflation crisis and forced the state to find alternative solutions. In 1942, with Şükrü Saraçoğlu becoming the new prime minister, the government decided to levy a 'Capital Tax' to overcome the difficulties caused by the war. In its outlook, the legislation respected equality. However, prior to the legislation, newspapers and comics were being circulated in Istanbul which associate minorities, mainly Jews, with theft, black marketing, extortion, profiteering, and speculation (Aktar 2000, 141-3). These publications could be assessed as examples that indicate that an equal process would not be applied in the application of the Capital Tax. Accordingly, even though the law was introduced on an egalitarian basis and targeted anyone who took advantage of the exceptional wartime conditions to acquire money through black marketing, as Kuyucu argues, in practice, it turned into a discriminatory practice targeting primarily the non-Muslim minorities (2005, 370). On the day of the 18th of December, lists were hung on notice boards at tax offices in Istanbul to announce the necessary amount every individual should pay. What was striking in the lists, as İçduygu argues, is that non-Muslims were levied amounts of five to ten times higher than their Muslim counterparts (2008, 367). To cover the necessary expenses, non-Muslims were obliged to sell their property, and according to Aktar, 98 percent of non-Muslim real estate was either bought by Muslim people or confiscated by the state at this time (2000, 204). Nevertheless, even the sale of properties did not suffice for some people to cover the assessed amount. It was decided for those individuals to be deported to camps for physical labor, where they were to work for the government until they paid off their debts. It is striking that since the obligation to work only applied to non-Muslims, all of the deceased in Aşkale were non-Muslims, arriving in Aşkale from Istanbul (Aktar 2000, 151). It is evident that the unjust application of Capital Tax was deliberate to shackle the non-Muslims' significance over the Turkish economy and as a result of it, 30,000 Jewish and 20,000 Orthodox Christian citizens of Turkey had to flee from the country (Kuyucu 2005, 371).

A decade after the Capital Tax, another significant incident occurred in Istanbul which holds an important place in the collective memory of non-Muslim communities. Known as 'Istanbul Pogroms of 6-7 September, the incident was initiated on the night of 6 September 1955, when the pro-government newspaper *Istanbul Ekspress* released the news stating that Atatürk's house was bombed by Greeks in Salonica. Four hours after the release of this news, thousands of shops and houses of non-Muslim minorities were destroyed or damaged and physical harm was inflicted

on thousands of people. According to official numbers, seventy-three churches were burned down, two Rum cemeteries were destroyed, and three people were murdered including a priest who was burnt alive (Kuyucu 2005, 362). The events affected the Greeks in Istanbul the most and between 1955 and 1960, about 20,000 Rums decided to leave Turkey permanently after being physically, psychologically, and materially harmed during and after the riots (Kuyucu 2005, 376).

2.4 Conclusion

The state policies aiming to homogenize society through demographic engineering as well as the restrictions and pressures placed on non-Muslims to speak in their native tongues, engage in financial activities, perform their culture in public spaces created an environment where minorities felt like 'outsiders.' As a result of numerous policies and related incidents that took place during the relatively short history of the Turkish Republic, the non-Muslim population of Turkey significantly diminished and restricted almost exclusively to Istanbul. As stated by Ahmet İçduygu, while non-Muslims made up close to 3% of the population in the 1920s, they now make up less than 2% of the population (2008, 358). Despite the presence of official data, the non-Muslim population of Istanbul is estimated to be less than a hundred thousand.

The Armenian population of Turkey, on the other hand, is estimated to be around sixty thousand people with almost all of them living in Istanbul apart from some living in Anatolian cities. The community has various publications, schools, newspapers, and cultural institutions concentrated in several neighborhoods. Silva Kuyumcuyan, the principal of Getronagan Armenian High School in Istanbul since 1980, draws a detailed picture of the Armenian educational institutions in Turkey. Accordingly, in 1965, there were 32 schools with 9,200 students. The number of schools remained the same in the 1970s, but the number of students dropped to roughly 7,300. Thirty years after, the number of the schools fell to 18 and the number of students to 3,786. The last statistic dates to 2017, and at this date, there were a total of 16 Armenian schools with almost 3,000 students, including immigrant Armenians from Armenia and Syria, as well as a few Iraqi guest students (Panossian et al. 2021, 304).

The decreasing numbers of schools and students illustrate the weakening presence

of Armenians in Turkey and Armenian example could also be applied to other non-Muslim communities. One of the most crucial reasons for the decline in the non-Muslim population is that to this day the Turkish state has never confronted the atrocities it either planned or failed to prevent.

3. THRESHOLDS OF ARMENIANNESS: CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARMENIAN IDENTITY AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Young Armenians are not exempt from what elder generations experienced in the Turkish Republic for over close to one hundred years. The discriminatory policies and practices initiated by the Turkish state, paramilitary groups, and the public at large continue to interfere with the daily lives of Armenians and other non-Muslim communities in Turkey. It is arguable that the scope and the intensity of those practices are changing as the non-Muslim population is reduced. As Fatma Müge Göçek argues, with the decrease in the Armenian population, the annihilation of the community evolved into symbolic violence to remove what was left in the cultural fabric (2014, 21). Accordingly, policies that once directly affected the lives of those communities, such as the Capital Tax or the 6-7 September pogroms, reverted to more subtle and symbolic domains. Churches and examples of civil architecture in Anatolia are either demolished by the state or targeted by treasure hunters. Additionally, the names of prominent figures from the Ottoman and early Republican periods are Turkified or not mentioned in the narration of particular periods.

Ekmekcioglu conceptualizes the experiences of Armenians within the broader society in the early Turkish Republic by transforming the term dhimmi into 'secular dhimmitude.' The term dhimmi was used in the Ottoman context to define the non-Muslim elements of the society. Since the Ottoman Empire was regulated by a millet system based on Islamic law, sharia, it was not possible for non-Muslims to enjoy the same privileges as Muslims. In this system, every non-Muslim community was defined by their religion, and in exchange for protection, they had to pay the poll tax and remain loyal to the Ottoman state. As Ekmekcioglu indicates, the millet system was not based on equality but justice and if the Muslim ruler decided that dhimma have broken the contract by being disloyal or by trespassing their rights, he could terminate the contract unilaterally and revoke their rights. (Ekmekcioglu 2016, 109)

The existence of a system that situates different communities hierarchically inevitably brought tension between Muslims and non-Muslims. This tension, despite the collapse of the Ottoman state and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, did not cease as most of the policies that were once based on the supremacy of Islam started to be based on the supremacy of the Turks. Ekmekcioglu argues that the Bolsahay opinion-makers who remained in Turkey perceived the newly established state as yet another Turkish state and believed that the way to sustain their lives was closely dependent on the cooperation that they would successfully establish with the new state. In this modified version of dhimmitude, secular dhimmitude as Ekmekcioğlu calls it, loyalty to the new rulers and dis-identification with the past compose the two main pillars of cooperation. (Ekmekcioglu 2016, 109)

The absence of egalitarian policies, coupled with events that inflict physical and psychological harm to non-Muslims led those communities to withdraw from the broader society and public spaces and to perform their cultural practices and traditions within closed environments. As Tchilingirian argues, the policies pursued for almost over a century are exclusively based on the demonization of the "other." These policies reflect on the daily lives of non-Muslims as hate speeches, rumors, and misrepresentations in political and public spaces at best and physical violence in some instances. In his article, Tchilingirian examines the thought schools that emerge in response to those policies and made a valuable distinction between the ones who advocate isolationism and integrationism. He states that Armenian institutions such as the Armenian patriarchate, community church, school, and charitable trusts, as well as newspapers such as Marmara and Jamanak, are proponents of 'isolationism'.

Left-leaning, progressive, or liberal intellectuals such as Agos, Nor Zartonk circles, or the only present-day Armenian MP Garo Paylan, on the other hand, constitute the integrationist side. Integrationists state that the rights of non-Muslims should be based on the notion of egalitarianism and equal citizenship rather than the Treaty of Lausanne. The main issue that they raise is the representativity of the Armenian community which is currently attributed to the Patriarch or the clergy. While Tchilingirian mentions the changing attitude of the new generation of Armenians who are exclusively in favor of integration and support full participation in broader society.

Tchilingirian states that the last 50 years have witnessed a struggle in the Armenian community to move from an isolated inner circle to an outer circle that necessitates integration. In this struggle, the boundaries and limitations imposed through state policies had a vital impact on shaping the Armenian identity as "the concern for physical, psychological and material security takes precedent over all other issues"

(Tchilingirian 2017, 133). The constant changes in state policies in the last couple of years did not bring a significant change in the position of the Armenian community against the larger society and the state. It is important to note that various measures were taken by the newly elected Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) government for the democratization of Turkey within the context of negotiations for the accession to the European Union starting from 2002. In this period, through several policies, they aimed at the normalization of the Turkish and Armenian relationship, and improvements of the conditions and rights of non-minorities were aimed through several policies. Among those, the most significant one was returning some of the seized community properties through the notorious 1936 Declaration. Nevertheless, those progressive acts gradually ceased as the AKP government started to employ more conservative and Turkish nationalist policies in the following years. In 2014, for example, the Prime Minister and the leader of AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan shared his disappointment that people claimed he has Georgian, even Armenian, roots in an interview on NTV: "I am originally from Rize, I was born and raised in Istanbul. But with ill intent, they called me Georgian. Even with uglier intents, they have called me Armenian. But as far as I learned from my grandfather and father, I am Turkish."[1]

Despite the changes in state policies, it is possible to argue that a culture of fear is persistent within the Armenian community which also has a significant effect, as Tchilingirian argues, on "the isolationist perception of collective Armenian identity in Turkey" (2017, 131). Another outcome of those policies is the emergence of an 'everyday ecology of fear, mistrust, and anxiety,' in everyday encounters of Armenians (Das and Kleinman 2000, 6). It is important to note that, those encounters are experienced differently in different spaces. Ekmekcioglu makes an illuminating distinction by conceptualizing them as *in*-side, *mid*-side, and *out*-side of the Armenian institutions. While 'in-side' was the familial circle immune to state authority to some extent, the mid-side is the place where negotiation with the state took place. Despite the presence of state surveillance in those spaces, such as Armenian schools, churches, or cemeteries, the community still has some authority over their acts. The out-side, on the other hand, is the public or private spaces where Armenians could easily become targets of violence. While Ekmekcioglu argues that "this enclave-like existence did not negate or exclude intercommunal interaction between Armenians and other ethnic and religious groups in Turkey," it is possible to argue that the perceptions of young Armenians in Turkey are significantly affected by the negotiations that took place while moving from one space to another (2016,

[1] "'Bana Gürcü, affedersin çok daha çirkin şeylerle Ermeni diyenler oldu'," Diken, accessed August 2, 2021, https://www.diken.com.tr/afedersin-cok-daha-cirkin-seylerle-ermeni-diyen-oldu/

13). Accordingly, following Lerna Ekmekcioglu's conceptualization of Armenianness in Turkey as "ever-precarious," young Armenians are defining their experience and daily lives with fear and uneasiness (2016, 15). Masis, for example, claims that the biggest problem is the inability to reveal one's Armenian identity. This is caused mainly by the education system.

> First and foremost, I would describe living as an Armenian in Turkey as difficult. I'm not sure it qualifies as a life. For example, being unable to express your Armenian identity in public... This is the most serious issue. Being Armenian is not a crime, but it causes many regrets and takes a lot of time to explain. This is especially significant given that Armenians, like Assyrians, have a history of genocide. A provocative attitude is taken against Armenians as a result of the indoctrination of distorted historical consciousness through our education system, which is already crooked due to serious problems with official history. When it is said or you say that there was a genocide, you are told, "No, you actually committed genocide".[2]

He adds that events that take place elsewhere also affect the lives of the Armenians in Turkey. He defines the social and political atmosphere of the country as very conducive to discrimination and massacres and gives the example of a discriminatory incident that took place during the Nagorno-Karabakh War in the second half of 2020.

> For example, the atmosphere of the country is very conducive to discrimination and massacre. In other words, not only the events in Turkey, but also the events related to the Armenians abroad affect the Armenians of Turkey. Unfortunately, there is an extreme nationalist and racist vein in Turkey. In order to keep the power, these wounds are constantly bled, and provocations are made. For example, in Kumkapı, an Armenian family was beaten by the Azerbaijani people. And accordingly, living in Turkey or living in Turkey as an Armenian is another name for hell, at least politically.[3]

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[2]Türkiye'de Ermeni olarak yaşamak, öncelikle olarak zor diye tanımlarım. Yaşam denir mi bilmiyorum. Kamusal alanda mesela kendini ifade edememek Ermeni kimliğinle... En büyük problem bu mesela. Bir Ermeni olmak, suç değil ama bunu anlatmak için büyük diller dökülüyor, büyük pişmanlıklar ve büyük zaman kayıpları yaşanıyor. Ermeniliğin bir soykırım geçmişi olduğu için, Süryaniler gibi vs. Ve işte tarih bilinci de çarpık olduğu için söylediğim gibi. Bir yalan tarih yazıldığı için, resmi tarihin ciddi problemleri yüzünden ve bunun aşılanması yüzünden eğitim sistemimiz de zaten çarpık. Bu yüzden işte Ermenilere karşı özellikle daha şey, kışkırtıcı bir tavır alınıyor. Soykırım oldu dendiği zaman, dediğiniz zaman, hayır asıl siz soykırım yaptınız vs. deniyor.

[3]Mesela ülkenin atmosferi çok elverişli ayrımcılığa ve katliama. yani sadece Türkiye'de yaşayan olaylardan da değil, yurtdışında yaşanan Ermenilerle ilgili olaylar da Türkiye'deki Ermenileri etkiliyor. Zaten Türkiye'de aşırı bir milliyetçi, ırkçı damar da var maalesef. Sürekli de işte iktidarı elde tutmak için bu

In the following pages, I will examine various institutions and spaces that have an impact on the Armenian identity. Ekmekcioglu's conceptualization of those spaces as in-side, mid-side, and out-side will be followed in situating those instances and institutions in the lives of young Armenians.

3.1 Encounters with non-Armenians

In the Ottoman period, the responsibility to maintain order and public morality of neighborhoods had been entrusted collectively to the residents of each neighborhood. As Wishnitzer argues, such collective responsibility inevitably created a personal and collective identification of locals with the neighborhood and brought a sense of acquaintance as everyone knows who the members of their neighborhood are and who are not (2014, 516). Despite the changes in the regulations of the neighborhoods with the formation of the new Turkish Republic modern mechanisms of administration have been brought. Nevertheless, households continued to be regarded as private spaces and were exempt from state surveillance. As Lerna Ekmekcioglu argues, the regulatory energies of the state mechanisms were halted at the threshold of the household and the state has a limited power on the family structures, such as marriageability rules and kinship networks (2016, 121). Due to the relative autonomy that Armenians enjoyed in their private spheres, the family continued to be one of the main enablers of the reproduction and continuity of Armenianness. However, it should be underlined that this autonomy is very limited and case-specific. For example, while it is possible to inform the children for the sociability rules, traditions, or religious holidays, most of the time, it is not preferred by parents to talk about how they have survived the Armenian Genocide and inform their children not to talk about those issues when it is asked. In other words, the family did not only act as a ground where Armenian culture and traditions are transferred from one generation to other but also introduced the limits of the performability of the Armenianness to the following generations. Children grew up by learning the necessary knowledge regarding the acceptable conducts that are expected and should performed beyond the relatively safe and autonomous borders of the household. This exemplifies the limited nature of the autonomy that is mentioned above, and as young Armenians

yaralar da tekrar kanatılıyor vs. Kışkırtmalar yapılıyor. Örneğin Kumkapı'da bir Ermenistanlı aileyi Azerbeycanlılar sıkıştırıp dövdü. Hal böyleyken Türkiye'de yaşamak da, Türkiye'de bir Ermeni olarak yaşamak da cehennemin diğer adı da diyebiliriz en azından, politik olarak.

are being taught from little ages about how to deal with the state in the home and they are not being told about the past in the home.

Throughout interviews, it becomes visible that the most frequent interventions that Armenian children face in their familial circle is with whom they can be friends, what they can or more precisely, what they cannot talk about with their friends, and how they should behave outside the home. Interviews are revealing in this regard as they shed light on the ways that parents intervene in their movements and behaviors either straightforwardly, by giving direct warnings regarding how to behave on the 'outside' or indirectly, which are conveyed to the children without direct notice. Sarven, for example, recounts that on the street he exclusively played with Armenian children and when Muslim children came out, he would generally return home. He even remembers an unnamed tension with Muslim children even though there were no incidents of conflict or a problem. Yet, in some rare instances when they played with Muslim children, he remembers how his or one of his friends' mothers immediately started to watch over from the window.

> Because we always think that why they don't include us in their game. Why don't they invite us? Or why didn't they come when we invited them? Or why did one of our mothers always feel the need to look out the window when we said let's play with them? But I also remember this thing. Sometimes, when other groups, Muslims went out on the street, we either went home or felt the need to go home, or we continue playing among ourselves without intervening in them.[4]

In a more straightforward example, Zepour remarks on the changing attitude of her parents toward Armenian and non-Armenian friends. She questions why her parents were advising her to be easygoing and kind when playing with Turkish children while there were no instructions when she was playing with Armenian children. She also notes that her parents' attitude had ever-lasting effects as it shaped her character.

> As I previously stated, when I went out on the street, I was given advice such as "Don't argue too much" or "I don't know much." And because they did it that way, I'm curious why it's that way for them. Why do you get that warning when you go out on the street if you don't get it when you are with a boy from your own school? There, you notice

[4]Çünkü biz hep şunu düşünüyoruz ya onlar niye bizi oyununa dahil etmiyor. Onlar niye bizi çağırmıyor? Ya da biz çıkardığımızda onlar niye gelmedi? Veya biz onlarla bir şekilde hadi oynayalım dediğimizde niye sürekli birimizin maması camdan bakma ihtiyacı hissediyordu? Ama hani şeyi de hatırlıyorum. Bazen işte diğer gruplar da Müslüman kesimlere sokağa çıktığında biz ya eve çıkıyorduk, ya eve çıkma ihtiyacı hissediyorduk ya da onlara müdahil olmadan, biz kendi aramızda, Rupen, Sevag, Kamer, ben oynuyorduk.

> that something is different. Then you think, “I should keep quiet,” “I shouldn’t get into arguments,” or, I don’t know, “I shouldn’t reveal my identity too much.” And it’s something that makes you passive.[5]

She further states that it is because of the parents’ attitude that children learn prejudices and correspondingly approaching one another with negative feelings. She also finds it difficult to understand and strongly questions why her family ignores whom she can get along with in choosing friends and wants her to befriend Armenians only.

> For example, your family may say, “Don’t befriend them” or “Only befriend Armenians,” but I get along better with others. In other words, the family constantly forces you to stay in your own community (...), but they don’t care whether or not you get along with them. They claim that even the worst Armenians are preferable. There is nothing to discriminate against, but children develop prejudices as a result of their family’s taboos. Because this is something that is taught. So, regardless of how friendly you are, your family may support you more if you have a friendship with an Armenian rather than a Muslim.[6]

3.2 Speaking Armenian

The way that Armenian children should behave outside the safe space provided by the household is another significant area that should be mentioned. The dangers posed when experiencing and performing Armenian culture outside the officially defined areas, in addition to past examples that parents have in their mind whether witnessed directly or passed on their elders, are reflected on the children in the form

[5] İşte dediğim gibi sokağa da çıktığımda bana, "Çok tartışma," veya "Bilmiyorum de," gibi öğütler verilirdi. Hani onu o şekilde yaptıkları için de, niye onlara öyle? Kendi okulundan tanıdığın çocuğa o uyarıyı almıyorsun da sokağa çıkarken niye alıyorsun? Orada anlıyorsun ki bir şeyler farklı. E bu sefer de sana öyle dendiği için, “ben az susmalıyım”, “ben kavga etmemeliyim”, “ben, ne bileyim, kimliğimizi çok açık etmemeliyim,” diye düşünüyorsun. E bu da seni sürekli pasifleştiren bir şey.

[6] Mesela ailen yeri geliyor "Onlarla samimi olma," ya da "Ermenilerle samimi ol," diyor ama ben diğerleriyle daha iyi anlaşıyorum. Yani aile sürekli seni kendi cemaatinde kalmaya zorluyor (. . .) ama hiç umursamıyorlar ki, hani onlarla anlaşabiliyor musun, anlaşamıyor musun. Yani kötüsü bile iyidir diyorlar. Ayrımcılık yapacak bir şey yok ama ailelerin tabuları olduğu için çocukların önyargıları oluyor. Çünkü bu durum biraz da öğretilen bir şey. Yani sen ne kadar arkadaş canlısı olsan da ailen Müslüman biriyle ilişkilenmendense, yani arkadaş olarak, Ermeni biriyle ilişkilenmeni belki daha çok destekler.

of various control mechanisms. The most direct outcome of these mechanisms on the daily life of young Armenians could be summarized as living in two distinct spheres, regulated by the very existence of the door that separates the home from the outside. Many interviewees mentioned how their way of living their identity is transformed when they leave their home and walk on the street. In many instances, parents prohibit their children from speaking Armenian with them, call them "*mama*" (*mother*), or even deny the existence of the Armenian language. Sarven brilliantly illustrates the existence of the mutually exclusive Turkish and Armenian spheres which, in his instance, are not separated by a door but a window.

> My grandmother spoke Armenian very well. At that time, you are going to school. You are just trying to learn Armenian. I remember, for example, my grandmother is sitting on the semi-ground floor, we are talking through the window. We speak Turkish when we speak through the window, but the moment you enter the apartment and pass through the doorway, you turn to Armenian. You know that window is a border, and it is forbidden to speak Armenian behind the border, but inside it, you can speak Armenian as you wish.[7]

Awareness of the vulnerabilities that being Armenian entails leads young Armenians to be more conscious about their identity, especially in the public sphere. This consciousness led to the frequently used Armenian words like *yaya* or *mama* not being used in everyday life.

> So, for example, when we went out on the street, when we walked together in those times, there is no such thing as mama, and you are only allowed to call your mother anne. There is no yaya, but anneanne. Or, I don't know, you're trying to be extra sensitive and avoid using Armenian words when you are on the street.[8]

It is also important to note that these precautions were not only taking place where Armenians are in minority but even in places where Armenians constitute the ma-

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[7] Benim yayam çok iyi Ermenice konuşurdu. O zamanlar işte böyle okula gidiyorsun. Ermeniceyi yeni yeni öğrenmeye çalışıyorsun. Şeyi hatırlıyorum mesela yayam bodrum katta oturuyor, camdan konuşuyoruz. Camdan konuştuğumuzda Türkçe konuşuyorsun ama apartmandan içeri girip kapı dairesinden geçtiğin an Ermeniceye dönüyorsun. Hani o cam bir sınır ve sınırın arkasında Ermenice konuşmak yasak ama içinde dilediğin gibi Ermenice konuşabilirsin. Bu aslında bütün sokağa değil, aslında bütün bulunduğun lokasyona da yayılmış diyebilirsin.

[8] Yani mesela şey, sokağa çıktığımızda, o dönemler beraber yürüdüğümüz de filan böyle 'mama' demek yok, sadece anne demek var. 'Yaya' yok, anneanne var işte. Ya da ne bileyim sokaktayken Ermenice kelime kullanmamaya ekstra hassasiyet ve özen göstermeye çalışıyorsun.

jority of the population, Armenians still prefer to conceal their identity. A very accurate example reflecting this manner took place in the life of Tatul, born and raised in one of the most densely populated localities by Armenians, Kurtuluş. What is particularly striking in this example is his mother's denial of the very existence of the Armenian language because of not knowing how another person will react.

> I remember my mama once told me to not to call her mama in front of a dacig. In fact, there was an incident that she lived with my sister, not with me. Our apartment consisted of four flats and a sibling lived in each flat. One day, my sister said something in Armenian to one of those brothers. The man said to my mama, "What did he say?" and my mom replied, "I don't understand either". However, my sister was speaking Armenian and as she didn't know how the other person would react, she felt the need to hide it back then. Something like that happened in the past. Even if it was small, there were cases where my mother told me "Oh, be careful". Of course, since I was a child, I couldn't understand everything, so when she said to me, "Don't call me mama, and call me anne," I couldn't understand the reason. But why? The question of why was in my head. But as I said, since I was a child, I was only thinking about why, I was questioning so little. Later on, we somehow learned the answer of it.[9]

Although Tatul could not make sense of his mother's decision to deny a language she knows back then, there are several examples that emerged during interviews that interviewees mention as the first instance where they realized how different they are from 'others'. Zabel mentions an incident where she was trying to push the spider off from her friend's foot and describes it as 'one of the first traumatic incidents' of her life.

> We wouldn't go out anyway in Bakırköy, but in Kınalı Ada, we were always outside because the street was already full of Armenians, we were among our own friends. I never forget one day; it is one of the little traumatic memories from my own childhood. I am such an extroverted person, and I was like that when I was little. I don't know how right it

[9]Mamamın bir daçiğin yanında bana mama deme dediğini hatırlıyorum. Hatta benimle değil de aslında kuyriğimle yaşadığı bir olay vardı. Kuyriğim çocukken Hayren tek tük duyduğu şeyleri söylemeye başlamış. Bizim yan komşumuz da şeydi, 4 daireydi ve her dairede bir kardeş oturuyordu. Bir gün işte o kardeşlerden birine kuyriğim Hayren bi şeyler söylemiş. Adam da ne diyo falan demiş. Mamam da ben de anlamıyorum demiş. Halbuki Hayren konuşuyormuş. Karşı tarafın ne tepki vereceğini bilmediğinden onu gizleme ihtiyacı duymuş o zamanlar. Öyle bi şey yaşanmış eskiden. Ufak tefek oluyordu yani o "Aman dikkatli ol," deme hadiseleri. Tabii çocuk olduğum için her şeyi idrak edemediğimden dolayı bana "Mama deme, anne de," dediği zaman pek anlam veremiyodum. Yani niye? Bir soru, niye sorusu kafamda oluyodu. Ama dediğim gibi, çocuk olduğum için sadece niye ile kalıyordu. Sorguluyordum yani ufaktan. Daha ileride onun cevabını bir şekilde öğrendik.

> is to say this, I won't tell the name of the girl, of course, but I had an incident like this when I was playing on the street in Kınalı, maybe when I was in the first or second grade. (...) Of course, we also had Muslim friends there. While we were all sitting together, a spider climbed the foot of a Muslim friend of mine. As a favor, I said, "Oh, you have a spider on your foot." Then I made a move to push the spider off my friend's foot. She got very angry with me and shouted, "How could you do such a thing to a sacred animal like a spider," in front of everyone. I just wanted to show goodwill there. It was one of my first traumatic events where I realized that there is a distinction between people, it was that moment. Then, of course, we experience different things as we grow up, but you realize that your identities are different. Even if you are friends, eat the same meals every day, play the same marbles every day, even if you are on the same team while playing, you understand one thing, there is a difference, and this is somehow implied to you. Maybe she didn't do it on purpose, maybe it was something she saw or heard something from her family. I don't know and at this age I don't want to think about it anymore.[10]

So far, the interventions initiated within the Armenian community were taken into consideration which, as the interviewees mentioned, held an important role in the formation of their identity. Yet, along with the interventions coming from the 'inside', there are various incidents that are taking place on the 'outside'. Despite all the warnings and precautions conveyed to or taken by the individuals to conceal their identity, some elements are impossible to conceal, such as names or slight accent. Armenians, during their encounters with non-Armenians, which could either be in a friendly, bureaucratic, or a daily setting where you just take a taxi, are faced with the imminent question that asks them their *memleket*, their birthplace. Accordingly, the following part will discuss how young Armenians' daily lives are affected by having a non-acceptable identity, how they negotiate and what kind of mechanisms they employ to cope with the dangers that their identity possesses, and how this process affects the identity construction of young Armenians. In doing so, names, as the most visible and integral part of their identity will be examined.

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[10] Bakırköy'de zaten dışarı çıkmazdık ama Kınalı Ada'da sokak zaten Ermeni kaynadığı için her zaman dışarıdaydık, kendi arkadaşlarımızın içindeydik. Hatta bir gün hiç unutmuyorum kendi çocukluğuma dair küçük travmatik anılardan bir tanesi. Ben böyle çok dışa dönük bir insanım, küçükken de öyleydim. Bunu söylemek ne kadar doğru, kızın adını söylemeyeceğim tabi de sokakta oynarken Kınalı'da daha böyle belki birinci ikinci sınıftayım. (...) Orada tabii Müslüman arkadaşlarımız da vardı. Hep birlikte otururken Müslüman bir arkadaşımın ayağına örümcek tırmanmıştı. Ben de iyilik olsun diye, "aa ayağında örümcek var," dedim. Sonra dur itiyim diyerek bir hamle yaptım ona. O da herkesin içinde bana çok kızmıştı işte sen nasıl örümcek gibi bir kutsal hayvana böyle bir şey yapabilirsin diye. Halbuki orada iyi niyet göstermek istemiştim ben. Bu benim ilk travmatik, ilk böyle insanların insanlardan ayrıldığını anladığım noktalardan bir tanesiydi, o andı yani. Sonra tabii daha farklı şeyler de yaşıyoruz büyüdükçe ama anlıyorsunuz ki kimlikleriniz farklı. Arkadaş bile olsanız, her gün aynı yemekleri de yeseniz, her gün aynı misketi de oynasanız, oyun oynarken aynı takımda bile olsanız anlıyorsunuz bir şey var, bir farklılık var. Ve bu size bir şekilde sezdiriliyor. Belki o da kasten yapmadı, belki o da gördüğü bir şeydi ya da ailesinden bir şey duymuştu geldi onu söyledi bana bağırdı, etti. Bilmiyorum artık. Bu yaşımda bunu düşünmek istemiyorum geriye dönüp.

3.3 Having an Armenian name

I woke up early today. Last week my grandmother had a heart attack, and we are going to visit her today. My mother had been staying with my grandmother for a while, but she had not taken me with her. I'm a little sorry we had to wait until the weekend to visit my grandmother. I wish I could have visited sooner. Anyway, we're going, even if it's late. We leave the house and take a bus. It is the same bus we take to go to my grandparents, I guess the hospital is close to their house. We manage to find a seat in the back of the bus. I don't like to go standing as the road takes a little longer. I hope the bus doesn't get more crowded, so I don't have to sit on my mom's lap. As the bus is slowly moving, my mother calls out to me and warns me that there are other patients in my grandmother's room so that I should only speak Turkish to her. I already know that I shouldn't speak Armenian outside, I've heard it many times before. Thinking that the conversation is over, I continue to watch the road, but my mother continues. She says that she introduced me to the other patients in the room as 'Serhat' and she wants me to respond with this name if they ask my name. This is the first time my mother has requested such a thing; I just say okay. When we get to the hospital, I decided it would be better not to talk at all. After staying in the room for a short while, we go out and I did not speak at all, without even saying goodbye to my grandmother.

Jenny B. White makes a remarkable comparison between Istanbul's landscape and the Braille script and argues one could read the notions that characterize the city as a code for the different forces and interests, and negotiations among them (2003, 14). Like the Braille script, social distinctions in the city, one of the most prominent areas that negotiations took place in the city, are encoded and decoded through introductions as Marcy Brink-Danan claims (2011, 63). Every individual who doesn't have a Turkish first name and belongs to one of the non-Muslim communities in Turkey, at some point in their life, is faced with an inquiry that questions the 'foreignness' of their name. It is possible to argue that in the context of Turkey, asking one's *memleket*, appears as a frequently used medium in negotiating social distinctions in society. While the question might seem harmless at first sight, it could be regarded as a 'polite' way of asking someone's ethnic origin. Accordingly, '*Nerelisin*?' is a very common question that Istanbulite Armenians constantly hear in their daily lives. While the question emerges because of the unfamiliarity toward non-Turkish members of society, the consequences of such unfamiliarity result in instances of discrimination.

Some Jewish families, for example, opt to register their children with a Turkish name, but they also give their children a Ladino or Hebrew name that is not listed on their ID and is only used among friends and family. Interestingly, the rabbinate's marriage applications ask not just for the "legal" name on the ID, but also for the Ladino or Hebrew names that will be used in the ceremony. The practice of double naming in the Armenian community, on the other hand, is just the opposite of the Jewish example and interviews revealed that most of the discriminatory attitudes that Armenians experience are closely related to having an Armenian name. While it is possible to hide the cross one wears or be careful not to speak Armenian, there is almost nothing to do when the name of the person is asked. Zepour vividly illustrates how her parents' efforts to conceal her Armenianness are futile as her name and accent manifest the difference without the need for a further sign.

> So, if someone says something bad to you don't say we are Armenian. But either my accent or my name, Zepour, make it abundantly clear. That's why you prefer not to answer when asked why your name is different or something. But the child also knows that you are different.[11]

Nevertheless, as parents are well-aware of the dangers of having an Armenian name, despite the difficulties to conceal one's name, they warn their children to not use their Armenian name in public spaces. Sarven's parents, for example, warn their child to not utter his Armenian name in the street if someone asks but rather use a Turkified version. Although Sarven states that this situation did not mean anything to him at that time, he states that he started to grasp that something was different in his identity.

> In fact, I think we begin to understand things as we ask them. How do we feel in turn, we feel bad. I don't know, I mean, my name is Sarven, but why did my mother tell me to say Salih or Sercan when someone asked what my name was back then? I have a name, but two other names are being tried to be derived from it. You didn't really understand much back then.[12]

Despite all the precautions and efforts, once someone understands that the name

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[11] Yani birisi sana kötü bir şey derse-yani Ermeniyiz deme. Ama zaten ya aksanımdan ya da adımızdan zaten çok net anlaşılıyor yani, Zepour. O yüzden, ismin neden değişik falan dendiğinde cevap vermemeyi tercih ediyorsun. Ama çocuk da biliyor farklı olduğunu.

[12] Aslında bunları sordukça anlamaya başlıyoruz bir şeyleri bence. Ha nasıl hissediyoruz, kötü hissediyoruz. Ne bileyim, yani benim ismim Sarven ama annem niye o zamanlar biri sana ismini sorduğunda Salih veya Sercan de diyordu. Benim bir ismim var ama bu bir isimden iki tane alternatif isim çıkartılmaya çalışılıyor. O zamanlar aslında çok bir şey anlamıyorsun.

belongs to a different origin, the immediate question that comes is "*Nerelisin*?". This could happen in either a setting where you meet with new people or during everyday encounters such as when you take a taxi or go to a governmental office for some paperwork. To respond to this question, one could either prefer to avoid it by mentioning the complicatedness of their origin which does not have a singular answer or can directly mention their homeland. Talar prefers the first option.

> So, I don't know, when meeting someone, for example, something always happens, my name is very obvious anyway, and when you say Verjin Ardasaryan, they don't perceive it first, and they ask, "Where are you from?" Sometimes it happens in taxis. When they ask what my name is, it changes every time. I mean, I make it up all the time because I still lack confidence. You're in the guy's taxi and something could happen, or he can do something to me.[13]

However, if someone prefers the latter case, then the conversation becomes much complicated as the person who asks the question at the first hand hears a city located in Turkey. Expecting a country or a city abroad, it becomes surprising for them that someone whose name has no Turkish connotation has their roots in the same country with them. Eventually, when the person comprehends that the person with a non-Turkish name has their roots in Turkey but is not a Turk but an Armenian, the immediate response that Armenians receive is a discriminatory one.

> You know, the first question asked after meeting with someone is, where is your hometown? We are from Sivas, but when I say that I was born and raised in Istanbul, they say, "Oh, are there Armenians in Sivas?" I encounter such things. Yes, there is. You know that too, we know that too, so you don't have to ask. But a long silence and then the question "Are there Armenians in Sivas?" Or, I don't know, the question "Did you come from Armenia?" They can come from one name to those questions. How is it that the meaning of a name can bring the subject to Armenians in Sivas?[14]

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[13] Yani ne bileyim, tanışırken mesela hep şey oluyor; benim adım bağırıyor zaten Verjin Ardasaryan dediğin zaman insan bir şey oluyor (gülme) "nerelisin", zaten bir algılayamıyorlar önce bir. Taksilerde oluyor bazen. Adını soruyorlar ya her seferinde değişiyor işte. Bazen Melike oluyorum bazen Mehlika oluyorum, Meliha falan. Yani sallıyorum böyle çünkü güvenim hala yok. Adamın taksisindesin bir şey çıkabilir ve bir şey yapabilir bana.

[14] Tanıştıktan sonra sorulan ilk soru şeydir ya, memleket neresi. Söylüyorum. Sivaslıyız ama doğma büyüme İstanbulluyuz biz dediğim zaman "Aa Sivas'ta Ermeni mi varmış?" diyor. Böyle şeylerle karşılaşıyorum. Evet varmış yani. Bunu siz de biliyorsunuz, biz de biliyoruz yani bunu sormanıza gerek yok. Ama uzun bir sessizlik ve ardından "Sivas'ta Ermeni mi varmış." olayı, ya da ne bileyim Ermenistan'dan mı geldin sorusu. İsimden buralara kadar geliyor olay. İsminin anlamı neden Sivas'ta Ermeni mi varmışa kadar geliyor?

In addition to the ignorance toward the existence of Armenians in Turkey, as Anoush pointed out, one of the most frequent reactions that Armenians receive when they declare their Armenian identity is "*Olsun*," which could be translated to English as "No problem." Even though the response may seem innocuous, it signifies the social hierarchy between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The phrase 'no problem' connotes that being a non-Muslim is a flaw that should be tolerated by those who are in the upper ranks of the hierarchy which drives young Armenians to adopt a Turkish name to utilize during everyday encounters.

Anoush's questioning of the absurdity of the encounter she experienced which started at the moment she told her name and led to a conversation about the existence of Armenians in Sivas is in parallel with Michael Herzfeld's conceptualization of naming as "a vocabulary of inclusion and exclusion" (1982, 299). Accordingly, to cope with the great power that names possess, young Armenians are adopting a strategy that may be dubbed 'double naming', either imposed by their parents or voluntarily themselves. It is the practice of adopting of a Turkish 'safe' name along with their authentic real name. Although it is not directly forced by legislation, individuals prefer to keep a Turkish name in their back-pocket to avoid conversations that might cause them discomfort.

In *Ideology, and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1994), Louis Althusser coins the term interpellation to describe the process which transforms individuals into subjects. Through social and political institutions, which Althusser calls 'ideological state apparatuses,' 'proper' citizens are created to reproduce the conditions of production and ensure the continuation of the capitalist ideology. Butler's discussions in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997) adds a new dimension to the concept of interpellation and demonstrates its connection with the practice of naming. She argues that it is through names that "a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible" (Butler 1997, 5). In other words, it is the name that performs nationality, race, and gender which interpellates a person into a particular social existence (Stevens 1999, 165). Through naming interpellation transforms unique individuals into socially intelligible subjects. After being named with an Armenian name, young Armenians become interpellated not only as a subject but also as an Armenian subject which in turn, expects them to carry out particular sort of performances. As Butler puts it, "the mark interpellation makes is not descriptive, but inaugurative"; it seeks to "introduce a reality rather than report on an existing one" (1997, 33). What I argue moving from Butler's discussion is, adoption of Turkish names by young Armenians should be regarded as one of the dimensions of the performances that possessing a non-Turkish name necessitates which has far-reaching implications on the behaviors of Armenians.

Owning a non-Turkish name in the context of Turkey could result in political, social, and economic exclusion and in that sense, possesses great dangers. However, being named with another name complicates the process of the subjectivization of young Armenians. From the moment when they start to possess a Turkish name, except for performing the necessities of an Armenian name, they had to fulfill the requirements of their Turkish name too. The Turkish name, for instance, does not allow them to speak Armenian or obliges them to hide the cross that they wear, as Turkishness is exclusively based on being ethnically Turk and Muslim. Correspondingly, hiding any physical object that might signify Armenianness takes an important place in the narratives of the interviewees. Particularly, hiding the cross is one of the most recurring themes that emerged during the interviews. Karin, for example, recounts the processes that she went through in her everyday encounters which almost made her give up even saying her Armenian name. Even though she "enlightened" at some point that this is who she is, and it does not need to be veiled, she shares her disappointment toward inequalities that she experiences in living her traditions in comparison with other communities.

> But then an enlightenment came, and I said, for God's sake, if your name is Karin, you will say Karin, it's that simple, no matter what they write [on a Starbucks glass]. There was a time when I gave up. It's not just about Starbucks, by the way, in general, I thought I could keep some things to myself. (...) People can easily wear something that reveals their religion, or something related to their culture, but I always thought that if I wore a cross, it would attract attention. I mean, these little incidents brought me to a brief period of giving up, but I did not experience such a big event. (...) I had such a breaking point at that time, but I don't have anything to complain at the moment. But I still do not easily wear anything that betrays and shows that I am Armenian and Christian. Or I don't wear a cross when I go to college. I have a cross on my wrist, a tiny cross. That's it.[15]

Similar concerns and disappointments regarding the inability to freely use the psychical signifiers of Armenianness were also mentioned by Sarven. He identified the presence of various control mechanisms which constantly regulate the performative

[15] Ama sonra bir aydınlanma geldi ben de dedim ki ya bırak allah aşkına Karin adın senin Karin'se Karin diyeceksin, bu kadar basit, ne yazarlarsa yazsınlar [strubucks bardağına] yani. Bir ara böyle kırıldım, pes ettiğim dönem oldu. Bu sadece Starbucks mevzusu değil bu arada genel olarak, bazı şeyleri kendime saklayabileceğimi düşündüm böyle. (...) İnsanlar onu bunu takıyor kendi dinini gösteren veya ne bileyim kendi geleneğiyle ilgili olan bir şeyi rahat rahat takıp gezebiliyor ama ben işte bir haç taksam dikkat çeker, hep bunu düşünmüştüm. Bunlar yani, bu ufak tefek olaylar beni küçük bir pes etme dönemine getirmişti ama öyle büyük bir olay yaşamadım. (...) O açıdan hani o ara böyle bir kırılma noktası olmuştu ama şu anda herhangi bir şeyim yok yani. Ama hala bağıra bağıra Ermeni olduğumu ve Hristiyan olduğumu ele veren, gösteren bir şeyi haçtır bir şeydir rahatlıkla takmam yani. Ya da üniversiteye giderken haç filan takmam. Bileğimde bir haç vardır, minik bir haç. Öyle söyliyim.

aspects of the Armenian culture and complained about the mechanisms that are forcing him to go through those processes. It is worthwhile mentioning that while describing the process, the tone of his voice raised, and he experienced some difficulties in forming sentences.

> But no matter what, even if you don't realize it, you are going through a difficult time. Because there is a constant pressure, a constant control mechanism on you. You won't say mama when you go out on the street. While playing ball with them, one of ours's mama will look out the window. (...) You want to wear a cross, for example, you cannot wear a cross. They don't make you wear it when you go out. Because your family won't let you. In some places you need to change your name. They don't allow [to use your name] either. You know, you can't say Sarven comfortably, you have put a code name for yourself in a job or you have to say the name you have given yourself. At the end, you know, you say, "Why am I living all this?"[16]

In the last example, while mentioning his contentment of being a member of a 'different' group, Arden illustrates the anxiety that forces him to hide the cross tattoo he has on his arm while using public transportation or his inability to take his shirt off as his friends while celebrating the victory of his favorite football club because of the presence of a cross on his neck. While reflecting on the reasons that force him to conceal the possible signifiers of his identity, he initially mentions the ignorance of the people that they live with but also relates it to the possible outcomes of his parent's attitude starting from childhood.

> I like being in a different part of the society, it's a good thing. Of course, we cannot live comfortably. For example, I can't take off my t-shirt because I have a cross on my neck, while everyone takes off their tops to celebrate the goal. Or because I have a cross tattoo, I try to hide it on public transport. Because there are many people in our country who might misunderstand, who, as we say, are bigots. So eventually we try to hide them. (...) There is a saying, "Either seem as you are or be as you seem," don't look at the fanciness of the dress they are wearing. Likewise, why would I feel the need to hide my religion and race in some places? But we have to. Maybe we want that ourselves, I

[16] Ama ne olursa olsun farkında olmasan bile zor bir süreçten geçiyorsun. Çünkü üzerinde sürekli bir baskı var, sürekli bir kontrol mekanizması var. İşte sokağa çıktığında mama demeyeceksin. İşte onlarla top oynarken birimizin maması camdan bakacak. (...) Haç takmak istiyorsun atıyorum, haçını takamazsın. Sokağa çıktığında, tak tak taktırmıyorlar sana. Çünkü sana-onu izin vermiyor ailen. Bazı yerlerde adını değiştirmen gerekiyor. Ona da müsaade etmiyorlar. Hani rahat bir şekilde Sarven diyemiyorsun, başka bir işte kod adı koymuşsun kendine veya isim koymuşsun onu söylemek zorunda kalıyorsun. Hani şey diyorsun ya ben niye bunları yaşıyorum ki?

> don't know. Maybe that's how we got used to it, that's our habit. "Let's not reveal." You know, when I enter the tram, I take care to not show off my cross, but I don't know whether it is because of fear or because we have been used to it since we were little. Although I do not face with discrimination, I try to hide it. I haven't done my military service yet; I don't know what I will encounter there.[17]

At this point, it is important to note that the subjectivization processes of young Armenians are experienced differently depending on their gender. While it is the compulsory military service that has the most significant impact on the subjectivization process of young men, women are experiencing the complications of being both women and Armenian in a multifaceted way. As already mentioned in the previous part, even the way that Armenian parents interfere with their child's friends changes depending on the gender of their children. This does not mean that Armenian men are not reminded to marry an Armenian woman and are independent in their choice, but the intervention does not necessitate direct involvement of the parents and remains on the advisory level. The following part will examine the impact of gender on young Armenians.

3.4 Gender and Subjectivization of Young Armenians

As is revealing in the previous excerpt from Arden's interview, military conscription remains an important and fearful stage for most young male Armenians as the stories of discrimination or even physical violence are frequently told within the Armenian community. In addition to the stories heard from elders, it is evident that the murder of Sevag Balıkçı on the 24th of April while doing the compulsory military service, at the exact date commemorating the anniversary of the Armenian genocide, intensified the anxiety of male interviewees.

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[17] Ayrı bir kesimde olmak benim çok hoşuma gidiyor, güzel bir şey. Tabi rahat yaşayamıyoruz. Ben mesela maçta gol sevincinde herkes üstünü çıkarırken ben boynumda haç olduğu için tshirtümü çıkaramıyorum. Veya haç dövmem olduğu için bunu toplu taşımalarda saklamaya çalışıyorum. Çünkü yanlış anlayan, hani bizim deyişimizle yobaz olan çok kişi var ülkemizde. Bunları saklamaya çalışıyoruz açıkçası. (...) Ya göründüğün gibi ol ya da olduğun gibi görün diye bir laf var hani üstündeki elbiseye bakma, ne kadar süslü. Ben de neden dinimi, ırkımı bazı yerlerde saklama gereksinimini duyayım. Ama mecbur kalıyoruz. Belki de kendimiz öyle istiyoruz, onu da bilemiyorum. Belki de öyle alıştık, alışılmışımız bu. Belli etmeyelim. Kalıplaşmışız belki de bilemiyorsun ki. Hani ben tramvayda içeri girerken haçımın gözükmemesi için özen gösteriyorum. Bu korkudan mı başka bir şeyden mi yoksa küçüklüğümüzden beri böyle alıştırıldığımız için mi onu bilemiyorum şu anda. Ben de ayrımcılık görmememe rağmen saklıyorum bunları. Daha askerlik yapmadım orada neyle karşılaşacağım bilmiyorum.

During the interviews, the topic of conscription came out naturally without necessitating a question about the topic and was always discussed relative to the murder of Sevag Balıkçı, Hrant Dink, and the Armenian Genocide. It is important to note that at the date of the interview, apart from Tatul, all of the interviewees had not yet completed their compulsory military service and half of them mentioned Sevag when talking about their anxiety. The anxiety caused by the military service is mainly based not on the stories that they have been told or somehow heard about the problems of being an Armenian in the army but rather based on events that they witnessed, especially the murder of Sevag Balıkçı and the role of the military in the assassination of Hrant Dink. For example, Arden, while basing his unease on the aforementioned incidents, also worries about the possible long-term effects of any exclusion he might encounter in the army on his psychological health.

> When I say uneasiness, maybe we will come across such people with a one in a million chance. But after Sevag's death or after seeing those who took a stand against Hrant Dink, you start to wonder what will happen if such people come across to us, will they exclude us, or will I be harmed? Or, after all, these are events that will affect psychology. Even an exclusion there can affect or harm my life.[18]

He also shares his belief and disappointment that if he is ever going to experience discrimination, it would not be coming from his peers but from the high-ranking officials of the army. Additionally, the possibility of coming across as a 'fascist' and inability to stay silent in a conflict is among the possibilities that worry him.

> I don't even feel like serving the armed forces. If something happens, we are all willing to act for the country, but military service is both mandatory and unnecessary. And someone who thinks badly of you, like the commander or someone else there- In my opinion, the question that will be asked to me the most about this Armenianness will be these high-ranking people, not my friend who served in the military with me. That's what's frustrating, I think. (...) Or will we be able to hold our mouths on certain things? For example, I came across a dissident, a fascist, will we be able to keep quiet or will we open our mouths and be labeled as terrorist there? These are things that could happen.[19]

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[18] Ya tedirginlik derken belki bir milyonda bir ihtimal o tarz insanlara denk gelicez ama işte Sevag'ın ölümünden sonra veya Hrant Dink karşıtı savunma yapanları gördükten sonra bize denk gelirse ne olur, bizi dışlarlar mı ben bir zarar görür müyüm. Veya sonuçta bunlar psikolojiyi etkileyecek olaylar sonuçta bunlar. Orada bir dışlanma bile benim hayatımı etkileyebilir veya bana zarar verebilirler.

[19] Bu silahlı kuvvetlere hizmet etmek bile içimden gelmiyor. Ha sonuna kadar bir şey olduğunda ülke için bir şey yapmaya hepimiz razıyız ama hem zorunlu, bene gereksiz bir olay askerlik. Bir de senin hakkında

Tatul, the only interviewee that completed his military service, mentions a particular instance in which one of his peers threatened him with circumcision. Even though he mentions the singularity of the event which did not evolve into a bigger problem, while describing the event his tone of voice rose and his words became stronger.

> Lieutenant of our unit knows me. I mean, he knows I'm Hay, he knows everything about me, even teases me. I mean, I don't mean it in terms of anything, he's just joking or something. He was that type. In the military, a couple of people came. If you don't mind, I'll call say two idiots came and said, "Lieutenant Mahmut doesn't like this kind of incidents, you get circumcised." They tried to intimidate me like that, but I didn't care, I said "Ha ha," so I glossed over. Am I going to act on your words? Also, it was not the period when I had just enlisted in the army and my military service was almost over. It was a small thing; I can say in a negative sense. But as I said, I didn't care too much. I did not dwell on it, and frankly, I did not find it worth dwelling on.[20]

In comparison to Armenian men, it is possible to argue that the extent and intensity that gender plays in the lives of women is multi-faceted. In addition to the difficulties that young women encounter in Turkey regardless of their ethnic, sexual, or religious identities, Armenianness adds a new dimension to the subjectivization process of Armenian women. Despite the absence of a specific period that women point out during the interviews, like conscription in the men's example, women are constantly reminded of their gender and accordingly being asked to restrain their movements. Almost all of the woman interviewees recounted that they were advised not to have Turkish friends while none of the male interviewees mentioned such remarks. Zabel recounts how her parents did not allow her to go out in Bakırköy but would allow her out in Kınalıada as there are Armenians there. Then, she relates the problems that she encountered during the first years of her university life in socializing to grow in a tight-knit community.

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kötü düşünen, atıyorum orada komutan olur, bilmem ne olur- Bence en çok sorguyu, suali bu Ermenilik hakkında bana sorulacak askerde bu büyük rütbeli insanlar soracak. Yanımda askerlik yapan arkadaşım değil de. Sinir bozucu olan şey de o bence. (. . .) Veya bazı şeylerde ağzımızı tutabilecek miyiz? Atıyorum karşıt görüşlü birine denk geldim, faşist birine denk geldim, susup oturabilecek miyiz yoksa biz de ağzımızı açıp orada terörist damgası mı yiyicez. Bunlar olabilecek şeyler, olabilir bunlar.

[20] Askeriyede, hani sinek ufak mide bulandırır hesabı. Bir iki kişi gelmişti, bizim birliğin üstteğmeni, ki beni biliyor. Yani Hay olduğumu biliyor, her şeyimi biliyor. O zaman hatta adam bana takılıyor yani şey anlamında söylemiyorum normal şakalaşıyor ediyor falan. Öyle bir tipti. İki, yani sakınca görmüyorsan çok afedersin gerizekalı dicem, işte Mahmut üstteğmen bu tarz olaylardan hoşlanmaz sen sünnet ol gibilerinden şey yapıyorlar. Böyle gözdağı vermeye çalışmışlardı da ben takmadım, ha ha dedim geçiştirdim yani. Sizin lafınızla mı hareket edicem ben. Bir de yani o zaman yeni gittiğimiz zamanlar da değildi ki, neredeyse askerliğim bitecekti orada. Ufak bir şeydi olumsuz anlamda diyebileceğim ama dediğim gibi takılmadım çok fazla. Üstünde de durmadım, durmaya da değer bulmadım açıkcası.

> As a girl, you know, maybe my parents were more protective. First of all, there is no such thing around me, so I have never witnessed it. My mama didn't let me out on the street anyway when I was in Bakırköy and she only gives permission in Kinaliada because there are Armenians there. It took a long time for me to adapt. And it was because I stayed away from them, not because of someone else's prejudice against me. This happened because we were brought up a little bit secluded by hearing things like "Oh my girl, stay away from that" or "Oh my girl, this will make you sad" or "Oh my girl, don't go to that, don't do that."[21]

Furthermore, the regulations that are imposed on children in making friends have further connotations, particularly for women as it reminds them with whom they can have romantic relationships. It is worthwhile to mention that, while the advice toward befriending only Armenians stays only on the symbolic level and parents do not directly force their children to end the friendship, in the case of romantic relationships they could intervene and generate pressure until their demands are met. Zepour describes the pressures her family put on her which inevitably forced her to break up with her partner.

> To give an example, I had a two-year relationship at the university, but I broke up because of the constant pressures my parents put on me. But I was happy too. So that distances me a lot. Everything is always tied to religion. So, it doesn't matter if you agree with that person or if they are the right person for you. Come on, is it better if I get divorced? Especially parents look at it that way. They say such nonsense as "It is enough to be a Hay", "An evil Hay is better than a good Muslim."[22]

Rita, on the other hand, a young woman struggling to sustain a romantic relationship with a Kurdish boy, vividly describes the pressures that her father put on her and her disappointment toward his father as she has never done anything to embarrass him.

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[21] Bir kız olarak belki işte ailem daha fazla korumacı davrandı. Önce çevremde öyle bir şey yok benim yani hiç şahit olmamışım. Mamam zaten sokağa salmıyordu Bakırköy'deyken. Yani Kınalı'da da salıyor, haylar var. Çok uzun sürmüştü benim adapte olmam. Halbuki benim işte uzak durmamdan kaynaklıydı yoksa başkasının bana olan bir önyargısından değildi. Böyle birazcıkta şey aileden de dışa kapalı büyüdüğümü için aman işte aman kızım şundan uzak dur aman kızım bu seni üzer aman kızım şuna gitme buna gitme falan diye büyütüldüğümüz için, yetiştirildiğimiz için herhalde öyle de bir şey kalmış.

[22] Hatta örnek vereyim üniversitede iki yıllık bir ilişkim vardı ama sürekli annemlerin bana yaptığı baskılar yüzünden ayrıldım. Ama mutluydum da. Yani bu beni çok soğutuyor. Her şeyin sürekli dine bağlanması. Yani senin o kişiyle anlaşman, senin için doğru insan olması önemli değil. Hay olsun ama boşansam daha mı iyi? Özellikle ebeveynler böyle bakıyor. "Hay olsun nasıl olursa olsun", "Hayın kötüsü, Müslüman'ın iyisinden iyidir." gibi saçma salak...

> I mean, I've been dating for over a year and a half now, and it's my first relationship. It's my first boyfriend and it makes me so sad to see such a reaction. It's like I've done a lot by now - I'm still doing nothing. I've never embarrassed them, I've done nothing disgraceful; I didn't come home drunk; I didn't stay up late, I always came on time. Since I have one dacig lover, we became enemies about this, really.[23]

The term 'intersectionality' was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to describe the extent of race and gender that affect the lives of black women in the US. Some later studies extended the scope of Crenshaw's study by adding other dimensions such as class, nation, and ethnicity. In their works, those scholars accurately pointed out that each of those categories has distinctive impacts yet affects the everyday lives of individuals cumulatively. In other words, as Yuval-Davis emphasizes, in concrete experiences of oppression, being oppressed, for example, as 'a Black person' is always constructed intermeshed in other social divisions" (2016, 195). In Rita's case, it is possible to argue that although she fulfilled all the gender roles imposed on her, as she failed to fulfill the roles expected from an 'Armenian' woman, she was pressured by her father. The imagery of crossroads and traffic, developed by Crenshaw's as quoted in Yuval-Davis (2016, 196), would make a great fit to the experience of Talar.

> Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group (...) tries to navigate the main crossing in the city. (...) The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street. (...) She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, many-layered blankets of oppression."

Nevertheless, the extent of the gender-based intervention that young Armenian women experience is not limited to their parents and extended family. Various examples are told during interviews that stress the gendered implications of being an Armenian woman living in Turkey. Among those examples, I would like to focus on two particular and relatively similar instances narrated by Zabel and Verjin, where their peers found the necessity to intervene on the Armenianness of their friend.

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[23] Yani bir buçuk seneden uzun süredir çıkıyorum, ve ilk sevgilim yani. Benim ilk erkek arkadaşım ve bu kadar tepki olması beni çok üzüyor yani. Bu zamana kadar sanki çok bir şey yaptım- hala yapmıyorum. Hiç yüzünü kızartmadım, rezil bir şey yapmadım; eve alkollü gelmedim; geç saate kadar kalmadım etmedim, hep saatinde geldim ettim. Bir tane dacig sevgilim olduğu için düşman olduk gerçekten yani bu konuda.

Zabel: Anyway, my close friends told me, "If he asks the meaning of your name or something, don't tell him you're Armenian." It broke my heart a lot when they said that. I think they said it out of fear, that the child will get angry, he will lose his temper in the friend environment or something.[24]

Verjin: This is the classic at Istanbul University. There is always something, we know. Was it October, I don't remember exactly the month. I don't know what a day. Sala.. Do they bring salawat, that is, they walk with prayers. "So now your name is Melike, we will call you like that," something like this happened. I said "Berkay, calm down, nothing will happen."[25]

3.5 The Impact of Generational Differences

One another issue that is worth mentioning at this point is the changing attitudes of Armenians among different generations. It has been revealed during interviews that young Armenians are finding their attitude different from the older generations. Sarven relates differences in experiencing Armenianness among different generations to the Armenian Genocide and particularly to the way of experiencing the outcomes of it in their lives. His grandfather, for example, experienced and performed the Armenian culture in Malatya for the most of his life whereas his father born in Malatya but had to migrate to Istanbul at some point with his parents and had their son born and grew up in Istanbul. According to Sarven, the changing political atmosphere along with the different ways of experiencing Armenianness depending on the city one lives in are among the reasons of the generational differences. Nevertheless, he defines the younger generations politically active in comparison with the older generations.

I try to compare myself with my father. Or, when we took my grand-

[24] Neyse, benim çok yakın olduğum arkadaşlarım şey demişlerdi bana, sen adının anlamını falan sorarsa Ermeni olduğunu söyleme söylemişlerdi. O benim çok kalbimi kırmıştı, bunu söylemeleri. Yani herhâlde çocuk yükselir işte arkadaş ortamında bir taşkınlık yapar falan filan diye, korkularından söylediler diye düşünüyorum.

[25] İstanbul Üniversitesi'nde klasik böyle. Sürekli olay olur hani biliyoruz. Ekim zamanı mıydı, tam hatırlamıyorum ayını. Bilmem ne bir şey günü. Sala.. Salavat mı getiriyorlar, yani dualarla yürüyorlar. "Yani şu an senin adın Melike, böyle sesleneceğiz sana," falan oldu böyle. Berkay dedim sakin ol bir şey olmaz.

> father and father and myself into our hands for three generations, the Armenianness that my grandfather lived in is very different. I think what he experienced regarding the Armenian culture is very different because my grandfather lived the Armenianness in Malatya. My father's life is very different. My father lived half of his life in Malatya and the other half in Istanbul. But I only lived in Istanbul. When we look at the basis of all of these, or when we take 1915 as the basis, it turns out that my grandfather somehow grew up with memories and stories [about the Genocide]. And maybe he couldn't predict or know what to do and after a while he had to come to Istanbul. My father, on the other hand, grew up with those stories in the same way, but there is a difference because at the time he grew up, he could not do anything due to political problems in Turkey or there is an urgency to do something. But when we look at this last generation of Armenians born in 1990s and 2000s, I do think that this last generation of Armenians has a slightly different mentality and even if not all of them, a certain part is struggling for something a little more. Besides all that, put 1915 aside. How do these three generations live the Armenian culture? How does he live in Istanbul or Turkey? Even these are actually experienced in very different ways when we look at them. I think that the holiday story my father told 20 years ago, and the holidays we celebrate today are probably not the same, I can even directly say that they are different. Or I don't know, religious rituals, weddings. It seems to me that everything has become a little different. For example, I remember my grandmother's sensitivity at that feast table, her care that day, it was necessary to go to church together like that. Not only on the day of the feast, if there are fasts to be fulfilled on the previous days of the feast, they are held, if you need to go to church, you go to the church, etc.[26]

Various respondents stated a shift in attitudes, notably toward religious rituals, as well as a lack of enthusiasm among the younger generation in these rituals. One of the reasons for the change, according to Zabel, is the age we live in, which has caused the younger generation to break with tradition as a result of digitization and technological advancements.

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[26] Babamla kendimi kıyaslamaya çalışıyorum. Veya işte dedemle babamı ve kendimi, üç kuşağa elimize aldığımızda, dedemin yaşadığı Ermenilik şeyi çok farklı. Bence Ermeni kültürü üzerine yaşadığı şeyler çok farklı çünkü dedem Ermeniliği Malatya'da yaşadı. Babamın yaşadığı çok farklı. Babam biraz Malatya'da, biraz İstanbul yaşadı. Ama ben tamamen İstanbul'da yaşadım. Bunların hepsinin temeline baktığımızda veya temeline 1915'i aldığımızda; dedem bir şekilde o anılarla, o hikayelerle büyümüş ve işte belki ne yapacağını tahmin edemedi, kestiremedi ve bir şekilde bir süre sonunda İstanbul'a gelmek zorunda kaldı. Babam yine aynı şekilde o hikayelerle büyümüş ama onun büyüdüğü dönemde, bir anlamda işte Türkiye'deki siyasi sorunlar, politik sorunlardan kaynaklı bir şey yapamama halleri veya bir şey yapma ihtiyacı olduğundan bir farklılık var. Ama şu son dönemeçte, bu 90 ve 2000 doğumlu Ermeni kuşağına baktığımızda, ben bu son kuşak Ermenilerin biraz daha farklı kafa yapısında olduğunu, farklı düşündüğünü hepsinin olmasa da tabii ki, belli bir kısmın biraz daha sosyal bilimlere ilgi duyan kısmının biraz daha ilgili olduğunu, biraz daha bir şeyler için mücadele ettiğini filan düşünmüyorum. Bunların hepsini yanında, 1915'i bir kenara koy. Bu üç kuşak Ermeni kültürünü nasıl yaşıyor? İstanbul'da veya Türkiye'de nasıl yaşıyor? Bunlar bile aslında birbirine çok farklı şekilde yaşanıyor baktığımız zaman. Bunun- bundan bir 20 yıl önce babamın anlattığı bayram hikayesiyle bence bugün bizim kutladığımız bayramlar aynı değildir, aynı değil hatta, gibi değil aynı değil yani. Veya ne bielyim, kilise törenleri, düğünler. Her şey biraz daha farklılaştı gibi geliyor bana.

> I don't even question the difference between the two generations. There is a very, very sharp, very obvious difference, so definitely. Of course, this is also about traditions, as we break away from traditions, we also break away from other things. (...) Our generation was born into technology, now I think what happens to us is happening to them too. I mean, they don't have much to do with religion either, at least I'm speaking for all my Turkish friends I know. I mean, I think it has something to do with the era, it has something to do with the era we live in. We were born into technology; our previous generation was not like that. I think it has nothing to do with national identity. Being born into technology also made us more questioning and eventually we broke away from traditions or questioned the necessity of traditions.[27]

Similar to Zabel, Yervant underlines that it is not only the Armenians of Turkey, but the Turkish community is also witnessing a change and this change led the younger Turkish generation to dissociate themselves from their older generation's attitude particularly regarding the Armenian Genocide as they simply 'forget'. Comparing the younger Turkish generation with younger Armenian generation, on the other hand, Yervant states that nothing has changed for Armenians as they still grow up with stories of the Genocide.

> I think there is necessarily a difference because there is a dimension of witnessing. In other words, just as the event changes over time in the word-of-mouth game, there is a similar situation in the transfer of things from generation to generation. For example, while someone in the previous generation directly witnessed the events, the next generation only grew up with what they heard from their own mother and father, or maybe they witnessed when they were little. The next generation, on the other hand, has only heard of the events and increasingly I think, it becomes a story. I mean it will be like medieval stories, maybe a few generations from now. Because inevitably, people forget or may not care about what they have not experienced. (...) For example, when I said that from generation to generation the stories are forgotten a bit, I said it not for our generation, but for the other side. Even though they are brought up with denialist policies, the tendency to deny decreases a little as generations are passed. In our generation, however, nothing much has changed since we always grew up with the same stories. Since we are a

[27] İki kuşak arasındaki farkı hiç sorgulamıyorum bile yani. Çok çok sivri çok belli bariz bir fark var yani kesinlikle. Bu biraz geleneklere bağlı olmakla da alakalı tabi, geleneklerden koptukça başka şeylerden de kopmuşuz. (...) Bizim çağımız daha teknolojini içinde doğdu, şimdi bize olan şey bence onlara da oluyor. Yani onların da dinle çok alakaları yok en azından benim çevremin, benim tanıdığım bütün Türk arkadaşlarım için konuşuyorum. Yani bu bence biraz çağla alakası var bunun yaşadığımız dönemle alakası var. Biz teknolojinin içinde doğduk o bizim üst kuşağımız öyle değildi vs. vs. bunun şeyle alakası yok yani milli kimlikle hiç alakası yok diye düşünüyorum. Teknoloji içinde doğmak da bizi daha sorgular hale getirdi hem birincisi geleneklerden koptuk, geleneklerin gerekliliğini sorgular olduk biz istemeden yani bunu bilinçli olarak yapmıyor olduk.

> minority, that information is still fresh and that's why we don't forget it easily. That's the reason why I said they forget because they only saw it in primary school, maybe only in the books, like Armenians who did us this and that. They grew up that way, but it's a thing of the past and it doesn't matter much anymore.[28]

As it is mentioned by Yervant, the education plays a significant role for young people in Turkey where they get to know the Armenians or other minority groups however with negative connotations. In the next section, I would like to examine the impact of the educational institutions on the perceptions of youth in Turkey, with a special emphasize on young Armenians.

3.6 Educational Institutions and Perceptions of Young Armenians

Until the adoption of the Unification of Education Act in 1924, Armenian schools were under the regulation of the patriarchate. However, with the adoption of the act, all schools operating in Turkey were put under the control of the Ministry of National Education. As the name of the ministry suggests, a 'national' education started to be given in schools which, naturally, has additional implications for minority schools. Before moving to describe the outcomes of nationalized education on Armenian schools and the effects of such an education on young Armenians, the importance of educational institutions in the subjectivization processes of individuals should be discussed. It is important to note that educational institutions are not restricted to Armenian schools. Some interviewees went to non-Armenian schools and most of them attended tutoring schools, known as *dershane*. As those institutions coincide both *mid-* and *out*-side it is important to situate the impact of those institutions on young Armenian subjectivity separately.

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[28] Bence ister istemez fark var çünkü tanıklık olayı da var. Yani olaylara tanıklık vs. nasıl kulaktan kulağa oyununda gittikçe olay değişiyorsa tanıklık ettikçe. Hani birisi mesela bir önceki nesil direkt olaylara şahit olmuştur. Öbür nesilde kendi mamasının, babasının duyduğuna ondan ondaki nesil artık dinlemiş hatta belki küçükken yaşamış. Ondan sonraki nesil duymuş, gittikçe hani bir hikâye olarak görüyorum. Yani sallıyorum orta çağdaki hikâyeler gibi olacak belki birkaç nesil sonra. Çünkü ister istemez insan unutur ya da hani umursamayabilir birebir yaşamadığı şeyi. (...) Ben mesela o dedim ya nesilden nesile gidince biraz unutuluyor gibi. Onu daha çok hani bizim nesil için değil de karşı taraf için söyledim. Çünkü niye onlar inkâr politikası üzerine ı büyütüldükleri için hani nesilden nesile gidince inkâr biraz azalıyor. Bizim nesil çünkü hep aynı hikayeler ile biz büyüdüğümüz için biz de değişen bir şey yok. Azınlık olduğumuz için de hala bilgiler taze. O yüzden de biz hani kolay kolay unutmayız. Onlar unutuyor dediğimin sebebi o. Onlar sadece ilkokulda belki şu an kitapta görmüştür, işte bize kötülükler yapan Ermeniler falan gibisinden. Öyle büyümüş geçmiş gitmiş.

Bernstein, Elvin, Peters, & Huxley (1966) underlines the importance of educational institutions in the formation of modern society as they are designed to transmit two cultures: an instrumental and expressive culture. While instrumental culture enables children to develop necessary skills, particularly vocationally skills, to sustain their lives, the expressive culture, transmits necessary norms and values to legitimize the dominant system by homogenizing and unifying the society (Bernstein et al. 1966, 429). In a similar vein, Althusser underlines the importance of the schools in the reproduction of the dominant ideology as they provide children with the necessary knowledge (1994, 250-52). The term "hidden curriculum," coined by Philip W. Jackson (1990) and then elaborated by various scholars, particularly by Paulo Freire (2018), opens a significant perspective in understanding the role of the educational institutions in the transmission of the ideology. It is possible to define the "hidden curriculum" as a subtle and selective educational guide that transmits the ideology of the world that students live in and shape their subjectivity per that particular ideology to sustain the social order (Luykx 1999, xxxiii-xliii). As Meşeci Giorgetti argues, textbooks, curriculums, national or religious festivals, and pledges occupy great socio-political importance in the hidden curriculum as they remind students of their role and position within society (2019, 82). When it comes to Turkey, there are multiple examples in the Turkish education system that aim to create of unified Turkish identity and legitimization of the state ideology. It is possible to argue the extent and density of those examples are more frequently encountered during the primary school years. Despite their discriminatory nature, Karin states that she participated in those events with great enthusiasm.

> For example, I noticed in Feriköy, I was conscious of [being an Armenian] when I was studying in Feriköy, but unfortunately, there is a system of the state and, let's say, you to go to the choir and you are made to be sung songs, but these are necessarily Armenian songs, for fests or something, songs of these occasions and it is sung obligatory. For example, the National Anthem competition. My Turkish teacher pushed me hard and I was very enthusiastic about it back then. I thought it was a very great virtue for me, a very big, very beautiful event. I will memorize and recite ten stanzas of the Turkish National Anthem; I will go on stage and so on. If my teacher also liked my performance, I said it was excellent and I didn't go into that questioning in that respect. It seemed to me that I was doing something very nice.[29]

[29] Feriköy'de mesela fark etmiştim, Feriköy'de okurken [Ermeni olma] bilinç gelmişti bana ama ne yazık ki işte işte devletin bir sistemi var ve atıyorum koroya gidiyorsun okulda ve koroda sana şarkılar söyletiyorlar ama bunlar genelde Ermenice şarkılardan ziyade işte bayramdır, seyrandır o tarz şeylerin şarkıları ve zorunlu olarak söyletiliyor. İstiklal Marşı okuma yarışması mesela. Türkçe hocam çok zorlamıştı beni ve ben de o zamanlar hani çok aşırı bir şekilde heves etmiştim buna. Bunun benim için çok büyük bir erdem, çok büyük, çok güzel bir olay olduğunu düşünmüştüm. İstiklal Marşı'nın on kıta ezberleyip okuyacağım, işte

One of the most prominent mediums that are utilized by the state, is the "Student's Pledge" (Andımız), which was obligated by the Ministry of National Education in 1933 and continued to be chanted every morning in primary schools. Even though the pledge was full of militarist statements and has a celebratory tone about being a Turk, minority schools were not exempted from the pledge and every morning young Armenians committed their existence to Turks. The Student's Pledge read in full as follows:

> I am a Turk, I am righteous, I am hardworking. My principle is to protect my juniors, to respect my elders, and to love my country and my nation more than my own self. My motto is to rise, progress, and go forward. I commit my being to the existence of the Turks. (as cited in Ekmekcioglu 2016, 108)

In addition to the 'Student's Pledge', young Armenians are obliged to participate in a flag-raising ceremony at school where they sing the Turkish national anthem every Monday morning and Friday evening. The anthem which mainly depicts the heroic acts of Turks during the War of Independence, memorized and sung by young Armenians who in some instances are even encouraged to participate in recitation competitions of the anthem. There was one significant incident related to this issue that took place in 2006 in which a student from Private Feriköy Armenian Primary School memorized the anthem and won the competition in Şişli locality. At that time, the incident found a wide space in various media outlets and interviews conducted were with her. In one of those interviews, after stating how proud she felt to have won the competition, Katya mentioned her teachers' efforts to teach the anthem from a very little age which eventually enabled her to memorize the ten verses without any difficulty and succeed in the competition.

> It was not difficult at all to memorize the ten stanzas as our teachers taught us the National Anthem since primary school. I was the last one on the stage in the competition. This helped me overcome my excitement. The National Anthem is already a beautiful poem, and I read it with emotion. When I learned that I was the first, I was both happy and proud. Our teachers and school have a big role in my success.[30]

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sahneye çıkacağım falan. Hocam da performansımı beğeniyorsa süper demiştim ve o açıdan o sorgulamaya girmemiştim. Çok güzel bir şey yapıyormuşum geliyordu bana.

[30] İlkokuldan beri öğretmenlerimiz bize İstiklal Marşı'nı öğrettiği için on kıtayı ezberlemek hiç de zor olmadı. Yarışmada ben en son çıktım sahneye. Bu da heyecanımı yenmemi sağladı. İstiklal Marşı zaten güzel bir şiir, ben de ona duygu katarak okudum. Birinci olduğumu öğrendiğim zaman da hem sevindim, hem de gurur duydum. Benim başarımda öğretmenlerimizin ve okulumuzun büyük rolü var.

A similar incident, yet with a discriminatory outcome, was experienced by Karin during her primary school years. It is important to note that she told this discriminatory incident after being asked about any moment or period in which she realized her Armenianness. Recounting the competition, she says;

> Moreover, I was treated unfairly in that competition, and I still cannot forget that. Maybe because I'm Armenian, I don't know. (...) According to what my teacher said, I read it much better; I was better prepared, but they put a Muslim first. They didn't even take me into consideration. I don't know exactly, but my teacher told me something, "You were treated unfairly. When I participated in this competition before, with another student from a different [Armenian] school, he was treated unfairly as well. I will not participate again," he said.[31]

The ideological state apparatuses utilized by the Turkish state are not limited to the spatiality of the school buildings. The celebration of national holidays, particularly Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, and National Sovereignty and Children's Day, are obligatory, and as well as decorating classrooms, schools are expected to participate in official ceremonies held at various stadiums. While the importance of these events in the construction of the national Turkish identity is evident, they have further implications for Armenian students as they might face discrimination in those settings. Zabel relates the first instance of discrimination that she encountered in her life to one of those events.

> Anyway, when we were at fifth grade, we were going to that thing, there are May 19 ceremonies. Where was it, I guess it was in a big stadium, we were going to walk in the cortege too. All the schools in Fatih were gathered there. They weren't clapping as we passed, I remember that. We were in the fifth grade, that was the first time I witnessed such a thing.[32]

On a more structural level, the Ministry of National Education necessitates that the vice-principal of Armenian schools should be ethnically Turk, and Turkish literature,

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[31] Üstelik o yarışmada da bana haksızlık yapılmıştı, onu da hala unutamam. Belki de Ermeni olduğum için, bilmiyorum yani. (...) Hocamın dediğine göre, ben çok daha iyi söylemişim; daha iyi hazırlanmışım ama Müslüman birisini birinci yapmışlar. Beni hiç kaale bile almamışlar falan. Tam bilmiyorum ama hocam bana şey demişti, sana haksızlık yapıldı. Ben daha önce bu yarışmaya katıldığımda farklı bir [Ermeni] okulundan başka bir öğrencimle, ona da haksızlık yapılmıştı. "Ben bir daha katılmayacağım," demişti.

[32] Her neyse beşinci sınıfta şeye gideceğiz, 19 Mayıs törenleri var. Neredeydi, büyük bir staddaydı galiba, biz de yürüyeceğiz. Fatih'teki bütün okullar toplanmış orada. Biz geçerken alkışlamıyorlardı, onu hatırlıyorum. Beşinci sınıftaydık ilk kez orada hani birebir böyle bir şeye şahit olduğum o andı.

geography, and history courses have to be taught by a Turk teacher (Vahapoğlu 2005, 151-52). The urge to regulate what is taught in these courses is related to the Turkish state's nationalist ideology which leaves no room for the information about geography, history, or literature of other ethnic communities living in Turkey. Furthermore, it is possible to argue that in Armenian schools, the implementation of the "hidden curriculum" is entrusted particularly to those teachers who, as Mehmet Deri states, possess "national consciousness" and "national sentiments," a competence that could not be fulfilled by their Armenian counterparts (2009, 152-53). In addition to the teachers, history, literature, and geography books, prepared specifically by the Ministry of National Education, are also among significant tools to shape Armenian students as "particularly positioned social beings" (Luykx 1999, 125). It is in those books that the stories of Armenians or other non-Muslim communities are either not mentioned or mentioned within the framework of treachery. In most instances, Armenians and Greeks are depicted as enemies of the Turks and traitors who are tricked by foreign powers and stab the Turks from behind (Ekmekcioglu 2016, xii).

In response to the discriminatory policies that are imposed on children to teach them "the 'rules of good behavior," they developed some tools and methods both in subtler and direct forms. It is through these mechanisms that young Armenians respond and resist the injustices and constraints that schools are imposing on them. The most recurrent form of resistance particularly in high schools is simply not participating in acts or performing the roles that are expected from students. In either case, silences are the inherent component of tools and methods developed by students. Nevertheless, those silences are not related to, as Walsh states, "a lack of voice, identity, or an inability to express (. . .) but should be evaluated as an active, momentary (and safe) response to oppressive conditions within the classroom or school, or a conscious and/or unconscious decision not to risk self-disclosure" (1990, 114-41). At this point, it is worth mentioning a personal incident which occurred during the author's high school years which would make a great fit for this discussion. It is related to the ceremonies that took place every Monday morning and Friday evening which necessitates singing the Turkish national anthem. Students were passively resisting this form of oppression by simply withdrawing from the ceremony by not singing the national anthem. It was almost exclusively the voices of teachers, Turkish and Armenian alike, that was heard in the room.

Another instance that I would like to mention is told by Anoush where she describes her reaction against the parts of the history books about the Armenian Genocide. Giroux argues that resistance is not solemnly about countering oppressive mechanisms and practices imposed on students but also they are "rooted in the need

to dignify and affirm those experiences that make up their lives outside of school" (McLaren 1999, xii). It is possible to situate Anoush's experience within this framework as she relates her actions to being an Armenian in Turkey.

> I scribbled and tore the pages about the Armenian genocide in the tenth-grade history book. In front of the teacher. And I said that "I won't read these pages. I will not learn these pages." So, I scribbled and tore those pages up by saying that will not read. I scribbled them all line by line. Either way I was not going to use those pages. I already know they're lies. I think it's something that anger made me do it. I mean, it's not just about 1915, but, um, it was about the anger that I lived in this country for having this identity.[33]

Despite the presence of oppressive mechanisms in the educational system, Armenian schools hold a significant position for young Armenians to discover their Armenianness. As "a legal and traditionally accepted way of maintaining the identity and recovering Armenianness," schools are succeeded to sustain their autonomy to some extent, as Armenian literature, language, and music are allowed to be taught (Ekmekcioglu 2016, 143). However, the relative autonomy enjoyed by Armenian schools, like that of Armenian families, is limited and varies widely between schools and grades. For instance, while Armenian primary schools are more likely to support the official narrative, students in Armenian high schools, particularly in some of them, are finding it easier to raise their voices and actively resist state policy. Accordingly, when talking about the Armenian schools, interviewees underlined their impact on the formation of their Armenianness.

> As a preparation for this, I think the Naregyan Armenian High School is a high school that has a more political and culturally protective attitude than other Armenian high schools in Istanbul, culturally and politically. I also graduated from there. Through the teachers there, including the teachers appointed from the national education, who have political awareness; they were people who had at least some historical consciousness. This helped me a lot. Compared to other Armenian high schools, it was a school where Armenian was used more widely. For example, mathematics lessons were taught in Armenian. Likewise, biology lessons were given by Armenians and taught in Armenian. That's how most science

[33] Onuncu sınıftaki tarih kitabındaki Ermeni soykırımıyla ilgili sayfaları ben karalamıştım hep ve yırtmıştım. Hocanın gözü önünde. Ve demiştim ki ben bu sayfaları okumiyicam. Ben bu sayfaları işlemiyicem. Yani okumayacağım, kullanmayacağım bu sayfaları ve yırtıp atmıştım. Hepsini satır satır karalamıştım önce. Nasıl olsa yalan olduklarını biliyorum zaten diye. Bu-bu bana- yani bu öfkenin yaptırdığı bir şey diye düşünüyorum. Yani hem- 1915 ile ilgili değil sadece ama, umm, yani, bu kimliğe sahip olduğum için bu ülkede yaşadığım şeylerin bende yarattığı öfkeyle ilgili bir şeydi bu.

> classes were taught. Such a consciousness has also emerged, obviously with the contributions of teachers. I think the principal of the school is also a very sensitive woman. Her contribution cannot be ignored.[34]

Although the impact of schools on the consciousness of young Armenians is imminent, it would be erroneous to assume that all Armenian schools are equally significant in the formation of Aremniannes in student's lives. It is important to note that during interviews the names of two schools and their importance on generating a consciousness were frequently mentioned by the interviewees. As the names and significance of the principals of these schools are mentioned by interviewees, it might be accurate to emphasize the importance of principals in Armenian schools.

> Our teacher was someone who liked to talk, who like to talk about our religion and race. Frankly, he opened our minds. It aroused curiosity. We had good conversations. We shared with him everything that should not be talked about outside. It taught us our identity. I was a person who did not have any job in these works, did not research. I started researching. For example, I learned the Wealth Tax from him. I learned about Wealth Tax from him, it was very interesting to me. There is even a movie starring Hülya Avşar, I watched it immediately after recommending it. "Ms. Gülsüm's grains" or such a name. It was thanks to that baron, she. It aroused my interest.[35]

Despite the importance that students attribute to Armenian schools, there are also some instances where students criticize their schools' protective attitude which caused fear and unease while socializing outside of the Armenian institutions. In other words, as Young Armenians exclusively socialized in closed and protective environments within the borders of household or Armenian institutions struggled to socialize outside of the defined circle. Verjin's example is illuminating at this point. Even though she reflects on the influence of the school she attended in discovering her Armenian identity with affirmative overtones, she mentions the attitude of some

[34] Buna da bir ön hazırlık olarak Naregyan Ermeni Lisesi de bence kültürel ve politik olarak istanbuldaki diğer Ermeni liselerine nazaran daha politik bir tavrı olan, daha kültürel korumacı bir tavrı olan bir lise bence. Ben de oradan mezunum. Oradaki öğretmenler vasıtasıyla, hem- yani milli eğitimden atanan öğretmenler dahil, politik bilinci olan; tarihsel bilinci en azından bir nebze olan insanlardı. Bu bana çok yardımcı oldu. Diğer Ermeni liselerine nazaran, Ermenice'nin daha yaygın kullanıldığı bir okuldu. Mesela matematik dersleri Ermenice işleniyordu. Aynı şekilde biyoloji dersleri de Ermeniler tarafından verilip, Ermenice işleniyordu. Fen derslerinin çoğu öyle işleniyordu. Öyle bir bilinç de oluştu açıkası öğretmenlerin de katkılarıyla. Bence okulun müdürü da çok hassas bir kadın. Onun da katkısı görmezden gelinemez.

[35] Baronumuz, biraz konuşmayı; dinimizi, ırkımızı anlatmayı seven bir baronumuzdu. Açıkçası beynimizi o açtı. Merak uyandırdı. Güzel sohbetler ettik. Dışarıda konuşulmaması gereken her şeyi biz onunla paylaştık. Bize kimliğimizi öğretti. Ben bu işlerde hiç işi olmayan, araştırmayan biriydim. Araştırmaya başladım. Mesela Varlık Vergisi'ni ondan öğrendim. Varlık Vergisi olayını ondan öğrendim, çok ilgincime gitti. Hatta Hülya Avşar'ın oynadığı bir film var, hemen tavsiye ettikten sonra onu izledim. Gülsüm Hanım'ın taneleri mi ne öyle bir adı vardı. O baron sayesinde oldu. Bende ilgi uyandırdı.

teachers who portrayed Muslims as the enemies of Armenians, and one should keep them at bay brought powerful anxiety toward socializing with non-Armenians.

> Of course, teachers should teach this to a certain extent, but after a while, in high school, my teachers planted those little seeds in our heads, like little criticisms about Atatürk and so on. I've been something since then, I can say that I had an enlightenment about it. (...) In this way, by making us question, by asking us questions, umm, they led to an enlightenment. For example, I have always praised Naregyan until now, but it is also a fact that we were often reminded of this at Naregyan: Dac, here, "Muslims are our enemies." We were not told this directly, but Muslims are enemies to us, we have to keep a distance with them. There were also things like turning us against them in Naregyan. I will never forget those. Although they enlightened us, some of the teachers there had such statements. And even then, I questioned him, back then I did not have the courage, of course, but I went to the teacher and said, "Teacher, why did you say such a thing?" as. But the subtext is the Muslim thing, "University is not like this place, be careful with your friendships, you will miss here." Okay, but why? The beneath is always empty. These are the words we have always been told in vain. Later, after seeing the university environment, I learned that everything was not as we were told in primary and high school.[36]

3.7 Outside of the Armenian Schools: *Dershanes*

It's almost been a month since dershane started and I still do not have any friends that I hang out with. There are other Armenians, but we are not in the same class, and we rarely coincide with each other. The dershane that I'm attending has a very

[36] Tabi ki öğretmenler bunu da öğretmeli bir yere kadar ama işte bir yerden sonra, lisede, öğretmenlerim ufak ufak Atatürk ile ilgili de böyle eleştiriler olsun, o ufak tohumları ekmişlerdi bizim kafamıza. Oradan beridir bir şeyim zaten, o konuda bir aydınlanma yaşadım diyebilirim. (...) Bu şekilde hep bizi sorgulata sorgulata işte, bize sorular sora sora, umm, bir aydınlanmaya yol açtı. Ben mesela şimdiye kadar Naregyan'ı hep överek konuştum ama şu da bir gerçek ki Naregyan'da bize çoğunlukla şu da kafamıza sokuldu: Dac- işte Müslümanlar bize düş-man-dır tarzı. Direk bu denmedi bize ama işte Müslümanlar bize düşmandır, işte onlarla bir mesafemiz olması lazım. Bizi onlara karşı dolduruşa getirme tarzı şeyler de oldu Naregyan'da. Ben hani bunları asla unutmam. Her ne kadar bizi aydınlatmış olsalar da oradaki bazı öğretmenlerin böyle söylemleri de olmuştu. Ve o zaman bile sorgulamıştım ama o zaman o cesaret yok tabi gidip hocaya "Hocam işte sen neden böyle bir şey dedin." gibi. Ama alttan alta Müslüman şeyi, "Üniversite burası gibi olmaz, arkadaşlıklarınıza dikkat edin burayı arayacaksınız. Tamam ama neden? Altı hep boş. Bizlere hep öylesine söylenmiş cümleler bunlar. Daha sonra üniversite ortamını da gördükten sonra her şeyin bize ilkokulda ve lisede anlatıldığı gibi olmadığını öğrendim.

conservative attitude. Classes are mixed but most of the time boys and girls are hanging out separately. Maybe that's why I exclusively chat with boys up until now. Tonight, we are going to have dinner with the study group that I'm a member of but honestly, it freaks me out to spend a whole dinner time with those people and I will probably find an excuse to avoid the event. Despite everything, I have a crush on someone from our class. We are having these moments where we catch each other's eyes but never talked. I don't dare to take the first step. I can't even envision that moment. What would I answer to her if she asks why my name is Sayat, what is the meaning of it or where I'm coming from? It's best to stay away and stop thinking about this possibility. This is the final bell ringing and it's the end of the day. I'm leaving the building and we are having eye contact again. Wait... Is she walking towards me? Oh my God! And here comes the question. "What is the meaning of my name?" I'm blushing. I'm talking gibberish. What is happening! I can't even look at her face. It's so desperate. Just say bye and leave, you can at least do this.

Despite the efforts initiated by family or school, as the lives of young Armenians are not limited to the Armenian institutions, it is impossible to prevent them from having encounters with the outer world. The moment young Armenians step out from their homes or schools, or any kind of an Armenian institution, they inevitably encounter the broader society. While the control mechanisms limit the possibilities and variety of such encounters, education offers one of the most unavoidable spaces where young Armenians meet with individuals from different backgrounds. Tutoring schools, *dershane*s, have frequently been mentioned by interviewees as a place where they have their first long-term encounters with non-Armenians. Sarven, for example, pictures the way that the *dershane* makes him feel, like a fish out of water.

> The dershane was something for me, like fish out of water. Because for the first time in my life, well, umm, I was going to meet Turkish friends for the first time with my thoughts settled, and I even met some.[37]

In a similar vein, being in a non-Armenian environment for the first time in her life makes Karin feel anxious. Attending a *dershane* known for its connection with the Gulenist movement and accordingly strong religious undertones, intensified this anxiety.

[37] Ya dershane benim için şeydi, sudan çıkmış balıktı. Çünkü hayatımda ilk defa, şey, umm, düşüncelerim oturmuş bir şekilde ilk defa Türk arkadaşlar edinecektim ve edindim hatta.

> Ermm.. The environment - it wasn't a very religious environment, but I felt that "Everyone here, the majority here is Muslim, I'm Christian and I can draw attention here." You know, this made my head a little bit like that. Because for the first time, think about it, I always went to Hay schools, and in a flash, Fatih Dershanesi. So I just fell into right place [laughs]. It was a little tense—well. I was figuring it out in my own head, but then I saw that what I had set up was also correct.[38]

As they are told to be refrain from making friends with Turkish students throughout their lives, along with the incidents of discrimination that they experience or hear of from their friends who are attending *dershane*s, young Armenians acted more carefully when choosing friends. This precaution, in the case of Sarven, resulted in feeling lonely.

> But the thing was very difficult, I felt very lonely around me because there was no one out of me. Someone that I can talk to always or something in Armenian whenever something happens. You are in a different world, you have no protection mechanisms, you have nothing. It required a feeling of loneliness, something, a period of adjustment. Here's a month and two months like this.[39]

While the absence of the protective mechanisms hindered Sarven for a while from adapting to his new life in *dershane*, as he luckily found another Armenian that he was acquainted with in the *dershane* the process of socialization was easier. The way he describes the process of adapting his subjectivity to the new environment is substantial to understanding the sense of insecurity that young Armenians experience when they first step out from their safe 'Armenian' space.

> Then we stumbled upon something. You are in the same classroom with another Armenian I know by chance. The first person I tried to be friends with was that other Armenian person. Then you start to make friends with other children, together with him. Of his own class or his class. Here - if there's anyone I trust, it's from the Turks, in my class, so I'm

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[38] Umm ve ortam- çok dinci bir ortam yoktu ama şunu hissettim, buradaki herkes, buradaki çoğunluk Müslüman, ben Hristiyan'ım ve ben burada dikkat çek-çekebilirim. Hani bu biraz kafamı böyle şey yaptı bir anda. Çünkü ilk defa. Düşün hani o kadar Hay okullarında okumuşum ve pat diye bir anda Fatih Dershanesi. Tam yerine düşmüşüm yani [gülüyor]. Biraz gergin- yani şeydi. Ben kendi kafamda kuruyordum ama sonra kurduğumun da doğru olduğunu gördüm.

[39] Ama şey çok zordu hani etrafımda çok yalnız hissetmiştim kendimi çünkü benden biri yoktu. Sürekli konuştuğum birileri veya bir şey olduğunda Ermenice konuşabileceğin biri. Bambaşka bir dünyadasın, bütün koruma mekanizmalarının yok, hiçbir şeyin yok. Bir yalnızlık hissi, bir şey, bir alışma evresi gerekiyordu. İşte böyle bir ay iki ay böyle.

> saying, here I say "Sayat, here, Ahmet is a good boy." I'm introducing you. You say that "Mehmet is a good boy," etc. Friendship started to develop a little like this in the dershane, but I don't remember being able to make friends with a Turkish person at one time. Because I went there with a reservation anyway.[40]

Even though young Armenians found new ways to navigate their Armenianness in *dershane*s, the absence of defensive mechanisms that they were used to, significantly impacted the subjectivization process of young Armenians. Masis recounts the reaction of other students at *dershane* when they discovered the cross he was already hiding beneath his shirt.

> But I remember the first time I met this discrimination at that thing, I was going to the Sınav Dershanesi in Bakırköy in the eighth grade, when I was going to high school. At that time, I was wearing a cross, I was a Christian. And those who saw my cross, they saw it under my shirt, there was a lot of gossip. I felt a lot of discrimination. For example, they were asking, "Are you a Christian? How did you become a Christian?" etc. They came to me with such questions.[41]

While *dershane*s constitute one of the most significant life stages of young Armenians when they meet with individuals outside of the Armenian spaces, it was not the only instance. For the ones who did not attend *dershane* or register to a non-Armenian school, these encounters took place in other venues. What is significant at this point is the impossibility to escape from such encounters. For example, the first discriminatory incidence that Zepour encountered, dates back to her high school years where she stepped out from the 'Armenian' spaces. After attending an Armenian primary school, she went to a private vocational high school that had an Armenian principal. She mentions the influence of the Armenian principal in her father's decision to register her child to a 'non-Armenian' educational institution. Zepour highlights a defense mechanism that she developed in response to being one of the few Armenians in an environment predominantly Turkish.

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[40] Daha sonra şeye denk gelmiştik işte. Şans eseri tanıdığım başka bir Ermeni ile aynı dershanedesin. İlk arkadaş olmaya çalıştığım kişi o diğer Ermeni kişisiydi. Daha sonra onunla beraber arkadaşlık kurmaya başlıyorsun diğer çocuklarla. Kendi sınıfından veya onun sınıfından. İşte benim- benim güvendiğim biri olduysa Türklerden, benim sınıfımdaki. Yani diyorum ki. İşteatıyorum Sayat diyorum, işte, Ahmet iyi çocuk. Seninle tanıştırıyorum. Sen diyorsun ki işte Mehmet iyi çocuk, falan. Arkadaşlık biraz böyle gelişmeye başlamıştı dershane içerisinde ama böyle hani tek seferde Türk biriyle arkadaşlık yapabildiğimi hatırlamıyorum. Çünkü nolursa olsun bir çekince ile gitmiştim oraya zaten.

[41] Ama bu ayrımcılıkla ilk defa şeyde tanışmıştım diye hatırlyorum. Bakırköy'de Sınav Dershanesi'ne gidiyordum sekizinci sınıfta, liseye giderken. O zaman haç takıyordum, Hristiyandım. Ve haçımı görenler, tişörtümün altından görmüşler, bayağı bir dedikodu olmuştu. Çok ayrımcılık hissetmiştim. Mesela soruyorlardı sen Hristiyan mısın? Nasıl Hristiyan oldun? vs. gibi sorularla üstüme geliyorlardı.

> I studied at the Armenian school until secondary school, but I encountered these a lot in high school. Because again I didn't know much because again you didn't go out much from the [Armenian] environment. But for example, I went to a vocational high school. It was a private vocational high school. The manager was Armenian. That's why my father chose it. But for example, we were still four Armenians in the classroom, but of course we had a lot of Muslim friends. They can't stand it and asks you this question: "Have you ever thought of becoming a Muslim?" Now, if I give a harsh answer, we will fight each other. At that moment, I said, I said automatically... What could I say, I can make him agree with me, but I can also teach him not to ask these questions again. You know that moment, it was a 1-2 seconds thing. And I asked him the question: "And have you ever thought of becoming a Christian?" He said "Tövbe." And so I said "Me, as well." I wasn't even thinking about it, because that didn't come to my mind. I said, "I'm very happy with my religion" and he never asked again. I mean, I learned a lot about being very smart, that is, [laughs] (...) without fighting, doing that thing, whether he likes you or not, but before anything goes wrong there [silence] I learned a lot to close that event. My brain has always worked like that.[42]

It would be important to mention the impacts of coming from a higher class in an educational setting. Rita mentions that she was never discriminated in a school setting, even though like Zepour, she did not have her education in an Armenian school.

> I have never experienced discrimination because I have always studied in private schools. Since Jews, Armenians and Turks—that is, Muslims—we all studied together in private schools, there was no such distinction.[43]

For other Armenians who went to Armenian schools but not to *dershane*s, the venue for such an encounter became universities. Zabel describes various steps and

[42] Ben ortaokula kadar, ortaokulu da Ermeni okulunda okudum ama lisede bunlarla çok karşılaştım. Çünkü yine [Ermeni] çevresinden çok çıkmadığın için çok bilmiyordum. Ama mesela, müs- meslek lisesine gittim. Özel bir meslek lisesiydi. Müdür Ermeni'ydi. Zaten o yüzden tercih etti babam. Ama mesela sınıfta yine de dört Ermeni'ydik ama tabi ki bir sürü Müslüman arkadaşımız vardı. Dayanamıyor ve sana şu soruyu soruyor: Hiç Müslüman olmayı düşündün mü? Şimdi ben sert bir cevap versem birbirimize giricez. O an dedim ki, otomatikman dedim ki. Ne diyebilirim ki hem bana hak vermesini sağlayabilirim ama hem de bir daha bu soruları sormaması gerektiğini öğretebilirim. Hani o an, 1-2 saniyelik şey. Ve ona şu soruyu sordum: "Peki sen hiç Hristiyan olmayı düşündün mü?" Tövbe dedi. İşte ben de aynı şekilde dedim. Ben de hiç düşünmedim aklıma gelmedi çünkü çok mutluyum dinimle dedim ve bir daha soramadı. Yani seni çok zeki olmaya, yani [gülüyor] (...) hani kavga etmeden, o şeyi yapmadan, hani sevmeyecekse de sevmesin ama orada bir terslik çıkmadan [küçük sessizlik] o olayı kapatmayı çok öğrendim. Hep beynim öyle çalıştı bu konuda.

[43] Ayrımcılık hiç yaşamadım çünkü hep özel okullarda okudum. Özel okullarda Yahudiler, Ermeniler ve Türkler- yani Müslümanlar hep beraber okuduğumuz için öyle bir ayrım olmadı.

difficulties that she experienced in her university life until she felt confident enough to take part in the public spaces.

> We have been aware that we are different, because of the fact that we are in a very closed environment since high school, we were aware of it, that is, at that age, they were 16, 17 years old. But we talk about it among ourselves, we say "Ah, we are not open to anything," but of course, there is living it in practice, there is living the practice of it. When you go to university, you are alone, you will meet someone at work for the first time. When you need to ask for anything, like from your desk mate, your teacher, you will ask for something from the front seat... Yes, maybe it's easy to say now, but I think it's a bit more challenging for people like us who are more introverted, whose family and friends have always been the same for a long time, and who have never experienced novelty (...) The first year of university was difficult for me, it was very difficult, I can even say it was the hardest few months of my life because I had a hard time adapting. I don't know anyone, I go to school five days a week, I don't know any of these people. In fact, I'm a very sympathetic person, but nobody knows me, I don't know them. I want to do something to meet them, but I'm embarrassed, it's been such a tough few months. (...) They were literally like aliens to me, so they were like aliens to me. That's why I was so confused. I always have those people around me. It was a time when I had a hard time thinking what I will talk about, how I will go into [the talk] and what they will think about me.[44]

3.8 Conclusion

The subjectivization process of young Armenians starts at very early ages, as they are constantly being reminded in their familial circle that they should only befriend

[44] Çünkü çok kapalı bir çevrede olduğumuzu aslında liseden beri farkındayız, farkındaydık yani o yaşlarda 16, 17 yaşlarında. Ama bunu aramızda konuşuyoruz yani aa diyoruz bir hiçbir şeye açık değiliz ama tabi bunu pratikte yaşamak var, pratiğini yaşamak var bunun. Üniversiteye geçince yalnızsınız, ilk kez işte birileriyle tanışacaksınız. Sıra arkadaşınız ne biliyim öğretmeniniz, önden bir şey isteyeceksiniz. Bunlar evet belki şimdi çok kolay söylemesi ama bizim gibi daha içe kapalı işte hem ailesi hem arkadaşları çok uzun süreler hep aynı olmuş, hiç yenilik yaşamamış insanlar için bence bir tık daha zorlayıcı. (...) Üniversitenin ilk yılı benim için zordu çok zordu hatta hayatımın en zor birkaç ayıydı diyebilirim çünkü adapte olmakta çok zorlandım. Tanıdığım hiç kimse yok, haftanın beş günü okula gidiyorum bu insanların hiçbirini tanımıyorum. Aslında çok sempatik biriyim ama kimse beni tanımıyor, ben onları tanımıyorum. Tanışmak için bir şey yapmak istiyorum ama utanıyorum da böyle zorlu birkaç aydı. (...) Resmen bana uzaylı gibiydi yani benim için onlar uzaylı gibilerdi. O yüzden çok garipsemiştim. Sürekli o insanlar var etrafımda. Ne konuşacağım, nasıl gireceğim, acaba benim için ne düşünecekler bilmem ne derken çok zorlandığım bir dönemdi.

Armenians and refrain from establishing friendships with Turks. Interestingly, none of the interviewees mentioned if they had ever been told by or asked for clarification from their elders regarding the reasons for such restrictions. This might be related to the silent transmission of traumatic incidents as will be elaborated in the following chapter. It would be reasonable to presume that the transmission of the traumatic stories about to younger generations enabled young Armenians to associate the events and grasp the necessary behavior without questioning them in the first place.

Following Ekmekicoglu's conceptualization, for most of the interviewees, the very first control mechanisms were introduced to Armenian children at very little age inside the familial circles. As young Armenians grow up and started their education life, they started to discover various aspects of their identity and made sense of some incidents they experienced as they spend time in the mid-side. Finally, they have been constantly reminded of the roles and performances that Armenians should follow at the ¬out¬-side. Although it appears that everyday life incidences that took place out¬-side were concluded with minor inconveniences, the existence of a mindset that entails possessing a non-Turkish identity could only be tolerated, generate more subtle results, including social, political, and economic exclusion. Because of those incidences, as Arus Yumul stated, for decades, Armenians have embraced the role of "silent outsider" and have chosen to live practically silently, making it possible for the rest of society to talk about them in the way they choose (2011, 151). Yet, as Tchilingirian argues, young Armenians are becoming more confident to show up in public spaces and perform their cultural practices. Following Tchilingirian's observation, one of the most significant similarities that emerged during interviews is the way that young Armenians are embracing their culture. These shifts can be ascribed to the emergence of global youth culture as well as the opportunities provided by digitization. As in the case of Arden, who shared his anxiety regarding his cross tattoo and cross necklace and his urge to hide those symbols in public spaces in previous pages, it is important to note that the very decision to carry those symbols on his body is taken consciously and could be regarded as an act of resistance to the assimilation policies of the Turkish state. Nevertheless, this does not mean that young Armenians see a future in Turkey where they live their Armeniannes freely. Sarven related the difficulties being Armenian entails in Turkey to almost a physical pain, as he used the word *sancı*, twinge.

> But when we look at the whole... the summary, it is also difficult. It is actually difficult and painful. But it makes you feel the pain later. You can't feel the pain at the age of ten, but at the age of 21, when you turn 22, you start to feel the pain. Here, this pain is that you can't express

> yourself with your whole being. You know, you start to hide yourself at the age of 10 or you start to hide when you are younger. But you turned 25 today. In some places, maybe you still feel the need to hide yourself. The pain is actually this, that is, this pain is starting to come to you as (...) They don't understand that you are a citizen of Turkey with all your identity, all your rights, and that you can benefit from everything in Turkey. In fact, I met a group of people who thought that you were constantly coming and going from Armenia. (...) It still makes you feel that here, here, Turkey does not accept us, that your existence does not recognize us, that you do not recognize your existence with this-this identity, and maybe one day I will have to leave from here. Because of these reasons. We still feel it.[45]

Anthropologist Sharika Thiranagama claims that "the relationship to what was once 'home' is not just one about the past, but about the possibilities of belonging in the future, the possibilities of finding a future in which one can flourish personally and collectively" (2007, 32). It would be accurate to argue that the absence of the fundamental rights, acknowledgment of Armenian culture, and the existence of a constant expectation that put on the shoulders of Armenians to 'prove' their existence result with frustration and impossibility to imagine a future in Turkey.

[45] Ama bütün cüm-özetine baktığımız zaman da zor geçiyor. Zor ve sancılı geçiyor aslında. Ama sancıyı sana daha sonra hissettiriyor. On yaşında acıyı hissedemiyorsun ama 21 yaşında 22 yaşına geldiğinde o sancıyı hissetmeye başlıyorsun yani. Ya bu sancı aslında bütün varlığınla kendini ifade edememen. Hani, 10 yaşında kendini saklamaya başlıyorsun veya daha ufakken saklamaya başlıyorsun. Ama bugün 25 yaşına gelmişsin. Bazı yerde belki hala kendini saklama ihtiyacı hissediyorsun. Sana sancı aslında bunu yani bu- sancı sana burada şy gelmeye başlıyor. (...) Senin bütün kimliğinle, işte bütün haklarına, bir Türkiye vatandaşı olduğunu ve Türkiye'deki her şeyden yararlanabileceğini anlamıyorlar. Hatta senin Ermenistan'dan sürekli gelip gittiğini filan düşünen bir kitleyle karşılaşmıştım. (...) Hala burası-burası-buranın, Türkiye'nin işte bizi kabul etmediğini, senin varlığının tanımadığını, bu-bu kimliğimle varlığını tanımadığını, sana hala hissettiriyor ve günün birinde belki ben de buradan gitmek zorunda kalacağım. Bu sebeplerden dolayı. Bunu hala hissediyoruz.

4. IDENTITY IN TRANSFORMATION: THE SENSE OF ARMENIANNESS AMONG YOUNG ARMENIANS

According to Tchilingirian, the Armenian Genocide, which has been discussed in the shadows for many years, gradually ceased being a taboo during the Istanbul patriarchal elections in 1990 and 1998, as well as following the foundation of the Agos newspaper, which began publication in 1996 (2017, 146). These events, particularly the writing of Hrant Dink in Agos and his public role marked the beginning of a process of transformation. The most significant transformation, on the other hand, occurred in 2007, with the assassination of Hrant Dink. The assassination not only caused the Armenian Genocide to be discussed in public spheres but also significantly affected the subjectivization process of young Armenians. Some of the interviewees who refer to the assassination as a 'breaking point' or a 'milestone' in their own lives indicate the importance of the incidents. Furthermore, all of the interviewees mentioned that the assassination caused a serious transformation both in making sense of their Armenianness and in the way they live their Armenianness, especially in the public sphere. This chapter will examine the perceptions of young Armenians regarding two significant events that were frequently mentioned by the interviewees and that have impacted their subjectivization process, namely the Armenian Genocide and the assassination of Hrant Dink. In addition to the perception of the interviewees regarding these events, the chapter will discuss the impact of those events on young Armenians' sense of belonging.

4.1 Getting to Know the Armenian Genocide

State policies regarding the Armenian Genocide, coupled with consequent events that aim to erase the traces of Armenians from public spaces, result in breaks in the transmission of family stories. The denialist state policies are particularly important at this point as it constitutes one of the founding pillars of the Turkish states and it constantly reminds Armenians of their fragility. Following Talin Suciyan, for Armenian families "who live under the shadow of the habitus of denial," the transmission of the stories of the Armenian Genocide to the younger generation is not an easy process (2015*a*, 133). In addition to the restrictions imposed by the state, the risks that the topic shelter in itself as it might result in mental or physical harm, force parents to not talk about what they or their ancestors went through during and after 1915 to protect their children. Nina Fischer, in her study on the post-genocide families, argues that "the parental wish to shield children from destructive knowledge" further complicates the communication of the traumatic event, which was already difficult in the first place for the survivor (2015, 5). Therefore, as Nazan Maksudyan states, Armenians of Turkey have been sustaining their lives "behind a wall of absolute silence" which hinders them from talking about the Armenian Genocide (2009, 636).

The fact that the Genocide was not discussed openly in the family circles also came forth during the interviews. For example, Sarven's parents pointed to the risks and fears that the topic entails as the reason for not sharing family stories with him: "Let's not talk about this. It's over. No need to fall for them again. If we talk, it's not good for us, it's bad."[1] It is also possible to argue that the reflections of those constraints and dangers are not limited to parents' attitudes and also influence the discourses of the young Armenians. Rita, for example, states that whenever the topic arises, the atmosphere of the country becomes tenser. In a more striking example, when asked about her family's story, the dangers, and risks to talk about the Armenian Genocide result in an interruption of Zabel's narration.

> Rudi: You described this family as people who are more conservative at work and give importance to their national and religious identity. Would you like to tell their story a little bit? Where are they from?
>
> Zabel: We are from Bitlis. I wish I had a yaya here, I wish I had my grandmother here. They suffered a lot, especially when they were coming

[1] Bunları konuşmayalım işte. Oldu bitti işte. Tekrar onlara düşmeye gerek yok. Konuşursak bizim için iyi olmuyor, kötü oluyor.

> from Bitlis- Shall I tell you about these places, Rudi?
>
> Rudi: Tell, tell. So if you are afraid of something, there is no need because on the one hand only I will be listening, on the other hand, as I said, it will be passing through your filter while putting things. So I'm going to say I put them.
>
> Zabel: I don't, not because I'm afraid of something myself... You already have the video; you can cut it if you want. I don't know, if these could be told. Well, okay, let me explain. Yayam always tells like this...[2]

Nevertheless, the restrictions enforced from the outside and cautiousness imposed on young Armenians from the inside do not necessarily mean that no transmission has ever happened within the family. It has happened indirectly and most of the time through silences. Fırat, Gürpınar, Muti, and Şannan (2021) defines the extent of such transmission, quoting from Agamben, as a "'wordless' experience which precedes in time and logic the constitution of the subject within and through language" (84). Therefore, silences within the household do not divert children to grasp what was not told to them. As argued by Fischer, "indirect transmission in an undercurrent of nonverbal communication and in the unspoken but powerful presence of secrets and taboos is also found in families characterized by minimal direct communication" (2015, 5). Correspondingly, the silent transmission of the traumatic stories was revealed in the interviews. The difficulty that interviewees experienced when designating a moment that they hear the Armenian Genocide for the first time, is telling in this regard. It is important to note that, even though parents abstain from talk about the Armenian Genocide, they still feel the necessity to urge their children to be careful. Zepour, for instance, recounts that the knowledge of being different was explicitly transmitted to her as their parents remind her that she is different from the 'others'.

> I never hid it that much but I didn't stand out because your parents teach you that. Because already it is not explained much when you are little. Just because the child is not clear where to say what. But they always teach you that you are different, that you are not one of

[2]Rudi: Bu ailenin işte daha muhafazakâr işte kendi milli ve dini kimliğine önem veren insanlar olarak anlattın. Onların hikayesini anlatmak ister misin biraz? Nerelilermiş?
Zabel: Biz Bitlisliyiz. Benim keşke yayam olsaydı burada keşke anneannem olsaydı keşke. Onlar, yayamlar epey çekmişler Bitlis'ten gelirken özellikle- Buraları anlatayım mı Rudi ya?
Rudi: Anlat anlat. Yani bir şeyden çekiniyorsan gerek yok çünkü zaten sadece ben dinliyor olacağım bir taraftan, diğer taraftan da dediğim gibi şeyleri koyarken senin süzgecinden geçiyor olacak. Yani ben bunları koydum diyeceğim.
Zabel: Ben yok ben kendim çekindiğimden değil de... Sen zaten evet video sende kalacak istersen kesersin de. Ne bileyim buralar anlatılır mı diye şey oldum. Neyse tamam anlatayım. Yayam hep anlatır böyle...

them, even without telling you much. And, I mean, you can't keep your shoulders straight.[3]

Even though parents paid great attention to conceal any kind of information regarding their children's Armenianness, it is almost impossible to succeed in this endeavor as the lives of Armenians are surrounded by various incidents that remind them of the 'dangerous' aspects of their identity. In Sarven's case, for example, despite the conservative attitude of his father regarding the Armenian Genocide, an unexpected letter received from a possible lost relative from Lebanon, broke the silence.

My father is harsh about talking about this, does not like to mention the story in the family. But we have a story like this. My yaya is my father's mother. She had Alzheimer's disease, like that in 2011-2012. Just at the beginning of this disease, when she started to forget something new, very strangely, a letter came to us from Lebanon. That's how the letter is at my yaya's house, we didn't understand it much then. We don't know what's what. I'm roughly 10-12 years old at work. I remember such a thing, within the family there is constantly "Yeah the letter has come but should we open it or not? Who did it come from? Okay, never mind, let's hide it, let's remove it." I'll never forget the thing, that scene, my father and my yaya stayed at the kitchen for a long time. They talked about that letter for a long time, and she made them hide the letter in some place, and the letter remained there. It's been quite some time. My yaya passed away in 2015. That's how I was now, umm, that was when I started getting interested in these subjects. I asked my father about, "Where is that letter, what was that letter, from whom did it come?" He didn't say anything. After My yaya died, I searched the house a lot, it was dispersed like this. We couldn't find the letter. But maybe he was a relative, maybe someone who was searching for us or someone we called in the past but could not reach. I still don't know exactly what it was.[4]

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[3]Hiç o kadar gizlemedim ama atılmadım çünkü ailen sana onu öğretiyor. Çünkü çok da anlatılmıyor küçükken zaten bir şeyler. Nerede ne diyeceği çocuğun belli olmaz diye. Ama hep senin farklı olduğunu, onlardan olmadığını sana çok bir şey söylemeden bile sana onu öğretiyor. Ve, yani omuzlarını dik tutamıyorsun.

[4]Babam çok sert bu konuda asla konuşmayı, anlatmayı bir aile içindeki hikâyeyi de dillendirmeyi sevmez. Ama bizde şöyle bir hikâye var. Benim yayam, babamın maması. Alzaymır hastalığına yakalanmıştı, 2011-2012 yıllarında falan böyle. Tam bu hastalığın başladığı dönemlerde daha böyle yeni yeni bir şeyleri unutmaya başladığı dönemde çok garip bir şekilde Lübnan'dan bize bir mektup gelmişti. Mektup böyle işte yayamın evinde, o zamanlar çok da anlamıyoruz. Neyin ne olduğunu bilmiyoruz. Ben de aşağı yukarı işte 10-12 yaşında filanım. Böyle şeyi hatırlıyorum, aile içinde sürekli o mektubu işte geldi ama açılım açmayalım mı, bakalım mı bakmayalım mı? Kimden gelmiş? Tamam boş verin, saklayalım, kaldıralım. Şeyi hiç unutmuyorum, o sahneyi babamla yayam çok uzun süre mutfakta kaldı. Uzun süre o mektubun üzerine konuştular ve mektubu yayam bir yere saklattı ve mektup orada kaldı. Üzerinden bayağı zaman geçti. 2015'te yayam vefat etti. Artık ben de böyle, umm, bu konuya ilgi duymaya başladığım dönemlerdi. Babama şeyi sormuştum. Ya o mektup nerde, o mektup neydi, kimden geldi filan diye. Hiçbir şey söylemedi. Yayam işte vefat ettikten sonra evi bayağı bir talan ettim, dağıtıldı filan böyle. Mektubu bulamadık. Ama hani belki işte o bir akraba idi, belki bir işte bizi arayan ya da bizim zamanında aradığımız ama ulaşamadığımız biriydi. Tam olarak neydi hala bilmiyorum.

While interviewees mentioned that they grasped some kind of delicate knowledge through silences during their childhood about the Armenian Genocide, most of them dated their first structured encounter with the topic to their high school years. As the history books contain a specific section where the Genocide is described in line with the official historiography, it became inescapable for children to learn about the topic. As the books are prepared by the Ministry of National Education, the knowledge given is in accordance with the state's official narrative. Although the historical narrative of 1915 changes conjunctionally, it always stays within the boundaries of the official history, which is based on the rejection of the 'Armenian claims' (*100. Yılında Soykırımı Hatırlamak* 2017). Furthermore, as Aybak illustrates, it is instructed in the teachers' manual for grade 7 teachers of social studies to pass 'the state's defensive discourse' to the students. The instruction is following:

> State to your students that the Russians also made some Armenians revolt on this front and murder many of our civilian citizens. Explain that the Ottoman State took certain measures following these developments, and in May 1915 implemented the 'Tehcir Kanunu' [Displacement Law] regarding the migration and settlement of Armenians in the battleground. Explain that care was taken to ensure that the land in which the Armenians who had to migrate were to settle was fertile, that police stations were established for their security, and that measures were taken to ensure they could practice their previous jobs and professions. (as cited in Aybak 2016, 138)

It is important to mention that, as the stories that are heard in the familial circles are in contradiction with what students read in the compulsory textbooks, it leads to the emergence of a conflicting socialization process among young Armenians. Anoush describes her reaction to the section of the history book about the Armenian Genocide that defies the anticipated public behavior of Armenians since she knows the narratives are based on lies, and Anoush describes her reaction to the section of the history book about the Armenian Genocide that defies the anticipated public behavior of Armenians since she knows the narratives are based on lies, and she relates her fury as the reason of her reaction.

> About going out, you learn some things because of the lessons you take, how it is. You learn not only from the lessons that the school gives us, but also from the history lessons, for example, and then you can realize how things are different from what actually happened and what is taught in the lessons. Because these subjects are introduced at that time, during

> high school. I scribbled and tore the pages about the Armenian genocide in the tenth-grade history book. In front of the teacher. And I said that "I won't read these pages. I will not learn these pages." So, I scribbled and tore those pages up by saying that will not read. I scribbled them all line by line. Either way I was not going to use those pages. I already know they're lies. I think this is something that the anger that I have, I mean, it's not just about 1915, but, umm, I mean, it was about the anger that living some things in this country because of having this identity.[5]

While interviews reveal that most of the young Armenians have learned the details of the Armenian Genocide during their high school years, it did not exclusively take place within the school buildings. There were also some instances where young Armenians confront the topic during encounters that took place *out*side. As it was not only the Armenian students who learned about the 'Armenian question' from history textbooks, it drove non-Armenian students to ask about the topic to their peers. It is worthwhile to mention that those questions were perceived by young Armenians as ill-intended, and they believe the aim was not to learn what they genuinely think about but rather to discomfort them and challenge their opinions about the topic. Zepour describes the ones who ask such questions as *sivri tipler*, pointy people, and states that they are either a fanatic Muslim or a Turk who wittingly asks the question.

> Some pointy people ask, "Do you think it happened?" and I say, "Yes, I think it happened because my grandparents experienced and I still see the effects of it in my life." This is my answer. He doesn't say anything about it. Because, for example, I say everyone's experience is different. I know what happened to us. That person already knows when asking. Do you understand? He is a fanatic Turk. He is a devout Muslim. He asks on purpose. And my answer is, "Yes, I believe it is." So, I know because my grandparents experienced the effects of it most closely. I say we are living even though we are the third generation. "I know it happened and I believe it, but I also respect everyone's opinion" I say and close the subject in a very political way.[6]

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[5] Dışarı çıkmak konusunda, aldığın dersler nedeniyle bazı şeyleri öğreniyorsun nasıl olduğunu falan. Sadece okulun bize verdiği derslerden değil tarih derslerinden de öğreniyorsun mesela nasıl şeyler olduğunu Ve aslında olanla derslerde okutulanın nasıl farklı olduğunu o zaman idrak edebiliyorsun. Çünkü bu konulara o zaman giriliyor, lise zamanı giriliyor. Onuncu sınıftaki tarih kitabındaki Ermeni soykırımıyla ilgili sayfaları ben karalamıştım hep ve yırtmıştım. Hocanın gözü önünde. Ve demiştim ki ben bu sayfaları okumiyicam. Ben bu sayfaları işlemiyicem. Hepsini satır satır karalamıştım önce. Nasıl olsa yalan olduklarını biliyorum zaten diye. Bu-bu bana- yani bu öfkenin yaptırdığı bir şey diye düşünüyorum. Yani hem- 1915 ile ilgili değil sadece ama, umm, yani, bu kimliğe sahip olduğum için bu ülkede yaşadığım şeylerin bende yarattığı öfkeyle ilgili bir şeydi bu

[6] Bazı böyle sivri tipler "Sence oldu mu?" diye soruyor. Ben de diyorum ki evet bence oldu çünkü benim dedelerim yaşamış ve bunun etkilerini hala hayatımda görüyorum diyorum. Benim cevabım bu oluyor. Üstüne de bir şey diyemiyor. Çünkü mesela ne olmuş diyorum herkesin deneyimi farklı diyorum. Bizim başımıza gelenleri ben biliyorum. Soran kişi zaten bilerek soruyor. Hani, anlıyor musun? Hani koyu bir

What is striking in those encounters is the obligation expected from young Armenians to know and discuss the Genocide, in a careful way, whenever it is requested. The necessity to know about the Armenian Genocide and not refrain from participating in a discussion are among the performances that are expected from Armenians in Turkey to fulfill. This obligation could be evaluated within the context of the 'Turkishness contract'. Barış Ünlü (2016), in his influential article, examines the question of ethnicity in Turkey and states that the vast majority of the Turks are actively choosing to 'not know' in order to escape from ethical responsibilities that 'knowing' entails. Conceptualized as the 'Turkishness contract', he states that to avoid such responsibilities, Turks are living "in a state of impenetrable ignorance in relation to the non-Turkish population of Turkey" (2016, 4). Then, following Melissa Steyn, he argues that part of the privilege of being Turk is the very ability not to know, not to see, and not to hear. According to Ünlü, "only the ones who belong to the dominant racial or ethnic group have the power not to see, not to hear and not to know" (2016, 4). Moving from this analysis, I argue that the unprivileged position of the Istanbulite Armenians obliges them to know, to see, to hear, and most importantly, to answer and satisfy the needs of the dominant ethnic group of Turkey. The reflections of this necessity could be found in Arden's description of what it means to be an Armenian in Turkey.

> We are always looking to prove something. We are constantly trying to express ourselves. It's a nice thing. I like being from a different part of the society. Of course, we cannot live at ease.[7]

In another example, Rita describes an incident that took place at *dershane* where she was asked about the Armenian Genocide. Given they both attended the same *dershane* and at similar ages, it is possible to assume that their knowledge regarding the topic is the same or that Rita knows more about it. Yet, Rita's anxiety is noteworthy as she fears her 'ignorance' could result in giving wrong information, and to avoid any misinformation, she urges herself to "Shut up!".

> "So we killed you?" he said. "Maybe you didn't kill us, but we experienced something in that time. But it stayed at that time, it remained

Türk oluyor. Koyu bir Müslüman oluyor. Bilerek soruyor. Benim de cevabım "Evet, olduğuna inanıyorum." Yani biliyorum çünkü benim dedelerim bunun etkilerini en yakından yaşamış. Biz bile kaçıncı kuşak, yaşıyoruz diyorum. Ben olduğunu biliyorum ve inanıyorum diyorum ama herkesin düşüncesine de saygı duyuyorum diyip çok politik kapıyorum.

[7] Hep bir şeyleri kanıtlama peşindeyiz. Kendimizi ifade etmeye çalışıyoruz sürekli. Güzel bir şey. Ayrı bir kesimde olmak benim çok hoşuma gidiyor. Tabi rahat yaşayamıyoruz.

there. Today, it is not considered as a genocide here. But such thing happened. We cannot say that it didn't happen" I said. "It didn't happen!" he said. "Well, let it be so, let it not be lived according to you" I said. I cut it there because if it gets longer, I'm ignorant and - I don't know much. So ok, I know some processes. I know from my own family, but I do not know how it happened like this or that or how it happened politically. I can't argue with him there because of my ignorance. Oh, what if I say something wrong, shut up Rita. You become hesitant. No matter how much I say I am Armenian, there is a fear. That instinct is what was given in our childhood. That's why I kept quiet.[8]

Illustrated by the aforementioned examples, although the efforts of parents to conceal any information from young Armenians regarding the Armenian Genocide is evident, as the knowledge about the topic is infused to different segments of the society, it becomes inevitably for young Armenians to confront the topic. Either at schools, *dershane*s, or during encounters, they are expected to know and answer the questions of their peers. However, the information expected from them to know might differ from the way that young Armenians perceive the topic itself. In the following part, I will examine what young Armenians know and think about the Armenian Genocide.

4.2 Young Armenians' Perception of the Genocide

Even though it is expected from young Armenians to know and put significant importance on the Armenian Genocide, as mentioned in previous parts, the way that young Armenians perceive the topic slightly differs from the expectations of both the Armenian and Turkish communities. Interviews revealed that young Armenians of Turkey are different as they prefer to put an emphasis not on the Armenian Genocide and the ensuing events but rather on the cultural aspects of the Armenian culture. Several interviewees mentioned that they are not interested at all in the

[8] "Biz seni öldürdük mü yani?" diyo. Sen bizi öldürmedin ama belki zamanında bir şey yaşadık. Ama o zamanında kalmış. Orada kalmış. Sadece bu soykırım olarak kabul edilmiyor burada dedim. Ama böyle bir şey yaşandı ama yaşanmadı diyemeyiz. Yaşanmadı! dedi. E hadi öyle olsun, yaşanmadı senin gözünle dedim. Orada kestim çünkü uzarsa ben, bilgisizliğimden ve-ben çok bilmiyorum. Yani tamam, bazı süreçleri biliyorum. Ben kendi aileminkinden biliyorum ama bu olmuş, şöyle olmuş, siyasi olarak bu olmuş şu olmuş bilmiyorum. Ben orada cahilliğimle çocukla atışamam. Yanlış bir şey derim falan aman Rita sus. Öyle bir tereddütte kalıyorsun. Ne kadar çok ben Ermeniyim desem bile, bir korku oluyor. O içgüdü, çocukluğumuzda verilen şey oluyor o. O yüzden sustum ben de o şekilde.

incidents that took place in 1915 and argued that they should be left behind. Zepour, for example, states that she has no interest in her family story of the Armenian Genocide. She describes her family's story as "always a tragedy". Additionally, she claims that most of the time, Armenians in Turkey have been negatively affected by the issues related to the Genocide. It is particularly important to mention that while describing the drawbacks of the incident, she does not mention the ones that are coming from the Turkish society but the patriarchal structure of the Armenians of Turkey.

> I don't remember much actually. I guess I don't care at all because it's always tragedy. I guess that's how it affects me. You know, doesn't a person know his essence, his thing? But I mean, we are so exposed to its influence even today. You say that it has already passed, but with the effect of it- as I said, an introverted family structure; patriarchy. I really don't want to be in it. That's how these events affect me. Because I live in Turkey and of course the neighborhood I live in is Yeşilköy, but my friends- I have Armenian friends as well as Muslim friends, Turkish friends.[9]

Zepour attributes her indifference towards the Armenian Genocide to the fact that she lives in Turkey and has Turkish as much as Armenian friends around her. It is important to note that Zepour was not the only young Armenian who stated that the issues related to the Armenian Genocide were not among their priorities. The presence of such an attitude among young Armenians could be explained by generational differences. In a study conducted by Sigel and Weinfeld (1989), it was argued that the effects of the traumatic incident that was experienced by the first generation are started to lose their grasp in future generations. According to them, this circumstance is particularly prominent for the individuals from the third generation, as they while having a higher level of psychological well-being, also establish a stronger bond with the first generation. The reason for the establishment of a stronger bond was explained by the researchers as grandchildren felt more secure in their own sense of self. The psychological well-being could be observed in Rita's example, who approaches the often-referenced 'scar' metaphor for the Armenian Genocide. While the phrase "Some wounds never heal," implies the state's denialist policies which hindered Armenians to heal their 'wound' to this date, she approaches

[9]Benim aklımda çok kalmıyor çünkü aslında sanırım hiç ilgilenmiyorum çünkü hep trajedi. Hani sanırım beni bu şekilde etkiliyor. Hani-hani insan özünü bilmez mi, şeyini? ama yani o kadar etkisine maruz kalıyoruz ki şu günde bile geçti gitti diyorsun ama onun etkisiyle- işte dedim ya, işte içe dönük bir aile yapısı; ataerkillik. Gerçekten çok ben içinde olmak istemiyorum. Beni o şekilde etkiliyor bu olaylar. Çünkü Türkiye'de yaşıyorum ve tabii ki de yaşadığım çevre Yeşilköy ama arkadaşlarım- Ermeni arkadaşlarım olduğu kadar Müslüman arkadaşlarım var, Türk arkadaşlarım.

the metaphor in a distinct way and claims that the wound is already healed and expelled from the body.

> For example, I haven't read any books. I read, but I read the memoirs, and when I read the memoirs, I couldn't stand and closed them. That's why I can't tell you if you want me to do now. (...) I fully accept what happened. But, um, we shouldn't bring this issue to the present day. Okay, the pain has crusted over and gone from the body. So, bringing this up... Why should we experience the pain once again? Maybe, I don't know, we don't know if we will live again after a long time. Maybe we will do something or they will do something to us or something will happen in the world. We don't know.[10]

Zepour and Rita were the two interviewees that did not enroll in an Armenian but rather in a private Turkish high school. As the importance of Armenian schools was underlined in the previous chapter, the absence of the socialization provided by the Armenian schools might have impacted the way these two young Armenians perceive the Armenian Genocide. Nevertheless, the lack of interest in family stories does not entail the lack of interest in the Armenian culture. Rita, for example, does not consider her 'indifference' to the genocide or family history as forgetting or trivializing the past. She says that the past should stay in the past, and we should look ahead as we live in Turkey.

> But my only logic... Sometimes people also think wrong: "Oh, why do you forget your past?" I don't forget my past! I just- it's the past, as the name suggests. The event is happened and over, now we have to look to the future. We are not experiencing that right now. I should never have had a friend then. Let me live in the church, not leave Kurtuluş, do nothing, always live under the same roof. But it can't happen! We live in Turkey.[11]

Similarly, in another instance, Zepour mentions her desire and even her struggle

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[10] Ben hiçbir kitap okumadım mesela. Okudum ama anı okudum, anıları okuyunca da içim dayanmadı kapattım. Onun için, bana şimdi anlat desen anlatamam. (...) Olanları tamamen kabul ediyorum. Ama, umm, bu meseleyi günümüze getirmemek gerekir. Acı tamam kabuk bağladı, ve yani vücuttan gitti. Yani bunu gündeme getirmek... Niye acıyı bir kez daha yaşayalım? Belki de bilmiyorum uzun süre sorna yeniden yaşayacak mıyız, onu da bilmiyoruz. Belki biz bir şey yapıcaz ya da onlar bize bir şey yapacak, ya da dünyada bir şey olacak. Bilmiyoruz.

[11] Ama benim tek mantığım, bazen insanlar yanlış da düşünüyor: "Aa, niye geçmişini unutuyorsun?" Geçmişimi unutmuyorum! Ben sadece, o geçmiş, adı üstünde. Olay yaşanmış bitmiş, biz şimdi geleceğe bakmamız lazım. Biz şu anda o şeyi yaşamıyoruz. Benim o zaman hiçbir zaman arkadaşımın olmaması gerekir. Ben kilisede yaşayayım, Kurtuluş'tan dışarı atmayayım, hiçbir şey yapmayayım, hep aynı çatı altında kalayım. Ama olmuyor ki! Biz Türkiye'de yaşıyoruz.

against her parents to put a cross on her neck. She underlines that her attitude is not related to nationalism, but she just is not ashamed of who she is.

> I feel more like an individual now. As a result, as you get older, the family doesn't have that much pressure on you. They tell me "Keep your cross in" or "Don't wear a cross" or "Wear it only when you're on the Island." I take my huge cross and walk the streets. They say, "Keep it in," and I say "I don't want to keep it in!" So, I love it. I'm not such a nationalist, but why should I hide my cross? Do you understand? It seems very stupid to me. I'm not ashamed of myself. I don't feel the need to hide. Oh, I can get reaction because of this. I don't know if something might happen to me one day, but I don't want to live with this fear or this instinct.[12]

Reflecting on the testimonies of Zepour and Rita, I argue that the aim of young Armenians is not to trivialize the stories of the Armenian Genocide and the past but is related to the realities of living in Turkey and the desire to establish a different future. Instead of focusing on a topic that the Turkish state and society do not allow them to act on, they are trying to build a different future by prioritizing various aspects of the Armenian culture. Participating in cultural activities, working for the survival of the Armenian language, and embracing the cultural elements in their daily lives could be counted among this new sense of Armenianness. In other words, being aware of the fact that they come into contact with Turks more often than Armenians and that the Turkish state will not recognize the Armenian Genocide, young Armenians are trying to create new spaces to act on. To reiterate, this does not mean that young Armenians neglect or ignore the impact and importance of the Armenian Genocide. In a clear example, although Rita states that focusing on the issues revolving around the Genocide creates a tenser and troubled environment for Armenians, she still underlines the responsibility of the Turkish society and her expectation for an apology.

> I think it is important that this is accepted in our country. But if it won't be accepted, whatever. We can't fight for this. How many years have passed now? And when the situation is too much - that is to say, when it's on the surface, there is a more tense environment. It gets more

[12] Ben daha şimdi bir birey olduğum hissediyorum. Hani sonuç olarak büyüdükçe ailenin o kadar baskısı kalmıyor. Bana "Haçını içeri sok" veya "Haç takma" hani bir tek adada tak diyorlar. Ben kocaman haçımı alıp sokaklarda geziyorum. Bana içine sok diyorlar, "Sokmak istemiyorum!" diyorum. Seviyorum yani. Seviyorum hani. Öyle milliyetçi değilim ama niye haçımı saklayayım? Hani, anladın mı? Bana çok aptalca geliyor. Böyle olmaktan utanmıyorum. Gizleme gereksinimi de duymuyorum. Ha böyle tepki çekebilirim, bir gün başıma bir şey gelebilir bilemem ama onun korkusuyla veya bu içgüdüyle yaşamak istemiyorum.

> troublesome. There is tension between families. But still, they have a responsibility like this, I think they should know how to apologize. Those who accept are already apologizing, but these people need to raise awareness of those who don't. Look bro, look, I'm apologizing. Even if I didn't do it, I apologize on their behalf, so let's apologize too. In other words, they should do it by raising awareness, not by force. Just as we raise awareness of them, they must do this among themselves.[13]

All the young Armenians interviewed mentioned very similar expectations as Rita's, namely, to receive an apology. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that young Armenians do not consider their peers guilty of the Armenian Genocide, as it would be wrong to blame the grandchildren for the crimes their grandfather committed. Zabel states that it would be sufficient for her to hear, "I share your pain."

> I do not think such a thing, the crime does not descend from father to son. I say this with a very cold heart right now, but I mean, why should they take responsibility for this, why should they bear the burden of it after three generations? The younger generation is already conscious when you talk. When you sit down and talk to someone, they said, "yes, something like this happened, you suffered a lot back then, as Armenians, as Greeks." (...) I think it's enough for me to say, "I share your pain, brother." I don't expect more anyway, I can say that I don't think he needs to do more.[14]

However, even though young Armenians think that the grandchildren of the perpetrators cannot be held accountable for the crimes they did not commit, they still expect an apology. One of the most repetitive themes that emerged during the interviews was the expectation from Turkish society to take an initiative to confront the Genocide. Nevertheless, for some interviewees, it was not only an apology that is expected from Turkish society but also to struggle to make others apologize as well. Anoush, for example, even though she states that the people of this era could

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[13] Kendi ülkemizde bunun kabul edilmesinin mühim bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum. Ama edilmeyecekse de edilmeyecek yani. Biz bunun savaşını veremeyiz, kaç sene geçti artık yani. Ve durum ne zaman çok- yani yüz üstüne çıktığında daha gergin bir ortam oluyor. Daha sıkıntılı oluyor. Aileler arasında da gerginlik oluyor. Ama yine de şu şekilde sorumlulukları var bence, özür dilemeyi bilmeleri gerekiyor. Kabul edenler zaten özür diliyor ama bu insanların Kabul etmeyenleri bilinçlendirmesi gerekiyor. Bak abi bak ben özür diliyorum. Ben yapmamışsam bile ben onlar adına özür diliyorum, hadi sen de özür dile. Yani zorla değil, bilinçlendirerek yapmaları lazım. Biz onları nasıl bilinçendireceksek onların da kendi aralarında bunu yapmaları lazım.

[14] Böyle bir şey düşünmüyorum yani, suç babadan oğula geçmez. Şu an bunu çok soğuk bir yürekle söylüyorum ama yani bunun sorumluluğunu niye alsınlar, bunun yükünü niye üç kuşak altı çeksin ki? Aşağısı zaten oturup konuştuğun zaman, bilinçli. Biriyle oturup konuştuğun zaman her zaman şey söylüyor, evet ya böyle bir şey olmuş dönemde çok çekmişsiniz Ermeniler olarak işte Rumlar olarak şunlar olarak bunlar olarak. (...) Ben senin acını paylaşıyorum kardeşim demesi bence yeterli benim için zaten fazlasını da beklemiyorum, fazlasını yapmasına gerek olduğunu da düşünmüyorum diyebilirim.

not be held responsible for an event that happened 100 years ago, she still held them accountable as they failed to stand with Armenians and confront an event that took place 100 years ago.

> I don't think we can hold people of this period responsible for something that happened 100 years ago. This is my logical thinking. That's what I'd say if I thought logically. But we tend to be emotional about it, so they are responsible. They are still responsible for not revealing something that happened in the past and not being able to make everyone accept that it exists, and they are responsible because they are still not there for us when such issues arise. They are still responsible for continuing this mentality.[15]

In addition to an apology on the personal, and a struggle for confrontation on the societal level, the sincerity of the apology also has significance for young Armenians. Karin, for example, mentions that an apology to save the day without any authenticity would have no meaning for her. She particularly recounts an incident where one of her peers apologized with a mocking tone and her frustration for such an attitude.

> I think it was April 25. We left school; we were sitting somewhere. There is a boy named Halil and he said to me, "I didn't see you at school yesterday, I'm sorry," I said why. "So, it was April 24th," he said. I was petrified. He said this, but he is such a person that I know he didn't say it with good intentions at that moment. And he did this next to Utku Hoca, an instructor. "Yesterday was April 24, I'm sorry," so it's not like that. You can't confront the Genocide with an apology at a coffee break. There is no such thing. This is kind of foolishness. He apologizes as if he is kidding. That's not what I want, that's not what I expect.[16]

Zepour, on the other hand, points a significant obstacle for the confrontation of the

[15] Bu dönemdeki insanları, 100 yıl önce yaşanmış bir şey için sorumlu tutamayız bence. Bu mantıklı düşüncem. Mantıklı düşünsem böyle derdim. Ama duygusal bakmaya meyilliyiz bu konuda, o yüzden sorumlular. Yani geçmişte olan bir şeyi ortaya çıkarmayıp, bunun var olduğunu kabul ettiremedikleri için ve böyle bir konu olduğunda bizim yanımızda hala olmadıkları için bence hala sorumlular. Hala bu zihniyeti devam ettirdikleri için sorumlular.

[16] 24 Nisan'dan 25 Nisan'dı sanırım. Okuldan çıktık oturuyoruz. Halil diye bir çocuk var. Bana şey dedi, "Dün seni okulda göremedim, özür dilerim," Niye dedim. "24 Nisan'dı ya o yüzden," diyor. Böyle bir kaldım. Öyle bir söylüyor ki, öyle bir insan ki o yani bunu iyi niyetli söylemediğini biliyorum mesela o an. Ve bunu şey öğretim görelisi Utku Hocanın yanında yaptı. "Dün 24 Nisandı ya özür dilerim," yani bu şekilde de olmaz. Bir soykırımla kahve arası söylenen bir özürle yüzleşemezsin. Böyle bir şey yok yani. Böyle bir dangalaklık olamaz. Dalga geçermiş gibi özür dilerim. İstediğim şey bu da değil yani istediğim, beklediğim şey bu da değil.

Genocide, that is, the oppressive political atmosphere of the country. Because of the oppressive environment in Turkey, which does not allow anyone to talk or act freely, she does not think they have any responsibility.

> I don't think they have any responsibilities, but an Armenian is looking for his right and I don't know if a Muslim would worry about it. In Turkey because you do not have the right to free speech. I do not know. I wish we could speak freely. But I don't think anyone can talk about anything, especially now. So, I don't think they have any responsibilities.[17]

As Zepour already illustrated, the disbelief for the possibility of the Turkish state's confrontation with the Armenian Genocide was common among all of the interviewees. The denialist policies pursued by the Turkish state for more than a century, along with the recent increase in nationalist sentiment were mentioned as the source of their disbelief. Nevertheless, while it might be assumed that this situation would upset young Armenians, interviews revealed that their attitude is quite opposite. As I already mentioned previously, most of the interviewees stated that confronting the Genocide was not a priority for them. Two different perspectives could be counted among young Armenians while approaching the topic of confronting the Genocide. First, young Armenians claim that the Genocide was a tragic incident that belongs to the past and instead of focusing on the past, it is more important to build a future in this country. The second perspective, on the other hand, is that the recognition of the Genocide by the state will have a very limited or no effect in their own lives as the topic has already become highly politicized. Zabel, for example, states that the state's recognition of the genocide means nothing to her, as no decision taken by the state would bring back the people, she lost in 1915.

> So, history is a science. I say this as someone who loves history very much. But Rudi, there has been some pain. I mean, it seems very meaningless to me that people's feelings are ignored so much and everything is reduced to a science. So, what happens if the state accepts this, what happens if it doesn't? If you stand up and go out to the street right now, can you relieve my yaya's pain? What will bring back the feelings, the grief, the losses experienced by my ancestors or those before them? What can we do? If I go out and stand like this now, "we will

[17] Bir sorumluluklarının olduğunu düşünmüyorum ama bir Ermeni hakkını arıyor ve bir Müslüman da bunun derdine düşer mi bilmiyorum. Türkiye'de çünkü özgür konuşma hakkın yok. Bilmiyorum. Keşke özgürce konuşulabilseydi. Ama özellikle şu anda hiçkimse hiçbir konu hakkında hiçbir şey konuşamıyor bence. O yüzden bir sorumluluklarının olduğunu düşünmüyorum

> attend these commemorations, you cannot postpone them, it will be like this, it will be like that." Well, those people won't come back. Will the pain of my yaya sooth? So, it doesn't make any sense. Now, someone has lived those lines you are reading shakingly, and that someone is my yaya. Maybe your grandfather, maybe someone else's aunt. So, what will happen if we face it or the state accepts it? What will happen?[18]

Despite their disbelief and the presence of a desperate environment that exists both in the state and the society, young Armenians still mentioned a transformation that is taking place in Turkish society. Verjin, for example, illustrates the transformation of society at large through an incident that one of her friends experienced.

> In fact, when they used to write "Die Armenian" on Twitter, I saw that there is a large number of people defending Armenians now. For example, a death threat was made to a friend of mine. There were a lot of comments under it, most of them were Turk. There are many "Armenian lovers" in front of those who say "die now". I say this [Armenian lovers] in quotation marks. I'm not saying that. It is good to know that there are also Turks who react to these and say "No, these are not stories, they are not fictitious, what is told is true." Good to see these.[19]

As a trigger of such transformation, most of the interviewees pointed out the assassination of Hrant Dink and the following commemorative events. They argued that the impact of the assassination has reached far beyond the Armenians of Turkey and brought awareness to the society at large. Tatul, for example, even though he was not precise about the significance of the impact, argues that the assassination changed the perception of society regarding the Armenian Genocide.

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[18] Yani tarih bilimdir. Ben tarihi çok seven biri olarak bunu söylüyorum. Ama Rudi bazı acılar yaşanmış ya. Yani insanların duygularının bu kadar görmezden gelinip, her şeyin bir bilime indirgeniyor olması bana çok yavan geliyor. O yüzden bunu devlet kabul etse ne olur, etmese ne olur? Şu an sen ayaklansan, sokağa çıksan benim yayamın yaşadığı acıyı dindirebilir misin? Benim atalarımın ya da ondan öncekilerin yaşadığı duyguları, o kederi, o kayıpları ne geri getirecek ki? Ne yapabiliriz ki? Ben şimdi çıkıp böyle diklensem desem ki, işte bu anmalara katılacağız, hayır bunlar erteleyemezsiniz, şöyle olacak böyle olacak. Eee, o insanlar geri gelmeyecek ki. Benim yayamın yaşadığı acı ne dinecek mi? O yüzden hiçbir anlamı yok. Şimdi senin titreyerek okuduğunu satırları birileri bir gün yaşadı ve o birileri benim yayam. Belki senin deden, belki başkasının halası, teyzesi neyse yani. O yüzden yani bununla yüzleşsek ne olur, devlet bunu kabul etse ne olur. Artık ne olur yani.

[19] Aslında eskiden twitter ortamında "Geber Ermeni" yazarken şu an Ermenileri savunan büyük bir kitlenin de olduğunu gördüm. Bir arkadaşıma ölüm tehdidinde bulunulnuştu örneğin. Onun altında mesela bir sürü yorum vardı, çoğu da Türk. Artık geber diyenlerin karşısında hani 'Ermeni seviciler' de çok. Hani bunu tırnak içinde söylüyorum. Ben öyle demiyorum. Bunlara tepkilerin verilmesi, "Hayır, bunlar hikâye değil, hayal ürünü değil, anlatılanlar gerçek" diyen Türklerin de olduğunu bilmek güzel. Bunları görmek güzel şeyler.

> I believe that the murder of Hrant Dink had a certain effect on a large part of Dacik society. But considering the percentage, I'm not sure. But I think it convinced a certain group of people about the genocide or to change some things.[20]

The assassination of Hrant Dink brought an impact to Turkish society as commemorative events increased the visibility of not only the Armenians of Turkey but also hinted at the Armenian Genocide. Yet, the impact of the assassination was more significant for the Armenians of Turkey and particularly for young Armenians. The following pages will examine the impact of the assassination on young Armenians' subjectivity and how did the assassination transform the lives of Armenians particularly concerning their Armenianness. Before elaborating on its impact, I would like to describe how young Armenians recounted the day of the assassination.

4.3 The Day of the Assassination

On 19th January 2007, most of the interviewees were attending a primary school and were at a very young age. Nevertheless, they described the day of Hrant Dink's assassination with great clarity. Even though the young Armenians that I interviewed were continuing their education in different schools at the time of the assassination, there are striking overlaps in their narratives. The most prominent themes that emerged during the interviews could be separated into three groups: the time that they spent after the assassination at the school until they were sent to homes, the mourning environment they witnessed in their homes, and finally, the commemoration held four days after the assassination. It is important to note that what is recurring in the narratives of interviewees is not limited to what they have witnessed on that day but also the words that they use to define their feelings as they mentioned fear, anxiety, and insecurity.

[20] Hrant Dink'in öldürülmesinin Daçik toplumunun büyük bir kesiminde, nasıl diyim, belli bir etkisi olduğuna inanıyorum. Ama yüzdeye vuracak olursa yüzde kaç işte ondan emin değilim. Ama belli bir kesimi bence ikna etmiştir diye düşünüyorum soykırım konusunda. Veyahut da bazı şeylerin değiştirilmesinde.

> Yervant: I remember, even our school closed early that day. (...) Our shuttle driver was also such a warm person, but that day he was very worried. I came home, I remember, the TV was on until midnight. Everyone was watching anxiously.[21]
>
> Sarven: I remember that day very well. On Friday, the last lesson of the class was our painting lesson. We were trying to draw a picture. Oyrort was constantly wandering around, like, oh my daughter does this, oh my son does that. All of a sudden, the principal of the school, digin, came to the classroom. "Will you come to the dining hall, Oyrort," she said. There was news on TV. And Oyrort did not come to class again. The whole lesson was wasted. Oyrort was crying, a few minutes before the end of the lesson. Such extreme, abnormally swollen eyes. They immediately took us out of the school and put us on the bus.[22]
>
> Anoush: I remember that moment very well because we got the news after school. It was when we were leaving school. I even remember how shocked one of my oyrorts was. She was right next to me, and we already knew from her facial expression that something bad had happened. Until then, let me say this, since I was already a child until then, I didn't know Hrant Dink either - actually I didn't know him. But the murder of a Hay -an Armenian- in public like that... So, it was difficult for me because I felt in danger.[23]

Most of the interviewees, as they were very young at that time, told that they did not know who Hrant Dink was and only learned about him after the assassination. However, their young age was not the only reason as Zabel mentioned the closed structure of the Armenian community among the reasons for not knowing Hrant Dink. After an explanation, she describes the first sight she saw when she came home and recounted how sad her whole family was. Furthermore, as the threats aimed at Armenian institutions were circulating at that period even after the assassination, the feelings that Zabel mentioned were not restricted to sadness but includes fear, distrust, and anxiety.

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[21] Hatırlıyorum hatta işte bizim okul erkenden kapandı o gün hani. (...) Bir tane bizim servis şoförümüz de hani çok şey böyle candan bir insandı ama o gün çok kuşkulu şey böyle kork... Tedirginlik falan vardı. Hatta eve geldim, hatırlıyorum, gece yarılarına kadar televizyon açıktı. Herkes kuşku ile izliyordu.

[22] O günü çok iyi hatırlıyorum. Cuma günü sınıfın son dersi ve resim dersimizdi. Resim çizmeye çalışıyorduk. İşte oyrort böyle sürekli aralarda geziniyor, aman kızım şöyle, aman oğlum böyle yap. Birden okul müdürü, işte digin, sınıfa geldi. Oyrort dedi, bir yemekhaneye gelir misiniz? Televizyonda bir haber var. Ve bir daha gelmedi oyrort sınıfa. Ve bütün ders boş geçti. Ve dersin bitimine son bir iki dakika kala, oyrort böyle ağlıyor, böyle aşırı anormal derecede gözleri şişmiş, yaşlı. Apar topar hemen zaten bizi okuldan çıkartıp servise bindirdiler.

[23] O anı çok iyi hatırlıyorum çünkü okul çıkışında almıştık haberi. Okuldan çıkacağımız zamandı. Hatta bir oyrortumun nasıl şok olduğunu hatırlıyorum. Tam yanımdaydı oyrortum ve yüz ifadesinden falan kötü bir şey olduğunu zaten anlamıştık. O zamana kadar ben şunu da söyliyim yani. O zamana kadar ben zaten çocuk olduğum için Hrant Dink'ten de benim- Hrant Dink'i de tanımıyordum aslında. Ama bir Hay'ın öyle- bir Ermeni'nin öyle ortalıkta öldürülmesi... Yani benim için zor olmuştu çünkü kendimi tehlikede hissetmiştim.

I was in the seventh grade. One day oyrort came through the door crying, saying, "We're not going to do our lecture." The woman was crying her eyes out. We ask what happened, and she tells us that Hrant Dink was killed. We didn't know who Hrant Dink is, I didn't know, I was little, I wasl relatively little. And as I said, we were very closed to everything. I was even closed to reading anything outside of class. We all were, the whole school. I'm sure it's the same in most schools. Maybe if I had been a little older, if I had been in high school or something, I would have been smarter. But I think I was too young to know Hrant Dink. Anyway. I came home, my mama was crying. My mama and Hrant Ağparik used to meet from the camp. Hrant Ağbarik also spent his childhood in the camp, so I guess in the summers. My mama says he was an outspoken person back then, too. So when he was going to do something, when he was going to defend someone, he would always defend, she said. My yaya used to cook. I told you before, they were the janitors of the camp for a while. My yaya, my grandfather, and their 5 children. He was very fair, my yaya says, he was such a child, such a man. My yaya cried a lot, she was very upset. So does my mama. We were very upset. My father always cuts his beard, I have never seen him grow a long beard. He has never trimmed his beard for two months, and it was his kind of mourning. I remember I was very scared afterwards because, as you may have heard, threatening letters were sent to schools. "We will come to you too, we will do this, we will do that" etc. At that time, there was even the police at the school door, but we didn't trust them either. In other words, the police are not one of us, not an Armenian either. We were always talking about these. We were going to school, but we, as children, were also nervous. Then we grew up and we started going on marches. Now we know, of course. We absorbed it years later that more precisely, one of us was killed but we don't know him.[24]

One other theme that should be mentioned is the way that young Armenians were affected by their parents' attitude, even though they did not know who Hrant Dink was. Rita, for example, mentioned that as their parents were responding with pow-

[24] Ben yedinci sınıftaydım. Bir gün oyrort girdi kapıdan ağlayarak dedi ki ders yapmayacağız, Kadın ağlıyor iki göz iki çeşme. Ne oldu falan diyoruz, bize diyor ki Hrant Dink öldürüldü. Bilmiyoruz Hrant Dink kim, haberim yok ufağım, nispeten ufağım. Bir de dediğim gibi çok her şeye kapalıyız biz, bir şey okumaya bile kapalıyım ders dışında. Hepimiz öyleyiz, bütün okul tayfası. Ben eminim çoğu okulda da durum aynıdır. Belki bir tık daha büyük olsaydım, lise döneminde falan olsaydım daha bir akıllı olurdum. Ama ufaktım bence Hrant Dink'i bilmek için. Her neyse. Eve geliyorum işte mamam ağlıyor, mamamla da Hrant ağparik kamptan tanışırlarmış zaten. Hrant ağparik de kampta geçmiş çocukluğu, yazları falan galiba. Mamam, o zaman da lafını sakınmazdı diyor. Yani bir şey yapacağı zaman, birini savunacağı zaman, her zaman savunurdu, söylerdi diyor. Yayam yemek yaparmış, dedim ya hani kampın bir dönem kapıcılığını yapmışlar yayamlar. Yayam, dedem, bir de 5 tane çocuğu, mamamlar yani. Çok adaletliydi diyor yayam, öyle bir çocukmuş, öyle bir adammış. Yayam çok ağlamıştı çok üzülmüştü, mamam da aynı şekilde. Epey bir üzülmüştük. Babam sakallarını her zaman keser, ben hiç sakal bıraktığını görmedim yani uzun böyle. Epey 2 ay hiç kesmedi sakalını, o da onun tutabileceği türde bir yastı. Sonrasında çok korktuğumu hatırlıyorum çünkü belki duymuşsundur sen de, okullara tehdit mektupları çıkıyordu. Size de geleceğiz, işte şöyle yapacağız, böyle yapacağız, bilmemne bilmemne. O dönemler hatta polis molis vardı kapıda ama onlara da güvenmiyorduk. Yani polis dediğin şey de sonuçta bizden değil, Ermeni değil o adam da. Hep bunları konuşuyorduk, okula geliyoruz falan ama biz çocuklar olarak da tedirgindik. Sonra büyüdük, artık yürüyüşlere biz de gitmeye başladık, artık öğrendik tabi. Seneler sonra sindirdik. Daha doğrusu evet bizden biri öldürülmüş. Onu bilmiyoruz ama.

erful emotions to the assassination, they grasped the importance of the assassination which caused intense sorrow.

> That day, everyone learned that Hrant Dink was killed. I was little, I was in the fifth grade in 2007. I must have been ten years old. Maybe I can be even older. My father cried sobbingly. I saw my father cry for the first time. I said "Dad, why are you crying?" He said, "They did it again," and cried. He said, "A part of us is gone," and I thought, "Oh, he must have been very important to us," and I was upset. When we got older, we understood why, but at that moment, I was upset thinking that he was an important person to my father. I never thought about that event politically. Or I didn't think about anything. I was upset because my family was upset. So, I was upset because he was one of us.[25]

It is also important to underline that now knowing Hrant Dink did not hinder young Armenians from feeling a strong connection with him. Arden, for example, states that he was strongly affected by the news and felt an intense sorrow for someone he had no information about.

> Frankly, I didn't know him very well. I didn't know about his life when he was killed. I was in the seventh grade if I remember correctly. But I was very affected by the news that day. As someone who likes to watch and listen to news, I was listening to a lot of news on TV at that time. I truly felt sorry for someone I had never met. I really wanted to go to his funeral, but they didn't let us to leave the school. I remember him. After that, after this critical death, I started researching. Why, why? What would he do? After that, I think I have quite a bit of knowledge.[26]

What is striking in the testimonies of interviewees, when their age is taken into consideration, is the clarity of their narration. None of the interviewees have ex-

[25] O gün de Hrant Dink'in öldürüldüğünü öğrendi bütün herkes. Ben küçüğüm yani, 2007'de beşinci sınıftaydım. On yaşındaydım herhalde. Belki daha da büyük olabilirim. Babam hüngür hüngür ağladı. Ben ilk defa babamın ağladığını gördüm. Baba niye ağlıyorsun dedim? Yine yaptılar yapcaklarını." dedi ve ağladı yani. Bir parçamız gitti dedi ve ben de "Aa, herhalde bizim için çok önemliymiş." dedim ve üzüldüm. Ama büyüdüğümüz zaman anladık niye olduğunu ama o anda babam için önemli bir kişi olduğu için ben üzüldüm. O politik olayını ben hiç düşünmedim. Ya da herhangi bir şey düşünmedim. Ailem üzüldüğü için ben üzüldüm. Yani bizim-bizden biri olduğu için üzüldüm.

[26] Açıkçası fazla iyi tanımıyordum. Hayatını bilmiyordum o öldürüldüğünde. Yedinci sınıftaydım ben yanlış hatırlamıyorsam. Ama o günü haberlerden çok etkilenmiştim. Haber izlemeyi, dinlemeyi seven biri olarak. Bayağı haber dinliyordum o sıralar televizyonda. Hiç tanımadığım birine gerçekten yürekten üzüldüm. Cenazesine gitmeyi çok istemiştim fakat okuldan bırakmamışlardı. Onu hatırlıyorum. Ondan sonra, bu olaylı ölümün ardından araştırmaya başladım. Hani neden, niçin? Ne yapar ne ederdi? Onun ardından bayağı bir bilgiye sahip olduğumu düşünüyorum.

perienced any difficulty remembering and narrate the incidents that took place on the day of the assassination. It is important to underline that they remembered the assassination of someone that they did not know. While this aspect of young Armenians' narration already says a lot about the impact of the assassination, the following part will further examine the ways that they make sense of the assassination.

4.4 The Perception of Hrant Dink in the Armenian Community

It is possible to argue that Hrant Dink is the most-known Armenian in Turkey, particularly after the assassination. Nevertheless, he was not the first Armenian that catches the attention of the Turkish public. Tchilingirian, for example, gives a chronological and detailed description of such instances which was frequented after the 1980s. Bishop Mesrob Mutafyan, for example, when he was the outspoken young Chancellor of the Patriarchate, was accused of "terrorist acts against Turks" and in 1987, he was appeared in a Turkish Criminal court to face charges. Tchilingirian states that the arrest of Mutafyan soon after the 1980 military coup, "caused a heart attack to the Armenian community collectively" (2017, 144). Additionally, the arrests of Manuel Yergatian, who was sentenced to 15 years without a significant accusation, and Hrant Güzelyan, pastor of the Armenian Protestant Church in Gedikpasa who was accused of training militants in the Camp Armen, were among other incidents that are circulated in various media outlets. In addition to those clergymen, some civilians also received the interest of the Turkish state and the media. Among those, Levon Ekmekciyan, who organized the Esenboğa attack, and Artin Penik, who set himself on fire in Taksim, to protest this attack were prominent. Those incidents, as Emre Can Dağlıoğlu argues, were made use of by the military regime that was in power during that period as a propaganda tool by basically making a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Armenians (Tölölyan 2021, 182). Through this distinction, they aimed to improve the perception of Turkey abroad which was affected significantly due to the acts of ASALA, and in the meantime, remind the Armenian community in Turkey of their fragility.

Despite the wide extent of incidents that encompass both the civil and religious lives of the Armenian community after the Republic, none of those incidents affected the Armenian community as did the assassination of Hrant Dink. What makes the case

of Hrant Dink different could be found in the ways that Hrant Dink separated from the rest of the the mentioned figures. Even though the Turkish state made a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Armenians, those categories had no meaning for the Armenian community aside from reminding them of their unprivileged position within the Turkish society. Furthermore, apart from Levon Ekmekciyan, who was originally born in Lebanon, no one was involved in any kind of violent act and the accusations were exclusively conjectural. All of the aforementioned allegations could be evaluated within the context of the state's responses towards acts of ASALA. It is important to note that those individuals who had not spoken a word or taken any action against the Turkish state yet, could not escape from being detained, tried, or arrested. In addition to these individuals, institutions that claimed to represent the Armenian community including the Armenian Patriarchate, Armenian foundations, or press organs such as Jamanak and Marmara, constantly release statements in support of state policies whenever it seems necessary and lived within the framework drawn by the state. These were the very people and institutions that Lerna Ekmekcioğlu conceptualized as *secular dhimmis* (2016, 108) and Tchilingirian put in the 'isolationist school' (2017, 127). These individuals and institutions followed state policies, supported the official historical narrative, shelved the genocide as a topic that should not be talked about, and tried to continue their lives as isolated as possible.

Hrant Dink, and therefore the Agos newspaper, of which he was one of the founders, on the other hand, differed from institutions that had claim to representing the Armenians of Turkey. In opposition to those institutions and individuals, as Yasemin Koç Gabrielsen (2015, 123) argues, Hrant Dink was actively questioning and criticizing state policies, the Turkish society, and even the Armenians of Turkey. In other words, he was advocating that Armenians were more than dhimmis with the rights limited to the Lausanne Treaty, but citizens with equal rights like everyone else living in Turkey. In this regard, he became the most prominent person who raised his voice to point out the problems of the Armenians of Turkey and successfully made his voice heard both by Armenians and non-Armenians in the Turkish Republic.

Hrant Dink's singularity led to the emergence of some debates that have not been held for nearly a century in Turkey, particularly in Turkish society. The impact of speaking about the Genocide in public had far-reaching effects not only for the Armenians of Turkey but also the society at large. The Armenians of Turkey, who grew up learning that the Armenian Genocide should be discussed behind closed doors and in silence, were introduced to a new alternative through Dink's articles and the words he uttered in the television programs. This was also a time when the

Armenian Genocide, a specter that had haunted Turkish society for nearly a century, began to be discussed in public for the first time. Dink's statements, which went beyond what was allowed for Armenians were not welcomed both by the Armenian community and the Turkish state. As he was an authentic example of Armenians, whom the state defamed as 'bad', he was accused of being the enemy of the Turkish state and society and faced with various charges based primarily on two articles he wrote. One of those articles was focusing on Sabiha Gökçen, an Armenian orphan named Hatun Sebilciyan adopted by Mustafa Kemal, and pointing out the Islamized Armenians living in Turkey. The other article, on the other hand, which was deliberately misinterpreted, was addressing all Armenians around the world to unshackle themselves from the heavy burden of 1915. Even though the path that led to the assassination of Hrant Dink was paved through these two articles, the biggest threat he was posing was his ability to shackle the foundational bases of the Turkish Republic. It should also be mentioned that it was not only the Turkish state that was disturbed by Dink's presence. Some people from the Armenian community also accused him of talking too much, disturbing the peace, and endangering the security of the Armenians of Turkey. The dispute between him and the Armenian Patriarchate, and even with the Patriarch himself was among the known incidents, which resulted in the Patriarchate banning the publication of obituaries in Agos, which constitute one of the main sources of income for the newspaper.

The perception of Hrant Dink among the Armenian community went through a substantial change with the assassination of Hrant Dink in 2007. As different segments of the society came together to demand justice, it also brought a remarkable effect on the relationship between Turkish and Armenian communities. As the Armenianness was not used pejoratively in public spaces and attributed some dignity to it, encouraged Armenians to step up and talk about their stories. This transformation, as Leyla Neyzi argues, enabled Armenians to discuss 1915, to talk about their family stories, and to mention the responsibility of the state in the event (2010, 19).

14 years since the incident, various academic articles, books, and theses have been prepared on the effects of Hrant Dink's assassination. In addition to its effects on both Turkish and Armenian communities, these studies claimed that the group most affected by the assassination was the young Armenians (Bilal 2006; Fırat et al. 2021; Neyzi 2010). The interviews conducted for this research have also resulted in similar outcomes. Despite their young age, the assassination brought a significant impact on young Armenians' subjectivization process. The fact that Dink's assassination was described as a "breaking point" or a "milestone" in their lives by different interviewees supports this claim.

> Karin: Now let me tell you this. It was such a change for me, as if a fairy tale turning into a reality. Until then, okay, okay, we are a minority here, but everything is going well, you know, I didn't encounter anything. But someone is killed. That's ruthless. Someone gets killed, and that – and maybe that is - that I said I'm worthless in Turkey. (...) So, in this country, such a person is killed in a planned manner and [weak connection] another genocide can be committed. That's what I thought. Why not? Or, how should I put it, I mean, I don't know—that's something, the breaking point for me. But I am also very happy to see this... The support of people, Muslims and the intelligentsia and their rebellion, their revolt against this event, their being with us, in the marches, here and there. You know, feeling the support of that intelligentsia is something that makes me very happy, but of course - of course, I wish such a thing had not happened. But this event is also perceived as we understand it by at least a part of the society.[27]

> Masis: Let's say that Armenians were more depoliticized in Turkey. Understandably, they still had to hide their identities. After that, with the efforts of Hrant Dink and his circle, especially Hrant Dink, the genocide began to be discussed on television all night long. (...) The murder of Hrant Dink can be said to be a milestone for me, for Armenians in Turkey. Seeing the crowd at that protest. I remember I was so impressed. It was a turning point for me. I positioned myself politically as well, and I tried to engage in politics a little bit.[28]

It is noteworthy to mention that both of the interviewees who talked about the assassination as a breaking point in their lives, attribute great significance to the commemoration that was organized after that assassination and continues to this day. Those events result in the emergence of a sense of hope and optimism among young Armenians.

> Masis: When Hrant Dink was killed, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in memory of him. He was buried with a magnificent, very

[27] Şimdi şöyle söyleyeyim, peri masalından gerçekliğe geçiyormuşsun gibi olur ya öyle bir değişimdi benim için. O zamana kadar tamam, tamam biz burada azınlığız ama her şey yolunda gidiyor, hani bir şeyle karşılaşmadım. Ama biri öldürülüyor. Canice yani. Biri öldürülüyor ve bu- ve bu belki de- bu işte şeydi benim için yani dedim ki ben Türkiye'de değersizim. (...) Yani bu ülkede böyle birisi, planlı bir şekilde öldürülüyor ve [bağlantı zayıf] bir soykırım daha yapılabilir. Bunu düşünmüştüm yani. Neden olmasın? Ya da, nasıl diyeyim, yani, bilmiyorum yani- o bir şey noktası, kırılma noktası benim için. Ama şunu da hep görünce çok da seviniyorum... İnsanların, Müslümanların, aydın kesimin verdiği destek ve onların da o isyanı, bu olaya karşı isyanı, bizim yanımızda olması, yürüyüşlerde, orada burada. Hani o aydın kesimin de desteğini hissetmek çok mutlu eden bir şey ama tabii ki- tabii ki böyle bir şey keşke olmasaydı. Ama en azından bir kesim tarafından da bu olay bizim anladığımız şekilde algılanıyor.

[28] Türkiye'de Ermeniler daha depolitize edilmişti diyelim. Daha kimliklerini saklamak zorundalardı anlaşılabilir olarak. Ondan sonra Hrant Dink'in ve çevresinin çabalarıyla, özellikle Hrant Dink'in çabasıyla soykırım televizyonlarda geceler boyunca tartışılmaya başlanmış. (...) Hrant Dink'in öldürülmesi benim için bir milattı denilebilir, Türkiye'deki Ermeniler için. O eylemdeki kalabalığı falan da bir görünce. Hani çok fena etkilenmilştim onu hatırlıyorum. O benim için bir dönüm noktasıydı. Kendimi de politik olarak öyle konumlandırdım ve işte biraz da siyasetle uğraşma gayertinde bulundum.

crowded, mostly non-Armenian protest. This actually showed me the hope in Turkey. In this despair, in this loneliness, it showed the importance of fighting together.[29]

Rita: I think it's a very strong bond. Because the participants are not only Armenians. We can say we are not alone when we see them. I am showing my father as an example, look, we are not alone. Look, not only Armenians are there, but these people are also there. A kind of hope, a kind of strength, I say. There are those who accept the genocide in this country, and those who accept the genocide are also there. Those who want equality are also there. They are there thinking that they feel close themselves. I feel like it's actually a place as it should be.[30]

Arden: Even after many years, thousands of people still gather there. The news still covers what happened at that time. I am actually very proud. People take free buses to join a rally for a political party, the subways become free, and then many people attend. There is no such call here and there is no free buses here. However, every year, thousands of people attend that ceremony to commemorate him. I think it's something to be proud of.[31]

While the presence of non-Armenians in commemorations, as it filled them with hope and optimism, was celebrated by young Armenians, the absence of such reaction after the murder of Sevag Balıkçı during his military service, was questioned by young Armenian men. Sarven critically asks, "Do we have to be both political and Armenian for them to take care of us?"

So let me say this. I don't know how accurate it would be to compare this with Sevag, but Sevag was an Armenian, and Hrant was also an Armenian. The only difference between them was that Hrant was political. Sevag was not a political person and was killed in the military. Why was this crowd absent in Sevag? So, do we have to be both political and Armenian for them to take care of us? So why didn't many people from the crowd support any other Armenian? Then you realize that you are

[29] Hrant Dink öldürüldüğünde yüz binlerce insan onun anısında toplandı. Görkemli, çok kalabalık, çoğunun Ermeni olmadığı bir eylemle cenazesi defnedildi. Bu da bana Türkiye'deki umudu gösterdi aslında. İşte bu umutsuzluk içinde, bu yalnız kalmışlığın içinde birlikte mücadelenin önemini göstermişti.

[30] Ben çok güçlü bir bağ olduğunu düşünüyorum. Sadece orada Ermeniler katılmıyor çünkü. Aşırı derecede biz yalnız değiliz diyebiliyoruz onu gördüğümü zaman. Babama örnek gösteriyorum, bak biz yalnız değiliz. Bak sadece Ermeniler orada değil, bu insanlar da orada. Bir tür umut, bir tür güç diyorum. Bu ülkede soykırımı kabul edenler de var ve soykırımı kabul edenler de orada. Eşitlik isteyenler de orada. Kendini yakın hissettiğini düşünerek orada oluyorlar. Orası aslında tamamen olması gereken bir ortammış gibi hissediyorum.

[31] Even after many years, thousands of people still gather there. The news still covers what happened at that time. I am actually very proud. People take free buses to join a rally for a political party, the subways become free, and then many people attend. There is no such call here and there is no free buses here. However, every year, thousands of people attend that ceremony to commemorate him. I think it's something to be proud of.

> actually alone in some places and that you can't be more than a post on the internet.[32]

Although commemorations arouse positive feelings, the assassination brought a substantial fear among young Armenians. The assassination revealed that even after almost 100 years of the Armenian Genocide, Armenians can still be easily murdered in the middle of the street. Sarven, for example, underlines that after the assassination, he realized Armenians might *still* get killed in Turkey and describes his initial feelings as being in the wrong place and inability to trust anyone.

> Do I tell you how I felt at first? I had a feeling that we were in the wrong place and that I couldn't trust anyone. At that time, it was built on grudge and hatred, maybe because of the childhood. Because the period when I learned about these coincides with the murder of Hrant Dink and the murder of Sevag. It traumatized me. They can still kill us here then. I'm going to join the military service. I could be killed there. I felt like I could be killed anywhere. And I still feel it. You know, it still exists as it was on the first day, nothing has changed.[33]

The issue of how young Armenians realized that they were Armenians, which was examined in the previous chapter, is also affected by the assassination of Hrant Dink. For example, Verjin mentions that as a child, she was unaware of the existence of a distinction between different identities, but she became aware of both her Armenianness and the distinction between Armenians and non-Armenians after the assassination.

> Before that, like every child, I was unaware of the fact that someone is different from your society, you are from a different society... Here is the Armenian society, the Turkish society or whatever society is. When I was a kid, I wasn't aware of this distinction. (...) At that time, of

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[32] Yani şöyle söyleyeyim, Sevag'la bunu kıyaslamak ne kadar doğru olur bilmiyorum da Sevag da bir Ermeni'ydi, Hrant da bir Ermeni'ydi. İkisinin tek farkı Hrant'ın politik olmasıydı. Sevag politik biri değildi ve askerde öldürüldü. Bu kalabalık neden Sevag'da yoktu. Yani illa hem politik hem de Ermeni mi olmak gerekiyor bize sahip çıkmaları için. Yani herhangi bir Ermeni'ye oradaki kalabalıktan birçok kişi neden sahip çıkmadı. O zaman da işte aslında bazı yerlerde yalnız olduğunu, sadece işte internette bir paylaşımdan öteye gidemeyeceğini anlıyorsun.

[33] İlk başta ne hissettiğimi söyleyim mi? Şey hissetmiştim ya, yanlış yerde olduğumuzu ve hani böyle kimseye güvenemeyeceğimi. İşte o zaman çocukluğun verdiği bir şeyle belki kin, nefret üzerine de kurulmuştu. Çünkü benim bunları öğrenme dönemim biraz da şe denk geliyor aslında işte Hrant Dink'in öldürülmesine ve Sevag'ın öldürülmesine denk geliyor. O bir travma yaratmıştı bende. Bizi hala burada öldürebilirler o zaman. İşte askere gidicem. Orada öldürülebilirim. Hani herhangi bir yerde öldürülebilme ihtimalim hissetmiştim. Ve hala bunu hissediyorum. Hani bu- hala ilk günkü gibi varlığını koruyor, hiçbir şey değişmiş değil

> course, I didn't say that this is my identity, but I realized that I am Armenian and that friend is Turkish. Otherwise, I am not even aware of these, for example, when I was a child. I was Armenian but he is not, I was not aware of that.[34]

I argue that the significance of the impact of Hrant Dink's assassination could be explained by the young Armenians' perception of the assassination as an extension of the Armenian Genocide. As highlighted in Sarven's narrative where he emphasizes the word still, young Armenians perceived the assassination as the continuation of the Armenian Genocide. I argue that before the assassination, the Armenian Genocide was rather an abstract event that young Armenians encountered only in their family stories or in textbooks. Yet, after the assassination of Hrant Dink, as they witnessed to some extent of it in their own lives, the Genocide is transformed into a perceptible incident that is possible to refer to.

The term "crucial event" coined by Alessandro Cavalli (2004) provides an explanation for events that has a significant impact on the lives of individuals, groups, or societies. Following Cavalli, Fırat et al. argue that the Armenian Genocide is "marked, monumentalized and commemorated as a turning point in the history of the Armenian people" (2021, 79). While the Armenian Genocide was the most significant event that shaped the perception of the first-generation Armenians, the assassination of Hrant Dink has become a "crucial event" for young Armenians as it disrupted the course of time for young Armenians and dividing their lives into a "before" and "after."

Reflecting on the interviews, Hrant Dink's assassination created a significant rupture in the perceptions of young Armenians. Although they did not know Hrant Dink at the time of the assassination, because of the initial reaction of their parents, commemorative events that organized afterward or discussions regarding the Armenian Genocide that started to be held publicly, have fundamentally affected, and transformed the way that young Armenians make sense of their Armenianness. In the following part, I would like to examine the extent of such transformation.

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[34] Onun öncesinde her çocuk gibi ben şeyin farkında değildim yani. Birinin senin toplumundan farklı olduğunu. Senin farklı bir toplumdan olduğunu... İşte Ermeni toplumu, Türk toplumu ya da ne bileyim bilmem ne toplumu her neyse. Bunun ayrımının olduğunun ben farkında değildim çocukken. (...) Hani o zaman da bu benim kimliğim demiyordum tabi ama hani ben Ermeniyim o arkadaşım Türk, bunun farkına vardım. Yoksa ben farkında bile değilim bunların mesela çocukken. Ben Ermeniymişim o değilmiş, bunların farkında değildim.

4.5 The Impact of the Assassination on young Armenians

The assassination of Hrant Dink created a rupture in the lives of young Armenians. For young Armenians, establishing a connection between their presence and the Armenian Genocide was discouraged by their families and tried to be prevented through state policies. Nevertheless, after the assassination of Hrant Dink, a link was inevitably established between the assassination and the Armenian Genocide which had far-reaching effects such as the revival of the transgenerational memory. As the *habitus of denial* (Suciyan 2015*b*, 133) had been shuttered, a sense of awakening emerges among young Armenians, which led them to attribute different meanings to their identities.

Before the assassination, there were various control mechanisms utilized by the Turkish state, the Armenian community, and the society at large to regulate young Armenians and keep them in the designated areas. For instance, they were taught not to stand out, embrace a low profile, and not to talk about their Armenianness, and particularly about the Armenian Genocide. But after the assassination, a significant transformation took place in the lives of young Armenians regarding the way they perceive their Armenianness and reflect it on public spaces. With the transformation, young Armenians stepped out from the designated area they were taught to stay in and started to embrace the elements of the Armenian culture and strive to keep it alive. In accordance with those arguments, Sarven claims that young Armenians are affected the most by this transformation.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the transformation did not take place over the night. Yervant describes a period of fear and anxiety that prevailed in the Armenian community after the assassination. Nevertheless, with the positive steps taken afterward, the fear was replaced by self-confidence which enabled Armenians to speak Armenian from the outside.

> A well-known person, of course, an important person. But after his death, I think a lot of things have changed. Processes have also changed. The path of processes has also changed. More positively, of course. People are more comfortable on the street in terms of speaking Armenian or having a comfortable time. A self-confidence came. When I said that self-confidence came, of course, it didn't, because on the contrary, people started to fear after this happened to him. Afterwards, maybe people became more comfortable with the steps taken. I don't know, maybe I couldn't speak Armenian on the street because I was younger, but I can

> speak it now, for example. It might be because I'm older but I think Hrant Dink's death had a huge impact on the country.[35]

The steps that were taken after the assassination were also mentioned by Zabel. Yet, she claimed that those steps did not result in any change in the society and stated that the people who did not like Armenians are still not liking them. Even though the perception of Armenians in the society did not go through a significant change, the way that young Armenians perform their culture changed a lot. The traditional definition of being an Armenian which was limited to the safe spaces like households, familial circles, or Armenian schools or churches is replaced by a kind of Armenianness that can be performed in public spaces. The most prominent novelty that this new sense of Armenianness brought, as mentioned by many interviewees, is related to the public visibility of the Armenian language. The scope of the transformation is not limited to the young Armenians' changing perception toward their Armenianness, but it also extends toward the society at large. Verjin, for example, stated that Armenians did not only become aware of their Armenianness but also wanted it to be noticed by the society at large after the assassination.

> Pretty much has changed, actually. Because normally when we can't speak Hayeren even outside, we can't speak Armenian, for example, now we can speak. Because we are aware of our identity, now we want it to be noticed. How can I say... We are now aware that this is an identity rather than hiding it. Maybe I can't say this is our self, because having a race cannot be a self, it can be a part of the self. Armenianness is not my identity at least, so Armenianness is only a part of Verjin. (...) Now, as I said, we can speak Hayeren. You don't have to call your "mama" by "anne" out there, or "yaya" by "anneanne." You can speak in your own language; I can summarize it like this. Or I don't know, I don't hesitate when I say I am Armenian to someone. Because I know that he can't do anything. Because the fact that such things happen discourages the other side. They think that if I approach with something like this, I will get a reaction.[36]

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[35] Tabi hani bilindik bir insan tabii, önemli bir insan ama ölümden sonra bence çoğu şey değişti yani. Süreçler de değişti yani. Gidişatı da değişti süreçlerin. Daha çok pozitif yönde tabi. İnsanlar daha rahat belki de sokakta yani Ermenice konuşabilmek ya da uyduruyorum rahat rahat vakit geçirebilmek, bir özgüven geldi. Özgüven geldi dediğim tabi ki de gelmedi de ileriki süreçte çünkü tam tersi insanlar korkmaya başladı onun başına böyle bir şey gelince. Sonrasında hani atılan adımlarla belki daha rahat oldu. Ne bileyim belki de küçüktüm de diye daha rahat- sokakta Ermenice konuşamazdım ama şu an konuşabilirim mesela. Yaşım büyüdüğü için de olabilir ama bence çok büyük bir etki yarattı ülkede Hrant Dink'in ölümü.

[36] Baya değişti aslında. Çünkü normalde biz dışarda bile Hayeren konuşamıyorken, şu an mesela Ermenice konuşabiliyoruz. Çünkü kimliğimizin farkındayız, artık fark edilsin de istiyoruz. Nasıl diyeyim gizlenmektense artık bunun bir kimlik olduğunu farkındayız ve bu hani benliğimiz diyemem belki çünkü bir ırka sahip olmak bir benlik olamaz benliğinin bir parçası olabilir. Ben en azından Ermenilik benim benliğim değil yani Verjin'in bir parçası Ermenilik. (...) Artık dediğim gibi Hayeren konuşabiliyoruz. Dışarda mamana anne demek zorunda değilsin, ya da ne bileyim yayana anneanne falan. Kendi dilinde konuşa-

In a similar vein, Masis underlines a growing tendency among young Armenians that is marked by the embracement of the Armenian culture and its elements. He implicates that the extent of this tendency encompasses Istanbulite Armenians, Armenians of Turkey, as well as Islamized Armenians.

> Frankly, I think there is an increasing cultural awareness. We can see this when we compare the times before and after 2007. If we take Hrant's murder as a milestone, it is possible to say that Armenian youth began to claim more, speak more and do more research from the point of view of the Armenians of Istanbul, Armenians in Turkey, the Islamized Armenians, etc.[37]

It should be mentioned that what this transformation brought extends beyond performing the elements of Armenian culture in public spaces. One another dimension of as illustrated by Arden is related to the preservation of the dignity of Armenian identity. The incident takes place after a member of a football fan group posts a photo of policies from Hrant Dink's commemoration, by commenting "our pride." In the photo, police were wearing white berets which was the color of the beret that the assassin was wearing on the day assassination. As Arden is also a member of the same group, he decides to confront the person who shared the photo with one of his friends.

> Arden: On the second anniversary of Hrant Dink's death, the police officers at that protest wore white berets, if I remember correctly. That was in the news. Someone from my Galatasaray circle shared a photo of the people, the police, wearing white berets and said, "Our honor, our pride." There was a fight in our group. Of course, our elders intervened and made peace, but I can't forget. If they call me "my brother" in that group, then you can't share it, even if you see it that way.
>
> Rudi: What was your fight like? Who intervened, how did that process take place?
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> Arden: It was shared on Facebook. I saw it but didn't comment. Then there was a group meeting in Mecidiyeköy. Everyone was speaking there.

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biliyorsun, bunla özetleyebilirim. Ya da ne bileyim birine ben Ermeni'yim derken çekinmiyorum mesela. Çünkü biliyorum ki yapamaz böyle şeyleri. Çünkü böyle şeylerin olması karşı tarafın birazcık yapabilirim cesaretini de kırıyor. Çünkü şey oluyor, ben böyle bir şeyle yaklaşırsam tepki alacağım.

[37] Ben daha artış gösteren bir kültürel bilincin olduğunu düşünüyorum açıkcası. Bunu, işte, 2007 öncesi ve sonrası kıyasladığında da görebiliyoruz. Hrant'ın öldürülmesini milat alırsak. İşte ondan sonra daha bir sahip çıkan, daha konuşan, daha araştıran bir Ermeni gençliğinin, İstanbul Ermenileri açısından, Türkiye'deki Ermeniler açısından, Müslümanlaştırılmış Ermenileri vs. de sayarsak daha bir artış gösterdiğini söylemek mümkün.

> Only me and a friend were Armenian. We both went to the meeting after discussing it among ourselves. We said that we are Armenians too, should we die too, should those who killed us be commemorated? Our group heads and representatives warned the person who shared it to support us, they got angry. Then they reconciled us before the event escalated more.[38]

One another impact of the assassination could be observed on the politicization process of young Armenians. Two interviewees, Sarven and Masis, dated the assassination as the initiation point of their politicization process.

> Sarven: Hrant had such an effect on me. I became politicized after Hrant Dink was killed. My process and Hrant's effect on me were somewhat like that. And when Sevag's death happened on top of that... Umm, Sevag's murder triggered something a little more. It had come to the point that you were either going to speak up more, or you were going to leave here as a man before you became a soldier. Then I said, why should I leave this place? This is my place. I'm not leaving this place. It coincided with the period when I said I would start speaking up more.[39]
>
> Masis: For example, I went to my first protest in high school, the Hrant Dink protest on January 19. I think it was in 2013. So, my political activism and stance become much more apparent. I went with my friends from Naregyan in such an excited way and I'm glad I went that day. It can be said that the murder of Hrant Dink is a milestone for me, for Armenians in Turkey. Seeing the crowd at that protest. I remember I was so impressed. It was a turning point for me. I positioned myself politically, and I tried to engage in politics.[40]

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[38] Arden: Hrant Dink'in ikinci ölüm yıldönümünde o mitingde görevli olan polisler beyaz bere takmışlardı yanlış hatırlamıyorsam. Bu da haber olmuştu. Galatasaray çevremden biri bu beyaz bere takan insanların, polislerin fotoğrafını paylaşıp "Onurumuz, gururumuz," diye paylaştığında, bizim grubumuz içinde öyle bir kavga olmuştu. Tabi büyüklerimizi araya girip barış sağlamışlardı ama unutmam hani. Eğer o grupta bana kardeşim deniliyorsa- onu, yani öyle görsen bile paylaşamazsın.

Rudi: Kavga dediğin nasıl bir şey olmuştu? Kimler araya girdi, o süreç nasıl gelişti?

Arden: Facebook üzerinden paylaşım yapılmıştı. Ben de gördüm yorum atmamıştım. Sonra bir grup toplantısı olmuştu Mecidiyeköy'de. Orada işte herkes söz alıyordu. Tek Ermeni ben ve arkadaşım vardık. İkimiz de konuşup gitmiştik zaten toplantıya. İkimiz söz hakkı alıp, biz de Ermeni'yiz, bizim de mi ölmemiz gerekiyor, bizi öldürenlerin anılması mı gerekiyor gibi bir konuşma yaptıktan sonra, grup başkanlarımız ve temsilcilerimiz bize destek amaçlı onu paylaşan kişiyi uyardılar, kızdılar. Sonra da bizi barıştırmışlardı olay büyümeden.

[39] Hrant'ın bende şöyle bir etkisi oldu. Ben Hrant Dink öldürüldükten sonra politize olmaya başladım. Benim sürecim ve Hrant'ın bendeki etkisi biraz öyle olmuştu. Bunun üstüne Sevag'ın ölümü, umm, o Sevag'ın ölümü biraz daha böyle bir şeyleri hırçınladı. Ya daha fazla artık sesini çıkartacaksın, ya da sen de o duruma gelmeden, bir erkek olarak askerlik durumuna gelmeden buraya terk edeceksin durumuna gelmişti. Sonra dedim ben niye terk edeyim ya burayı. Burası benim yerim. Burayı terk etmiyorum. Ben daha fazla ses çıkarmaya başlayacağım dediğim döneme denk gelmişti.

[40] Mesela ben ilk eylemime lise 1, Hrant Dink eylemine gitmiştim, 19 Ocak. 2013'dü sanırım. Yani politik eylemliliğim ve politik çizgimiz orada biraz belli olmuştu. Naregyan!dan arkadaşlarımla gitmiştim böyle aşırı heyecanlı bir şekilde ve iyi ki gitmişim o gün. Hrant Dink'in öldürülmesi benim için bir milatdı denilebilir, Türkiye'deki Ermeniler için. O eylemdeki kalabalığı falan da bir görünce. Hani çok fena etkilenmilştim onu hatırlıyorum. O benim için bir dönüm noktasıydı. Kendimi de politik olarak öyle

The politicization of young Armenians after the assassination of Hrant Dink can be explained by the possibility of a new political outlet that developed after the assassination. Before the assassination, it was very difficult for young Armenians to claim political space as their Armenian identity was based on fear and silences. The presence of such feelings was hindering young Armenians to participate in political spaces, as it would necessitate them at some point to talk about the Armenian Genocide. However, those obstacles began to lose their grasp, as the Armenian Genocide began to be discussed after and most importantly in relation to Dink's assassination. In other words, while it was not acceptable to discuss the Armenian Genocide in relation to the events that took place in 1915, it became possible to talk about the Genocide in relation to the assassination of Hrant Dink. This change enabled young Armenians to actively participate in politics and even form their own organization, Nor Zartonk, which will be examined in the following pages.

The transformation that took place after the assassination has also its reflections on the institutional level. While it is possible to mention various institutions and initiatives that are proliferated after the assassination, two of those, Hrant Dink Foundation and Nor Zartonk, are prominent. Hrant Dink Foundation was established right after the murder of Hrant Dink in 2007 to work towards the establishment of the society that Hrant Dink envisioned. Since 2007, the Foundation supports dialogue among the peoples of Turkey, Armenia, and Europe; aids Turkey's democratization process, and contributes to the promotion and protection of human and minority rights while encouraging academic studies on these issues and combats to hate speech through documentation and awareness-raising activities. Through various publications, oral history works, conferences, and reports, The Hrant Dink Foundation made up for the deficiency in this area, especially by working on minorities.

In addition to the Hrant Dink Foundation, Nor Zartonk, which defines itself as the "self-organization of the Armenian people" and struggles for "the equal, free and fraternal life of the peoples of Turkey and the world" can be cited as an activist group that developed after the assassination[41]. While Nor Zartonk was initially formed as a mail group, it turned into a political organization after the assassination. It is important to mention that organization does not only focus on the problems of the Armenians of Turkey but also on the problems of other disadvantaged groups. Hrag Papazian, in his article, illustrates the intersectional extent of the organization through the activities held in Kamp Armen during the Kamp Armen protests. The topics of those activities were including issues like Women's Rights, LGBT rights,

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konumlandırdım ve işte biraz da siyasetle uğraşma gayertinde bulundum.

[41] "Nor Zartonk Nedir?," Nor Zartonk, accessed August 2, 2021, https://www.norzartonk.org/nor-zartonk/.

the protection of the environment, and issues of other ethnic/religious minorities (Papazian 2017, 10). Similarly, the intersectional extent of the organization was mentioned by Masis who, as a member of the organization, described the process that led to the emergence of the Nor Zartonk and particularly the effects of the Kamp Armen protest on his political subjectivity.

> When Nor Zartonk was a mail group in 2004, after Hrant was killed, they made an effort to open up an area for struggle. I think it was a successful effort. For example, Hrant had a dream for Armenian radio, and they realized it as Nor Radyo. I started going to the association when I was in the 10th-11th grade. There were many good things in the association, there were articles in Hayeren, there were radio broadcasts, there were books to research. There were also forums on genocide. It was not just about the genocide, for example, there were forums about Armenian feminist women or the Armenian LGBTI+ movement in Armenia. After that, this Kamp Armen resistance began. When that resistance started, the Kamp Armen resistance, I started going there on the weekends. So, as a 15-year-old boy, I used to go to Kamp Armen. The political practice there was very high for me and it was an amazing experience.[42]

In addition to the Hrant Dink Foundation and Nor Zartonk, it is important to mention Gezi Park protests, which functioned as a political ground for young Armenians where they meet with other groups. During Gezi Park protests, young Armenians, particularly through Nor Zartonk, claimed a public space for the first time without concealing their Armenian identity and for political reasons. Additionally, as they meet other disadvantaged groups during protests, they realized it was not only Armenianness oppressed by state policies but there are others too, such as women, LGBTI, Kurds, etc. While talking about the Gezi Park protests, Anoush mentions that she met people from different backgrounds there for the first time.

> I was going to Gezi every day after school, I was there every day. Yes, maybe I was too scared to be there at the time of the police intervention, but other than that, I was there. I was with the people there and I

[42] 2004'de Nor Zartonk bir mail grubuyken, Hrant öldürüldükten sonra ete kemiğe bürünüp bir mücadele alanı açma gayretinde bulundu. Bence başarılı da bir gayret. Mesela Hrant'ın Ermenice radyo isteği, hayali vardı ve onu Nor Radyo olarak gerçekleştirdiler. 10-11. sınıf gibi derneğe gidip gelmeye başladım ben. İşte dernekte çok güzel şeyler var, Hayeren yazılar var, radyo yayını falan yapılıyor, araştırmak için kitaplar falan var. Aynı zamanda forumlar falan oluyordu soykırıma dair. Sadece soykırımla ilgili de değil. Mesela Ermeni feminist kadınlarla ilgili forumlar oluyordu. Veya işte Ermeni-LGBTİ+ hareketi Ermenistan'daki. Ondan sonra zaten bu Kamp Armen direnişi başladı. Oralara gitmeye başlamıştım haftasonları o direniş de başlayınca, Kamp Armen direnişi. Yani 15 yaşında bir çocuk olarak oraya gider gelir olmuştum Kamp Armen'e. Oranın şeyi, pratiği, politik olarak çok yüksekti benim için ve muhteşem bir deneyimdi.

> actually got to know those identities there. And it was, you know, a very different environment. Because it was a different place where people from all segments were there.[43]

The protests did not only increase the visibility of the Armenian community, but also it became a venue to talk about the silenced history of Gezi Park which was a former Armenian cemetery. During the Gezi Park protests, Nor Zartonk placed a representative tombstone with the inscription "You have taken our cemetery, you will not be able to take our park". In this way, it revived the memory of the Armenian past of the park, and therefore of Istanbul, which was intended to be erased for decades. The study, which was published in 2015 with the title of 'Remembering the Genocide in 100th Years' (2017), claims that Gezi Park, which was originally seized as an Armenian Cemetery and later rebuilt as a park area, holds an important place in the Armenian memory in Istanbul. The impact of Gezi Park protests on young Armenians is also revealed in the interviews. Verjin, for example, mentions the Gezi Park protests among the three moments in her life that made her realize the existence of the Armenian Genocide.

> I was in 9th grade during the Gezi. At that time, something began to happen to me. I began to realize something. While I was starting to think about identity, this time, I also started to think about the state. The association may also have had an effect on my awareness of the genocide. Or, I don't know, in my research on it. I think we probably talked with my yaya during high school, when these were happening.[44]

So far, I have argued that the murder of Hrant Dink has caused a rupture in the subjectivization process of young Armenians and examined its reflections. Yet, I would also like to mention how young Armenians' sense of belonging was affected by this rupture. Therefore, in the next section, I will examine how the sense of belonging is affected by the processes experienced and what it means for young Armenians.

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[43] Okul çıkışı her gün geziye gidiyordum, her gün oradaydım. Evet belki müdahale zamanı orada olamayacak kadar korkaktım ama onun ışında, o zamanların dışında oradaydım. Oradaki insanlarla beraberdim ve oradaki kimlikleri de orada tanıdım ben aslında. Ve çok şey bir ortamdı, biliyorsun çok değişik bir ortamdı orası. Çünkü her, umm, kesimden insanın orada olduğu değişik bir yerdi.

[44] Ben Gezi zamanında 9. sınıftaydım. O zamanlarda da ben de bir şeyler olmaya başladı, bir şeylerin farkına varmaya başladım. Bu seferde kimlik üzerinden düşünmeye başlarken, bu seferde devlet üzerinden düşünmeye başladım bir şeylere iste. Derneğin de yani etkisi olmuş olabilir bu soykırımın farkına varmama. Ya da ne bileyim onun üzerine araştırma yapma. Yayamla da muhtemelen lise zamanında yani bunların olduğu zamanda konuşmuşuzdur diye düşünüyorum

4.6 The Issue of Belonging

Throughout this chapter, I examined the major break in the subjectivity of young people after the murder of Hrant Dink and the reflections of the transformation effected by this event in different areas. Before closing the chapter, I would like to touch upon the sense of belonging of young people, which I think will be complementary to this chapter, as the 'today's of young Armenians would be missing. At this point, I would like to underline that I do not want to specifically examine how the murder of Hrant Dink affected the sense of belonging, but rather how young Armenians, who underwent such a complicated subjectivization process, establish a connection with the country that they grow up. It is possible to mention four different themes that came to the fore in the interviews. Firstly, the relationship of young Armenians with their ancestral homeland; secondly, in connection with the first, their relationship with Istanbul, the city where they were born and raised; thirdly, their relationship with Armenia and lastly, their relationship with the place they want to have a future.

The perceptions of the interviewees on the cities where their parents or ancestors were born or grew up show a diversity that even contradicts each other in some cases. For example, while some of the interviewees emphasized that their homeland is very important to them, most of the interviewees stated that they only have general information and were not very interested. Another group, which is less in number, stated that they do not have any affiliation with those ancestral cities, and define themselves as Istanbulite. This diversity among the interviewees reveals a complicatedness of the issue of belonging among young Armenians.

There are several factors that I think have an effect on this diversity among the interviewees. One of the main factors is whether young Armenians could relate themselves in any way with the region referred to as 'homeland'. For example, Masis mentions that he has an 'organic' bond with Dersim, since his grandfather's grave is there, and his uncle regularly visits Dersim.

> [Dersim] has a special place for me. Since there are always people from Dersim around me and we carry the Dersim traditions in the family, I feel closer to that place, maybe even a little bit. (...) My mama hasn't been there for a long time, but my dayday goes there every year, my middle dayday. We had the intention to go this year as well, it was planned from last year, but unfortunately, we couldn't due to the pandemic. But

> we really want to go. I feel like I have a more organic connection with Dersim. My grandfather's grave is also there.[45]

Similar to Masis, Sarven says that the thing that connects him to Malatya is the grave of the grandfather of his father in the cemetery there. However, the fact that there is nothing in Erzincan, to evoke this feeling causes him to do not think of going there.

> Frankly, I didn't go to Malatya or Erzincan. But I really want to go to Malatya. I'm wondering about it. Because there is one more thing that connects me to Malatya. My father's grandfather lies in the cemetery in Malatya. That's why I want to go to Malatya more, but frankly, I never thought of going to Erzincan.[46]

It is important to underline the transgenerational dimension of Sarven's testimony, which is strongly influenced by one of his grandmother's sayings.

> My yaya had a saying. I guess I can't leave Turkey because of this saying. When I was planning to go to America last year, I would go but come back. I thought I'd never build a life in there. Then, when I couldn't go, my grandmother said, "In whichever land there is death, that is your homeland." I wonder if it's because of this saying, I don't want to leave Turkey. I don't know. Because when I look back, Malatya is the place where my ancestor is buried. The next ones are in Istanbul. But at for a moment, I want to give up everything and go somewhere to America, France or Sydney.[47]

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[45] [Dersim'in] benim için özel bir yeri var. Etrafımda sürekli Dersimliler olduğu için ve ailede de Dersim geleneklerini taşıdığımız için belki bir nebze de olsa, oraya daha yakın hissediyorum kendimi. (. . .) Mamam uzun süredir gidemiyor ama daydayım gider mesela her yıl, ortanca daydayım. Bu yıl da gitme şeyimiz vardı, niyetimiz vardı geçen yıldan planlanmış ama işte pandemi süreciyle maalesef gidemedik. Ama çok istiyoruz gitmeyi. Dersimle daha organik bir bağım varmış gibi geliyor. Dedemin mezarı falan da orada çünkü.

[46] Ben Malatya'ya da Erzincan'a gitmedim açıkçası. Ama Malatya'ya gitmeyi çok istiyorum. Orayı merak ediyorum. Çünkü Malatya'da beni bağlayan bir şey daha var aslında. Malatya'daki mezarlıkta babamın dedesi yatıyor. O yüzden biraz daha belki Malta'ya gitmek istiyorum aslında ama Erzincan'a gitmeyi hiç düşünmedim açıkçası.

[47] Benim yayamın bir sözü vardı. Ben galiba bu söz yüzünden Türkiye'yi terk edemiyorum. Geçen sene Amerika'ya gideceğim zaman şeydi, gidicem ama geri geleceğim. İşte orada asla bir hayat kurmayacağım kafasındaydım. Sonra gidemeyince yayam, "Nerde, hangi toprakta ölüm varsa orası vatanındır," demişti. Ben galiba bu sözden kaynaklı mı acaba Türkiye'yi biraz terk etmek istemiyorum. Bilmiyorum hani. Çünkü dönüp baktığımda atamın gömülü olduğu yer Malatya. Ondan sonrakiler İstanbul. Ama ben böyle bir anda her şeyi bırakıp işte Amerika'ya, Fransa'ya veya işte Sidney'e bir yerlere gitmek istiyorum.

The genocide stories told by grandparents also have an importance in the bond established with the homeland. This is particularly evident in the narrative of Zabel. She mentions the story of her grandmother who was visiting Bitlis until a few years ago but stopped visiting because of the changes that are taking place in Bitlis. After describing the importance of Bitlis for herself, as it is a place where her beloved ones have strong connections, she told how her heart was broken for a place that she never saw when her grandmother talked about the negative changes happening in Bitlis.

> So, everything has an origin, everything has a starting point. I also want to look at my own history as much as I can, through and through, from a bird's-eye view. I want to look at where my ancestor, my yaya, was born, where she drank water, where she rolled up her pants and gathered things from which field. I want to look at where we missed my aunt, where did my grandfather take my aunt, and her family. (...) I also feel a connection. Why shouldn't I? My yaya said that now there are dacigs all over the place and they messed the fountains up etc. It was enough to break my heart about Bitlis which I have never seen. The fact that the people I love so much have a bond with it makes me love it too, it makes me love somewhere I have never seen before. [48]

When they do not have someone they know, a place they can visit, or something they can relate themselves to, most of the interviewees are unable to establish a connection with their homeland. For example, Arden states that Sivas, which he has never visited, does not mean anything to him. On the other hand, Armenia, to which he has no ties, is of greater importance to him.

> It doesn't make me feel anything. Am I from Sivas? I am so-called from Sivas, but it doesn't make me feel anything. For example, we have no ties to Armenia, but Armenia makes me feel a lot of things. I get emotional, and I want to go there. I've never been there either. But I don't feel anything like that for Sivas. Maybe I would have felt if my parents had been born there, I don't know.[49]

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[48] Yani her şeyin bir orijin'i var her şeyin bir başlangıç noktası var. Ben de bir bakabildiğim kadarıyla kendi eskilerime bakmak istiyorum şöyle bir tepeden tırnağa, kuş bakışı. Ben benim atam benim yayam nerede doğmuş, nerede görmüş, nereden su içmiş, paçalarını sıvayıp hangi tarladan bir şeyler toplamış ona bir bakmak istiyorum. Biz nereden halamı kaçırmışız, dedem nereden halamı almış götürmüş, ailesini almış götürmüş bir bakmak istiyorum. (...) Bir bağ da hissediyorum ya niye hissetmeyeyim. Sadece yayamın işte şimdi bu her taraf dacig kaynıyor, çeşmelerin ağzına sıçmışlar falan filan demiş olması hiç görmediğim o Bitlis'in, benim kalbimi kırmasına yetti gerçekten. Çünkü, çok sevdiğim insanların bir bağı var ya orayla o benim de onu sevmemi sağlıyor, hiç görmemiş olduğum bir şeyi sevmemi sağlıyor yani.

[49] Bana hiçbir şey hissettirmiyor. Lafta Sivaslı mıyım Sivaslıyım ama hiçbir şey hissettirmiyor bana. Mesela Ermenistan'la bir bağımız yok ama Ermenistan bana çok şey hissettiriyor. Hani duygulanıyorum, gitmek

From this point, I will move on to the discussion of what Armenia means to young Armenians. The topic of Armenia, which was brought up naturally in Arden's example, did not mention by all interviews in the natural flow of the interview. In some interviews, I had to specifically ask a question about the topic. Although this might indicate that Armenia is not of great importance for young Armenians, it is also very valuable that all the interviewees have something to say about this issue. In only during one interview, when I asked what Armenia meant to Zabel, she reacted to this question.

> Rudi: Have you ever been to Hayastan? Have you ever visited there?
>
> Zabel: I've never been to Hayastan. I am not at all eager to go to Hayastan. I'm not curious abot Hayastan. Yes, I'm not curious about Hayastan.
>
> Rudi: The reason you say you're not curious is because Armenia is a place of curiosity? I mean, you're saying it such directly, why did you say that?
>
> Zabel: I felt like you will introduce there to me as such a place. I got that feeling. That's why I wanted to explain in advance. I'm not curious about Hayastan. I don't care what's in there. Usually, it is expected that Armenians have already visited Armenia. How was Armenia, etc. The answer is always that: There was nothing, it was very old, there was this, there was that... So, what will I see in Hayastan? I'm not curious at all, I don't aspire at all. It's something like that. [50]

The interviewees, whom I asked if they had visited Armenia, gave different answers on this matter, as they did when talking about their homeland. Some of them visited Armenia, some wanted to visit, and some did not have a priority to visit, as in Zabel's example. The fact that Armenia is a place where Armenian culture is kept alive in the public sphere is important for young Armenians. For example, Tatul states that although he has not been to Armenia, speaking Armenian on the street will probably exciting. Yet, it will not be enough to establish a bond for him.

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istiyorum. Oraya da hiç gitmedim. Ama Sivas için öyle bir şey hissettiğim yok. Belki annem babam orada doğmuş olsaydı hissederdim, bilmiyorum.

[50] Rudi: Hiç Hayastan'ı Hayastan'a gittin mi, hiç orayı ziyaret ettin mi?
Zabel: Hayastan'a hiç gitmedim. Hayastan'a gitmeye de hiç hevesli değilim, Hayastan'ı merak da etmiyorum. Evet Hayastan'ı merak etmiyorum.
Rudi: Merak etmiyorum demenin sebebi, Ermenistan'ın merak edilen bir yer mi olması? Yani direk onu diyor olman, niye öyle dedin?
Zabel: Sanki sen öyleymiş gibi lanse edecektin bana, öyle bir his aldım. O yüzden açıklamayı, peşinen yapmak istedim. Hayastan'ı merak etmiyorum ne var ne yok merak etmiyorum. Genellikle öyledir ya işte Ermenilerin Ermenistan'a gitmiş olması beklenir ya da işte nasıldı Ermenistan falan filan. Hep verilen cevap şudur: Hiçbir şey yoktu, şöyle çok eskiydi, şurada şu vardı, şurada bu vardı... Ee ee yani neyini göreceğim ki ben Hayastan'ın? Hiç de merak etmiyorum hiç de özenmiyorum da. Öyle bir şey yani.

> Of course, things like speaking Armenian cause me to have positive or good thoughts when I go there. But I won't go and live there. So, I don't think there will be a connection either. If I go to Hayastan, it will be only for visiting the places. Okay, I will also learn about the life and culture there, but that's it. It's superficial and I won't look too deep into it. I would like to say that I am happy here.[51]

It is not only Tatul among the interviewees who has a positive opinion about Armenian even though he has never been there. Similarly, Arden states that he has a strong interest and even feels a kind of responsibility for Armenia.

> So, I feel very sincere with there. I have researched quite a bit of history. Let me show that. The Etchmiadzin church is the first cathedral in the world, and I carved it into this ring, this stone. I worked on this for eight months. Just to build that church. I would love to go and see the church up close. I couldn't understand what I'm doing right or wrong just by looking at the picture. I looked at the picture and did this as a result. I also want to go there and make a comparison with this bracelet. I want to see how similar my work is and whether it is the same or not. I want to visit that monument, the genocide memorial. In addition, there are villages in Indonesia that are starving, and they are constantly being helped. You know, I learned that there are also such villages in Armenia that when you bring even a chocolate, they become so thrilled. I want to make those people happy. I hope I will make soon.[52]

Some interviewees who have visited Armenia point to the differences between the two communities as the reason for the lack of their sense of belonging to Armenia. In addition, they feel uncomfortable when the Armenians of Armenia perceive them as Turks and not Armenians. For example, Zepour argues that there is a substantial difference between Armenians of Armenia and Armenians of Turkey, and therefore it is not possible for her to feel she belonged to Armenia.

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[51] Gittiğin yerde tabii ki Hayren konuşulması falan, bunlar çok gittiğim zaman olumlu veya güzel düşüncelere gark edecek şey o. Ama gitmem, gidip de yaşamam. O yüzden de çok fazla bir bağın olacağını da düşünmüyorum. Hayastan'a gidersem yer görmek için giderim. İşte tamam oradaki yaşantıyı kültürü de öğrenirim ama bu kadar yani yüzeysel. Çok derinlemesine inmem. Ben burda mutluyum diyim.

[52] Yani çok içten hissediyorum. Bayağı tarihini araştırmışlığım var. Hatta şöyle göstereyim, Eçmiadzin kilisesi dünyadaki ilk katedraldır. Onu da şu yüzüğün, taşın için oydum. Sekiz ay uğraştım şuna. Sadece o kiliseyi yapabilmek için. Gidip kiliseyi yakından görmeyi çok istiyorum. Resimden neyi doğru neyi yanlış yaptığımı anlayamıyorum. Resme bakıp yaptım sonuç olarak. Bir de bu yaptığım bileklikle birlikte oraya gidip orada bir karşılaştırma yapmak istiyorum. Yaptığım işin ne kadar doğru olduğunu; benzetebilmiş miyim, aynısı olmuş mu olmamış mı onu görmek istiyorum. O anıtı ziyaret etmek istiyorum, soykırım anıtını. Bir de bu Endonezya'da falan çok aç olan köyler var sürekli destekler gidiyor. Hani öğrendim ki Ermenistan'da öyle bir köyler var ki bir çikolata götürdüğün zaman dünya onların oluyormuş. Hani orada insanları mutlu etmek istiyorum. En yakın zamanda da inşallah edicem.

> For example, I say "Oh, this is Armenia. Is this our root now?" [laughs] No! For example, there is no one from Armenia in my family. Armenian you learned at the school isn't understood there. The food you eat is not the same. So it is another culture. We are Armenians, but we have acquired the culture of Istanbul Armenians. I don't know, the food is not the same food we eat in Turkey. The language you speak is not exactly the same. You understand it, but they do not try to understand you and say I don't understand. In fact, you don't say anything that is very difficult to understand. When I got there, I realized that I didn't actually belong there either. I think we are not because they are looking at you as if you are not Armenian.[53]

It should be underlined that the bond established by young Armenians with Armenia is not fixed and can change over time. For example, Anoush recounts that although she had very negative thoughts when she first went, she became increasingly attached during her following visits and she made her last visit to get Armenian citizenship.

> I went four or five times. I think I went four times. I was in tenth grade when I first went. We went for a performing where we were going to exhibit Armenian clothes. It didn't mean anything to me when I first went. In fact, maybe because of childhood, I thought that what kind of country is this. Well, I don't know, it was winter, the weather was really bad. After 2-3 years, we went again for the same purpose. But this time I looked at there from a different perspective. I actually liked there more on my second visit because I had matured a little more and started to look at it from a slightly different angle. The last time I went, I was really attached to there. Let's go again, let's go again. Let's go as soon as possible. I felt a little more connected to there. I've seen most, if not all, of them. It's like a different world in my eyes. After all, the purpose of our last visit was to get citizenship, to get Armenian citizenship.[54]

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[53] Ya mesela nasıl biliyor musun "Aaa Ermenistan burasıymış. Şimdi aa bizim kökümüz burası mı?" diyorum mesela. [gülüyor] Hayır! Mesela benim ailemde Ermenistanlı olan biri yok. Sonra okulda öğrendiğin Ermenice orada işe yaramıyor. Sonra bakıyorsun ki yediğin yemek oranın yemeği değil. Sonra o da başka bir kültür diyorsun. Biz Ermeniyiz ama İstanbul Ermenisi'nin kültürünü aldık. Yani bilmiyorum dönüp baktığında o yediğin yemek bizim Türkiye'de yediğimiz yemek değil. İşte, dönüp baktığında konuştuğun dil de birebir aynı değil ve sen onu anlıyorsun ama o seni anlamaya çalışmıyor ve ben anlamıyorum diyor. Ki sen aslında sen çok zor bir şey söylemiyorsun. Oraya gidince aslında oraya da ait olmadığımı anladım. Olmadığımızı çünkü onlar da sana bunlar da Ermeni değil ki diye bakıyor bence

[54] Dört beş kere gittim. Sanırım dört kere gittim. İlk gittiğimde onuncu sınıftaydım. Ermeni kıyafetlerini sergileyeceğimiz bir gösteri için gitmiştik. İlk gittiğimde bana hiçbir şey ifade etmedi orası. Hatta belki çocukluğun verdiği bir şey diye düşünüyorum bu nasıl ülke, işte ne bileyim zaten kıştı, iğrenç bir hava vardı. 2-3 sene sonra bir daha gittik yine aynı amaç için. Ama bu sefer daha farklı bir bakış açısıyla baktım ben oraya. Daha çok sevdim aslında ikinci gidişimde çünkü biraz daha olgunlaşmıştım ve biraz daha farklı açılardan bakmaya başlamıştım oraya. Son gidişimde ise oraya gerçekten bağlanmıştım artık. Bir daha gidelim, bir daha gidelim. İşte ilk fırsatta gidelim falan. Biraz daha oraya bağlı hissetmiştim kendimi. Her yerini olmasa da çoğunu gördüm. Orası bambaşka bir dünya gibi benim gözümde. Zaten son gidişimizin amacı da vatandaşlık almaktı, Ermenistan vatandaşlığı almaktı ona başvuracaktık falan.

The last point I would like to mention regarding the relationship of young Armenians with Armenia is that they see Armenia as an alternative to which they can take refuge in a possible crisis, even though they do not feel any bond with Armenia. For example, Sarven talks about the worsening conditions in Turkey and says that he may consider going to Armenia if the conditions get worse, but he is not sure whether he will maintain his life there or not.

> Under which conditions would I go to Armenia? When things get out of hand, I would seek refuge in Armenia but, for example, I am not sure if I will continue to live in Armenia. So let me put it this way, I don't know how much I feel belonged or connected there. I don't feel very belonged to there, I don't feel very connected either. However, in the most difficult situation, when everything is over, I would say Armenia is my refuge.[55]

As I mentioned before, the relationship of young Armenians with Armenia varies considerably among interviewees. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees felt that they belonged to the city where they were born and raised. Even the interviewees who mentioned that they have a strong connection with their homelands stated that they have no desire to build a life in these cities. For example, Yervant, although he felt a deep connection to Vakıflı Village, stated that he could only spend a certain period of a year there and would not want to settle there.

> For example, if you ask that if I would live in there in the current situation, I won't live for all 12 months. But for example, it is a place to go to spend your time for 3 weeks of the year. Even if not the whole summer, I can spend maybe a month or so without getting bored.[56]

After stating her perception of Vakıflı Köy, Yervant makes a similar comparison with Armenia and points Anatolia as where he belongs, and then Istanbul.

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[55] Hani hangi şartlarda Ermenistan'a giderim? Artık böyle bir şeylerin iyice ipin ucunun kaçması, zıvanadan çıkması durumunda Ermenistan'a sığınırım. Ama orada Ermenistan'da yaşamaya devam eder miyim ondan da emin değilim mesela.Yani şöyle söyleyeyim, ne kadar oraya kendimi ait hissediyorum veya bağlantılı hissediyorum, bilmiyorum. Çok ait- çok oraya ait hissetmiyorum, çok da bağlantılı da hissetmiyorum. Ama şey, en zor durumda, en artık her şeyin bittiği yerde sığınacağım yer deyip Ermenistan'ı kullanabilirim.

[56] Mesela şimdiki sonuçta yaşar mısın desen 12 ay boyunca yaşamam ama örneğin senenin haftası 3 haftası tam gidilmelik bir yer yani, vakit geçirmek için. Bütün yaz olmasa da en azından belki 1 ay falan geçiririm hani seve seve hiç sıkılmadan

> Okay, that's our country, we're lucky to have a country. Everyone speaks Armenian in there. But for example, if you ask where you want to live, I still prefer Istanbul. Because it is where I was born and raised, or in terms of mentality, it seems closer to me. Because Armenia is also a different culture. How can I say... I have been here already, so I feel more like I'm from Turkey. Not like I'm a Turk but from Turkey. I am from Anatolia, I am a man of this land, so I do not feel like a citizen of Armenia.[57]

In another example, Verjin states that a person cannot feel a sense of belonging to a place they do not know, so they belong to Istanbul, where they were born and raised.

> Istanbul, this is where I grew up. I know this place better. You can't feel like you belong to a place that you don't know. I don't know Sinop at all, for example, how can I feel that I belong there? I was born and raised in Istanbul. I feel that I belong to Istanbul when I think of my experiences and the time period I lived here.[58]

It is possible to see in Masis's narrative that Hrant Dink's assassination has an impact on belonging. When I ask him if he has ever thought of leaving Turkey, he answers by quoting Hrant Dink and thinks that although he will lead a more comfortable life abroad, he will have difficulties in living his culture.

> No, I didn't think of. I never thought of going to Armenia or going to the Diaspora. I did not even think of living outside of Istanbul in Turkey. Because my life is established here and I love it. And frankly, I have hope. Hrant also didn't go, and you know his saying, "We stayed and we resisted." That school of thought fits me too. I think that I should preserve my culture. For example, if we leave here, there will be no trace of us. Frankly, I might be more comfortable economically, but not as much in terms of culture or language.[59]

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[57] Tamam, orası da bizim ülkemiz, şanslıyız ki bir tane ülkemiz var yani. Herkes Ermenice konuşuyor falan gibisinden ama mesela gene de nerede yaşarsın dersen ben İstanbul'u tercih ederim. Çünkü doğup büyüdüğüm ya da mantalite olarak, kafa yapım olarak bura bana daha yakın geliyor. Çünkü orası da farklı bir kültür. Nasıl diyeyim yani ben zaten buradaydım yani kendimi daha çok Türkiyeli hissediyorum. Yani Türk gibi değil. Türkiyeli gibi hissediyorum kendimi. Ben Anadoluluyum, bu toprağın adamıyım yani Ermenistan vatandaşı gibi hissetmiyorum.

[58] İstanbul yani büyüdüğüm yer burası. Burayı daha iyi bildiğim için de yani bilmediğin bir yere ait hissedemezsin kendini. Sinop'u hiç bilmiyorum mesela oraya nasıl ait hissedebilirim kendimi? İstanbul'da doğup büyüdüm, burada yaşadığım deneyimlere, burada yaşadığım zaman sürecine bakarak kendimi İstanbul'a ait hissediyorum.

[59] Yok düşünmedim ya. Ne Ermenistan'a gitmeyi ne de Diaspora'ya falan gitmeyi hiç düşünmedim. Hatta

Sarven, on the other hand, prefers to explain his sense of belonging by emphasizing the cultural dimension of his relationship with Turkey as he wants to express his happiness or sadness in Turkish or Armenian and not in English, as it would not be possible for him to describe his feelings in other languages or, in another example, listen to Ahmet Kaya when he feels emotional. In addition to those cultural dimensions, his grandmother's saying takes an important place regarding his desire to live here.

> I don't know, when I'm sad, I want to listen to songs in Turkish and Armenian, or I want to tell my problem in Turkish or Armenian. I want to experience my joy in these languages. I don't want to explain in English. Or there are some words that express an event very well in Armenian or Turkish. But when you go there, you will not be able to experience the same feeling or share the same feeling. Or even if you are going to love someone, you want to live your love in Armenian and Turkish because you have always grown up with this, as a part of this culture. You know, when I'm sad, I want to listen to Ahmet Kaya, I don't want to listen to anything else. Actually, maybe it's a very simple cultural attachment. However, is it worth staying here for all of these? Sometimes I question that too, but I don't know. I guess that's why I can't leave. Sometimes my yaya's saying comes to my mind. In whichever land there is death, that is your homeland. Our dead are here. They've been here since 1915.[60]

Although the majority of the interviewees stated that they felt they belonged to Istanbul and Turkey, Anoush does not think that she has a future in Turkey and wants to leave the country as soon as possible.

> I mean, if I live here right now, it's out of necessity. If I get a chance, I'd rather leave here. You know, I have such hatred. Because I can't

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Türkiye'de de İstanbul dışında yaşamayı düşünmedim. Çünkü kurulu bir düzen var ve ben seviyorum. Ve benim umudum da var açıkcası. Hrant nasıl gitmediyse, hani sözü var ya "Biz kaldık ve direndik." diye. O ekol bana da uyuyor. Kültürümü korumam gerektiğini düşünerek, işte biz buradan gidersek mesela, bizden iz kalmayacak. Ben açıkcası ekonomik olarak daha rahat ederim ama kültür olarak veya dil olarak o kadar rahat edemem.

[60] Ne bileyim ben üzüldüğümde Türkçe ve Ermenice şarkı dinlemek istiyorum veya derdimi Türkçe veya Ermenice anlatmak istiyorum. Sevincimi bu dillerde yaşamak istiyorum hani. İngilizce anlatmak istemiyorum veya işte hani bazı kelimeler vardır o kelime şey, Ermenice bir olayı çok güzel ifade eder veya Türkçe çok güzel ifade eder ama oraya gittiğinde aynı duyguyu yaşayamayacağız, aynı hissiyatı paylaşamayacağız. Veya ne bileyim birini seveceksen bile Ermenice ve Türkçe sevmek istiyorsun çünkü hep bunla büyümüşsün, bu kültürün bir parçası olarak çıkmışsın. Hani ben üzüldüğümde Ahmet Kaya dinlemek istiyorum, başka bir şey dinlemek istemiyorum. Aslında belki çok basit bir kültürel bağlılık ama hani bunların temelinde, hepsi için de burada kalmaya değer mi? Bazen bunu da sorguluyorum ama bilmiyorum. Ben biraz galiba bu yüzden ayrılamıyor ve yayamın o dönüp dolaşıp bazen böyle sözü aklıma geliyor. Nerede bir- hangi toprakta bir ölüm varsa orası senin vatanındır diye. Bizim ölülerimiz burada, yani 1915'ten beri burada.

take it anymore. I can't even stand to walk on the street with people like that. I don't want to be beneficial to this country. Because as an Armenian, I don't want to do this. Because I know that this will neither work nor change anything. I prefer to be beneficial to another country. I don't know, I have such anger. Any other country will be okay, but I don't want to be beneficial to here. What else can I say. [a little silence] Because they don't deserve it. This country does not deserve any recovery. Because I know it won't get better.[61]

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined two important dimensions of Armenian identity, the Armenian Genocide, and the assassination of Hrant Dink, which have a significant impact on the subjectivization process of young Armenians of Turkey. After examining those dimensions and illustrating their impacts, I discussed what young Armenians think about their sense of belonging. Interviews revealed that the assassination of Hrant Dink created a rupture in the lives of young Armenians as their perception regarding the Armenian identity has evolved after the assassination.

Before the assassination, young Armenians' subjectivization process was overwhelmingly formed by the encounters they had in the family circles. They were warned to stay silent and to keep a low profile during their encounters with non-Armenians. In addition to instructions coming from the family, Armenians were constantly reminded by state apparatuses to not raise their voices as they "are surrounded by countless official and unofficial mechanisms of repression" (Maksudyan 2009, 636). Although young Armenians were tried to be protected by their parents or reminded by state mechanisms regarding dangerous possibilities that talking about Armenianness and particularly the Armenian Genocide might entail, the inescapability of those issues becomes prevalent during high school as history textbooks were examining the topic. Being exposed to denialist Genocide narratives through history books, which were contradictory to what they heard in their families, led to the

[61] Yani şu anda burada yaşıyorsam mecburiyetten yani. Eğer bir fırsat elime geçerse buradan gitmek daha çok isterim. Hani öyle bir nefret bendeki. Çünkü artık katlanamıyorum. Sokakta yürümeye bile katlanamıyorum o tarz insanlarla. Bu ülkeye hiçbir yararım olmasını istemiyorum. Çünkü bunu, bir Ermeni olarak ben yapmak istemiyorum. Çünkü biliyorum ki ne işe yarayacak, ne bir şey değişecek. Ben başka bir ülkeye yararlı olmayı tercih ediyorum. Yani bilmiyorum böyle bir öfke oluştu bende. Herhangi bir ülke olur ama buraya bir yararım dokunsun istemiyorum. Ne diyeyim başka. [küçük sessizlik] Hak etmiyorlar çünkü. Bu ülke hak etmiyor düzelmeyi. Çünkü biliyorum düzelmeyecek.

emergence of a conflicting socialization process for young Armenians. This process has been complicated further by the questioning of young Armenians about their views on the Armenian Genocide. It became complicated because young Armenians were forced to express their views on the Armenian Genocide, despite what they had been taught during their subjectivization process, such as remaining silent or keeping a low profile. What these contradictory expectations mean for young Armenians is that they have to be silent as much as possible but if somehow, they are exposed, then they should have the necessary skills and information to confront the questions.

The implications of such a complicated process, as discussed in the previous chapter, led young Armenians to develop various defense mechanisms such as hiding their names, not speaking Armenian in the street, or responding to controversial questions in political ways. However, with the assassination of Hrant Dink, those mechanisms started to be abandoned as young Armenians began to develop a distinctive approach to their Armenianness. This new approach was mainly based on the embracement of the Armenian culture and brought the desire to openly live their culture in the public sphere. The source for such a significant transformation could be found in the changes that take place after the assassination of Hrant Dink, as it "revived the memory of the Genocide, strengthened the transmission, and reshaped the patterns of remembrance" (Fırat et al. 2021, 90). Apart from reviving the memory of the Genocide, the connections established between the assassination and the Armenian Genocide enabled young Armenians to determine a reference point from which they can define their subjectivity.

The assassination did not only shatter the silence for Armenians of Turkey, but also impacted the society at large. Most prominently, the option of ignorance was removed from Turkish society, and they forced to confront the incidents that took place in 1915. Even though it would be a bold claim to argue that this confrontation led to an identity crisis for Turkish society, as argued by Ünlü, it resulted in increasing awareness toward the presence of the Armenians of Turkey (2016, 5). The only incident that increases the visibility of the Armenian community was not the assassination of Hrant Dink. Gezi protests and the Kamp Armen struggle were among prominent incidents that enabled the society at large to meet with the Armenian existence in Istanbul. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that increasing awareness does not necessitate a positive impact on the lives of Armenians and as argued by various interviewees, their lives did not undergo a significant change.

One of the most important findings in this chapter is that despite the presence of a significant change in the lives of young Armenians of Turkey, only a very few of them

imagine a future outside of Turkey. Most of the interviewees, as they were born and raised in Istanbul, mentioned that they feel a special connection with the city, and it would be very difficult for them to leave. As the reason for such connection, Zabel remarks on all the labor that she put throughout her life. Nevertheless, because of the increasing oppression in Turkey, she mentions her desire to leave the country which is, she underlines, not because of her ethnic identity.

> I really love Istanbul because my past is here, all my loved ones are here, I know this place, I have worked for here, and I believe that people really love what they work for. I have worked for Istanbul and Istanbul has also worked for me. I was born and raised here. My everything and everyone I know are here. I worked for the university, for high school, for improving myself. The fact that those who govern us make a fool of me so easily really bothers me. I can't stand this, so that's why I'm thinking of leaving. Other than that, I will say it again, it has nothing to do with the national identity.[62]

[62] Ben çünkü İstanbul'u gerçekten çok seviyorum hem geçmişim burada olduğu için hem bütün sevdiklerim burada olduğu için hem bildiğim için hem buraya emek verdiğim için ki insanların emek verdikleri şeyi gerçekten sevdiklerine de inanırım. Ben İstanbul'a emek verdim, İstanbul'da bana emek verdi. Ben burada doğdum, büyüdüm. Her şeyim herkesim burada. Üniversiteye emek vermek liseye emek verdim, kendimi geliştirmeye emek verdim başımızdaki insanların karşıma geçip bu kadar rahat beni aptal yerine koyması benim canımı sıkıyor. Buna dayanamıyorum zaten bu yüzden gitmeyi düşünüyorum yoksa bunu yine söylüyorum milli kimlikle bir alakası yok.

5. CONCLUSION

Discriminatory policies and practices implemented by the Turkish state, paramilitary organizations, and the society at large continue to disrupt Armenians' and other non-Muslim communities' daily life in Turkey. Due to a lack of democratic legislation non-Muslim communities have isolated themselves from public spaces and forced them to perform their cultural rituals and traditions in confined environments. As a result, the Armenian community has struggled for decades to transition from an isolated inner circle to a shared outer circle.

The isolationist behavior of the Armenian community started to change with the patriarchal elections and the establishment of the Agos newspaper in the 1990s. It was during this period that the Armenian Genocide started to catch the public's attention, but the most significant transformation took place in 2007, with the assassination of Hrant Dink. Until this date, the Armenian Genocide is not something that is openly discussed in the Armenian community. Changes in state policies have not resulted in a major change in the status of the Armenians of Turkey and the culture of fear among Armenians persists. Moreover, this persistent fear is felt by Armenians differently depending on the context. Ekmekcioglu contextualizes these contexts by distinguishing them as *in*-side, *mid*-side, and *out*-side.

To elaborate, while the family circle on the 'inside' is somewhat impervious to official power, the mid-side is where negotiations with the state takes place. On the other hand, the outside refers to public or private locations where Armenians interact with the society at large, which also constitutes the space where most of the discriminatory practices take place. The way that interviewees narrated their life stories was fitting with Ekmekcioglu's conceptualization. Young Armenians mentioned that despite silences, they learned what it meant to be an Armenian in Turkey in their familial circles, through the warnings of their parents. In Armenian schools, they learned details regarding their Armenian identity and on the outside, they were exposed to discriminatory behaviors. Interviews also revealed the significance of

gender in this process, as outcomes for male and female interviewees were different.

State policies surrounding the Armenian Genocide, together with subsequent events are aimed at eradicating Armenian traces from public spaces, resulting in gaps in family story transmission. Due to anxiety, parents have avoided discussing the Armenian Genocide with their children, yet this avoidance has made young Armenians aware of their differences. Despite this, the majority of interviewees said their first structured experience with the topic occurred when they were in high school. Because history books include a chapter in which the Genocide is presented in accordance with official historiography under the title of the Armenian question, it has become unavoidable for young Armenians to learn about the subject. This results in inconsistencies between family stories and history textbooks, which form a contradictory zone in the socialization of young Armenians and influence their attitudes. Apart from schools, the Armenian Genocide has been a topic of inquiry for Turkish youth, and young Armenians have often been challenged by their peers. This is linked to the Istanbulite Armenians' disadvantaged situation, which requires them to know, see, hear, and most importantly, respond to and serve the needs of Turkey's majority ethnic community.

Regarding the perceptions of young Armenians on the Armenian Genocide, interviews indicated a wide range of perspectives, some of which were even conflicting. Several interviewees stated that they are uninterested in the events of 1915 and believe that they should be buried. They explain their lack of interest in the subject based on the fact that they live in Turkey and have both Turkish and Armenian acquaintances. This approach is understandable in light of generational disparities. However, the purpose of the young Armenians is not to dismiss the Armenian Genocide or the past, but rather to confront the realities of life in Turkey and the desire to create a new future. Rather than emphasizing the Armenian Genocide on which the Turkish state and society prevent them from engaging in social and political lives, they are attempting to establish a new future by emphasizing other components of Armenian culture. This new sense of Armenianness could be defined as participation in cultural activities, working for the survival of the Armenian language, and incorporating cultural components into daily life. To be clear, this does not imply that young Armenians are unaware of the Armenian Genocide's consequences and significance. Despite their conviction that the perpetrators' grandchildren cannot be held liable for acts they did not commit, all of the interviewees stated that they would still want to receive an apology.

When it comes to the possibility to receive an apology, all interviewees were hopeless. Nonetheless, while they all mention that the denialist policies of the Turkish state

will continue for another hundred years, they still observed a transformation in Turkish society. They claimed that society at large became aware of the presence of Armenians and the Armenian Genocide after the assassination of Hrant Dink. Although the assassination has had a modest influence on Turkish society, it has marked the start of a vital transition for Armenians in Turkey. Several interviewees described the assassination as a watershed moment in their lives which caused a dramatic shift in young Armenians' perceptions. Although they did not know Hrant Dink at the time of his assassination, the subsequent remembrance gatherings and public conversations about the Armenian Genocide have radically altered the way that young Armenians make sense of their Armenianness.

The impact of Hrant Dink's assassination may be explained by young Armenians' understanding of the assassination as a continuation of the Armenian Genocide. Prior to the assassination, the Armenian Genocide was a largely abstract event that young Armenians only learned about through family stories or textbooks. However, following the assassination of Hrant Dink, the Genocide is transformed into a tangible event to which they can refer. To put it another way, before the assassination, the Turkish state, the Armenian community, and society at large used a wide range of control mechanisms measures to regulate young Armenians. They were taught, for example, not to stand out, to keep a low profile, and to avoid discussing their Armenian roots, particularly the Armenian Genocide. However, following the assassination, a dramatic shift occurred in the lives of young Armenians in terms of how they define their Armenianness and how it is reflected in public areas. With the shift, young Armenians began to venture outside of the defined zones they had been instructed to stay in and began to embrace components of Armenian culture. According to many interviewees, the most notable novelty offered by this new sense of Armenianness is related to the public visibility of the Armenian language. Another effect was seen in the process of young Armenians becoming politicized. It was impossible for young Armenians to claim political space before the assassination since their Armenian identity was founded on fear and silence. The presence of such feelings was preventing young Armenians from participating in political settings, as it would force them to discuss the Armenian Genocide at some point. However, as the Armenian Genocide was debated following Dink's assassination, those restrictions began to unravel, which led to the foundation of a new political outlet. In other words, whereas discussing the Armenian Genocide in regard to the events of 1915 was not allowed, discussing the Genocide in relation to the assassination became acceptable. This shift allowed young Armenians to become more involved in politics and, in the case of Nor Zartonk, even start their own organization.

Young Armenians' sense of belonging was inevitably impacted by these experiences

and processes. There were four distinct topics that came forth during the interviews. First, young Armenians' relationships with their homelands; second, their relationships with Istanbul, the city where they were born and nurtured; third, their relationships with Armenia; and finally, their relationships with the region where they hope to have a future. The most crucial concern raised during interviews is that, despite substantial changes in the lives of young Armenians in Turkey, only a small percentage of them envision a future outside of Turkey. As they were born and raised in Istanbul, the majority of the interviewees expressed a strong attachment to the city, saying it would be difficult for them to leave. Nonetheless, due to increased authoritarianism in Turkey, the majority of young Armenians express a wish to flee the country.

The goal of this thesis is to provide a response to the question of what it means to be a young Armenian in Turkey. It looks in depth at the impact of numerous methods undertaken by the Turkish state, Turkish society, and the Armenian community on the process of 'becoming' an Armenian. The thesis pinpointed the significance of various spaces on the formation of young Armenians' subjectivities by following Lerna Ekmekcioglu's conceptualization. One of the most significant outcomes of this research is situating the experiences of young Armenians within Ekmekcioglu's conceptualization which revealed the differentiating extents of young Armenians' perceptions. However, there are points that need improvement in the thesis. The most prominent of these is related to how Armenianness is represented in different geographies. Although I have tried to uncover the stories of young Armenians in Turkey, this groups only constitutes one part of the bigger story. Accordingly, it will be very valuable and complementary to reveal how Armenianness is experienced and how young Armenians perceive it in societies living in different cities of the world and forming the Armenian diaspora.

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APPENDIX A

Table of interviewees' demographics

pseudonym	**age**	**place of birth**	**gender**
Anoush	21	Şişli	F
Karin	21	Şişli	F
Zepour	21	Yeşilköy	F
Sarven	22	Bakırköy	M
Verjin	22	Beyoğlu	F
Rita	22	Canada	F
Masis	22	Şişli	M
Yervant	24	Yeşilköy	M
Toros	27	Beyoğlu	M
Arden	27	Merter	M
Zabel	27	Yeşilköy	F
Tatul	35	Şişli	M