‘Genocide, Diasporic Identity and Activism: The Narratives, Identity and Activism of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians regarding the Recognition of the Deaths of Armenians during the First World War as Genocide’

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on how political recognition of the Armenian genocide constructs and reflects the diasporic identities of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians. For Armenians in the diaspora, commemoration of the genocide and campaigning for genocide recognition is an important marker of identity. For the Turkish government, the Armenian genocide allegations accuse the Ottoman government of an act which is viewed normatively as the ultimate crime against humanity and therefore undermines the foundation of the Turkish republic. Issues of identity are at stake for both groups. This thesis focuses on the relevance of political recognition of the Armenian genocide and the Armenian allegations for Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians. The central research question is: How and why have the Armenian and Turkish diasporas in Australia participated in the argument surrounding the recognition of Armenian deaths by the Ottoman government during World War I as genocide?

The research argues that diasporic groups relate differently to the same hostland based on how they view their diasporic identity and narratives within that identity. It is demonstrated that remembrance of the genocide and fight for genocide recognition is central to the diasporic identity of Armenian-Australians as it gives them an understanding of their dispersion from Armenia and life in Australia. Remembrance of the genocide is actively mobilised by Armenian diasporic institutions and the family to develop the Armenian diasporic identity in second generation Armenian-Australians. Dispersion from Armenia or Armenian communities in the Middle-East and the prioritisation of maintaining the Armenian diasporic identity in Australia impacts on the sense of belonging of Armenian-Australians to Australia. Living in Australia threatens the Armenian diasporic identity with integration into the broader society, which is resisted due to the importance of the Armenian identity based on narratives regarding the genocide. The desire for genocide recognition within Australia links them to their past and the Republic of Armenia, their homeland, and is also used as a means of developing
a sense of belonging to Australia, the hostland. The opposite is true for Turkish-Australians. They do not have a strong diasporic identity due to their sense of belonging to Australia which is developed through Australian notions of multiculturalism. They do not prioritise maintaining their Turkish diasporic identity and view integration and assimilation into broader society as a natural outcome of living in Australia. The Armenian allegations, when raised in Australia and supported by Australian politicians, impact on the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia as it undermines their Turkish identity and ideas of multiculturalism.

This research also demonstrates that diasporic activism in a hostland focused on an international situation with regards to a homeland can impact on the identity of other diasporic groups in the same hostland. Armenian-Australian activism is focused on defending the Republic of Armenia, and Armenian-Australian organisations engage in long distance activism in support of their homeland. The Armenian allegations, if recognised federally in Australia, could result in the formation of a stronger diasporic identity amongst Turkish-Australians due to what is perceived as an attack on their Turkish identity. Turkish-Australian activism against the allegations is focused on defending their sense of belonging to Australia.
Declaration

This thesis contains only sole-authored work, some of which has been published and/or prepared for publication under sole authorship. The bibliographical details of the work and where it appears in the thesis are outlined below.


Acknowledgements

A great number of people assisted me during the process of completing this thesis. This includes emotional and intellectual support, without which I could not have hoped to undertake this project. I’d like to start off by acknowledging the opportunity provided by my academic supervisor, Professor Samina Yasmeen. The Political Science department has also supported me throughout this process, especially Roderic Pitty and Bruce Stone, and I am grateful for their feedback, assistance and ideas; also to Van Ikin for looking over my final draft and assisting me in the completion of the thesis; Linley Hill for her administrative support throughout my UWA career; and Michael Azariadis for providing me with ideas and helping to develop my research skills. I would like to thank the staff at the Centre for Muslim States and Societies, especially Beth, for assisting and encouraging me.

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A number of friends have stood with me throughout the research process. This has especially been the case with colleagues who discussed concepts and ideas with me and
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### Conclusion

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Introduction

Genocide is viewed normatively as the ultimate crime against humanity (Akhavan 2012; May 2010; Tatz 2001; Arel 2007), with the victim group targeted for destruction. The impact on the victim group rarely ends after the final planned death, with the pain carrying on through memories of suffering and the fight for justice. This often revolves around gaining recognition from those accused of committing genocide that they did commit the ultimate crime and through this providing closure to the victims (Sassounian 2010; Anderson 2005; Gewald 2004). This is especially the case for historical massacres which are tagged as genocide and fall outside of the jurisdiction of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention of Genocide as they occurred before it was ratified in 1951. States accused of committing historical genocides often reject the accusations due to the normative significance of committing genocide which paints the perpetrators as being guilty of the ultimate evil and means the state’s history is marred by genocide (Zimmerer 2010; Tatz 2001; Bendle 2010).

There is a growing awareness of the impact of genocide commemoration and fight for genocide recognition on the identity of groups who consider themselves to have been victims of genocide. This includes indigenous communities (Moses 2008; Churchill 1998), groups who were colonised (Gewald 2004), and the impact of the Holocaust on the identity of diasporic Jews (Magid 2012; Herman 1989). A growing area in this regard involves analysing the importance of genocide commemoration and genocide recognition for the identities of diasporic communities (Beachler 2007; Sysyn 1999), who, in some cases, mobilise around genocide remembrance and actively pursue genocide recognition.
One of the most prevalent debates in this area regards the Armenian genocide. Armenians, supported by historians and broader society, argue that the Ottoman government committed genocide against Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This is disputed by the Turkish state, which claims that any Armenian deaths should be attributed to necessary anti-insurgency measures undertaken by the Ottoman government. Activism for genocide recognition is led by the Armenian diaspora and countered by the Turkish state, which actively denies that the Ottoman government committed genocide. The issue of political recognition of the deaths of Armenians as genocide is important to the identity of the Armenian diaspora (Toumani 2004; Herzig & Kurkchiyan 2005) and disputing the genocide allegations is important for the Turkish state. Despite literature which discusses the importance of resisting recognition of the genocide to the Turkish historical narrative (Akçam 2004) and the role played by the Turkish state in suppressing attempts to recognise the genocide, limited research has been conducted on the perceptions of the Turkish diaspora towards recognition of the genocide and the role of this in their identity (Baser 2010). As noted by Akgün (2000) very little is known about the Turkish diasporic identity or activism globally, despite its growth in size and importance in pursuing the interests of Turkey overseas. Additionally, very little is known of the perceptions of the Armenian diaspora towards genocide recognition in countries other than America, Russia and France. With the growth in the understanding of the importance of diasporic influences on genocide recognition (Beachler 2007; Sysyn 1999) and the role genocide remembrance and recognition can play in diasporic identity construction and maintenance (Satzewich 2002), this thesis provides a comparative study of the identity of the Turkish and Armenian diasporas in Australia and their perceptions towards political recognition of the Armenian genocide.

This research focuses on how the issue reflects and constructs the diasporic identities of Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians by analysing their perceptions, narratives and actions in relation to the political recognition of the Armenian genocide. The main research question is: How and why have the Armenian and Turkish diasporas in Australia
participated in the argument surrounding the recognition of Armenian deaths by the Ottoman government during World War I as genocide? The comparative study answers questions such as: what role, if any, do the genocide allegations play in the diasporic identity of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians? What role does the homeland play? Do the two communities interact in any way? Do they respond to each other’s actions? Has one community been more successful than the other community in getting their narrative to be accepted by the wider Australian community? If either of the diasporas are not involved in the debate, why not? Are the issues surrounding the recognition of genocide not important to them, or have they not organised themselves regarding this issue? How does the same hostland influence the diasporic identity and activism of the two groups? What connection do the two diasporas have to their homelands and homeland government with regards to this issue? Do diasporic networks play a role in their identity and activism?

This dissertation does not argue that genocide was committed or not committed. Both cases have been extensively argued elsewhere and are presented in the thesis. This thesis should not be viewed as endorsing either side of the debate. Where possible, the language relevant to the different communities is used. When writing about Armenian-Australians, genocide is spoken of. When writing about Turkish-Australians, the terms ‘Armenian Question’ or ‘Armenian accusations’ are used. The focus of the thesis is on the diasporic identities of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians.

The thesis argues firstly that, diasporic groups relate differently to the same hostland based on their diasporic identity and narratives regarding the importance of identity maintenance. It is demonstrated that remembrance of the Armenian genocide and the fight for genocide recognition is central to the diasporic identity of Armenian-Australians. Genocide remembrance gives them an understanding of their dispersion from Armenia and reasons for being in Australia and it enforces the importance of
maintaining the Armenian diasporic identity. Remembrance of the genocide is actively mobilised by Armenian diasporic institutions and the family as a means of developing the Armenian diasporic identity in second generation Armenian-Australians. The fight for genocide recognition and commemoration of the genocide links Armenian-Australians to their history, diasporic identity, and homeland, the Republic of Armenia. Living in Australia threatens the Armenian diasporic identity with assimilation into the broader society, because Australia challenges the maintenance of the Armenian diasporic identity due to the size of the Armenian-Australian community and the characteristics of Australia as a homeland, including its multicultural nature. Assimilation is resisted due to the importance of the Armenian identity based on narratives regarding the genocide. Turkey’s denial of the genocide is viewed as a continuation of the genocide and keeps the suffering alive. Recognition of the genocide by Turkey is sought for personal, family, community and international reasons, including preventing other genocides. One way in which a sense of belonging is developed to Australia is through fighting for genocide recognition by Australia, as this creates an ‘Armenian space’ within the hostland.

The opposite is true for Turkish-Australians. They do not have a strong diasporic identity due to their sense of belonging to Australia, which is developed through Australian notions of multiculturalism. They view integration and assimilation as a natural outcome of living in Australia. Australia is viewed as the homeland, which encourages them to maintain their Turkish identity while also becoming Australian, creating a sense of responsibility to integrate and not prioritise their Turkish identity above integration. The Armenian allegations reinforce the Turkish identity in Turkish-Australians by highlighting important moral narratives which Turks have about themselves, such as their ability to forgive and move on from the past. The allegations do not result in Turkish-Australians questioning their identity. However, the Armenian allegations, when supported by Australian politicians, impact on the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia. They perceive their Turkish identity as being under attack, which undermines multiculturalism, and develops a stronger Turkish identity in reaction to the allegations.
The second point argued in this thesis is that diasporic activism in a hostland focused on an international situation can impact on the identity of other diasporic groups in the same hostland. Armenian-Australian lobbying for genocide recognition is conducted to support the Republic of Armenia against the perceived threat of Turkish aggression by drawing focus on Turkey’s actions. Genocide recognition is instrumentalised in support of Armenia, and is not undertaken in order to develop a sense of belonging to Australia amongst Australian-Armenians, although this is its natural outcome. However, the Armenian allegations, when supported by Australian politicians, undermine the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia, despite this not being the intent. This results in Turkish-Australian activism against the allegations which is focused on defending their sense of belonging to Australia rather than on defending Turkey.

Research Methodology

This research begins by outlining the broader debates and narratives regarding recognition of the Armenian genocide and the Armenian allegations and locates them in the Australian context. It identifies dominant themes within the narratives of Turks and Armenians globally and highlights the relevance of these themes for the identity of the two groups. The research then explores the dominant themes and perceptions of Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians relating to the Armenian accusations and the importance of recognition of the Armenian genocide to their diasporic identities.

Qualitative interviews with Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians were used as the primary source of data.¹ Snowball sampling techniques were used in recruiting Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians in Perth, Western Australia and in Sydney, 

¹ The research received ethics clearance from the University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee.
New South Wales for the research sample. Snowball sampling is ‘an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases. The process begins by asking well-situated people “Who knows a lot about…? Who should I talk to?” By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger’ (Patton 1990, p. 176). This style of sampling was chosen due to the sensitivity of the topic which meant that recruiting a research sample would be difficult, especially within the Turkish-Australian community. Snowball sampling is an excellent technique for building up a research sample when the research issue is sensitive (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). In order to gain high quality data, both Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians who were recognised as knowledgeable were approached. As noted in the above quote by Patton, snowball sampling allows for the recruitment of informants with high-levels on knowledge on a particular topic. Aware of the biases which can be created when snowball sampling is employed, techniques were employed to ensure that a broad representation of both diasporas was interviewed (Welch 1975; Heckathorn 2002). This included asking respondents to put me in touch with people, either Turkish or Armenian, who may have a different perspective on the issue.

In order to avoid recruitment bias, interviewees were asked to only introduce me to a maximum of two other individuals. This meant that the interview cohorts were not formed from the same networks which would likely have similar ideas and perceptions (Johnston & Sabin 2010, p. 39). This step helped to reduce bias in this regard. Asking members of the interview cohort to refer me to others personally by first contacting the potential interviewee countered possible bias. It meant that people within both communities who were not accessible by ‘outsiders’ could be accessed. Peers recruiting peers is important in allowing individuals ‘to exert social influence where [the researcher] likely has none’ (Johnston & Sabin 2010, p. 39).
One of the challenges I faced with the research was that some of the stories were emotive. Through my interview process I was subjected to some emotive stories and the challenge and limitation that I was faced with as a researcher was how to remain neutral in order to enable the data to inform my research. While I initially considered this as undermining the objectivity of the research, I applied Patton’s (2002, p. 48) view of objectivity which states ‘[t]raditionally, social scientists have been warned to stay distant from those they studied to maintain “objectivity”. But that kind of detachment can limit ones openness to an understanding of the very nature of what one is studying, especially where meaning and emotion are part of the phenomenon’. I was able to distance myself as a researcher and maintain a degree of objectivity, while understanding and interpreting the meaning and emotion of the interviewees.

An important part of remaining objective within the research was not focusing on whether genocide was committed or not, but on the impact of the historical discussion on narratives, perceptions and actions of Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians. This research angle enabled me to remain objective and not function within a paradigm of genocide recognition or genocide denial, but rather to focus on the identity of the interviewees, and how the genocide or genocide allegations impacted on this.

Interviews were conducted in Perth and Sydney as Western Australia has not had any activism regarding political genocide recognition, whereas New South Wales has in 1997 when the state Parliament commemorated the Armenian genocide. Sydney was deemed a fertile ground for understanding the perceptions of the Turkish-Australian community as they were more likely to have encountered the issue on a political level. As shall be illustrated below, contact with the issue for Turkish-Australians often only occurs when the subject is raised by the Armenian-Australian community, and this has been done most regularly in Sydney. Both communities have significant populations accompanied by high levels of community organisation in Sydney. This is not the case for either
community in Perth, although Turkish-Australians do have community groups in Perth, and Armenian-Australians do not. This multi-sited research allowed comparison between two locations where there have been different levels of engagement with the Armenian allegations. The impact of genocide recognition on Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians within Australia was compared between a state which has not recognised the Armenian genocide and a state which has. The significance of larger and more organised communities on the diasporic identity of Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians was also compared. Slightly different approaches were taken in each community when recruiting a research cohort.

Contacts within the Armenian community in Perth were originally made through Armenian friends who were asked if they knew of individuals within the Armenian-Australian community who might be interested in being interviewed. My Armenian-Australian contacts approached members of the Armenian-Australian community in Perth to ask if they would be interested in being involved in the research. The contacts within the Armenian-Australian community in Perth provided their contacts with my information so that they could branch out to me either on their own or through my original contacts. I did therefore not contact members of the Armenian-Australian community without their explicit consent. This was an important ethical consideration. Two letters were sent out to possible participants in the study. The first outlined the purpose of the research and the second focused on the interview process. It was requested that the contacts pass the information sheets onto members of the Armenian-Australian community in Perth who might be interested in being interviewed, or the information sheets were emailed directly to potential interviewees after they had contacted the researcher. Requests were also made after interviews if people might know of other Armenians who might be interested in taking part in the research.
A similar technique was used in recruiting members of the Armenian community in Sydney (with initial contacts in the Sydney community provided by Armenian-Australians in Perth). The study cohort was further enlarged using the same methods in Sydney. Leaders of the Armenian-Australian community in Sydney were approached to be interviewed through Armenian contacts. This included the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-Australia), the largest and most relevant Armenian-Australian public affairs group.

The purpose of interviewing community leaders differed from interviewing members of the Armenian-Australian community. Interviews with the Armenian-Australian community were aimed at understanding their perceptions towards their diasporic identity in Australia; the importance of maintaining this identity; their understanding of what happened to Armenians in Ottoman Turkey during the First World War; the impact of this (if any) on their Armenian diasporic identity in Australia; and their perceptions and feelings towards genocide recognition in Australia and elsewhere. The aim was to explore the narratives and perceptions of first generation Armenian-Australians, whether these were passed down to second generation Armenian-Australians, and to what extent these were accepted. This was important for understanding how members of the Armenian-Australian community learn about their diasporic identity and the genocide. Additionally, the interviews focused on understanding the impact that Australia as the hostland has on the Armenian diasporic identity, and whether genocide recognition is important in this.

Armenian community leaders were interviewed to understand to what extent they engage in genocide recognition political activism and how they viewed the Armenian-Australian diasporic identity. ANC-Australia was interviewed as the organisation has been the most active Armenian-Australian organisation in advocating for political genocide recognition and leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church were interviewed.
due to the importance of the Church within the community. The Republic of Armenia has no representation in Australia; therefore no Armenian government representatives were interviewed. Two representatives of ANC-Australia were interviewed and one from the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Interviews were conducted with eight members of the Armenian-Australian community in Perth and ten in Sydney. The interview sample included seven women and eleven men. Nine of the research sample was born in Australia, and nine outside of Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>First Generation Australian</th>
<th>Second Generation Australian</th>
<th>Born in Armenia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Perth</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The interview cohort is not large enough to be representative of the Armenian-Australian population, but it does shed light on some of the perceptions and ideas prevalent within the community. The interview cohort is referred to when Armenian-Australians are discussed below, rather than the whole Armenian-Australian community. ANC-Australia and the Armenian Apostolic Church will be referred to when discussing the perceptions of their representatives.

Lofland and Lofland (1995, p. 38) argue that recruiting a research sample through a well-regarded contact can be a crucial way of gaining trust within a community and in lowering barriers which might be present. This approach was adopted vis-à-vis the Turkish-Australian interview cohort. Due to the controversial and political nature of the
research, especially for the Turkish-Australian community, original attempts at recruitment in Perth were largely unsuccessful. Upon recommendation of Turkish-Australian contacts, I contacted the Turkish Honorary Consul for Western Australia based in Perth, as a way of gaining the trust of the Turkish-Australian community. As a senior and well respected member of the community in Perth he facilitated contact with Turkish-Australians, who provided additional contacts. The Turkish Honorary Consul also facilitated contact with different Turkish-Australian organisations in Perth to ensure that a variety of viewpoints were covered. Recruitment of a research sample in Sydney followed a similar pattern.

Three contacts within the Turkish-Australian community in Sydney who had been involved in campaigning against the Armenian allegations were provided after the Turkish Honorary Consul contacted the Turkish Consulate in Sydney. Through these and other contacts provide by Turkish-Australians in Perth, a research cohort in Sydney was formed. Additionally, some Turkish-Australian contacts were provided by a member of the Armenian-Australian community who had, along with a member of the Turkish-Australian community in Sydney, formed a group which aimed to open dialogue between Turks and Armenians in Australia regarding genocide recognition. This was done to ensure I gained as many opinions as possible.

The interviews focused on understanding the Turkish-Australian diasporic identity and the role of the Armenian allegations and political recognition in this. This included whether political recognition within Australia at a state level has or at a Federal level would impact on their sense of belonging; whether they counter the Armenian allegations in Australia; their connection to Turkey; if they engage in long-distance activism in support of Turkey; whether the Turkish government mobilises Turkish-Armenians to counter the allegations; and if living in Australia exposes Turkish-
Australians to the Armenian allegations and allows them to form their own conclusions free of the narratives told by the Turkish state.

A total of nineteen interviews were conducted with Turkish-Australians, including ten in Perth and nine in Sydney. Three women and seven men were interviewed in Perth and one woman and eight men in Sydney. Interviews were conducted with two second generation Turkish-Australians in Perth and three in Sydney, with the rest being first generation Turkish-Australians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>First Generation Australian</th>
<th>Second Generation Australian</th>
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<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>3</td>
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The interview cohort is not large enough to be representative of the Turkish-Australian population, but it does shed light on some of the perceptions and ideas prevalent within the community. The interview cohort is referred to when Turkish-Australians are discussed below, rather than the whole Turkish-Australian community. In addition to interviewing members of the Turkish-Australian community, a representative of the Turkish Consulate in Sydney was interviewed, as well as the Turkish Ambassador in Canberra. It was hoped that these interviews would shed light on the extent to which the Turkish government is involved in fighting the Armenian allegations and whether any cooperation is undertaken between the Turkish government and the Turkish-Australian community. This research has resulted in developing the arguments as detailed below:
Chapter 1 reviews the literature on diaspora, diasporic identity and discusses genocide, genocide recognition and genocide denial. It highlights diasporic identity creation, the relationships between the homeland, hostland and transnational networks within the diaspora as key areas of analysis and discusses transnational political activism. This is followed by defining genocide, demonstrating the importance placed on genocide recognition and outrage over genocide denial, the role genocide recognition plays in the creation of identity and why genocide recognition is opposed by those accused of the crime.

Chapter 2 focuses on the relevance of the Armenian genocide for the Armenian diaspora outside of Australia, the Armenian genocide narrative and the Armenian diaspora’s activism for genocide recognition. It demonstrates that the genocide narrative accuses the Ottoman government of committing genocide against Ottoman-Armenians under the guise of the First World War. Memory of the Armenian genocide forms a constitutive part of the Armenian diasporic identity, and campaigning for political recognition is an important point of mobilisation for Armenians in the diaspora. Political activism has placed the Armenian diaspora in conflict with the Republic of Armenia due to the difference of priorities between Armenia and the diaspora.

Chapter 3 analyses why and how the Turkish government has countered the allegations of genocide and the extent to which they have tried and been able to mobilise Turkish communities around the world to campaign against the allegations. It demonstrates that the Turkish government owns the Turkish historical narrative and counters the genocide narrative as it undermines the Turkish state and key government institutions such as the army. The Turkish government has countered the genocide narrative internationally through engaging with academics, especially in America, to assist in creating and disseminating the Turkish historical narrative. They have also used diplomatic tools as a
means of challenging states which recognise the Armenian genocide and have attempted to mobilise the Turkish diaspora to act on their behalf.

Chapter 4 discusses the Armenian-Australian diasporic identity and the connection of Armenian-Australians to Australia and Armenian communities outside of Australia. It demonstrates that the genocide forms a constitutive part of the diasporic identity of Armenian-Australians as it gives context to life in Australia, highlights the hard-rock nature of Armenians, and gives Armenian-Australians the responsibility to maintain their Armenian identity. Australia as a hostland is viewed positively by some of the cohort, as it has allowed them to be Armenian without the conflict of previous homelands in the Middle-East. For others, Australia directly challenges their Armenian identity with assimilation due to the importance attributed to maintaining the identity. This results in a desire for a larger space in Australia within which to be Armenian and a longing for previous hostlands in the Middle-East where it was easier to maintain the Armenian identity.

Chapter 5 analyses the Armenian-Australian perceptions towards the genocide, recognition by Turkey and Australia and how it impacts on their sense of belonging to Australia. It argues that the family is central to mobilising the Armenian genocide as a source of identity and for learning about the genocide. Failure by Turkey to recognise the Armenian genocide has a lasting impact on Armenian-Australians and also keeps the genocide alive by not allowing closure. Recognition by Turkey is desired for the individual, family, nation and to prevent future genocides. Recognition by Australia provides a greater sense of belonging for Armenian-Australians to Australia. Armenian-Australians highlight the relationship between Australian and Armenian history as a way of developing a sense of belonging to Australia.
Chapter 6 discusses Turkish-Australian perceptions towards the Armenian allegations. It highlights that the majority of the interview cohort only engage with the Armenian Question when it is raised through Armenian diasporic lobbying in Australia or internationally. The allegations are denied based on ideas of Ottoman multiculturalism and tolerance; the idea that external powers manipulated the Armenians against the Ottoman government; and that Armenian deaths were the result of anti-insurgency tactics. Political genocide recognition is viewed as manipulative, especially by European powers involved in militarising Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian accusations and genocide recognition by governments does not lead to the interview cohort questioning the past, but instead reinforces positive ideas Turkish-Australians have about themselves such as the Turkish ability to forgive and move on from the past.

Chapter 7 demonstrates that Turkish-Australians feel a sense of belonging to Australia based on multiculturalism which allows them to maintain aspects of their Turkish identity while integrating into Australian society. They view Turkey as the motherland where their Turkish culture was born and Australia as the homeland where they practice their Turkish culture. They prioritise integrating into the broader Australian culture and view contributing to Australia as important for migrant groups. Turkish-Australians view the Armenian allegations within Australia as divisive and likely to lead to acrimony between ethnic groups. Additionally, political recognition of the allegations would impact on their sense of belonging to Australia as they would feel as if their Turkish identity is under attack by the Australian government, rather than feeling free to embrace it.

Chapter 8 demonstrates that Armenian-Australian activism is aimed at defending the Republic of Armenia from the perceived threat of Turkey and Pan-Turanism and has been successful due to the ability of Armenian-Australian lobbying organisations to frame the debate. They employ international arguments about the importance of
genocide recognition and connect the Armenian genocide to Australian history to gain support from Australian politicians. They have gained genocide recognition in New South Wales in 1997 and South Australia in 2009.

Chapter 9 shows that Turkish-Australian activism against the accusations in Australia has been limited, however when it has taken place, it has been to defend the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia and reactive to Armenian-Australian activism. The reasons for limited activism are found in Turkish-Australian perceptions regarding the manipulative nature of political genocide recognition and the importance of benefiting the whole of Australia rather than only Turkish-Australians through political activism. While Turkish-Australians undertake activism to defend their sense of belonging to Australia, the Turkish government undertakes activism to defend Turkey, meaning the two groups have different views on reasons for activism which hinders cooperation. When activism has taken place, it has been reactive to Armenian-Australian activism meaning that it is limited in its ability to persuade policy makers. The Turkish government has tried to employ diplomatic efforts to counter the Armenian allegations within Australia, but the Turkish government has not been able to influence the debate within Australia due to the majority of Armenian activism being at a state rather than Federal level.
Chapter 1

Literature Review

Introduction

To understand the impact of the Armenian allegations on and the importance of recognition of the Armenian genocide for the Turkish-Australian and Armenian-Australian diasporic identities, it is necessary to locate the discussion within the literature. This chapter discusses the creation of a diasporic identity. This includes how it is created, how the diasporic identity will be analysed and transnational activism. Additionally, the impact of genocide on identity construction will be discussed.

Diaspora

On a basic level, diaspora refers to persons who are at ‘home away from home’, ‘here and there’ (Vertovec 1999) or ‘at home abroad’ (Sheffer 2003). It refers to dispersed persons who maintain an affinity to their ‘land van herkomst’ (country of origin) (Anderson 1992, p. 7), their homeland. This connection influences their behaviour, identity and actions in the country in which they have settled, their hostland, and towards their homeland. The root of the word ‘diaspora’ can be found in ancient Greek, translated to mean ‘the scattering of seeds’ and is used in the Old Testament of the Bible to refer to the Jewish nation which was exiled from Israel. Traditionally, diaspora has referred almost exclusively to the Jewish diaspora (see Safran 2005), although the term is also applied to the Armenian and Greek communities dispersed from their homelands, with these three groups viewed as ‘prototype’ diasporas. Safran (2004, p.
11) argues that the Jewish experience of diaspora is the most unique experience, and that the concept should only be used with reference to the Jewish diaspora.

The study of diasporas has gone through different phases. The term has traditionally lacked definitional clarity and often been used in the limited context of prototype diasporas (Tölölyan 1991). Due to the importance of the Jewish diasporic experience to the development of the concept, the study of diasporas has typically focused around a group of people violently dispersed from a homeland, and their memories, emotional and material ties (Schumann 2007, p. 12). This means that diasporas have traditionally been seen as forming from groups of people who have been violently or forcefully dispersed from a homeland, or a nation-state, rather than focusing on religious groups or groups united by a different shared identity, although this understanding has begun to change.

The concept has gained broad usage in a number of different academic fields, including Political Science, Anthropology and Sociology. The use of the concept has proliferated to include any group of people ‘that is to some extent dispersed in space’ (Brubaker 2005, p. 3). Tölölyan (1991, p. 4) argues that the concept ‘now shares a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community’. Its meaning has further extended past ethno-national groups, to include linguistic groups (the Francophone and Anglophone diasporas (Mendelsohn 2007)), religious groups (the Catholic or Muslim diaspora), groups without a homeland (the Roma diaspora), continental groups (the African diaspora), social groups (the homosexual diaspora (Gopinath 2005)) and more unique approaches, such as adopted girls from China (Miller-Loessi & Kilic 2001). As noted by Brubaker (2005), the idea of transnationalism and diaspora, has been in vogue for the last 10 years, resulting in the widespread use of the term.
This thesis uses Sheffer’s (2003, p. 11) concept of ‘ethno-national diasporas’, which states that ethno-national diasporas are:

dispersed groups whose members regard themselves as being participants in nations that have common ethnic and national traits, identities and affinities...Namely, either consciously or subconsciously, members of such groups feel and think that although certain segments of the nation are dispersed in many host countries, nevertheless they are still affiliated with a cohesive ethno-national entity.

There are a number of definitions of diaspora, with points of cross-reference. Safran’s definition, set in the tradition of the prototype diaspora, is narrow, referring to the Jewish diaspora and prioritises the ethno-national identity and link between the diaspora and homeland. Safran’s discussion of diaspora states that: “Expatriate minority communities” are diasporas when:

- they have dispersed from a ‘center’ to two or more ‘peripheral’ places;
- the diaspora maintain a collective ‘memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland’;
- they struggle to integrate into the hostland as they ‘believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host country’;
- they have a desire to return to that homeland sometime in the future;
- they are committed to supporting, maintaining and defending their homeland or to restoring their homeland; and
• their identity and group consciousness is defined through their ongoing relationship to their homeland’ (Safran 1991, pp. 83-84).

Safran’s definition is a typology of what constitutes a diaspora, and although all components need not be present for a group to constitute a diaspora, a number of them must be. Safran’s typology emphasises the link between the diaspora and their homeland, highlighted by the desire of homeland return and active attempts at restoring or defending the homeland. Because Safran’s definition is focused on the Jewish diasporic experience it omits a large amount of migrant groups from being a diaspora due to his focus on violent dispersal. There are a few groups who can be considered as constituting a diaspora within this definition, including the ‘Armenian, Maghrebi, Turkish, Palestinian, Cuban, Greek and perhaps Chinese diasporas’ (Safran 1991, p. 84).

Sheffer (1986, p. 3) simply refers to ‘modern diasporas’ as ‘ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands’. The concept of ‘modern diasporas’ breaks from the focus on prototype diasporas. He does not emphasise a reason for dispersion, highlighting that diasporas are made up of groups with ‘migrant origins’ and are ‘ethnic’ minorities. This does not restrict the reasons for dispersion to violence or forced migration and highlights that members of a diaspora have minority status within the hostland. He also notes that the links between the diaspora and ‘their homelands’ are ‘sentimental and material’ meaning the connection of the diaspora to their homeland can be tangible, consisting of providing funds, regular trips to the homeland or an emotional attachment without contact or material links.

Milton Esman (1996, p. 316) defines diaspora as ‘a minority ethnic group of migrant origin which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin, either because of social exclusion, internal cohesion or other geo-political factors. It is never
assimilated into the whole society, but in time, develops a diasporic consciousness, which carries out a collective sharing of space with others’. The maintenance of ‘sentimental or material links with its land of origin’ ties in with Sheffer’s (1986) definition. This point is also made by Butler (2001, p. 191) and Tölölyan (1996), who distinguish ‘between a symbolic ethnic identity of “being” and a more active “diaspora” identity requiring involvement’. Esman’s (1996) definition lists some of the reasons for the creation of a diasporic identity and the existence of diasporic communities. These include ‘social exclusion, internal cohesion or other geo-political factors’. A diasporic identity does not develop in all migrant groups, with other factors playing a role in assisting the development of a diasporic identity. He also highlights that the identity develops ‘in time’ meaning that a diasporic identity does not exist as soon as a migrant arrives in a new country, but develops with time spent away from the homeland.

Shain and Barth (2003, p. 452) follow a similar track to Esman, defining diaspora:

as a people with a common origin who reside, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their ethnic or religious homeland - whether that homeland is real or symbolic, independent or under foreign control. Diaspora members identify themselves, or are identified by others—inside and outside their homeland—as part of the homeland's national community, and as such are often called upon to participate, or are entangled, in homeland-related affairs.

That the homeland can ‘be real or symbolic, independent or under foreign control’ is important. The idea of a symbolic homeland is applicable to groups such as the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, who base their identity around commitment to the imagined and symbolic homeland of Tamil Eelam, or the Sikh diaspora who based their diasporic
identity on a longing for the creation of Khalistan, an imagined homeland in India. Diasporas also participate in ‘homeland-related affairs’. Members of a diaspora are not divorced from issues within their homeland and participate in issues relevant to their homeland. Shain and Barth’s (2003) definition argues that members of ethnic groups belong to a diaspora if they ‘are identified by others...as part of the homeland’s national community’ meaning people can be considered as part of a diaspora even if they do not recognise this themselves. This is in contrast to the majority of other definitions which consider people part of a diaspora if they themselves are aware of this. This ties in with Cohen (2008) who argues that it is important to consider the emic (participants’ view) versus the etic (observers’ view) point of view, and the influence this can have when studying diasporas. Cohen (2008, p. 15) suggests that while it is important to consider the emic point of view, not every group who claims to be a diaspora is one.

Brubaker (2005, p. 5-7) discusses the three core elements which constitute a diaspora. The first is dispersion. This is the ‘most straightforward’ and can mean traumatic dispersion, but should also be understood as ‘any kind of dispersion in space’ (Brubaker 2005, p. 5). The second is an orientation towards a real or imagined homeland as ‘an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty’ (Brubaker 2005, p.5). The final is ‘boundary-maintenance’, which ‘involve[s] the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis a host society (or societies)’ (Brubaker 2005, p. 5). A diaspora must, to varying degrees, maintain cultural and ethnic boundaries with other communities within the hostland.

Butler (2001) adds to the criteria presented by Brubaker (2005) by arguing that dispersal ‘must be to a minimum of two destinations’ (Butler 2001, p. 192). This is central, and necessitates internal networks linking the diaspora in different hostlands. Butler (2001, p. 192) agrees with Brubaker that the diaspora must have ‘some relationship to an actual or imagined homeland’ and that this relationship ‘provides the foundation from
which diasporan identity may develop’. Butler’s third feature is a ‘self-awareness of the group’s identity’ (Brubaker 2001, p. 192), which is in contrast to the definition discussed by Shain and Barth (2003). The diasporic identity requires a conscious awareness of the existence of that identity which ‘binds the displaced peoples not only to the homeland but to each other as well’ (Butler 2001, p. 192).

Butler (2001) adds that the diasporic identity needs to exist for two or more generations, or be in existence in at least the second generation past migration. This is a multi-generational understanding of diaspora and the identity being passed on to later generations. This separates the diasporic identity from a migrant identity, and migrant behaviour from diasporic behaviour. Cohen (2008) also makes this point, by quoting Marientras ‘that time has to pass’ before we can know that any community that has migrated ‘is really a diaspora’. Cohen further states that ‘[a] strong tie to the past or a block to assimilation in the present and future must exist in order to permit a diasporic consciousness to emerge or be retained’. The diasporic identity is also dynamic and fluid (Shuval 2000, p. 50) meaning a group of migrants can ‘lose it, regain it, change it and so on, over an undefined period of time’ (Shuval 2000, p. 50). In this way, ‘ongoing change is an integral part of the scheme’ (Shuval 2000, p. 50).

This thesis considers a diaspora as a group of migrants who have dispersed from a homeland, real or imagined, with the reason for dispersal not limited to violent or forced dispersal, to two or more locations. The group maintains a link, whether it is sentimental, material or both, to the homeland, with this continuing into the second generation and beyond, and those adopting such an identity are aware of it.

Two diverging and contrasting views exist regarding why and how a diaspora forms: primordial or essentialist approaches and constructionist or situationalist theories. The
first tradition suggests connections between individuals within a diaspora are based on ‘primordial, instrumental, and mythical/psychological elements’ and that the identity forms as a result of shared cultural and social norms and values (Sheffer 2003, p. 11). Koinova (2007, p. 6) argues that in this viewpoint, diasporas are primordial and a natural extension of nationalism and migration, with diasporas existing as ‘a monolithic body, a group related to the people in the home country by affinity ties; in and common descent’ (Koinova 2007). This understanding places the concept of diaspora clearly in relation to a homeland and views the formation of a diaspora as natural and a consequence of migration. It suggests that the creation of a diaspora is a result of people from the same ethnic group crossing borders. The diasporic identity is a natural extension of a national or ethnic identity, and provides continuity of the homeland identity and remains rigid, providing a strict cultural structure.

The second view employs constructionist approaches suggesting that diasporas are transnational ‘imagined communities’ which are ‘discursively constructed or mobilized’ (Adamson 2008) with the construction of the identity assisted by the processes of globalisation. It allows for the creation and mobilisation of new identities, with ‘groups that are classified as immigrant groups, ethnic groups, or minorities in their state of residence…redefin[ing] themselves as belonging to a larger transnational community that exists beyond the state by taking up the label of “diaspora”’ (Adamson 2008, p. 7). It highlights the ‘processes of strategic social construction’ and views diasporic identities as a ‘means of asserting political identity’ (Adamson 2008, p. 7). Sökefeld (2006) suggests that diasporas should be looked at as ‘transnational imagined communities’ and as a ‘special case of ethnicity’ and ‘identity becomes an issue of movement and mobilisation’ (Sökefeld 2006, p. 267). Sökefeld (2006) highlights the importance of ‘imaginations and discourses of shared identity [which] distinguishes diaspora communities from other kinds of transnational social formations’ but notes that ‘[i]deas and identities may be held quite differently by different people’ allowing for diversity within a diasporic group. Anderson (1992, pp. 8-9) uses an example to highlight the
constructionist approach, by discussing a ‘miserable Peloponnesian gastarbeiter’ sitting in a room in Stuttgart with a ‘handsome Lufthansa travel poster of the Parthenon’ on his wall. The Pantheon ‘which he may well never have seen with his own eyes, is not a private family memory, but a mass-produced sign for a “Greek identity” which only Stuttgart has encouraged him to assume’ (Anderson 1992).

The Homeland, Hostland and Diaspora Nexus

The formulation of a diasporic identity and diasporic political activism is shaped by three significant relationships:

(a) The relationship between the diaspora and the homeland;
(b) The relationship between the diaspora and the hostland;
(c) The relationship between different groups within the diaspora and different parts of the diaspora which are geographically disconnected from each other, with ties between the different parts.

As noted by Shuval (2000, pp. 48-49), the homeland, hostland and connections within the diaspora need to be considered on a ‘bifocal or trifocal level’ and ‘form the principle components of diaspora theory’. Sheffer (1986, p. 1) refers to the relationship between the homeland, diaspora and host societies as a ‘complex triadic relation’.

The homeland is critical to the identity creation and maintenance of an ethno-national diaspora; ‘it functions as the constituting basis of collective diasporan identity’ (Butler 2001, p. 201), with connection to a location and the meaning embedded in the location playing a central role. The connection can be to an imagined homeland, as is the case with the Tamil diaspora and Tamil Eelam, or the Sikh Diaspora and Khalistan; it can be to a homeland which existed historically but has since ceased to exist, as was the case with
the Jewish diaspora before the creation of Israel in 1948, and the Armenian diaspora before the independence of Armenia in 1991; or it can be to a state.

The notion of homeland return is important for the relationship between the diaspora and homeland. While few members of a diaspora might return to the homeland (as can be seen following the creation of Israel and independence of Armenia), an ‘idealization of return to the homeland’ (Rios & Adiv 2010) is important for the maintenance of identity. The homeland is viewed as ‘the true, ideal home and as the place to which one would (or should), eventually return’ (Brubaker 2005).

Homelands often engage with their diasporas. This takes a variety of different forms. Some homelands send political leaders to communicate and build ties with the diasporas, some give ‘their’ diaspora a seat in parliaments (Portes 2003), others allow members of the diaspora to reclaim citizenship (Portes 2003), and there have also been examples of governments actively consulting with the diaspora in order to involve the diaspora, and sponsoring ‘rallies on national days, student exchanges, sporting events, and cultural performances’ (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, p. 766). However, as noted by Østergaard-Nielsen (2003), it is not always possible for homelands to form relationships with diasporas, especially after communities have been neglected for a number of years. The benefits provided by diasporan communities means that despite difficulties in rekindling relations it can be beneficial to homelands to form connections with the diaspora. These include remittance payments to family members or friends (Itzigshon 2000), assisting in infrastructure development, and ‘using immigrant communities to promote economic and foreign policy goals’ in the hostland (Bauböck 2003, p. 720).

The hostland is one the primary agents in the creation and formation of the diasporic identity (Butler 2001). Butler (2001, p. 207) argues that ‘[d]iasporan analysis raises such
questions as how the host society affects the diasporan community’s ability to interact
with the homeland, with other diaspora groups, and with the hostland majority. Another
issue for diasporan analysis is the role of hostlands in shaping diasporan identity. The
degree to which a hostland encourages migrant communities to integrate, or the level of
perceived discrimination experienced by migrants can influence the strength of a
diasporic identity. If hostlands do not encourage integration, or if migrant communities
perceive discrimination, this can result in the migrant community becoming insular,
encouraging boundary maintenance, which can be passed on to later generations. Butler
(2001, p. 207) states ‘blanket discrimination based on membership in a “black” race was
a vital factor in forging solidarity between diverse African diasporan communities’. Shuval
(2000, pp. 46-47) argues ‘[a]ttitudes of a diaspora group to its host may be a
function of the host’s policy with regard to the homeland. This may express itself in
voting patterns and other forms of political support or non-support by the diaspora
group of the host’.

On the other end of the spectrum, a country or society which encourages a sense of
belonging can create an environment where a diasporic identity can be created. The
level of integration and length of time is not a measurement of the levels of political
activity engaged in by diasporas. As noted by Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003) in
America, for example, migrants who have acquired US citizenship are more likely to be
actively engaged within their diasporic group than non-citizens.

An essential part of the formation and maintenance of a diaspora and unique for
diasporic behaviour in comparison to migrant behaviour is the connections, links and
ties which bind different branches or groups of the diaspora around the world. These
links and ties are formed independent of the homeland. Butler (2001, p. 207) states ‘the
emergence of these relationships is the seminal moment in the transformation of
migratory groups to diasporas…[and] is vital in forging diasporan consciousness,
institutions, and networks’. She (2001, p. 207) further argues ‘if a dispersed population does not maintain ties among its members, it is difficult to cast it as an operative diaspora. This does not mean that the group might never develop diaspora identity’. Networks within the diaspora are central to a diasporic consciousness as ‘it necessarily includes a simultaneous recognition of the unique community existing between members of the diaspora group’ (Butler 2001, p. 208). Additionally, ‘[a]ny study of the ties that bind diasporas has the potential to yield insight into why formal transnational organizations may exist in some cases, or whether particular cultural practices serve to cement diasporan identification’ (Butler 2001, p. 207).

**Long-Distance Nationalism**

As noted above, the diasporic identity is dynamic, open to change, and constantly developing. This means that a part of a diaspora might mobilise around different issues in different hostlands and also mobilise around different issues to their ethnic kin in the homeland. The diasporic identity can often differ from the identity of the diaspora’s ethnic kin in the homeland, resulting in diasporas acting in ways which can be detrimental to their homeland. This idea was coined by Benedict Anderson (1992) who noted the importance that dispersion has on the political actions of diasporic populations. Drawing on the example of a Sikh living in Canada, he discusses the role that this Sikh has played in the movement for *Khalistan*, noting not only that the Sikh engages politically in the movement for *Khalistan* ‘through E-mail’ (Anderson 1992, p. 11), but also that this political action is performed with regards to a country ‘in which he does not intend to live, where he pays no taxes, where he cannot be arrested, where he will not be brought before the courts and where he does not vote: in effect, a politics without responsibility or accountability’ (Anderson 1992, p. 11). While a lot of the literature discussing Anderson’s concept of long-distance nationalism has focused on the role that diasporas play in supporting conflict (Demmers 2002 for example), Anderson
was sure to explain that the concept should not only be understood in this regard. Instead he notes that there are ‘millions of other long-distance ethno-nationalists who are by no means necessarily committed to fanaticism and violence...[b]ut, in different degrees, they share something with extremists; they live their real politics long-distance, without accountability’. They are not like ‘true exiles awaiting the circumstances of their triumphal return to the heimat, but émigrés who have no serious intention of going back to a home, which, as time passes, more and more serves as a phantom bedrock for an embattled metropolitan ethnic community’ (Anderson 1992, p. 12).

Central to the activities and political activism undertaken by diasporas in relation to their homeland, is the notion of transnational behaviour and transnational activism. The theory of diaspora falls within the broader category of transnationalism and it is important to look at the manners in which diasporas behave politically, what influences their behaviour, and who the major role players within their political and social behaviour are. As noted by Itzigsohn et al. (1999), many migrants, including members of diasporas, are part of a ‘transnational social field’ (Itzigsohn et al. 1999, p. 317) which is made up of ‘social interactions and exchanges that transcend political and geographical boundaries of one nation’ with members of diasporas having varying degrees of interaction with transnationalism. This means that diasporas, despite being physically located in a particular geographical area (the hostland), transcend the physical, political and social boundaries of the hostland, by interacting not only with their homeland (the geographical location to which they have an attachment) but also with parts of the diaspora which have formed and exist in other areas. While they are physically, politically and socially located in one area, their political, social and geographical behaviour, understandings, perceptions and exchanges transcend that social, political, and geographical area.
Itzigsohn et al. (1999) suggest that the degrees of interaction of the diaspora with other geographical, political and social boundaries take place between two opposite poles with transnational practices taking place which are ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’, with these representing ‘two poles along a continuum of different forms of transnational practices’ (Itzigsohn et al. 1999, p. 317). The difference between ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’ can be found in the levels of institutionalisation of the various practices or behaviours, the amount of people and degree of involvement and the level of ‘movement of people within the transnational geographical space’ (Itzigsohn et al. 1999, p. 317). Guarnizo (2000) makes a similar distinction, but terms the two opposite parts of the spectrum as ‘core’ and ‘expanded’ transnationalism. ‘Core’ activities refer to those activities which form an integral part of everyday life for members of the diaspora and ‘expanded’ transnational behaviours refer to those behaviours which are less frequent and more occasional.

While members of a diaspora, in order to be considered as part of the diaspora, must interact with their diasporic identity to some degree, there are different ways and degrees in which members of the same diaspora interact with the diasporic identity. The minority of a diaspora will take part in ‘core’ or ‘narrow’ interactions of the diasporic identity, with the rest of the diaspora doing so to different degrees somewhere between those who actively partake in core or narrow interactions, to those who limit their interaction with the diasporic identity to narrow or expanded interactions, at the other end of the scale. This point is made in another way by Butler (2001, p. 191) and also Tölölyan (1996), both of whom make a distinction ‘between a symbolic ethnic identity of ‘being’ and a more active ‘diaspora’ identity requiring involvement’. This means that within a diasporan population, there will be those who actively embrace the diasporan identity and through this actively partake in diasporic life and also actively partake in the diasporic social and cultural activities and political activism, while, again on a continuum, others, at the opposite end of the scale, will passively view themselves as being a member of the diaspora, and maintaining the ethno-national identity of their homeland, without actively partaking in diasporic social and cultural activities or taking part in diasporic activism.
Genocide

Genocide remembrance and the fight for genocide recognition can play an important role in the construction of identity, especially in diasporic groups, due to the normative significance of genocide. Genocide will be defined below and its normative, moral and political relevance and the importance of genocide recognition versus genocide denial will be highlighted. Due to the normative significance of the concept of genocide, those
accused of committing genocide are likely to deny such allegations, even if the allegations refer to historical events. For the victims, the failure to recognise past events as genocide is considered to be genocide denial. Denying that events constituted genocide is viewed as continuing the genocide and as the final phase of genocide, even if the events are not legally acknowledged as having been genocide.

The word genocide was created and originally defined by a Hungarian Jewish jurist named Raphael Lemkin after he witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust. The term was coined and defined in direct response to the atrocities committed by Hitler against European Jews and other people groups during the Second World War. The shock towards the Holocaust was wide, with Winston Churchill describing the actions of the Nazis as ‘a crime without a name’ (Elder 2005, p. 470). Lemkin saw the dangers of the perpetrators of the Holocaust and similar crimes not being brought to account and noted ‘[i]nternational premeditated murder, as planned and practiced against the peoples of Europe by Hitler, must be brought within the scope and jurisdiction of future international law. This is a major problem facing the coming world’ (Lemkin 1945). This close connection between the Holocaust and the creation of the concept of genocide has had an impact on how genocide is viewed and added to the normative importance of the concept of genocide.

The Holocaust is viewed as the ultimate example of genocide. Every genocide or example of mass killing is compared to the Holocaust, and is more seriously viewed in accordance with the extent to which it resembles the Holocaust. While genocide has a strong normative meaning, the Holocaust is the strongest example of genocide, and therefore further influences the concept of genocide. Isaksson (2010) argues that the ‘Holocaust is used as the “lens” through which other mass atrocities are interpreted and compared’, and as ‘the standard to measure good and evil’. He (Isaksson 2010) further notes that a ‘Holocaust and genocide discourse’ exists ‘in which the different
interpretations of the Holocaust enable the international community’s usages of the Holocaust as a political tool’. Isaksson (2010) discusses two examples, namely those of the Cambodian and Rwandan genocides; however his analysis could also be extended to a number of other examples, including those of historical genocide recognition, where the Holocaust paradigm is also invoked. The understanding of the Holocaust serves as the framework through which other events are understood and interpreted. As noted by Eliezer Livneh (1972, p. 2) ‘the more we feel the Holocaust the more we will understand present events; the more we remember its horrors, the more we will succeed in withstanding the horror around us’.

There are three distinctive features of the concept of genocide which set it apart from other crimes against humanity. The first significant difference is that it is an organised and premeditated policy of group destruction. The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention) (UN General Assembly 1948) refers to the idea of organisation and premeditation as ‘the intent to destroy’ (emphasis added), while Fein (1990) calls it ‘sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity’ and Charny (1994) refers to it as ‘mass killing of a substantial numbers of human beings, when not in the course of military action’. The purpose and end-point of genocide is to destroy a group of people, with individuals purposefully targeted in an orchestrated manner based on their membership of a group. The destruction of a group of people is not the accidental by-product of conflict or government policy, but rather its purpose.

Due to the organised nature of genocide, the victims of genocide are targeted by a group who has some degree of power over them. This could be a government or representatives of the state, although this does not have to be the case. The important point to note is that the victim group is targeted ‘regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim’ (Fein 1990), and ‘whose vulnerability is a major factor
contributing to the decision for genocide’ (Dadrian 1975). Although it is not a necessity, due to its organised nature, genocide often employs the state bureaucracy as a means of implementing policies aimed at destroying the victim group.

Genocidal intent can be argued through the activities of the state bureaucracy. The use of the state bureaucracy can be seen in the Holocaust, for example, where ‘step by painful step, law by law, and edict by edict, one of the most assimilated, educated and economically well-off Jewish communities in Europe were deprived of rights, wealth and power, and this process helped enable the subsequent Holocaust’ (Alvarez 2001, p. 49). Additionally, it can be seen in the Al-Anfal campaign of genocide committed in 1988 by Saddam Hussein’s government against the Kurds in Iraq, in which four million pages (over fourteen tons) of Iraqi government documents were collected detailing the policy of genocide (Totten & Batrop 2008, p. 14). The organised and premeditated destruction of a people group places genocide in its own category.

Genocide is targeted against individuals based on their membership of a particular group, rather than for any other reason. In originally defining genocide, Lemkin (1947, p. 147) noted ‘[t]he acts are directed against groups, as such, and individuals are selected for destruction only because they belong to those groups’ (emphasis added). The important phrase in this idea is ‘as such’, with the Genocide Convention (UN General Assembly 1948) using exactly the same phrase. This means that groups are not targeted based on their actions, but exclusively on their membership of the targeted group.

Through the normative value of genocide, the deaths of a group of people, related to each other through membership of that group, is considered to be more serious than if a same amount of people were killed, but with no particular group targeted. As noted by May (2010, pp. 6-7) ‘[i]f genocide is the crime of crimes because genocide is alone in
requiring that it be proved that there was an intention to destroy a group, then there must be something wrong about aiming at the destruction of a group that makes otherwise wrongful acts of killing, torturing, and raping even worse. Conceptually, destroying a group must be different from merely killing the group’s members. And normatively, this difference must be significant if genocide is to be the crime of crimes’. Schabas (2000, p. 6) illustrates the normative aspect of a group being targeted and argues that genocide is not the equivalent of what homicide is to human life, but is far more serious as it is ‘directed against the entire international community rather than the individual’.

When discussing the types of groups who can be victims of genocide, the Genocide Convention (UN General Assembly 1948) specifically mentions ‘a national, ethnic, racial or religious group’ whereas other definitions are far less specific referring to ‘a minority group’ (Dadrian 1975), ‘substantial numbers of human beings...of an avowed enemy’ (Charny 1994) or ‘a collectivity’ (Fein 1993). The idea of group membership suggested by the Genocide Convention is based on biological ties, with two of the five acts of genocide referring to the biological targeting of a people group, alongside the physical destruction of the group. Points (d) and (e) for example, refer to ‘[i]mposing measures intended to prevent births within the group’ and ‘[f]orcibly transferring children of the group to another group’ (UN General Assembly 1948). This idea is apparent in other definitions which refer to genocide as targeting ‘the progeny’ of a group of people, with this point strongly made by the root of the word genocide being ‘genos’ referring to ‘clan’, ‘race’ or ‘origin’. Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) highlight the importance of the perpetrators classification in relation to group membership by arguing the targeted ‘group and membership...are defined by the perpetrator’.

While the Genocide Convention (UN General Assembly 1948) is only focused on the physical destruction of a group of people, the destruction of a group’s culture is also
viewed as an aspect of genocide. This idea was originally advocated by Lemkin who argued that genocide signifies ‘a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves’ (Lemkin 1944, p. 79). Culture was viewed as one of the essential foundations of life. He suggested that the objectives of a genocidal plan ‘would be the disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups’ (Lemkin 1944, p. 79).

The concept of genocide functions within a number of different spaces. The first and most significant area is as a legal concept, as defined in the Genocide Convention (UN General Assembly 1948), which entered into force in 1951. The Genocide Convention has been used to prosecute a number of people who were involved in planning and implementing policies of genocide, with the most recent legal application used to prosecute those involved in genocides committed in Rwanda and Srebrenica.

Alongside the legal understanding, a normative understanding of genocide has also developed which has impacted on how past, present and future massacres are understood and framed, with incidents which are declared to be genocide, viewed more seriously than crimes which are not viewed as having been examples of genocide. A reflection of the normative and political significance of the concept of genocide can be seen in the manner in which the concept is used by broader society to signify suffering and destruction, although outside of the context of the majority of genocide definitions and the Genocide Convention. These examples can be found in any number of places, where the normative significance of genocide is invoked to gain attention and highlight the seriousness of a matter. More partisan members of the pro-life lobby call abortion genocide, arguing that governments and society are complicit in committing genocide by
allowing abortion to take place (Abortion No 2013). The HIV/Aids epidemic was referred to as genocide (Quinn 1997), with the term again used recently with reference to the Aids epidemic in South Africa (News24 2012). A more obscure reference, highlighting the normative value and impact of genocide, can be seen in the description of the effect of the Palm Oil Crisis on orang-utans in Indonesia, which environmental organisations have described as genocide (Leach 2013). It is, however, not only in populist examples where the normative significance of genocide is highlighted. The significance of the concept of genocide is initially addressed within the Genocide Convention, which refers to genocide ‘an odious scourge’ (UN General Assembly 1948). Samantha Power (2003) entitled her Pulitzer Prize winning book on America’s responses to genocide: *A Problem from Hell.* Similarly, Romeo Dallaire’s (2003) 2 book on events during the Rwandan genocide is entitled: *Shake Hands with the Devil.* Genocide is considered to be the ultimate example of evil that humans can do to other humans. Tatz (2001, p. 20) calls genocide ‘the ultimate word in our lexicon’.

Prevention of genocide is tied explicitly into the Genocide Convention, with the preamble noting: ‘Being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge’ (UN General Assembly 1948). Article 1 states: ‘The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish’ (emphasis added) (UN General Assembly 1948). The idea of liberating mankind from genocide is central to the understanding of genocide, with the field of genocide studies and academic study of genocide created and undertaken with an inherent approach of activism. The study and understanding of genocide is seen as being critical to ensure that genocide is prevented. Ending and preventing the ‘odious scourge’ is especially important as the international community is painted as having been bystanders during the Holocaust and they therefore have a responsibility to prevent genocide in the future.

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2 Dallaire was the officer in charge of United Nation Peacekeepers during the Rwandan genocide in 1994.
Part of this responsibility is *recognising* past events as genocide, as shall be demonstrated below.

**Types of Genocide Recognition**

Catic (2008) argues that genocide recognition is sought in three areas: scholarly, political and juridical. Scholarly recognition is not necessarily specific to the Genocide Convention with academics employing their own understandings and conceptualisations of genocide. There are a number of massacres and historical events which are widely considered as genocides by the academic community, included historical genocides, genocides of the 20th Century which occurred before the coining of the word genocide, and a number after the Genocide Convention came into existence. Some of the massacres which have received wide scholarly recognition (although debate still remains in some cases) as genocide during the 20th Century include: the genocide of the Herero in Namibia by the Germans in 1904 (Zimmerer 2010); the genocide of Armenians (and the Assyrians and Greeks) by the Ottoman government between 1915 and 1923 (Dadrian 2004); the famine genocide of the Ukrainians by Soviet Russia, also referred to as the *Holodomor*, in 1933 (Sysyn 1999); the Holocaust between 1941-1945, alongside the genocide of the *Roma-Sinti* by the Nazis; genocide in Cambodia committed by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979; Saddam Hussain’s *Al-Anfal* campaign in Kurdistan between 1987 and 1988; the Serbian genocide of Bosnian Muslims in the former Yugoslavia at Srebrenica between 1992 and 1995; and the Rwandan genocide of Tutsis by Hutus in 1994. Scholarly recognition has traditionally been activist in nature, in order to prevent genocide from occurring again. This activist approach of academia to preventing genocide is reflected in the name of the academic journal – *The Journal for the Study and Prevention of Genocide*. As noted by Stone (2010, p. 3) ‘the study of genocide has been dominated since the 1980s...by political scientists in the North American liberal tradition. Their aim...was to prevent genocide, and to this end they
sought to analyse past occurrences of the phenomenon in order to draw up typologies and this to prove “early-warning” signals of likely genocidal situations in the world’.

While academic recognition might not be undertaken for political reasons, it does play a role within attempts at gaining political recognition. The first link between academic and political recognition is through evidence that an example of mass death or mass murder constituted genocide. Academic support in this regard is critical as it provides support and credibility to political attempts at genocide recognition. Secondly, recognition by academic bodies, such as the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), is an important step in gaining support and credibility in attempts at having an event politically recognised as genocide.

At the centre of debates within the academic community regarding genocide, is the issue of historiography, and how history is used, understood and interpreted. It is, in many ways, a difficult concept to use within a historical analysis of events, resulting in academic debate taking place even amongst those who recognise that certain events amounted to genocide. Debates often focus on when exactly the genocide started, from when genocidal intent was evident. As noted by Bloxham and Göçek (2010):

Part of the interpretative problem is that ‘genocide’ is more a legal term than an historical one, designed for the ex post factor judgments of the courtroom rather than the historian’s attempt to understand events as they develop, that is, out of non-genocidal or latently murderous situations. In this sense, the use of ‘genocide’ by a historian is a classic example of the past examined teleologically.
While it is the role of historians to unearth whether particular events constituted genocide, this is complicated due to the *ad hoc* manner with which the study of events within the scope of genocide takes place. While genocide studies might be a growing discipline with academia, the ‘growth in literature does not apply equally to all cases of genocide’ (Stone 2010, p. 1). Furthermore, the applicability of the concept of genocide to historical study of past events is complex, and not without problems. Even on widely recognised and accepted examples of genocide, debate remains as to when exactly a particular genocide started, or who exactly was involved. Is it enough, for example, that one or two historians recognise an event as genocide? Or does there need to be broad consensus? How does interest levels in different genocides and the resultant differences in research influence acceptance of particular events as genocide?

Political recognition ‘refers to recognition by political actors, primarily states but also non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations’ (Catic 2008, p. 5). This includes recognition by any political body, including governments, international organisations, regional organisations, human rights organisations and state, provincial or local governments in particular countries. Organisations from which genocide recognition is sought can include religious organisations, such as the World Council of Churches; regional organisations, such as the European Parliament; international organisations such as the United Nations; and human rights organisations. The ultimate goal of political recognition is to obtain recognition from the perpetrator state (Catic 2008). Recognition by governments lends support to claims that an event constituted genocide and places pressure on the perpetrator state or the legal descendent of that state to recognise their guilt.

The third type of genocide recognition is juridical (Catic 2008, p. 6), and ‘refers to recognition by relevant juridical bodies, such as ad hoc international tribunals like the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International
Victimhood and the Instrumentalisation of Genocide

There are three groups involved in the process of genocide recognition - ‘the victims, the perpetrators and the international community’ (Catic 2008, p. 8). In trying to understand why the victim group fights for genocide recognition, Catic (2008) argues that genocide recognition, because it is the ultimate moral evil and therefore serves as the ultimate tool of victimhood, is instrumentalised and used as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. She (Catic 2008) suggests that ‘[o]fficial recognition of genocide has thus emerged as the central component of the “politics of entitlement” in which moral claims associated with genocide against a given group are invoked to strengthen that group’s claims to a particular resource’. Using Horowitz’s (2000) concept of ‘politics of entitlement’ she argues that ‘[i]n a way, what underlies initiatives for official recognition of genocide is an implicit claim-right: a permission to pursue a particular goal, plus a correlative obligation, usually of the “international community” to assist the state or a community in pursuit of that particular goal’. While claims of genocide on a basic level serve the purpose of ‘redeeming the victims and survivors from oblivion and from vanishing from the annals of history’, the ‘most important aspect of initiatives seeking genocide recognition is the argument of corrective justice embodied in those initiatives, regardless of whether such initiatives are designed to explicitly seek retributive and/or restorative justice’ (Catic 2008, p. 8).
The perpetrators are the natural targets of genocide recognition. Catic (2008, p. 8) highlights that inherent in genocide recognition is that perpetrators should be punished for their actions and where relevant, pay some form of compensation to the victims. Receiving recognition from the perpetrator state is an important part of restorative justice. Finkel (2010) highlights the negative role that this can play in relationships between the victim group and the perpetrator state. He notes ‘that the “export of guilt”…usually provokes an angry reaction from the state accused of committing the genocide, triggering a spiral of mutual accusations, diplomatic conflicts and history battles, which have the potential to escalate into real wars’ (Finkel 2010, p. 56).

Finkel (2010) argues that framing past events as genocide can play a critical role in the construction of identity and also, similar to Catic (2008), serves an additional role in the international arena. Using examples of states from the former Soviet Union, he (Finkel 2010) suggests that genocide recognition should be seen as part of a larger strategy of ‘moralizing and historicising’ politics. This results in ‘an active and coordinated involvement of political elites in the creation of desired historical myths and narratives. After being constructed, these narratives and myths become powerful instruments in the state-building process, provide the state with internal and external legitimacy, and consolidate and mobilise the public’ (Finkel 2010, p. 53). This historical policy is conducted from the victim’s position, as ‘it explicitly requires using past suffering not only as an internally mobilizing force but also for the “export of guilt” into the international arena as a means of achieving international legitimacy and creating a powerful bargaining chip to be used in various international interactions’ (Finkel 2010, p. 54). One way in which this is done, is through recognition of genocide, or as Finkel (2010, p. 54) calls it ‘the construction of “national Holocausts”’. Finkel (2010) follows a similar idea to Catic (2008) and those ideas discussed above regarding the importance of using the idea of genocide. He discusses the ‘normative and practical role’ that the concept plays in politics. He argues that instrumentalising the concept of genocide is ‘a very efficient mechanism to brush aside demands to confront injustices and crimes
committed by members of the “suffering nation”’. Furthermore, ‘if the campaign for victimhood is the weapon of the weak, genocide claims are the silver bullet’ (Finkel 2010, p. 55).

Both Finkel and Catic relate their analysis to the wider international community. For Finkel (2010, p. 56) the victim group aims to gain political genocide recognition through active campaigning as a means of ‘exporting guilt’ and even when these active campaigns are not successful, ‘the international community nonetheless has no other choice but to address the genocide claims, thus making them part and parcel of the global discourse on that state’. Catic (2008, p. 8) argues that the involvement of the international community in genocide recognition is more explicit, in that it serves ‘as the reminder to the world – the bystanders – of what was done to the victims by the perpetrators, accompanied by the indifference, or even hostility, of the larger world’. This aids in pushing for restorative justice through the genocide claims as ‘the international community...behaved shamefully during the genocide, [and therefore] should assist the group in obtaining that to which it is entitled’ (Catic 2008, p. 8). This extends Catic’s (2008) idea of the ‘politics of entitlement’, illustrating the role that the international community plays within genocide recognition being used instrumentally. Quoting Zertal, Catic (2008, p. 8) uses the example of the Holocaust, and how Israel has used this as a means of defining their own security needs – ‘the Holocaust and its appropriated survivors had become the supreme sanction for the deployment of Israeli power, its interpreters, apologists, and justifiers’. As noted by Confino (2005, p. 47) ‘[i]n many respects, ours is an era of memory and repentance...The philosophical, moral, financial, and judicial aspects of reparations are a measure of our “age of apology”’. This has created an environment which emphasises the important of repentance and reparations.
Diasporas play an important role in fighting for genocide recognition in the hostland. This is often the case where the diaspora was created as a result of a traumatic event, which they consider to have constituted genocide. The traumatic event can serve as a boundary maintainer and also as an identity marker, with the recognition as genocide of the traumatic event playing an important role in the creation of a diasporic identity.

An important example of a diaspora placing pressure on a country to recognise massacres as genocide from outside of the country where the deaths occurred is the Ukrainian diaspora in countries such as Australia, America and Canada who have traditionally been mobilised around the original reason for their dispersion, the Holodomor – a man-made famine which took place in 1932-1933 in the Ukrainian SSR and claimed the lives of between 7 and 10 million Ukrainians, under the command and organisation of Stalin. There are a number of reasons why this issue has been used as the core discourse around which the Ukrainian diaspora’s identity has been mobilised. The Holodomor was the reason for the original dispersion of Ukrainians to other countries. This allowed for the creation of a collective memory based around the traumatic dispersion caused by the Holodomor (Sysyn 1999). The diaspora viewed it as their responsibility to maintain the memory of the Holodomor and to educate people in their hostlands about the crimes that had been committed against the Ukrainians by Stalinist Russia. The area in which the mobilisation of the diaspora around the Holodomor has been most evident has been in attempts to have the Holodomor recognised by governments and commemorated as genocide, often bringing the diaspora into conflict with Ukraine. Sysyn (1999) discusses the critical role of the Ukrainian diaspora in promoting the study of the Ukrainian famine between 1932-1933 in America and Canada. He highlights how for many years the study of the famine could only be conducted outside of Ukraine due to censorship within Ukraine from the Communist government. He (Sysyn 1999) notes the negative effect the genocide had on the psyche of the Ukrainian diaspora who had suffered during the genocide and managed to escape the famine, and the degree to which recognition and remembrance
of the genocide became a critical part of diasporic life and identity, playing a more important role in the lives of Ukrainians in the diaspora, than those in Ukraine. Satzewich (2002) also concentrates on the Ukrainian diaspora and their dedication to furthering awareness and recognition of the famine as genocide. He focuses on particular parts of diasporic activism by Ukrainians such as occasions where the diaspora has lobbied governments, and campaigned for the recognition of the famine as genocide in America, Canada and Ukraine. The importance and centrality to identity of the recognition of the genocide to Ukrainians has brought them into conflict with other diasporas. One example is the argument between Ukrainians and Jews in Canada over the establishment of a Holocaust museum focusing specifically on that genocide, as opposed to a genocide museum commemorating all genocides of the 20th Century (Satzewich 2002, p. 185).

The lack of diasporic influence and activism is cited by Beachler (2007) as one of the reasons why the Bangladeshi genocide has not received more public acknowledgement or greater levels of academic studies. Although the Bangladeshi diaspora is relatively large in countries such as the United Kingdom, a lack of university education and organisation within the diaspora has resulted in the recognition of the 1971 Genocide not being pursued. Beachler’s (2007) argument has its merits. However it fails to recognise other important aspects of the Bangladeshi genocide and the influence on Bangladeshi independence. Despite the atrocities endured by the Bengalis, they were successful in their struggle to gain independence from Pakistan. The three million Bengalis who died during the War for Independence are celebrated and recognised as martyrs for freedom, rather than lacking recognition and requiring remembrance as victims of genocide. As illustrated by the Ukrainian diaspora, remembering, mourning and fighting for the recognition of a particular genocide can play an important role in the identity of a diaspora, especially those who were partly formed through the atrocities endured in their homelands.
Genocide Denial

The opposite of genocide recognition is genocide denial which is seen as an extension or continuation of genocide. Stanton (1998) sees genocide denial as the eighth stage of genocide, alongside polarisation, preparation and extermination. He notes that ‘[d]enial is the eighth stage that always follows a genocide. It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres...[The perpetrators] deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims’ (Stanton 1998). While Stanton is referring to genocides which are still taking place, or have recently occurred, the same ideas are evident when discussing historic denials. Israel Charny (1992) does not see a difference between denial and genocide, noting that it is a ‘part of it’ and further stating that ‘denials literally celebrate genocidal violence and in the process suggestively call for renewed massacres – of the same people or of others’ (Charny 2001). Deborah Lipstadt (1993, p. 179) views genocide denial as an ‘assault on truth’ while others have called those who deny that a genocide occurred ‘assassins of memory’ (Vidal-Naquet 1992), and ‘desecraters of memory’ (Kaye 1997).

Literature on genocide denial takes a normative, ethical and activist approach. Genocide denial is seen as ‘unabashed attempts to dominate the minds of people by dictatorial fiat and, metaphorically, “murders” historical truth and collective memory’ (Charny 2003, p. 11). Because of this, there is ‘an urgent need for a concerted battle against denials which will penetrate the inner mind-structures and propaganda techniques of deniers so as to combat their explicit and implicit strategies more effectively’ (Charny 2003, p. 11). The proactive and activist approach is further highlighted in the conclusion of Charny’s article (2003, p. 28) which is subtitled: ‘Planning counterattacks of denials’.
Genocide recognition does not carry with it any responsibility on the state accused of having committed genocide to pay reparations or engage in restorative justice to the victims. While reparations are often demanded through societal pressure, the absence of legal recognition means there is no responsibility to pay reparations. Instead, it is social pressure and pressure from the international community which might result in the perpetrator state engaging in restorative justice. A more important point with regards to reluctance to recognise past events as genocide by the perpetrator state is the impact that it can have on views of the perpetrator state’s history and historical identity.

The first example of this can be seen in the debate surrounding the recognition of the Herero genocide by the German government. There were a number of reasons why the German government, academics and the public were reluctant to engage with whether the deaths of Herero tribe people during the beginning of the 20th Century in Namibia constituted genocide. Germany has a painful historical connection to genocide through the Holocaust, and the chance of a connection between the Holocaust and an earlier episode of genocide created a number of varying debates within German society. One of these included whether the Holocaust was a unique occurrence, without German historical context, or if it could be understood within the context of Germany’s history. A German academic presented a thesis analysing the ‘Herero and Nama case as an important link between the less bureaucratised incidents of mass violence in the colonial context and the extremely bureaucratised violence of Nazism’ (Zimmerer 2010, p. 336). There were two reasons why this caused problems within Germany. As explained by Zimmerer (2010), German history has generally not had to face up to its colonial past in the same way as a number of previous colonial powers have had to and it is thus viewed as largely peaceful, with the German authorities considered to have been good-natured and respectful of those living in their colonies. The idea, therefore, that genocide was committed by the German government in their colonial past challenged the ‘idyllic image of benevolent German colonialism’ (Zimmerer 2010, p. 337). The second area which the interpretation of German history attacked was the German understanding of
the Holocaust as a unique event. It influenced it in two ways. Firstly, because a number of people viewed the Holocaust as unique, they attempted to avoid any comparison to the Holocaust or to discover the Holocaust’s roots and viewed such attempts as trivialisation of the Holocaust. The second group who take exception to categorisations of the deaths of Nama and Herero as genocide were those who have a positive view of German history, which they did not want ‘contaminated by establishing precursors to the crimes that were to come’ (Zimmerer 2010, p. 337). Tagging an historical event as genocide in Germany creates debates far beyond history, which influence and are influenced by German national honour and historical perceptions. Germany’s refusal to recognise the deaths as genocide is viewed as genocide denial.

Another example where the suggestion that historical actions may have constituted genocide has been met with opposition for reasons of historical identity, rather that historicity, can be found in Australia. The issue of whether genocide was committed against Australia’s Indigenous inhabitants, both by British colonial powers, and after Federation in 1901 through Australian government policies during the 20th Century, known as the ‘Stolen Generation’, takes place within broader debates about Australia’s past and what it says about Australia as a nation. The History Wars debate the interpretation of Australia’s history since the arrival of Europeans in 1788, and especially in relation to the impact of British colonisation on Australia’s Aboriginal population. Accusations of genocide, amongst other negative views of Australian history, is considered as ‘Black Armband History’ which only, in the words of John Howard, a former Australian Prime Minister ‘reflects a belief that most Australian history since 1788 has been little more than a disgraceful story of imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism and other intellectual forms of discrimination’ (Mark, 2009). Interwoven within this is the idea that Australia does not need to apologise for its history and that focus on the negative parts of Australia’s history is not necessary as it overlooks Australian achievements. Tatz (2003, pp. 67-68) takes this idea further, with specific reference to
the reluctance of Australian historians tagging the deaths of Australia’s Indigenous population as genocide, stating:

Are they ignorant of genocide theory and practice? Or simply reluctant to taint ‘the land of the fair go’, the ‘lucky country’, with so heinous and disgracing a label? Australians appreciate only the filmic scenes, the by-now conventional scenes, of historical and present-day slaughter, where genocide means bulldozed corpses at Belsen, or serried rows of Cambodian skulls, or panga-wielding Hutu in pursuit of Tutsi victims, or ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the former Yugoslavia. As Australians see it, we can’t be connected to, or with, the stereotypes of Swastika-wearing SS psychopaths, or crazed black tribal Africans.

This highlights the link that the concept of genocide has with the Holocaust, and genocide in Rwanda. The normative value of the concept of genocide makes it difficult for people to acknowledge that their country might be guilty of a historic genocide. The idea of an accusation of genocide soiling Australia’s past is further illustrated by Bendle (2010), who argues: ‘It is difficult to imagine a more horrendous accusation that could be made against a country than that its history is rooted in genocide and that every generation - past, present, and future - are forever and irredeemably complicit in this primal atrocity’.

Despite a number of scholars suggesting that Australia is guilty of genocide (Moses 2008; Tatz 2003), there has not been a proper engagement with the issue of whether the deaths of Indigenous people in Australia constitute genocide, although the Australian government did apologise to Indigenous people for past crimes committed against them. This did not, however, involve the use of the word ‘genocide’ at any point. What is
apparent is that any attempts to claim that the deaths of Indigenous people in Australia’s history did constitute genocide would be met with strong resistance based on the perceived judgment that it would have on how Australia’s national identity is framed.

Due to the moral significance and normative value of the concept, there are many attempts by sufferers of past atrocities to retrospectively tag massacres as genocide. For the victims of historical massacres, the tagging of their atrocities as genocide gives them the ultimate recognition of their suffering, and condemns the perpetrators of the events to the ultimate moral judgment. The alleged perpetrators often challenge the accusations due to what the accusations say about the country’s past and present.
Chapter 2

The Armenian Genocide Narrative and Activism

Introduction

Two completely separate narratives have developed regarding the deaths of Armenians during the First World War. At its most basic level, this separation is based on the relevance of the concept of genocide to the deaths of Armenians and what the application of the concept of genocide means to the victims and says about the perpetrator. The first narrative is that of the Armenians (this will be referred to as the ‘genocide narrative’), the victim group, and argues that genocide was committed by the Ottoman government against the Armenian population during the First World War. The narrative says that Armenians in the Ottoman state were innocent, vulnerable and purposefully targeted by the Ottoman government for destruction, and that this destruction was violent, intentional, and blood-thirsty. The actions of the Ottoman government are framed and argued as having been an example of genocide – clearly planned and intentionally aimed at the destruction of the Armenian population within the Ottoman Empire. This chapter highlights the constitutive role this narrative plays in the identity of the Armenian diaspora and how it fuels their diasporic political activism.

The Genocide Narrative

The Armenian genocide narrative articulates that the Ottoman government is guilty of committing genocide and that this guilt is established by Armenian and non-Armenian sources. The narrative highlights the cruelty of the Ottoman government, in torturing
and killing Armenians, while also destroying any proof of the existence of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire by destroying Armenian culture buildings and artefacts, including churches and schools. An important part of the genocide narrative is the failure of European powers to punish the Ottoman government. This failure, as well as the ongoing failure of Turkey and other governments to recognise the deaths as genocide creates a vacuum of justice which has allowed other genocides, including the Holocaust, to occur. Genocide recognition by other governments and the Turkish government is critical for preventing further genocides.

Armenian diasporic sources have played the central role in the genocide narrative. External powers witnessed the Armenian deaths and considered the Ottoman government to be guilty of actions which would have been called genocide had the concept existed at that time. From the beginning of the implementation of the genocidal plan by the Ottoman government, information regarding the suffering of the Armenians was published in newspapers around the world, including in Australia. The newspaper reports highlighted the cruelty of the Ottoman government and the horrific situations endured by Ottoman-Armenians. Kateb (2003) argues that despite genocide not having been conceptualised, it is clear from the language used in newspaper articles that genocide was committed against Armenians. Phrases such as “destroying a nation”, “race extermination”, “policy of extermination”, [and] “wiping out the Armenian nation” (Kateb 2003, p. III) are viewed as synonyms for genocide. Politicians at the time also recognised the Ottoman actions as aiming to destroy the Armenian nation. Winston Churchill (1929, p. 405), for example, wrote: ‘In 1915 the Turkish government began and ruthlessly carried out the infamous general massacre and deportation of Armenians in Asia Minor...There is no reasonable doubt that this crime was planned and executed for political reasons’ and also referred to the Armenian deaths as a ‘holocaust’. Missionaries based within the Ottoman Empire (Moranian 1992), European diplomats, including Germans who were supported by the Ottoman Empire during the First World War (Gust 2005), and Allied soldiers based within the Ottoman Empire (Bryce & Toynbee 2005) also
witnessed the atrocities. This includes Australian soldiers who were prisoners-of-war and witnessed Armenian deaths and desecration of Armenian churches, cultural buildings and monuments (AHSA 2011). One important account is from the American ambassador stationed in the Ottoman Empire during the genocide, Henry Morgenthau, who wrote about what he witnessed and his interaction with Ottoman officials. He noted (1918):

The real purpose of the deportation was robbery and destruction; it really represented a new method of massacre. When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact.

The Ottoman government subjugated minority groups in the Ottoman Empire generally, and the Armenians specifically. The Armenian genocide which took place from 1915-1923 needs to be viewed in the context of the Ottoman government’s history of discrimination against Armenians and other minority groups and the massacre of Armenians which began in 1894 and culminated in the Armenian genocide.

The genocide narrative considers the land which the Armenians occupied within the Ottoman Empire as the Armenian ancestral and traditional homeland rather than part of the Ottoman Empire. The narrative does not consider Armenians to be citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Rather, the Armenians had traditionally lived on the land for nearly 3,000 years and had a strong historical and cultural connection to the area. The Ottoman Turks conquered the Armenian homeland and Cilicia at the beginning of the 16th century (Adalian 2012a), unjustly claiming land which did not belong to them and unsettling the
ancient culture of the Armenians and their traditional society, as can be seen on the map below (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2012).

The Ottoman government imposed their way of life and their rules on Armenians, restricting what they were able to do. Armenian culture and religion was repressed, and Armenians, alongside other minorities, were discriminated against and subjugated to racist policies. As noted by Adalian (2013, p. 117) ‘the Ottomans imposed a strictly hierarchical social system that subordinated non-Muslims as second-class subjects deprived of basic rights’. This reduced Armenians and other non-Muslim minorities, including Greeks and Jews, to second class citizens. One way in which this happened was through the Millet taxation system which required Christian minority groups to pay extra taxes to maintain Christianity and communal autonomy (Adalian 2013).

The Ottoman government massacred Armenians throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire. The massacres accelerated as the Ottoman Empire began to decline towards the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. While the historical massacres
did not amount to genocide, they were ‘genocidal massacres’ aimed at controlling the Armenian population. As noted by Adalian (2012a):

To firmly secure and perpetuate Turkish rule in the remaining territories of the Ottoman state, Abdul-Hamid [the Ottoman Sultan] initiated a program of demographic and political consolidation through the mass slaughter of vast numbers of Armenians beginning in 1884. By so doing he also restricted the economic role of the Armenians...The Hamadian policies were applied with regularity over the course of the next thirty years.

The genocide was well orchestrated and planned with special cruelty saved for women and children. Within the history of discrimination, racism and massacres against Armenians, the Ottoman government decided to launch a systematic campaign to annihilate 2.5 million Armenians living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. This had been the intent of the Ottoman government for a number of years and the chaos of the First World War provided the perfect cover for this. During 1914, before the beginning of the First World War which started later in that year, plans were implemented which were meant to break the power of the Armenians and remove their capacity to defend themselves.

During 1914 and the early months of 1915, Armenian shops, stores, churches and other buildings were looted, vandalised and destroyed. Turkish soldiers were garrisoned in Armenian schools and churches in certain Armenian areas, such as the Sivas Province, and Turkish soldiers were placed in the Christian districts of various cities. All Armenian men between the ages of 20 and 45, then 15-20 and finally 45-60 were conscripted into the Turkish army with the purpose of rendering the Armenian population defenceless.
Armenian conscripts were ‘used as pack animals for the transport of military equipment’ (Dadrian 2004, p. 221). Laws were established which required all Armenians to give up their weapons, including knives, and other Armenian possessions, such as carts, horses and any other modes of transport were confiscated under the guise of military supplies (Dadrian 2004, p. 221). Irregular forces were established by the Special Organisation (an Ottoman government department), filled with criminals and armed by the Ottoman government. They were ordered to terrorise and target members of the Armenian population, alongside the targeted killings of Armenian leaders (Dadrian 1993). There were cases of notable Armenians or Armenian soldiers being publicly executed to serve as a warning and create an environment of fear amongst Armenians. In addition to this, Armenians were confronted by food shortages and the spread of disease was rife.

The genocide officially started on the 24th April 1915, when the Ottoman government arrested, deported and executed 250 Armenian political, intellectual and religious leaders. This set in motion the wide-scale deportation of Armenian women and children and the remaining men. This was done through the Temporary Law on Deportation which was enacted on May 29 1915. The law ‘authorized the Commanders of Armies, Army Corps, Divisions, and Commandants of local garrisons to order the deportation of population clusters on suspicion of espionage, treason and on military necessity...This vague but sweeping authorization resulted in the deportation of the bulk of Turkey’s Armenian population’ (Dadrian 2004, pp. 221-222). Armenian women and children were particularly vulnerable and unable to defend themselves against Ottoman forces and bandits. Without transportation, Armenian women and children were ordered, with little notice, to march to areas in the Syrian and Mesopotamian deserts. The march led Armenian women and children over mountainous regions and through deserts. Due to the short notice, they were forced to march with the clothes on their back and without supplies. These conditions were purposefully imposed on them by the Ottoman government meaning that Armenians were faced with starvation, exhaustion and disease resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Armenian women and
children. Armenian deaths were the intention of the Ottoman authorities. As noted by Adalian (2012b):

The deportations were disguised as a resettlement plan. The brutal treatment of the deportees, most of whom were made to walk to their destinations, made it apparent that the deportations were mainly intended as death marches...The genocidal intent of the CUP measures was also evidenced by the mass killings that accompanied the deportations. The convoys were frequently attacked by bands of killers specifically organized for the purpose of slaughtering the Armenians...A sizable portion of the deportees, including women and children, were indiscriminately killed in massacres along the deportation routes.

Armenians were also terrorised by Muslim villagers, looters and bandits supplied and organised by local government officials. Many of the Muslim villagers, including Kurdish tribes, targeted the Armenians due to long standing feuds and grievances based on religious differences. They were given carte blanche by Ottoman authorities. Women were exposed to the most horrific treatment and dehumanisation. Many were forced to strip naked and others were brutally raped. Some were taken as slaves and branded so that people would know that they were enslaved and children were separated from their mothers and forced into slavery or claimed by non-Armenians and raised as Muslims. The result of the deportations was that

[t]ens of thousands died from exposure to the scorching heat of the summer days and the cold of the night in the open. Men and women dying of thirst were shot for approaching the Euphrates River. Women
were stripped naked, abused, and murdered. Others despairing of their fate threw themselves into the river and drowned. Mothers gave their children away to Arab Bedouins to spare them from certain death. The killing units completed their task at a place called Deir el-Zor. In this final carnage, children were smashed against rocks, women torn apart with swords, men were mutilated, others thrown into flames alive. Every cruelty was inflicted on the remnants of the Armenian people (Adalian 2013, p. 120).

An additional tactic of the Ottoman Empire was cultural assimilation. Families were split, with members ending up in different areas outside of the Ottoman Empire, and never again being united. The tactic of targeting children is especially heinous and is explicitly mentioned as a punishable offence within the Genocide Convention (Miller & Miller 1992).

The genocide resulted in the deaths of 1.5 -2 million Armenians out of a population of 2.5 million. Many of the survivors suffered horrific events, such as seeing family members and friends slaughtered or personally suffering the tragedy and horror of the death marches. The surviving members of the Ottoman-Armenian population were dispersed all over the world, including to Lebanon, France, Jerusalem, India and Egypt. The survivors, where possible, where embraced by Armenian communities already existent in other countries, and if it were not for these communities, the Armenian nation would have been destroyed.

The articulators of the genocide narrative argue that there are plenty of primary sources available which indicate the genocidal nature of the Ottoman government. This includes telegrams sent from Talat Pasha, the Interior Minister of the Ottoman government.
These ordered provincial administrators to provide feedback to Talat Pasha on the success of the deportations of Armenians, with Talat supervising the deportations and destruction of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire. He filed reports based on the information received from provincial administrators, outlining how many ‘native’ Armenians were left in each particular province and how many ‘outsider’ Armenians were living there (Sarafian 2009). The telegrams and Talat Pasha’s reports based on the responses clearly demonstrate the extent to which Armenians were deported from each province (Sarafian 2009). Based on such evidence, the Armenian genocide is the second most documented genocide, after the Holocaust. This is despite attempts from the Turkish government to hide documentation which clearly demonstrates the Ottoman government’s genocidal intent. The Turkish government has refused to make a number of documents available and has also closed their archives to outside researchers in order to hide the truth about the Ottoman government’s actions against the Armenians. This is in contrast to the Armenian government who has made their archives available (Sarafian 1999).

European governments decided to hold the Ottoman government accountable for their actions against the Armenians through the Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920. It required of the Ottoman government to provide the Allies with any documents or persons they should request in relation to punishment regarding the deaths of Armenians and for the Ottoman government to make just restitution (Kuyumjian 2011, pp258-261). The Treaty of Sèvres survives as the basis for charging members of the Ottoman government with targeting and murdering Armenians. The Treaty of Sèvres also promised to recognise the Armenian homeland and provide support and protection to the state of Armenia (see the map above for the borders set up by the Treaty of Sèvres). Despite these intentions and the importance of bringing the perpetrators to justice, the Allied powers allowed political issues to supersede the importance of justice, signing the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. This did not mention Armenia as a state, or the importance of justice for the
Armenian genocide and ‘marked the international abandonment of the Armenian Question’ (Hovannisian 2007, p. 37).

Turkish genocide denial continues the genocide as it is the denial of the existence of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire, and of the memory of the deaths and suffering of Armenians ‘[b]ecause of the Turkish government’s refusal to face the country's dark past, the process of healing - so essential to international peace and harmony - has not even begun for Armenians. As genocide scholars have shown, the last stage of genocide is the denial of that crime’ (ANC 2013a).

Justice is at the centre of Armenian activism to gain recognition for the deaths of Armenians as genocide. An important part of this is based on the narrative of the Armenian genocide being the first genocide of the 20th Century. Raphael Lemkin, who created and defined the concept of genocide, did so based on the Armenian genocide (Lemkin 2008) and the Holocaust. The link between the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide is clear. The failure to gain justice for the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust is explicitly made by referencing an address given by Hitler in 1939 just before the invasion of Poland. Hitler gave the genocidal order that his troops should ‘kill without pity or mercy all men, women and children of Polish race or language....Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?’ (ANC 2013b). This quote suggests that if the Allied powers had carried through on their promises to punish Ottoman government officials who were responsible for the genocide, Hitler would not have been emboldened to commit genocide. Genocide denial and injustice encourages those who are considering committing genocide as they believe that they will not be held to account for their actions. In order to prevent genocide from happening, governments around the world need to recognise past examples of genocide, especially the Armenian genocide, as this will serve notice that the international community will not tolerate genocide. As noted in chapter 1, this is an important argument used within
the field of genocide studies. Recognising past acts of genocide is not only important for the group who suffered, but also for bringing genocide to an end because ‘[t]he recognition of the Armenian genocide is a moral and ethical issue. We owe it not only to the victims and survivors of the Genocide but to mankind, to prevent future crimes against humanity’ (ANC 2013a).

Relevance of the Narrative for the Armenian Diaspora

The genocide narrative is relevant for the ethno-national identity of Armenians, especially in the diaspora, on two levels. This relates to the traumatic impact of the events, the dispersion of the Armenian population around the world, and the loss of a homeland until 1991. The deportations are the reason for the size of the diaspora today. While there were Armenian diasporic communities before the deportations in countries such as Egypt, Sudan, India and Syria and cities like Jerusalem, these grew in size as a result of the dispersion and new communities were formed. Large parts of the Armenian homeland was under control of Turkey, or incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1922 meaning Armenians were left without their homeland. The deportations and tragedy of the Armenian genocide are viewed as the direct reason for the majority of Armenians living in the diaspora. The genocide influenced the creation of the diaspora and played a role in ensuring that the dispersion and migration of Armenians became a diaspora with a strong sense of identity. Dispersion as a result of the genocide forced Armenians into a number of strange and new locations, such as the United States of America, for example, where the survivors of the genocide were often the first Armenians to settle into such a location. This meant that groups of traumatised Armenians, united by their shared history and survival of the massacres often formed ‘tight-knit ethnic urban communities’ with ‘[t]heir world...starkly split between the outside world of strangers and their inner, shared world of intimate community’ (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian 1998, p. 193). It is in these communities that the stories, suffering and pain of the
genocide and deportations were shared and taught to younger generations of Armenians in the diaspora.

The Armenian diaspora is maintained by the horrific memories of the genocide. Paul (2000) examines grass roots mobilisation of the Armenian diaspora in the USA and notes the importance of genocidal memory for the creation of a cohesive group ideology amongst American Armenians. She (Paul 2000) quotes Bakalian’s work that ‘95 per cent of Armenian-Americans held strong feelings concerning the genocide’ and that ‘the Armenian Genocide is a symbol of collective Armenian identity for nearly all Americans of Armenian descent. It provides Armenian-Americans with a symbolic framework and supplies them with a sense of peoplehood, cultural rebirth, and historical continuity’ (Paul 2000, p. 29). Her study indicates that much of the Armenian diasporic mobilisation in America revolves around memory of the genocide, with Paul (2000) concluding ‘[t]he trauma of the genocide is important in providing a bond for those of Armenian heritage and ethnic elites recognise the importance of the genocide to what it means to be Armenian’.

While research suggests that commemoration of the Armenian genocide serves as an important point of identity for the majority of the Armenian diaspora, this is not the case in Russia. In direct contrast to the Armenian diasporic communities in America and France, those living in Russia do not share their sentiment regarding the importance of genocide recognition and commemoration. Oussatcheva (2001) notes the limited importance of genocide recognition in the identity formation of the Armenian community in Russia. This is seen by a lack of Armenian diasporic activism in Russia pertaining to genocide recognition. She also analyses the difference in community standing, and identity between different waves of Armenian immigration to Russia. The difference in the reason and times of migration, the size and closeness of the diasporas, and the situation in the hostland are used to explain the reasons for the difference in
priorities between the French and American Armenian diasporic communities on the one side, and the Russian Armenian diaspora on the other. The main differences noted by Oussatcheva (2001, pp. 19-20) are that the Russian Armenian diaspora is ‘preoccupied with an array of legal, political and economic interests’. Members of Armenian diasporas in different Western countries can afford to be preoccupied with traditional tasks (such as maintaining identity, national traditions and languages), members of the Armenian diasporas in Russia have yet to achieve the same level of affluence of their Western counterparts.

Turkey’s genocide denial and policy towards Armenians in Turkey impact on the ethno-national identity of the Armenian diaspora. Genocide denial is viewed as the denial of Armenian history and the existence of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The denial adds to the influence of the genocide narrative on the Armenian ethno-national identity. 85% of fourth generation Armenians living in America, for example. have strong feelings towards Turkey’s denial of the genocide (Bakalian 1992, p. 418). As noted by Kupelian et al. (1998) the failure of the Turks and parts of the international community to recognise the atrocities endured by the Armenians from 1915-1917 as genocide, results in their victimisation being denied. Essentially, the genocide is still ongoing, and to deny the Armenian pain caused by the genocide is to deny their humanity. Kupelian et al. (1998) suggest that if the Turks and the wider international community would recognise the genocide, it would result in an end to the continued victimisation of the Armenians, and allow Armenians to remember the tragedy in peace. This is a point clearly discussed by Hovannisian (2007), who suggests that the genocide cannot merely be forgotten or put to one side until the ‘Truth’ is known. The importance of genocide recognition to the Armenian diaspora in America is also clearly expressed by Toumani (2004) in her article entitled ‘The Burden of Memory’. She highlights the importance of the quest for genocide recognition, and also quotes Balkanian who calls it the ‘sine qua non’ of the Armenian community in America. Toumani (2004) questions ‘[w]ithout the shared sense of purpose afforded by the pursuit of Turkish recognition, would the Armenian diaspora
simply assimilate and disappear? In other words, is Turkey’s denial the diaspora’s lifeblood?’.

**The Armenian Response and Political Activism**

Political activism for genocide recognition has been led by the Armenian diaspora. The main reason for this is the lack of an Armenian homeland. The Democratic Republic of Armenia (DRA) was formed in 1918 but lost its independence in 1920 and was consumed by Soviet Russia in 1921. From 1920 until the formation of the Republic of Armenia in 1991, the Armenian diaspora was stateless, and therefore forced to maintain its cohesion without the assistance of a homeland. This meant that the attempt to seek justice for the deaths of Armenians was left to the diaspora.

Armenian attempts at gaining justice started almost immediately after the massacres ended. The early attempts involved assassinating Turkish officials who had organised and orchestrated the Armenian death marches. The assassinations were organised by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), which is now a political party in the Republic of Armenia and gave birth to the Armenian National Committee, a transnational diasporic organisation which is active in campaigning for genocide recognition. The assassinations became known as Operation Nemesis. The first assassination was committed by Soghomon Tehlirian in 1921, when he shot Talat Pasha, the former Interior Minister of the Ottoman Empire, in Berlin, Germany (Power 2003, p. 1).

Following initial attempts at justice, the Armenia diaspora did not further target Turkey or campaign for recognition of the deaths of Armenians until the early 1960s, approaching the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide. Armenian activism has followed
two streams. The first is terrorist attacks against representatives of the Turkish state and those who argue that genocide was not committed. Sheffer (2006) argues that stateless diasporas, as the Armenian diaspora was until the Republic of Armenia became independent in 1991, ‘are more prone to be engaged in violent and terrorist activities’ due to the lack of constraints from the homeland. Thirty-nine Turkish diplomats were murdered by Armenians outside of Turkey between January 27, 1973 and November 19, 1988. On the 27th of January, 1973, for example, Gourgen Yanikian invited the Consul General and Vice-Consul of the Turkish Embassy in Santa Barbara, Californian, to dinner and proceeded to shoot both of them. Yanikian stated that the reason for the assassinations was ‘to focus world attention upon the Armenian [genocide]’ by ‘destroy[ing] two evils’ (People v. Yanikian 1974). Other terrorist attacks include: attacks by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) against the Turkish Embassy in Beirut, and four bomb attacks against Turkish targets in Paris, claimed by the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide (JCAG). Both ASALA and JCAG stated that the terror attacks were to force the Turkish government to recognise the Armenian genocide and pay reparations for the genocide (Sullivan 2011, pp. 62-63).

There were two terrorist attacks in Australia. In 1980, JCAG assassinated the Turkish Consul and his bodyguard in Sydney. According to Australian authorities, the two Armenian assassins flew in from abroad before the operation, left Australia shortly after the assassination and were never caught. The assassins were assisted by members of the Armenian-Australian community (Nicholson 2012). The attack in 1986 was perpetrated by two Armenians living in Australia, who attempted to detonate a bomb beneath the Turkish consulate in Melbourne (Nicholson 2012). One of the bombers was, while the other one was arrested. It is unclear if they belonged to JCAG or ASALA. This highlights the transnational networks which are a key element of the Armenian diaspora. Armenian terrorist groups were able to make use of the diaspora in a number of different countries, either through the creation of cells in those countries or through the established community to support attacks against Turkish targets. Recently published
Australian Cabinet Papers highlight the extent to which transnational networks were used in the attacks committed on Australia soil (Nicholson 2012). The Cabinet papers illustrate that guns, for example, were brought into Australia in 1983 from Los Angeles by a member of the JCAG to be used in an attack on the Turkish Consulate. Additionally, weapons were also imported in furniture, again from Los Angeles, after the first shipment of guns had been seized at the airport (Nicholson 2012). The attack in Melbourne was the last attack by Armenian terrorists internationally.

The second and more successful form of activism from the Armenian diaspora involves raising awareness about the genocide and campaigning for genocide recognition in countries around the world. This activism started after the concept of genocide was defined and employs it as the most important aspect of the activism. The first genocide recognition took place on the 20th April 1965 in the Uruguayan Senate and House of Representatives. Armenian lobbying groups employ transnational networks in their attempts at gaining genocide recognition in the countries in which they are based. One of the most notable organisations, the Armenian National Committee (ANC) has offices around the world, as well as a link to the Republic of Armenia through the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) (also known as the Dashnucks). Globally, the ANC functions as a decentralised organisation with a clear political agenda which is relevant to the political and historical climate of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. This means that the political agenda and policies regarding particular topics and viewpoints towards events are clearly defined; however each separate office in different countries is able to act as necessary within the domestic environment in which they are located in order to further the agenda of the ANC. The decentralised nature of the ANC is important as it allows the organisation to function differently in different countries in accordance with the political and social environment in those countries. This is particularly important and relevant for political activism and engagement with the political environment, where the political system in each country differs greatly, and

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3 This information was acquired through interviews with representatives of ANC-Australia.
each branch of the ANC is able to adapt. This is a crucial aspect of transnational diasporic organisations, which need to be able to adapt and function within the different environments in which they are based in order to stay relevant to the community which they represent, while also being a part of the greater diasporic network. As noted by Tölölyan (2000, p. 114) ‘[i]n general, and paradoxically, the more successful a transnational diasporic organization is, the more likely to have developed local branches and services’.

Armenian lobby groups have been successful at gaining political recognition of the Armenian genocide. A number of governments, states and local jurisdictions have politically recognised the Armenian genocide. These include governments where there is a strong Armenian diaspora who have traditionally existed in the country such as the Lebanese Parliament (11 May 2000), the Russian Duma (14 April 1995). It also includes countries where there is a smaller Armenian diaspora such as the Dutch Parliament (21 December 2004), the German Bundestag (15 June 2005), the Venezuelan Parliament (14 July 2005) and the Uruguay Senate and House of Representatives (20 April 1965). Alongside political recognition by national parliaments, recognition of the Armenian genocide has also taken place in multi-national forums such as the European Parliament, the World Council of Churches, alongside recognition on smaller scales, such as by the Edinburgh City Council, and the London Borough of Ealing. This is similar to the tactics employed in the United States of America, where political genocide recognition has been pursued at a state level, and achieved in 43 of 50 American states, although not only by the Armenian National Committee of America. Additionally, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) has also declared the deaths of Armenians to have been genocide, lending further legitimacy to the genocide narrative.

Political recognition by national governments and jurisdictions is significant as it means the issue of genocide recognition is no longer only an Armenian issue, but also an issue
for the jurisdiction which recognises the deaths as genocide. This provides international legitimacy to the Armenian genocide narrative and pressurises other countries and jurisdictions to recognise the Armenian genocide, which in turn places pressure on Turkey.

The lobbying of the Armenian diaspora has not only been limited to striving for political genocide recognition or gaining justice through violent means, but also gaining justice through financial compensation. Members of the Armenian community in America brought a class action against AXA Insurance in order to secure payments from life insurance policies which had been bought from that company by Armenian ancestors. The policies had never been paid out following the deaths of Armenians during the First World War, with ancestors of the deceased bringing a lawsuit against the company for unpaid life insurance (Kyurkjian v. AXA 2005). The outcome of the lawsuit was a compensation fund totalling US$17.5 million (BBC 2005). It is important to note that this lawsuit is not based on the deaths of Armenians being recognised or declared as genocide and repayments are made regardless of genocide recognition by any government, with the issue not debated in court. What this does demonstrate is examples of activism by members of the Armenian diaspora which is not purely focused on genocide recognition, but also on pursuing justice in different ways.

**Conflict between the Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia**

The diaspora’s activism for genocide recognition has put them at odds with the Republic of Armenia. The diaspora prioritises genocide recognition to an extent where it undermines Armenia’s attempts at developing a relationship with Turkey. Toumani (2004) notes that genocide recognition is more important to diasporic Armenians than those living in Armenia. Armenians in Armenia are suffering power cuts, an economy
ruined by earthquakes, war with Azerbaijan, and a closed border with Turkey, while the diaspora only has the memory and battle for recognition of the genocide to keep them attached to their heritage (Toumani 2004). As noted above, remembrance of the genocide and political recognition serve an important role in community cohesion in the Armenian diaspora and is also critical to the creation and maintenance of their identity. The genocide serves as the reason why the majority of the Armenian diaspora are dispersed, and the ongoing battle for genocide recognition serves as a critical issue of identity around which they mobilise.

This difference in priorities is best illustrated by the actions of the Armenian diaspora against Levon Ter-Petrossian, the first President of Armenia. He was vilified by the diaspora after deciding that recognition of the genocide should not be a condition for Armenia developing a relationship with Turkey. Levon Ter-Petrossian attempted to face the challenges of an impoverished state surrounded by enemies by underplaying the genocide debate and attempting to foster a relationship with Turkey. As noted by Libarianid (2004), while Ter-Petrossian was directly descended from genocide survivors and a keen historian, his attempted rapprochement with Turkey was not due to his lack of historical knowledge, but rather because he had different ideas to the diaspora on ‘how to imagine the future’ of Armenia (Libarianid 2004). This included developing relationships with Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenia’s neighbour to the south with whom a longstanding war is still ongoing for Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory inhabited by Armenians, but within Azerbaijan’s borders. These relationships would open up import and export opportunities for Armenia, and allow growth in trade between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Ter-Petrossian’s refusal to prioritise genocide recognition outraged the diaspora who ridiculed him. This can still be seen today, with a clip on YouTube posted in 2010 showing Ter-Petrossian and the President of Azerbaijan as dancing heads placed on the bodies of cartoon characters dancing to an up-beat techno song. The video calls Ter-Petrossian and Aliev, the Azerbaijani president, ‘Assholes’ (Hayrenikizavag 2010). Levon Ter-Petrossian was shunned by the diaspora for his stance
on the importance of genocide recognition, and Robert Kocharyan who followed him into power in 1998 immediately reached out to the diaspora, building relationships with various diasporic groups, and although not explicitly stating that genocide recognition was a condition for a relationship with Turkey, placed the issue firmly on the negotiating table. Appeasing the diaspora is critical for Armenian politicians as the diaspora provides between 60 and 70 percent of Armenia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to Tigran Sargsyab, the current Armenian Prime Minister (Sanamyan 2011).

This tension between the desires of the diaspora to push for genocide recognition by Turkey and the practical needs of Armenia was prevalent in 2009. Turkey and Armenia engaged in negotiations regarding the signing of Protocols between the two countries. The purpose of the protocols was to normalise relations between Turkey and Armenia which would allow trade between Turkey and Armenia and the demilitarisation of the border between the two countries. This was viewed as critical for Armenia, and was praised by some in the diaspora, with a letter signed by prominent members of the Armenian diaspora stating: ‘The Armenian leaders with the sense of high responsibility for the future of the motherland and coming generations, act today with wisdom and courage for the establishment of the relations between the two countries and the opening of borders with any preconditions’ (Armenia Now 2009). The Protocols were widely criticised by other members of the diaspora, most particularly by the Armenian National Committee (ANC). The protocols called for the creation of a historical Commission into the deaths of Armenians, which would take place with both Armenian and Turkish researchers. The purpose of this Commission was to investigate the events that took place within the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. The ANC and other members of the diaspora felt that this was legitimising Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide (Asbarez 2010). There were protests in Yerevan (Armenian Weekly 2009a), the capital city of Armenia, as well as in countries around the world against the Protocols. The protests outside of Armenia were largely organised by the ANC branch in
that particular country (ANC 2009a and Armenian Weekly 2009b), and matched the opinion of the ARF based in Armenia.

The attitude from the Armenian diaspora resulted in the Armenian President, Serzh Sargsyan, undertaking a tour of various major Armenian diasporic communities in 2009, and was met with protests at all these meetings, including by 10,000 protestors in America (EFDS 2009). The normalisation of the relationship between Turkey and Armenian through the signing of the Protocols was viewed as a threat to the diaspora and to the importance of the existence of the diaspora. Hrant Markaryan, an ARF politician, commented that the protests in diasporic communities around the world must be understood as having hit ‘a raw nerve’, and that the Armenian government and authorities must ‘respect and reckon with that opinion’ because ‘the diaspora is facing the danger of losing its raison d’etre’ (EFDS 2009). This illustrates, as discussed above, that the recognition of the deaths of Armenians as genocide is an integral part of the Armenian diasporic identity. While the ratification of the Protocols has been delayed due to issues within both the Turkish and the Armenian parliaments, diaspora resistance towards the protocols highlighted the political differences between the diaspora and the Republic of Armenia.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the Armenian genocide narrative which identifies the Ottoman government as guilty of committing genocide against Armenians, and claims that there are a number of sources that prove this. This leads to the argument that recognition of the deaths as genocide is important for the wider international community as this can help to prevent future genocides. The genocide narrative is important for the identity of the Armenian diaspora. It lends context to their dispersion
from the Armenian homeland and for their existence in the diaspora. Genocide recognition serves as an important marker of identity, recognition of dispersion and trauma and as a point of mobilisation. This puts the diaspora at odds with the Republic of Armenia, for whom it is important to develop a relationship with Turkey to open up trade and economic opportunities. The diaspora refuses to allow this to happen as it jeopardises Turkey recognising the genocide. Turkey is not willing to develop relationships with Armenia if genocide recognition is a condition of this relationship, as the diaspora insists it to be. The diaspora provides important financial support to the Armenian state, meaning that the Republic of Armenia cannot risk jeopardising this relationship.
Chapter 3

The Turkish Historical Narrative and Government Activism

Introduction

The Turkish narrative is formed and shaped through the Turkish historical narrative and information which directly counters the genocide accusations. The genocide narrative threatens the legitimacy of the Turkish republic and Turkish government institutions and has resulted in Turkey countering the claims. This chapter outlines why Turkey counters the genocide narrative, then discusses the Turkish historical narrative and demonstrates how the Turkish state has countered the genocide narrative internationally.

Countering the Genocide Narrative in Turkey

The Turkish state plays a critical role in the creation and presentation of Turkish history. Turkey changed to the Latin alphabet in 1928 as part of a number of reforms brought in by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first President of Turkey, as part of his modernisation process of Turkey. This meant that Turkey’s history, which was written in the Perso-Arabic script, was no longer open to Turkish citizens and is still not open to Turkish citizens. As noted by Akçam (2006 p. xxi) ‘[w]ith the stroke of a pen, the Turkish people

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4 A number of these documents are available at the Turkish Archives in Istanbul. During a tour of the archives undertaken as fieldwork in 2012, it was highlighted that there is renewed interest in learning Ottoman Turkish amongst researchers, opening up Turkish documents and history recorded in the Perso-Arabic script.

5 Akçam is a Turkish-German academic who has published widely on the Armenian Question. He is the most famous Turkish academic who argues that genocide was committed against the Armenians and also addresses why the Turkish state counters the Armenian allegations and is defensive about the issue.
lost their connection to written history. As a result, modern Turkey is totally dependent on history as the state has defined and written it’. Therefore, the Turkish state has had a monopoly over Turkey’s historical narrative, which it has a natural interest and bias in. The Turkish state has also been willing to make use of its monopoly over Turkish history through government institutions to frame and communicate the Turkish narrative. While oral histories and individual narratives exist within Turkey, due to the nation building programme undertaken by Atatürk and the strength of the state in disseminating the official narrative, counter-narratives are silenced within mainstream public discourse.

The development of the Turkish narrative in response to the Armenian allegations has, according to Dixon (2010a, p. 471), contained five different elements, and started after 1980. She argues that the five elements are:

1. Centralising control over the official narrative,
2. Publishing defences of the official narrative,
3. Marshalling evidence to support the official narrative,
4. Teaching the official narrative to Turkish students, and
5. Gaining international support for the official narrative.

Through the relevant institutions of the state, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the National Security Council (MGK), the Ministry of the Interior and the National Education Ministry (MEB) (Dixon 2010a, p. 468), Turkey has been able to communicate their historical narrative. The MEB, for example, ‘has been an important vehicle by which official ideologies, national identity and values have been taught to the nation’ (Dixon 2010b, p. 108), especially on controversial and complex historical issues. While the early Turkish historical narrative largely ignored the existence of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey and did not address the genocide narrative, this changed in response to both external and internal factors. The catalyst behind both external and internal factors
has largely been Armenian attempts at gaining political genocide recognition and other Armenian activities which have sought to highlight the genocide narrative (Dixon 2010a). It is due to these activities, which have received traction within the international community, and have also begun to enter the public discourse in Turkey, that Turkey began to address the genocide narrative. The Turkish historical narrative presents a counter-narrative which addresses, refutes and discredits important aspects of the genocide narrative. It is well developed and backed by academic sources, both Turkish and from outside of Turkey. The work is largely published by nationalist groups or Turkish government organisations and focuses on proving the Armenians to be ‘the culpable party’ and highlighting ‘their ‘lies’ or their ‘ingratitude’” (Akçam 2004, p. 59).

One example of an organisation which actively targets the Armenian narrative is the Centre for Eurasian Studies (AVIM). A Turkish think tank in Ankara, it includes the Institute of Armenian Research (EREN) which focuses on the Armenian Question. The centre plays an important role in arguing the Turkish counter-narrative through two academic quarterly publications, organising speakers and conferences and disseminating research. Its aim is to ‘examine the Armenian Question within a broad perspective, including its historical, political, legal and international relations dimensions’ (EREN n.d.). One of the quarterlies, the Review of Armenian Studies, is focused on countering the Armenian narrative and arguing the Turkish counter narrative. The quarterly is available in English and free of charge, making it widely available. Evidence of the countering of the Armenian allegations through the journal can be found in articles such as ‘The Legal Avenues that could be restored to against Armenian Genocide Claims’ (Tacar 2008). The article presents information on how the Turkish state and Turks could target Armenian genocide claims through legal means so as to ensure that the claims are not politically recognised outside of Turkey. Another article, entitled ‘A Literature between Scientificity and Subjectivity: A Comparative Analysis of the Books Written on the Armenian Issue’ (Palabiyik 2007) conducts a literature review on books published ‘in the West’ which focus on the Armenian issue. The article divides the literature into three parts – non-
scientific subjective discourse, partially-scientific subjective discourse and scientific and objective discourse. The author places all literature which argues that genocide was committed in the first two categories, and literature which argues against the claims is placed in the third category. This serves to undermine the scientific and academic basis of literature which argues for the Armenian genocide.

The taboo nature of the topic within Turkey has also ensured that the Turkish historical narrative is accepted. An important part of tabooing accusations of genocide within Turkey is Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalises any act which is perceived as being an ‘Insult to the Turkish nation’. While the code, which took effect in 2005, was not brought in explicitly with regards to the Armenian allegations, it has been used by nationalist politicians and lawyers to target Turks who claim that the deaths of Armenians amounted to genocide. It was used against Turkish author Elif Şafak in 2006 after she had authored the novel ‘The Bastard of Istanbul’ in which one of her characters says ‘I am the grandchild of genocide survivors who lost all their relatives at the hands of Turkish butchers in 1915’ (Şafak 2008). Elif Şafak was acquitted (Birch 2005). The charge of insulting Turkishness was also brought against Orhan Pamuk, a Turkish novelist who stated in the Das Magazin, a Swiss newspaper, that ‘Thirty thousand Kurds have been killed here, and a million Armenians. And almost nobody dares to mention that. So I do’ (Matossian 2005). Pamuk was acquitted of the charges in 2005 (Rich 2008), only to be found guilty and forced to pay 6000 Lira compensation in 2011 (Harvey 2011). While Article 301 is used to target those who suggest that the deaths amounted to genocide, very few people have been found guilty, with the majority acquitted of the charge.

Article 301 was also used against Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist in Turkey, who published widely on the importance of genocide recognition and reconciling Turks

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6 The article was amended in 2008 from any act which is viewed as an ‘insult to Turkishness’ to its current articulation.
with Armenians within Turkey (Fowler & Arsu 2007). Although he was acquitted once, he was convicted under a second charge. Hrant Dink was murdered in 2007 by a Turkish ultra-nationalist, reportedly as a result of his work for Armenians and genocide recognition (Arsu 2007). His murder took place shortly after a documentary was shown in Turkey in which he spoke about the importance of genocide recognition. There were unproven accusations that the murderer had been encouraged and paid to target Hrant Dink by members of the Turkish military and nationalists, with photos showing the murderer smiling with Turkish policemen and officials after he was arrested (Turgut 2012). The impact of Article 301 and the assassination of genocide recognition advocates such as Hrant Dink within Turkey mean that debate within Turkey is largely shut down with regards to whether the deaths constituted genocide, resulting in the subject being taboo.

**Opposing the Turkish Narrative within Turkey**

Despite the monopoly of the Turkish state over the Turkish historical narrative and hostile environment to any dissenting voices, there is growing opposition within Turkish society towards the failure of the Turkish government to recognise the Armenian genocide. There is a growing number of Turks based in Turkey who consider the deaths to have been genocide and believe that the Turkish state should recognise the deaths as such, and make amends. This has seen the introduction of groups within civil society who are actively campaigning and trying to persuade the Turkish government to recognise the Armenian genocide. The most public display of this was in 2008 when a public apology was posted online and signed by a number of Turkish intellectuals (Ozurdiliyoruz n.d.a), as well as by over 31,000 Turks (Ozurdiliyoruz n.d.b). The apology reads (Ozurdiliyoruz n.d.c):
My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915. I reject this injustice and for my share, I empathize with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers and sisters. I apologize to them.

Although the apology refers to the deaths as ‘the Great Catastrophe’, a phrase used by Armenians to refer to the genocide, rather than genocide, it is an important sign of a growing development within Turkish civil society regarding the importance of genocide recognition. While the murder of Hrant Dink is viewed as a low point regarding genocide recognition within Turkey, it highlights the growing awareness amongst Turks of Armenians in the country and the issue of the Armenian genocide. Following his assassination, thousands of Turks took to the streets to march in support of Dink, holding placards which read ‘[w]e are all Hrant, we are all Armenian’. These marches have continued on the anniversary of his death, with thousands of people again taking to the streets in 2013. As noted by Alpay (2013) in the Turkish newspaper Zaman:

There is a greater clarity of mind on two basic issues among those who are concerned about Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. First is the wickedness in holding responsible an entire nation for the crimes committed by a government of theirs nearly 100 years ago. The other is the wickedness in Turkey's government still today assuming the responsibility of crimes perpetrated by a gang of dictators who led the Ottoman Empire to its demise.
Within Turkey, a space is developing in which the death of Armenians can be discussed more broadly. While that might not be whether the deaths amounted to genocide or not, there is still a growing awareness of the past and a growing willingness to discuss it.

**The Turkish Historical Narrative**

The Turkish historical narrative falsifies the claims of the genocide narrative. The narrative is made up of the official Turkish view, as understood and disseminated by the Turkish state. It does not consider dissenting voices. The relevance of the Armenian allegations has grown due to Armenian political activism on the international stage (Dixon 2010a). As a response to this, the Turkish counter-narrative has been refined to challenge the Armenian narrative; however, its basis is formed out of Turkish history as presented by the Turkish state. While the Turkish historical narrative naturally counters the genocide narrative, a body of literature has been produced which directly counters facts and historical points of the genocide narrative and argues that evidence is falsified.

The Turkish narrative argues that the issue should be left to historians and academics. Politically recognising the Armenian genocide and labelling the Turkish narrative genocide denial restricts academic freedom and freedom of speech. The political arena is not the arena for a historical matter to be debated and it should be debated academically, by Turkish, Armenian and neutral academics. The Turkish government wants the issue brought to a non-political end through academic debate as seen through a letter sent by the Turkish Prime Minister Recept Tayyip Erdogan to the Armenian President, Robert Kocharyan in 2005. Erdogan invited the Armenians to ‘form a group comprised of the historians and other specialists of our two countries to investigate the developments and events related to the 1915 period by researching all the archives of
not only Turkey and Armenia but also all relevant third countries and to report their findings to the international community’ (Erdogan 2005).

The Turkish narrative emphasises the tolerant and peaceful nature of the Ottoman Empire which allowed minority groups such as the Armenians to maintain their Christian heritage, with a degree of autonomy from the Ottoman government (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 7):

People from different religions were treated with an unprecedented tolerance which was reflected into the philosophies based on good will and human values...This was in contrast to the terrible treatment which Christian rulers and conquerors often have meted out to Christians of other sects, let alone non-Christians such as Muslims and Jews.

Benevolent Islamic principles such as ‘having the same view for all 72 nations’ within the Ottoman Empire and ‘you will be welcome whoever you are, and whatever you believe in’ (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 7) served as the basis for Ottoman rule. This is supported by non-Turks, such as Voltaire (quoted in Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 10) who said of the Ottoman Empire: ‘The great Turk is governing in peace twenty nations from different religions. Turks have taught to Christians how to be moderate in peace and gentle in victory’ and German General Bronsart (quoted in Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 10): ‘Unless they are forced, Turks are the world’s most tolerant people towards those of other religions’.

Under Ottoman rule, Armenians were allowed to maintain their religion and culture, establish religious centres, which resulted in Armenian migration into the Ottoman
Empire as ‘the great Ottoman conqueror had made his empire into a true center of Armenian life’ (CSR 2005, p. 13). Armenians and other non-Muslim minority groups had certain privileges and rights, such as being exempt from military service. Non-Muslim minority groups paid the same taxes as Muslims, although they had to pay an additional tax in place of taxes which were based on Muslim religious law, such as the *Zakat* Tax.\(^7\) Armenian community leaders collected taxes from their community and then paid these to Ottoman tax collectors. Within this system, the Armenian community was able to flourish and expand, and ‘contributed to the Turkish-Ottoman culture and ways of life and government to such an extent that they earned the particular trust and confidence of the sultans over the centuries, gaining the attribute “the loyal millet”’ (CSR 2005, p. 14). The environment in the Ottoman Empire allowed Armenians to flourish and some became ‘ambassadors, treasury officials, even foreign ministers’ (McCarthy 2005). The French Ambassador in Istanbul, General Sebastiani told Napoleon Bonaparte that ‘[t]he Armenians are so content with their lives [in the Ottoman Empire] that [stirring a revolt amongst them] is impossible’ (quoted in Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 10). This was stated after Bonaparte had tried to orchestrate a rebellion amongst Armenians to support his invasion of the Ottoman Empire in 1798-1799.

The Turkish narrative highlights the negative influence of European forces, such as France, Russia and Great Britain within the Ottoman Empire from the 1800s-1900s. Ottoman-Armenians were manipulated against the Ottoman government by European powers and the narrative argues that Armenian revolutionaries were merely playing a role in a larger imperialist game orchestrated by European powers against the Ottoman Empire. The majority of the Armenian population was content to live in the Ottoman Empire and this could have continued if it were not for Armenian revolutionaries supported by European powers (CSR 2005, p. 24):

\(^7\) An Alms tax, given for charity.
the basis for the Armenian revolts was not poverty, nor was it oppression or the desire for reform; rather, it was simply the result of a joint effort on the part of the Armenian revolutionary committees and the Armenian church, in conjunction with the Western Powers and Russia, to provide the basis to break up the Ottoman Empire.

The beginning of Armenian nationalism was the Russian Empire’s ‘imperial expansion’ (CSR 2005). Russian Czars sought to gain control over parts of Ottoman territory by undermining the Ottoman Empire from within. This involved ‘stirring the national ambitions of the Sultan’s subject Christian peoples, in particular those with whom it shared a common Orthodox religious heritage, the Greeks and the Slavs in the Balkans and the Armenians’ (CSR 2005, p. 17). The Russians promised that they would create a ‘Greater Armenian’ in the eastern regions of Anatolia. This started during the 1827-1829 Russo-Ottoman wars, when the Russians invaded Erivan Province, the Armenian Republic today, expelling all Muslims from the region and giving control to Armenians (McCarthy 2005). During these conflicts, ‘the pattern was always the same: Russian invasion of Muslim territory, Armenians siding with invaders, huge Muslim mortality and migration, and de facto population exchanges of Muslims and Armenians. That is how an Armenian majority was established in what is today the Republic of Armenia, a majority created by the Russians’ (Sonyel 2000, p. 9).

This continued following the Ottoman-Russian war between 1877-78, where Russia gained parts of eastern Anatolia, and was persuaded by the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul to either create an autonomous Armenian state, or to provide support for governmental, regulatory and administrative changes which would benefit Armenians. The gradual gain of power and influence by Russia through their relationship with Ottoman-Armenians led to Great Britain worrying about the growing threat of Russia. This created a situation where ‘[w]hether under Russian or British influence...the
Armenians became pawns to the advance imperial ambitions at Ottoman expense’ (CSR 2005, p. 19).

Armenian trouble makers used the opportunity to target the Ottoman state to ‘procure an autonomous Armenian province in eastern Anatolia, where the Armenians were overwhelmingly outnumbered by the Muslims’ (Sonyel 2000, p. 16). This accelerated between 1890 and 1908 where ‘Armenian militants...caused many incidents in the Ottoman state, which amounted to civil war’ (Sonyel 2000, p. 19). The Armenian groups ‘ended up in the hands of foreign-inspired, self-seeking, violent opportunists’ (Sonyel 2000, p. 19) which resulted in ‘a reign of terror...as a result of the reckless behaviour of a handful of Armenian agitators and assassins’ (Sonyel 2000, p. 19). British Vice-Consul Captain Dickson wrote a letter to the British Ambassador in Istanbul, Sir Gerard Lowther which reported ‘[t]he Armenian in subjection, such as I have seen him, is an unsympathetic, mean, cringing, unscrupulous, lying, thieving curd; given his freedom, he loses none of these bad qualities, but in addition becomes insolent, domineering, despotic’ (quoted in Sonyel 2000, p.23).

When the First World War broke out, Armenian revolutionaries immediately supported the Allied powers by providing information, joining the Russian and French armies and engaging in sabotage and insurrection within the Ottoman Empire. The extent of the Armenian commitment to outside powers is summed up by the following appeal to the Russian Tsar in 1914 from Alexander Khatissian, the President of the Armenian National Bureau of Tbilisi (quoted in Sonyel 2000, p. 30):

From all the countries the Armenians are hurrying to enter the ranks of the glorious Russian Army, in order, with their blood, to serve for the victory of the Russian arms...Let the Russian flag fly freely over the
Dardanelles and the Bosphorus...Let the Armenian people of Turkey, who have suffered for the faith of Christ, receive resurrection for a new life under the protection of Russia.

The tactics of the Armenians were to support the Russian forces advancing into Ottoman territory through eastern Anatolia by creating volunteer units made up of Russian and Ottoman-Armenians. They deserted the Ottoman army and formed bandit forces, targeting Ottoman depots to limit the ability of the Ottoman army to challenge the Russian forces. The Armenians armed themselves with weapons which had been stored in Armenian and missionary churches and schools (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 22). In close communication and coordination with the Russian forces, Armenian bandits targeted Ottoman cities and sabotaged the Ottoman war effort by targeting bridges, roads and supply caravans. Armenian bandit groups also massacred Ottoman Muslims, Jews and Greeks who did not support the Armenian revolution. Armenian tactics were horrific with the memoirs of Russian officers recording ‘Russian commanders themselves were compelled to withdraw [Armenians] from the fighting fronts and send them to rear guard duties’ (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 23). The tactics of the Armenian revolutionary organisations were twofold. Firstly, support Russian soldiers by undermining the Ottoman war effort, and secondly, leave only Armenians in the areas where they intended to create an Armenian homeland (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 23).

The Ottoman government was forced to defend itself against Armenian revolutionaries and insurgents. On April 24 1915, the Ottoman government arrested Armenian revolutionary leaders and ordered that Armenians be deported out of Ottoman territory. This ‘was a moderate and entirely legitimate measure of self-defence’ (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 24). Efforts were made to ensure that 700,000 Armenians were safely deported to Syria, Palestine and Iraq. The Ottoman orders were not to kill or
abuse Ottoman-Armenians. The Ottoman government provided food, water and other necessary provisions to the deported Armenians and assisted in settling them outside of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Council of Ministers sent out the following order (quoted in Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 24):

When those of the Armenians resident in the aforementioned towns and villages and who have to be moved are transferred to their places of settlement and are on the road, their comfort must be assured and their lives and property protected; after their arrival their food should be paid for out of the Refugees’ Appropriations until they are definitively settled in their new homes. Property and land should be distributed to them in accordance with their previous financial situation as well as their current needs; and for those among them needing further help, the government should build houses, provide cultivators and artisans with seed, tools, and equipment.

The same order also clearly stated the deportations were ‘entirely intended against the extension of the Armenian Revolutionary Committees; therefore do not execute it in such a manner that might cause the mutual massacre of Muslims and Armenians’ (quoted in Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 24).

Despite the best attempts of the Ottoman government to ensure that the deportations of Ottoman-Armenians was done peacefully, safely and securely, Armenians did die. This was due to the unfortunate circumstances of that time period, which resulted in deported Armenians dying as a result of general insecurity, and vengeance due to blood feuds, with tribal forces attacking Armenian deportees as they travelled through certain areas (Sonyel 2000, p. 34). Additionally, Armenians died as a result of famine and plague.
The Ottoman government tried to protect and supply Armenian deportees as they marched towards their new locations (Ataöv 1985) however the Ottoman government was not able to support their own soldiers, as seen through the death of 90,000 men in the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire due to shortages (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 25; Ataöv 1985). The failure by the Ottoman government to provide supplies and provisions for Armenians is understandable within the context of the First World War. While as many as 300,000 to 400,000 Armenians died 3-4 million Turks of all religions died during the same time period as they were exposed to the same conditions (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 30; Sonyel 2000, p. 34). The death of the Armenians was therefore as a result of ‘a civil war within a global war’ (Sonyel 2000).

The Turkish narrative directly targets the genocide narrative, disputing its facts and figures. For example, the existence of telegrams from Talat Pasha, the Ottoman Interior Minister during the First World War, which directly ordered the annihilation of Armenians are discredited. It is argued that the telegrams never existed and that forgeries were made and then translated to look as though they were extermination orders (Orel & Yuca 1986). The number of Armenians who lived in the Ottoman Empire that died as a result of the deportations is disputed. It is argued that sources at that time indicated that between 1 million and 1.5 million (Foreign Policy Institute 1982, p. 29) Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire rather than 2.5 million and that 300,000-400,000 died rather than 1.5-2 million. The quote by Adolf Hitler which is used as a justification for recognising the Armenian genocide is argued to be a forgery added to a speech by Hitler by Armenians to connect Armenian deaths to the Holocaust (Foreign Affairs Institute 1982). The Turkish narrative argues that the Armenian deaths were an unfortunate consequence of horrific conditions and that the deportations were necessary due to Armenian revolution. It also challenges the genocide narrative directly by disputing important facts.
Counteracting the Genocide Allegations

Allegations that a country committed genocide are often dismissed by that country (as discussed in chapter 1). This is especially so when different historical narratives exist and when the time period is relevant for national identity. This is the case in Turkey. While Turkey’s refusal to recognise the deaths is viewed as genocide denial, the Turkish historical narrative argues that genocide never took place and that this is confirmed through historical scholarship. This view is countered by researchers who argue that there are specific reasons why the Turkish government is unwilling to recognise the Armenian genocide.

Turkey idolises and glorifies the founding fathers of the Turkish republic. The First Parliament, for example, decreed that the founding fathers of the republic were national heroes (Akçam 2006). This included members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), also known as the Young Turks, who are accused of organising and implementing the genocide. Members of the CUP had been implicated in committing crimes against Armenians and openly stated that the removal of the Armenians was necessary for the creation of the Turkish Republic (Akçam 2006). Downplaying the Armenian deaths was, therefore important for the formation of the Turkish republic as a number of those involved in the creation of the Turkish republic in 1923 were also part of the Armenian genocide. The early decision to ignore the deaths of the Armenians is still carried on today and there has been ‘no fundamental change in this position from the founders of the republic to Turkey’s current ruling elite’ (Akçam 2006). Therefore, ‘declaring some of Turkey’s founders war criminals would call into question the state’s very identity’ (Akçam 2006, p. XX). Genocide recognition by the Turkish state would undermine the legitimacy of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish founding fathers and therefore Turkish nationalism.
The creation of the Turkish Republic is viewed as developing out of the destruction of the Ottoman Empire by European powers. The Ottoman Empire was therefore a victim of the European powers, and exposed to massive trauma as a result of this. The Turkish army is viewed as saving Turkish territory from Allied forces and allowing for the creation of the Republic of Turkey. The position of respect and reverence has meant that the Turkish army has played and continues to play an important role within Turkish society, including in political life. As noted by Jenkins (quoted in Dixon 2010b, p. 108) the Turkish Minister of Culture, Istemihan Talay, stated in 1999 that ‘[t]he Turkish military is synonymous with the Turkish nation...and the embodiment of the most important values which make us what we are. The Turkish military has given us the victories, glory and honour’. If the Armenian genocide was recognised, the Ottoman army, and by extension the Turkish army would be guilty of genocide rather than saving Turkey from European powers. This would undermine their centrality within Turkish society.

The Turkish government also fears that if they recognise the Armenian genocide they would be forced to pay reparations. Although they would not legally be forced to do so, societal pressure would challenge them. This is the significant difference between the deaths being unintentional massacres, and the deaths being genocide. Genocide lends a level of morality to the victims, larger levels of guilt for the perpetrators, and a stronger drive for justice. Germany recognised the deaths of the Herero at the beginning of the 20th Century in Namibia as genocide, and refused to pay reparations as they already provide aid to Namibia (Rostron 2012). However, additional pressure has been placed on the German government to pay reparations based on their genocide recognition. This pressure was not there before they recognised the deaths as genocide.
Creating the Narrative Outside of Turkey

The Turkish government has actively pursued academics outside of Turkey to support the Turkish narrative. This has especially been the case in America, where a number of historians have published work which supports the Turkish historical narrative and the Turkish government has provided funds to establish research institutes in Turkish Studies. The Institute of Turkish Studies at Georgetown University in Washington D.C., for example, was founded in 1982 by a $3 million grant from the Turkish government (Holthouse 2008a). The institute furthers relations between Turkey and America through the study of Turkish culture and history and supports Turkish studies throughout the USA. The Institute was not founded with the express purpose of countering the Armenian allegations but its connection to the Turkish government has raised controversy. In 2006 the Chairman of the Institute, Prof. Quataert\(^8\) resigned following claims of pressure from the Turkish Ambassador in America. Prof. Quataert stated in a book review that the deaths of Armenians ‘readily satisfies the U.N. definition of genocide’ (Quataert 2006, p. 251-252), while discussing the danger of applying the concept of genocide which was first used during the Second World War to a previous event. Quataert claimed that the Turkish ambassador pressurised him to withdraw his book review, or financing of the Institute would be reviewed by the Turkish government. Quataert viewed this as an attack on intellectual freedom (Holthouse 2008a). The Turkish Ambassador rejected that he had pressurised Quataert to withdraw his work or risk losing funding, arguing that Quataert had said he had been misquoted regarding the Armenian genocide, and that the Ambassador had encouraged him to set the record straight (MFA 2008).

The relationship between American scholars and Turkish government grants was especially apparent in the 1980’s. In 1985 an advertisement (Armenian Issues 2001)

\(^8\) Quataert was a Middle-East/Ottoman Historian at Binghampton University in America.
appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post and Washington Times addressed to the U.S. House of Representatives who were at that time debating House Joint Resolution 192. The Resolution would have declared April 24 ‘A National Day of Remembrance of Man’s Inhumanity to Man’ with special mention made of ‘the one and one half million people of Armenian ancestry who were victims of genocide perpetrated in Turkey between 1915 and 1923’. The advertisement was unsigned by 69 scholars based in America working on Ottoman or Turkish history. It is alleged that all 69 under signees had received grants from the Institute of Turkish Studies or the Turkish government (Holthouse 2008b). The advertisement took exception to ‘the use of the words “Turkey” and “genocide”’ and was paid for by an organisation in America supported by the Turkish government. The advertisement echoed parts of the Turkish narrative including that the deaths of Armenians cannot be ‘separate[d] from the suffering experienced by the Muslim inhabitants of the region’ and that the deaths were a result of ‘serious inter-communal warfare (perpetrated by Muslim and Christian irregular forces), complicated by disease, famine, suffering and massacres’ (Armenian Issues 2001). It was also argued that the issue should be addressed by historians and not politicians, stating ‘Statesmen and Politicians make history, and scholars write it’. The advertisement also strongly argued that political recognition of the Armenian genocide would ‘damage the cause of honest historical enquiry, and damage the credibility of the American legislative process’ (Armenian Issues 2001).

Not all work which supports the Turkish narrative or questions the genocide narrative is commissioned or financially supported by the Turkish state although work which is published is often indirectly supported by the Turkish government or organisations. Guenter Lewy (2005) published a book which outlines the Armenian and Turkish historiographies and then analyses what is known and not known about the deaths of Armenians. The book concludes that ‘[n]o authentic documentary evidence exists to prove the culpability of the central government of Turkey for the massacres of 1915-1916’ (Lewy 2005, p. 250) and that while the deaths of Armenians cannot be disputed
they were not part of ‘a scheme of annihilation’ (Lewy 2005, p. 251). Although not directly commissioned, his research has been widely acclaimed in Turkey. The Turkish government purchased numerous copies of his book, distributing them in schools and libraries all over Turkey and within America. Lewy was also presented with İnsanlığa Karşı İşlenen Suçlar Yüksek Ödülü (High Award for Fighting in Opposition to Crimes Against Humanity) by the Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies (ASAM) in Ankara (Walrus 2005). Through sponsoring research into Ottoman history and supporting researchers who argue Turkey’s historical narrative, the Turkish government has been successful in establishing a historical narrative supported by international researchers and which is established internationally.

**Countering Genocide Recognition**

Turkey has actively countered political genocide recognition around the world when governments have looked to recognise the Armenian genocide. The Turkish response is typically diplomatic. They communicate their unhappiness at attempts of political recognition, and withdraw their diplomatic representatives in protest if a country recognises the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government also threatens to limit trade opportunities between Turkey and the country which politically recognises the Armenian genocide.

The best example of Turkish diplomatic mobilisation has taken place in America. In 2007 the majority-Democrat House Foreign Affairs Committee voted 27-21 to pass a resolution which would affirm that Armenian deaths ‘accurately characterise the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians as genocide’. More than 50% of the House signed up to sponsor House Resolution 106 (H. Res. 106 2007). The Turkish Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdogan told President George W. Bush that the passing
of the Resolution would lead to the Turkish government limiting American access to the Icirklik airbase, through which more than 70% of American supplies for Iraq passed. Bush personally phoned members of Congress emphasising the importance of a relationship with Turkey and the impact the resolution would have on that relationship (Pan Armenian 2007). Condoleezza Rice stated in 2007: ‘I continue to believe that the passage of the...Armenian genocide resolution would severely harm our relationships with Turkey’ (Pan Armenian 2007). A letter from eight living former American Secretaries of State and three former Defence Secretaries also argued that the passage of the Resolution would ‘endanger [American] national security interests’, with George Bush reiterating that the resolution has the potential to ‘harm...our relations with a key ally in NATO and in the global war on terror’ (Lee Myers & Hulse 2007). The American Congress was not willing to risk their relationship with Turkey due to Turkey’s successful diplomatic mobilisation.

The prioritisation of the relationship between Turkey and America above political genocide recognition was highlighted after Obama became president. The US House Committee on Foreign Affairs passed House Resolution 252 by a one vote margin (23-22) in 2010. The Resolution called ‘upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes’ (H. Res. 252 2009). It detailed the historic accusations against the Ottoman government as well as America’s response, including aid given to Armenian refugees, former House resolutions, and speeches made by past American presidents, such as Bill Clinton, who said on April 24 1998: ‘This year, as in the past, we join with Armenian-Americans throughout the nation in commemorating one of the saddest chapters in the history of this century, the deportations and massacres of a million and a half Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the years 1915-1923’ (H. Res. 252 2009).
Obama had called the massacres genocide during his election campaign and pledged that his government would recognise the Armenian genocide. He stated ‘America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides. I intend to be that President’ (ANCA 2008). Despite this promise, his administration spoke out against the vote by the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Obama has not been willing to call the deaths genocide. Hilary Clinton stated that the administration would work ‘very hard’ (Arab News 2010) to ensure that the vote did not make it to Capitol Hill. As was the case for George Bush in 2007 when the same Congressional Committee passed a resolution which called the deaths genocide, the Obama administration prioritised diplomatic ties with Turkey above recognising the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government communicated to the Obama regime that political genocide recognition would negatively impact the relationship between Turkey and America. The implications of the Resolution for America’s relationship with Turkey were immediately evident with the Turkish government recalling their Ambassador for consultations minutes after the Resolution was approved by the House Committee, while voicing strong protests against the vote and stating that adoption of the resolution ‘could adversely affect’ (Sheridan 2010) cooperation between Turkey and America. Turkey was important as Obama needed to gain support for sanctions against Iran’s nuclear programme. Obama gave into the Turkish objections to the Resolution and it was not brought to a vote in Congress.

A similar line of action was followed by the Turkish government after the Swedish Parliament passed a Resolution recognising the Armenian genocide in March, 2010. The Turkish government withdrew their ambassador and the Turkish Prime Minister also cancelled a trip to Sweden. While Turkey did reinstate their ambassador to Sweden after a great deal of politicking between the two governments a short while after the envoy was recalled, the Turkish government made clear how important this issue is for its relationships with other states (BBC 2010). In response to Canada’s recognition of the genocide, Turkey withdrew their envoy ‘for a short time for consultations over the latest
developments about the baseless allegations of Armenian genocide’ (CBC 2006). While the diplomatic envoy returned to the post, it allowed Turkey to clearly express their dissatisfaction towards the governments of both countries.

How far Turkey is willing to go in order to make their point concerning genocide recognition is questionable. In 2001, France passed a law which states: ‘France publicly recognizes the Armenian genocide of 1915’ (Loi N° 2001-70 2001). Turkey reacted by temporarily withdrawing its ambassador and claimed that the French decision would influence trade between the two countries. But trade with France grew by 22% in 2002 and had grown by 257% by 2010 (ANCA 2010). In 2008, France was Turkey’s fourth biggest export market and trade between the two countries totalled US$8 billion in 2010 (ANCA 2010). Genocide recognition, despite Turkey’s threats, did not influence trade.

Turkey’s response to countries politically recognising the deaths of Armenians as genocide also influences their domestic policies, as a means of placing symbolic pressure on the country recognising the genocide. In response to France politically recognising the Armenian genocide, the Turkish Parliament’s Justice Committee stated in 2006 that it would discuss a draft resolution to make it illegal to deny that France committed genocide in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence 1954-1962 (Daily Star 2006). Although the Resolution was never brought into law in Turkey, in 2011, the Turkish government again accused the French government of committing genocide in Algeria as a response to a French Bill which would make denial of the Armenian genocide a crime. Erdogan, the Turkish Prime-Minister stated: ‘In Algeria from 1945, an estimated 15% of the population was massacred by the French. This is genocide. The Algerians were burned en masse in ovens. They were martyred mercilessly’ (BBC 2011). Directly addressing the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Erdogan said: ‘If Mr. Sarkozy doesn’t know about this genocide, he should go and ask his father, Paul Sarkozy. His father served in the French Legion in Algeria in the 1940s. I am sure he would have lots
to tell his son about the French massacres in Algeria’ (Blair 2011). This demonstrates a tactic of targeting countries who challenge Turkey’s identity through genocide recognition on a level which undermines that country’s national identity.

Turkish governments have used domestic policies to mobilise nationalism and to challenge countries which recognise the Armenian genocide. Açar and Rüma (2007) note the negative influences of outside pressure on Turkey to alter their opinions surrounding the Armenian genocide. Rather than encouraging debate within Turkey, external pressure results in reactionary nationalism from Turks. In 2010, during an interview following the Swedish genocide resolution and the vote in the American Congressional Committee, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, threatened to deport up to 100,000 Armenian citizens, mostly women, working illegally and in low-income jobs in Turkey. In response to questions about the resolutions in Sweden and America, Erdogan was quoted as saying (Villelabeitia 2010): ‘There are currently 170,000 Armenians living in our country. Only 70,000 of them are Turkish citizens, but we are tolerating the remaining 100,000. If necessary, I may have to tell these 100,000 to go back to their country because they are not my citizens. I don’t have to keep them in my country’. Erdogan also stated that Armenian immigrants in Turkey were tolerated as a ‘display of our peaceful approach, but we have to get something in return’ (Villelabeitia 2010). The Turkish government also dismantled a friendship statue in 2011 which was erected close to the Armenian border during negotiations regarding the Turkey-Armenia protocols, with the purpose of encouraging friendship between the two nations. The sculpture had depicted ‘two figures emerging from one human form’ (RFERL 2011), and had earlier in the year been called a monstrosity by Erdogan (Al-Arabiya 2011). It is not only diplomatic pressure that Turkey applies to countries which politically recognise the deaths of Armenians as genocide, but also domestic policies as a means of foreign policy.
The Turkish Government and the Turkish Diaspora

The influence of the Turkish diaspora in countering the Armenian claims is not well understood. What is clear is that the Turkish government has changed its attitude towards the Turkish diaspora. Originally, Turkish migrants were viewed by the Turkish government as part time workers, who would spend a limited amount of time outside of Turkey, working and saving hard, and would then return to Turkey. This was viewed as beneficial for short term migrants, who would be able to save money and create a better life for themselves and their families after returning to Turkey, and for Turkey, who would benefit from the money saved. Turkish guest workers were therefore viewed by the Turkish government as short term migrants, still belonging to Turkey (Şenay 2010). They were not viewed as communities who would settle outside of Turkey long term, and could therefore be mobilised by the Turkish government for political, economic or cultural means in the host country. The Turkish government did not aim to forge strong cultural, economic or political ties with Turkish migrants as they were likely to return to Turkey (Şenay 2010).

This viewpoint has changed. The early ideas of Turkish guest workers returning back to Turkey proved to be incorrect, with large Turkish communities situated in Western Europe, and a growing community in other countries such as Australia and America. This has resulted in the Turkish government actively approaching migrants to develop strong cultural, economic and political ties. This has especially been the case with Turks in Europe (Şenay 2010). The purpose of developing these ties is to benefit the Turkish state. As noted in chapter 1, diasporic and migrant communities can play an important role as representatives of their homeland in their host land. This can include remittance payments, and acting as a political force. As noted by Şenay (2010, p. 72), the Turkish government’s ‘discourse vis-à-vis Turkish migrants in Europe has shifted from “our workers abroad” to “our citizens abroad”’. The approaches of the Turkish government
include granting dual citizenship to Turkish migrants starting in 1981 (Law No. 403 1981). As noted by Şenay (2010, p. 71) ‘the granting of the right to hold dual citizenship to Turkish emigrants was seen as a strategy by the Turkish state through which the lobbying of its nationals abroad could be utilised in more effective ways’. Alongside this, the Turkish state also reached out to migrants through their consular networks (Şenay 2010, p. 71) and a government body established in 2010 called the Overseas Turks Agency (TYB). The purpose of TYB is to engage with Turkish communities outside of Turkey. It is noted that ‘[d]eveloping policies addressing the needs of those communities partly stemmed from a sense of historic responsibility, while in other occasions it was a good way to bolster Turkey’s public diplomacy efforts and soft power’ (Yurtnaç 2012, p. 4). One of the proactive measures the organisation has taken is to lobby for the installation of ‘ballot boxes at Turkish diplomatic missions abroad in a move to allow for 3.5 million Turkish expatriates to vote in national elections’ (Genç 2011).

The Turkish rapprochement with their diaspora has also focused on countering the Armenian allegations. During an interview conducted in 2012 with a representative of the Turkish Foreign Ministry in Ankara, it was confirmed that the Turkish government actively seeks to develop relationships with the Turkish diaspora as a means of countering the Armenian allegations. This includes encouraging the Turkish diaspora to develop political organisations to lobby the governments in their hostlands. The interviewee also emphasised that despite unhappiness among Turkish migrants over the Armenian claims being raised in their hostlands, activism from the Turkish diaspora had been limited in this area. He gave two reasons for this. Firstly, he noted that when it has taken place, activism has been reactive to Armenian activism meaning that the Turkish community has been unable to properly counter the Armenian allegations as they have not had the political infrastructure or knowledge. Secondly, he felt that the Turkish diaspora was not well established financially or in terms of integration in the majority of countries and that this impacted on their ability to counter the Armenian allegations. He argued that once the Turkish diaspora had better settled, they would be able to counter
the Armenian allegations, and that it was therefore only a matter of time before they are able to form effective political organisations which could counter the Armenian claims.

While there are some examples of organisations in America which are involved in countering the Armenian allegations on a political level, there is no evidence of transnational Turkish organisations. Examples of Turkish diasporic involvement in countering political genocide recognition are limited to reports of protests when the Armenian genocide is recognised in the country in which a particular Turkish community is based. The majority of activism against the political recognition of the Armenian genocide is top-down, carried out either by the Turkish government through official diplomatic channels and threats regarding trade, or through organisations which are either supported by the Turkish government, or encouraged by the Turkish government to engage in activism. There have been regular attempts by the Turkish government to mobilise Turkish communities in countries around the world to campaign against political recognition of the Armenian genocide (Journal of Turkish Weekly 2012), although the strength of this top-down approach is questionable.

There are examples of Turkish diasporic organisations lobbying for issues which are relevant for relationships between the hostland and Turkey. One of the strongest examples of this activism has taken place in America. The Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) was founded in 2007 by Yalcin Ayasli, an American citizen born in Turkey. The organisation actively attempts to foster relations between Turkey and America and this has included challenging the Armenian allegations. One example includes supporting Guenter Lewy, an American academic who published a book arguing that the deaths of Armenians did not constitute genocide. Lewy received support from the Turkish American Legal Defence Fund (TALDF), which is supported by the TCA when he was accused of genocide denial by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in their
Intelligence Report (Holthouse 2008b) in 2008. Lewy took exception to allegations that he was a Turkish agent, with the Intelligence Report alleging:

Lewy is the most active of a network of American scholars, influence peddlers and website operators, financed by hundreds of thousands of dollars each year from the government of Turkey, who promote the denial of the Armenian genocide — a network so influential that it was able last fall to defy both historical truth and enormous political pressure to convince America's lawmakers and even its president to reverse long-held policy positions...Although Lewy's brand of genocide denial is subtler than that of Holocaust deniers who declare there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, it's no less an attempt to rewrite history.

Lewy's defamation suit was filed against the author of the article, David Holthouse, and the Southern Poverty Law Centre. Lewy noted the following as his reason for bringing the defamation suit against the Southern Poverty Law Centre (Holthouse 2008b):

The SPLC has made important contributions to the rule of law and the struggle against bigotry. Thus I took no pleasure in commencing legal action against it. But the stakes, both for my reputation as a scholar and for the free and unhindered discussion of controversial topics, were compelling. It must be possible to defend views that contradict conventional wisdom without being called the agent of a foreign government.
Lewy’s defamation suit was successful, with Holthouse and SPLC forced to publish a retraction (Holthouse 2008b). The TALDF has been active in challenging both academics and politicians who have suggested that the massacres of Armenians by the Ottoman state were genocide. TCA also plays an important role as a lobby group, providing financial donations to America politicians who pursue pro-Turkish policies. This includes politicians who are willing to vote against the Armenian allegations in Congress. It is not clear if members of the Turkish-American community were encouraged by the Turkish government to start the TCA. What is clear is that it is not funded by the Turkish government, but instead through donations from members of the Turkish-American community, including $30 million worth of stock donated by Yalcin Ayasil (Wolf 2011).

What is not clear from the research is how the Turkish diaspora feels about their hostland recognising the Armenian genocide. While the exposure of Turks in Turkey to the allegations of genocide is limited due to the censorship of the debate and the teaching of the Turkish narrative, Turks outside of Turkey, especially in countries which have politically recognised the deaths as genocide, receive far more exposure to the topic. Research carried out in Sweden highlights that the Turkish community has negative views towards political recognition. The Armenian genocide was recognised, alongside the genocide of other ethnic groups including the Chaldeans, Syrians, Assyrians and Pontian Greeks, by the Swedish Parliament in 2010. Baser (2010) analysed Turkish diasporic perceptions and actions towards this decision by the Swedish Parliament and argues that it resulted in a diasporic awareness forming within Turkish migrants in Sweden, which had not existed before. She argues that Sweden’s recognition resulted in a ‘diasporic turn’ within the Turkish-Swedish community. She argues that they progressed from ‘a migrant group’ with the political recognition of the Armenian genocide providing ‘an accelerative factor for diaspora mobilization’ (Baser 2010). This suggests that the Turkish community is not influenced by the Armenian allegations in their hostland, until the hostland politically recognises the Armenian genocide. This demonstrates the influence of hostland policies on migrant communities, and also the
reactive nature of Turkish lobbying and identity creation in response to the Armenian allegations. This suggests that the Armenian allegations are considered to be largely irrelevant and do not play a role in identity creation amongst Turkish migrants until the issue is raised in their hostland, which can lead to mobilisation and forging of a stronger identity amongst Turks.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the relevance of the genocide narrative for Turkey. It has argued that the Armenian genocide narrative is perceived as threatening the basis on which Turkey was founded and undermines Turkish government institutions, including the military. The Turkish government has developed their narrative in response to the genocide narrative and ensured that this narrative is understood within Turkey. The chapter has also illustrated how the Turkish state has sought to gain outside support for their narrative, especially in America, and used diplomatic power to counter countries that have politically recognised the Armenian genocide. The Turkish state has also sought to mobilise the Turkish diaspora to counter the Armenian allegations outside of Turkey. Despite examples of the Turkish diaspora feeling aggrieved by political genocide recognition in their hostland, their activism has been limited.
Chapter 4

The Armenian-Australian Diasporic Identity

Introduction

The previous two chapters have discussed the genocide narrative and the Turkish historical narrative, how these two narratives have been employed politically, the role they play in developing the Armenian diasporic identity and the influence of the genocide narrative on the Turkish national identity. The following chapters focus on the diasporic identities of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians and the role of the two different narratives in their identity formation and maintenance as well as the roles of the two diasporas in activism within Australia. The interviews conducted with Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians serve as the primary data source and the perceptions and narratives of the two communities are presented and analysed in chapters 4 – 7, with chapters 8 and 9 discussing the political activism and reasons for activism of Armenian-Australians and Turkish-Australians. The researcher’s personal opinion and perspectives are not presented in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 discusses the Armenian-Australian diasporic identity as it relates to the global Armenian narrative of genocide recognition, and how the genocide narrative influences their diasporic identity and impacts on their sense of belonging to Australia. Chapter 5 analyses the Armenian-Australian perceptions towards the genocide, recognition by Turkey and Australia and how it impacts on their sense of belonging to Australia. Chapter 6 discusses Turkish-Australian perceptions towards the Armenian allegations and chapter 7 addresses the Turkish-Australian identity as it relates to Australia, and Turkey and the impact of the Armenian allegations on this identity.
Chapter 8 demonstrates that Armenian-Australian activism is aimed at defending the Republic of Armenia from the perceived threat of Turkey and Pan-Turanism and has been successful due to the ability of Armenian-Australian lobbying organisations to frame the debate. Chapter 9 shows that Turkish-Australian activism against the accusations in Australia has been limited, however when it has taken place, it has been to defend the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia and reactive to Armenian-Australian activism. The Turkish government has tried to employ diplomatic efforts to counter the Armenian allegations within Australia, but the Turkish government has not been able to influence the debate within Australia due to the majority of Armenian activism being at a state rather than Federal level.9

The Armenian Community in Australia

The number of Armenians living in Australia is disputed, with a significant difference between the numbers reported by the Armenian-Australian community and in the Australian Census, which in 2011 recorded 16,724 people claiming Armenian ancestry (ABS 2013). The largest Armenian organisation in Australia, the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-Australia) estimates that there are as many as 50,000 Armenians in Australia, mostly residing in Melbourne and Sydney. The difference between the estimated numbers and the Census data can be understood by the nature of the Armenian community in Australia. Armenians in Australia come from 43 different countries, including Armenia, Russia, Syria and Egypt (DFAT, 2007). There was little to no Armenian community in Australia before 1915 and Australia did not take Armenian refugees following the genocide. Armenian migration to Australia peaked during the 1960s; with chain-migration growing the numbers of Armenians in Australia (DFAT,

9 A more detailed summary of each empirical chapter is made in the introduction on pages 14 – 18.
The majority of individuals who can claim Armenian ancestry are from Armenian communities in the diaspora, rather than Armenia. This means that the majority of Armenians in Australia were already dispersed from Armenia and living in the diaspora. Migration to and settling in Australia is a continuation of this, making it difficult to gain a complete picture regarding the number of people in Australia with an Armenian heritage, or who claim an Armenian heritage. Armenian-Australians would have to specify their Armenian heritage on the Census form, rather than being able to state that they were born in Armenia, which a number of them do not do. It is argued by ANC-Australia that the reason for this is a lack of knowledge on completing the Census document. ANC-Australia encourages people of Armenian heritage in Australia to specify this during the Census. Many of the statistics concerning education and income gathered by the Australian government are based on country of birth, rather than ancestry or perceived ancestry.

The largest Armenian population is based in Sydney in New South Wales. According to the 2011 Census, 11,479 Armenians were living in New South Wales, 3,863 in Victoria, 249 in South Australia and 458 in Western Australia (ABS 2013). ANC-Australia estimates that there are 40,000 Armenians in Sydney, with 10,000 in the western suburbs of Sydney, specifically Smithfield and Fairfield, and 30,000 in the northern suburbs, notably Chatswood and Ryde. ANC-Australia estimates that there are 10,000 Armenians living in Melbourne, mostly in the eastern part of the city. There are small communities of Armenians in other Australia states, with an estimated 200 in South Australia and 300 in Western Australia, which is lower than the 2011 Census.

As is suggested by the population distribution of Armenians in Australia, the communities in Sydney and Melbourne are relatively well established. This is especially the case in Sydney, where there are three day schools and a number of Saturday schools, five different Armenian Christian denomination churches, including the
Armenian Apostolic Church, the official Church of the Armenian state, and a number of different community and cultural centres as well as a weekly newspaper. The Armenian-Australian community in Melbourne has three Saturday schools and an Armenian Apostolic congregation. The communities in South Australia and Western Australia do not have a church or official schools. The small Armenian community in South Australia has a high level of organisation, which has allowed ANC-Australia and the Armenian Apostolic Church to reach out to the Armenian community in the area. This is not the case with the Armenian community in Western Australia, where there are very low levels of community organisation in Perth, with ANC-Australia and the Armenian Apostolic Church having little to no contact with the Armenians on the western coast of Australia.

There has been one major research study conducted on the Armenian diaspora in Australia, focusing on those living in Sydney and using qualitative questionnaires for data collection (Kirkland, 1980). This study found that the majority of Armenians surveyed in 1980 were skilled, white collar-workers with relatively high levels of formal schooling reflecting the countries from which they originated (Kirkland, 1980). Other than this one study, very little is known about the demographic information of the Armenian community in Australia.

There are a number of diasporic Armenian political organisations within Australia. On a political level, the most prominent organisation is the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-Australia). ANC-Australia is the Australian branch of the Armenian National Committee (ANC), which is a transnational organisation with branches in thirty different countries and on six different continents. The ANC maintains links with Armenia as it falls under the umbrella of the Armenian Revolutionary Front (ARF), the Dashnuks, which is a political party within the Republic of Armenia. ANC-Australia is the peak public affairs organisation of the Armenian community in Australia and as is the
case with the ANC in a number of other countries, has close ties with cultural, educational, social and charitable sister organisations. ANC-Australia is headquartered in Sydney, with additional offices in the western suburbs of Sydney and an office in Melbourne. ANC-Australia represents the Armenian Youth Federation and the Armenian Weekly Newspaper. Within Australia, ANC-Australia claims to have a collective membership of 5,500 Armenians and a significant number of Armenian-Australians associate with ANC-Australia through its sister organisations, although they are not officially considered to be members of ANC-Australia. Despite the socialist origins of the ARF, ANC-Australia is a non-partisan organisation with regards to politics in Australia. Other transnational Armenian organisations in Australia include the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, which also incorporates sport, youth and cultural organisations, as well as the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party. While the cultural, youth and sport organisations are significant, the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party and the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party are largely irrelevant within the political environment in Australia. The existence of such transnational organisations is an important part of the Armenian community in Australia, and more specifically Sydney and Melbourne, which as noted by Tölöyan (2000, p. 114) ‘in general, and paradoxically, the more successful a transnational diasporic organization is, the more it is likely to have developed local branches and services’.

There are two Armenian Apostolic congregations in Australia, with the main congregation in Sydney, which is lead by the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand, and another congregation in Melbourne. The Armenian Apostolic Church is the official Church of the Republic of Armenia. Other Armenian denominations within Australia consider the Armenian Apostolic Church to be the church of the Armenian nation. The Armenian Apostolic Church in Australia is non-partisan with relation to the Armenian political environment in Australia, although it does have a strong relationship with the Armenian day schools in Sydney. Other
Armenian churches include the Armenian Brethren, the Armenian Catholic Church and Armenian Uniting and Evangelical Churches.

There is no Armenian government representation within Australia. The majority of those that identify themselves as Armenians within Australia are not Armenian citizens. The Armenian government has a limited outreach to the Armenian diaspora, and did not grant Armenians outside of the country citizenship following its independence in 1991. The Armenian community in Sydney has a number of prominent members in the political environment. Joe Hockey, the Shadow Treasurer and member of the Liberal party, is of Armenian heritage, having changed his name from Hokavian. Gladys Berejiklian is the Member for Willoughby, an electorate with a large Armenian population, and the minister for Transport, and the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of the Community Relations Commission of NSW, Stepan Kerkyasharian, is also Armenian-Australian.

Interviews were conducted with eight Armenian-Australians in Perth and ten in Sydney to assess their views on genocide and its impact on notions of identity. All interviewees viewed themselves as Armenian. The sample can be broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>First Generation Australian</th>
<th>Second Generation Australian</th>
<th>Born in Armenia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the nine born outside of Australia, two were born in Armenia, one in Turkey, three in Jerusalem, one in Egypt, one in Jordan and one in Syria. The ages of the research sample varied from 18 - 70. The majority over 35 years old were born outside of Australia. The location, gender and generation of the interviewee quoted will be referenced following each quote below.

Due to the lack of an Armenian-Australian organisation in Perth, no interviews were conducted with community leaders. Interviews were conducted with community leaders in Sydney, including a representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church and representatives of ANC-Australia. ANC-Australia was selected as it has been the most active in advocating for genocide recognition.

**The Armenian Diasporic Identity and Dispersion**

The majority of the Armenian community in Australia came from previously well-established Armenian diasporic communities in the Middle-East, with a limited number arriving from the Republic of Armenia. These communities exist for two reasons. Firstly, Armenian diasporic communities have existed for hundreds of years in places such as Jerusalem, Jordan, Sudan, India, Syria and Egypt (Adalian 1989). They grew as a result of forced dispersion but were also ‘formed by trade networks, by economic migration going on since at least the tenth century’ (Pattie 1999, p. 4). Secondly, these communities grew and new communities were established as a result of the Armenian genocide and forced deportations in 1915. Armenian refugees were either consumed into pre-existing Armenian communities or the refugees formed new communities outside of the Ottoman Empire (Pattie 1999). It is from these communities that the majority of Armenian-Australians arrived in Australia.
This has a direct influence on the formation of a diasporic identity in Australia. Firstly, the majority of Armenians arrived in Australia already part of a diaspora rather than having arrived from Armenia. They had experience of living in the diaspora and had a diasporic consciousness. The ideas of what it means to be Armenian in the diaspora and the Armenian diasporic identity are established and understood. Armenian diasporic institutions were also already established. Secondly, while the Armenian diasporic identity and institutions were established before Armenians arrived in Australia, these have to be re-imagined and redefined in the Australian environment.

Many Armenians also arrived in Australia from Armenian communities as a result of instability in their previous hostland. Some interviewees arrived in Australia after fleeing two conflicts in two different countries. One interviewee, for example, was born in the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem and fled that city in 1948, firstly to Bethlehem and then to Jordan as a result of conflict in Israel. He left Jordan for Australia as a result of conflict in 1971. Another interviewee was born into the Armenian community in Egypt and fled to Australia following the Suez War, with another leaving Syria for Lebanon as a result of conflict and then moving to Australia due to the situation in Lebanon. There is a strong trend of forced dispersion, following the ancestral dispersion from Ottoman Turkey and subsequent less traumatic dispersions from Armenian diasporic communities in the Middle-East before arriving in Australia.

The Armenian Diasporic Identity

Barry (2011) argues that the concept of Hayoutiun, or Armenian diasporic identity, is based around four critical tenants. These are ‘the symbolic use of the Armenian language, adherence to Armenian sects of Christianity, loyalty to the homeland and identity based association with other Armenians’. Two additional points were added
during the interviews. These were the importance of family as the central unit (also highlighted by Pattie 1999) in which Armenian traditions and culture can be learnt, taught and practiced and an awareness of the history and achievements of the Armenian nation within the face of extreme difficulties.

The family serves a dual role in the Armenian diasporic identity. It is critical for teaching the Armenian heritage and functioning as a space to actively ‘be’ Armenian. Language is taught and Armenian culture, traditions and value structures are maintained and passed on to the next generation, meaning that commitment to the family is critical. This was highlighted by a second generation Armenian-Australian in Sydney:

[Being Armenian] is just like anything else. It’s part of our heritage, it goes back thousands of years, so to me, it’s always been family for us, stipulated that the family is key and the family is the most important thing (Sydney, male, second generation).

The family provides the strongest space in which the Armenian identity can be lived. One Armenian-Australian interviewed in Perth noted how easily he adopted the Armenian identity learnt in the home despite being born in the Middle-East and moving to Australia as a young boy:

I think I adopted [my Armenian heritage] quite easily because it was never a case of the country that we were in that provided that identity, it was the family. So with the family moving [to Australia], [my Armenian identity] remained (Perth, male, first generation).
This point was further highlighted by a second-generation Armenian living in Perth. When questioned about the challenges of being Armenian in Perth with a small community and no diasporic institutions, he answered:

It’s not really difficult in Perth, because if I go back to what I consider being an Armenian, which is the language and cultural values, we do that at home. We have that and we speak it...It is really situational. I don’t consider someone less Armenian because they don’t have the opportunity to socialise with other Armenians. It is really about their beliefs and the values they hold. And I can get that socialisation from my family. Of course, you may identify a little bit better with Armenians if you are having greater contact with them, but I don’t see that as considering yourself Armenian (Perth, male, second generation).

It is through the family that ideas of being Armenian are passed onto younger generations and Armenian culture and language are practiced.

Christianity forms the central religious identity based on the role that it has historically played within the Armenian nation. This was communicated by a second generation Armenian-Australian. Despite not personally embracing Christianity he saw the critical role that religion plays in his Armenian diasporic identity:

I respect religion. Personally, religion doesn’t play a big role for me, but as any Armenian we respect it because it is part of the religion and it is intertwined with our identity and what it means being Armenian. So in the end if someone says: ‘What is being Armenian’, I would say: ‘Being
Armenian and Christianity is tied together’. But for me personally, I think it doesn’t have much to do with it...You can’t take religion out of being Armenian (Sydney, male, second generation).

Christianity is deeply ingrained within the Armenian identity. One example of this is the Armenian connection to Mount Ararat which is located within historical Armenia, which today is within the borders of Turkey. Mount Ararat is an important symbol for the Armenian nation. A representative of the Armenian Apostolic church noted that ‘for Armenians, it is [our] life’. Mount Ararat’s connection to Christianity and therefore the Armenian connection to Christianity is based on the idea that Noah’s Ark settled on top of Mount Ararat after God flooded the world for 40 days. This means that ‘Armenia...is the cradle of civilisation according to biblical understanding. The life; the new life, has started from Mount Ararat. It is the Biblical meaning, amalgamated in the Armenian history’. It is on this basis that the Armenian nation accepted Christianity, demonstrating a deep connection between Armenians and Christianity.

Armenians also view themselves as the first nation to formally adopt Christianity. As noted by one of the interviewees:

Religion is key. It’s what makes us quite strong. From hearing a lot of things back home, like very, very strong. We are the first [Christians]. Not the Romans, not England, no one else in the world but us (Sydney, male, second generation).

The Armenian Apostolic Church is viewed as the Armenian Church by interviewees. This idea was most clearly expressed by those who did not regularly attend church. As noted by a second generation Armenian:
It isn’t only about the Armenian Church to go to one, but if I was to do certain things, it would have to be in the Armenian Church (Sydney, male, second generation).

This includes getting married and baptising his children. This idea was expanded on during an interview with a first generation Armenian in Sydney. She highlighted that while her children did not attend church and that one of her daughters had married a non-Armenian, the Armenian Apostolic Church still formed an important part of her and her children’s identities.

This week we had the census, and all my kids [were] sitting here, and when it came to religion all my kids said Armenian Orthodox and also Armenian on ethnicity. They were baptised in the Armenian Church. My daughter married a Greek guy, but baptised her children in the Armenian Church (Sydney, female, first generation).

The Armenian identity creates boundaries between Armenians and non-Armenians, as noted by the emphasis on her daughter having married a Greek. However, participation through the Armenian Apostolic Church, in this case baptising children, serves as an important point of participating in Armenian activities.

The relationship between the Armenian Apostolic Church and being Armenian was taken further by a first generation Armenian who highlighted the integral relationship between the Armenian Apostolic Church and Armenians. Throughout Armenia’s turbulent history, the Armenian Apostolic Church has helped to maintain the Armenian heritage in the diaspora, replacing the role of the state. The Armenian Apostolic Church functions as a
significant cultural institution which has assisted with the development and preservation of Armenian culture:

For Armenians...Christianity [and the Armenian identity] is intertwined together. For 1000 years, we didn’t have a country, so our church was sort of a leader but then the people run the church rather than the other way around. All our cultural books and music was done by well known priests, so all the books we read of cultural importance and history was written by those people, so I can’t read a book and not be a Christian and an Armenian, and these are the reasons for it. Every book you read, every musician, famous – they were all twined together (Sydney, male, first generation).

The Armenian Apostolic Church in Australia is considered by Armenians and non-Armenians as the ‘spiritual leadership of the community’. The Armenian Apostolic Church views itself as an ambassador for the Armenian-Australian community and claims that this role is recognised by the broader community. A story was told by a representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church to illustrate this. While it is not clear if the story is true, it conveys the perceptions the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church has regarding its position as representative of the Armenian-Australian community:

The Foreign Affairs Minister of Armenia came [to Australia] once, and we were having dinner with [the Australian Foreign Minister] and the [Foreign Affairs Minister of Armenia] expressed his regret that unfortunately [Armenia] doesn’t have an embassy here in Australia. [The Australian Foreign Minister] said ‘Yes you don’t have an embassy
here, but you do have the ambassador’ looking [towards the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church].

This story highlights the importance felt by and placed on the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church as representative of the Armenian-Australian community. The majority of Armenian-Australians do not have an administrative connection to the Republic of Armenia. They are not citizens of the Republic of Armenia or able to acquire citizenship and are therefore not represented by the Republic of Armenia. In this regard, the Armenian Apostolic Church views itself as stepping into the void left by the state.

Armenian Christianity serves as a boundary-marker. The Armenian Apostolic Church is only accessible to members of the Armenian community because the services are held in Armenian. While the Armenian Apostolic Church shares characteristics with other Eastern Orthodox Churches, it also ‘has its own distinct liturgies and theological fine points’ (Alexander 2005, p. 2). Armenians are also expected to attend the Armenian Apostolic Church and pressurised if they do not. This point was emphasised by an Australia-born Armenian who attends a non-Armenian church:

So people look down on Armenians who go to churches which aren’t Armenian. My friend’s grandma, me and my mum were just talking about how we go to [a non-Armenian church], [and she asked] ‘Why don’t you go to an Armenian church?’ Her own granddaughter, she asked why she doesn’t go to an Armenian church. You get that judgment sometimes...you are getting judged just for going to a church which isn’t Armenian (Sydney, female, second generation).
An important feature of the Armenian diasporic identity is a strong sense of connection to other Armenians resulting in the desire to form relationships with Armenians. This was best illustrated by a first generation Armenian-Australian. Highlighting the cultural demarcation of Armenian surnames ending in ‘ian’, meaning ‘son of’, he noted:

If I am in Denmark or Holland, all I have to do is pick up the telephone book and look up ‘ian’ and call them. All of a sudden you are accepted (Sydney, male, first generation).

This idea was further expanded on by another first generation Armenian-Australian in Sydney:

It is ironic because in 1960s, I was in a little town in Germany. My teacher from Frankfurt said come and stay with us for a couple of days. One day I went through town, and there is this most fantastic Persian rug shop, absolutely beautiful and it had an Armenian name, and I walked in, and there was a man about 50 and I said: ‘Are you Armenian?’ and he said: ‘No, you want to see my father’. I went to this office, elderly gentleman, beautiful suit, and I said to him: ‘Do you speak Armenian?’, and he said: ‘Yes, we have been here since 1905 at this establishment’. He said: ‘Let’s have a cup of tea’. He then said: ‘Can I help you?’ And I just said: ‘No, I came to say hello’ (Sydney, male, first generation).

The idea of a belonging to a broader Armenian nation is reflected within narratives in the Armenian community:
I guess, Armenians have come to Australia and have their close knit community in Sydney, and it is just a way to...I guess there is recognition that there are Armenians around and they always stick together. There is even a poem around, an Armenian poem written by a famous author, and he wrote about Armenians, and how if two Armenians are sitting in a bar together, they don’t know each other, but find out that they are Armenian they will be so close to each other, even if they don’t know each other, they will feel as though they have known each other for ages (Sydney, female, second generation).

This illustrates awareness of the Armenian diasporic identity and the desire to connect with other Armenians. Part of this connection is created by pride in being Armenian. This especially refers to the bravery shown by Armenians in surviving genocide and rebuilding their lives. One interviewee in Sydney, for example, highlighted the importance of Armenian success and directly related this to the experiences of his father who escaped from the Turks as a young boy and was then able to forge a successful life despite trauma and challenges. When asked what being Armenian meant to him, he remarked:

It means a hell of a lot. We are very proud, and history is very important to us. It makes us what we are today. It gives us energy, because when I think what my father went through as a 9 year old child and succeeded in some ways without education, and to raise a family, we were not rich, but with all those difficulties, he learnt by himself (Sydney, male, first generation).
This was viewed as a critical trait which should be passed onto younger Armenians. A first generation Armenian-Australian related the importance of passing ‘Armenian attributes’ – the drive and willingness to be successful despite challenges - to younger family members and friends. He told the following story, which he related to his nephew who was in hospital:

At the hospital I was reading a book and in the book there were some maps and I told [my nephews and nieces] where my father was born, or my mother the area she was from, and the travels they did, and all of a sudden [my nephew] was interested. And I told him your grandfather jumped, a 9 years old boy, to get on the ship without a shirt on and you are complaining, because you don’t drive a Porsche or something? (Sydney, male, first generation)

Success amidst challenges was also highlighted by a second generation Armenian-Australian in Sydney:

When you go onto YouTube, you see the MIG fighter creators were Armenians, film makers who are Armenians; there are so many things that are Armenian. [I am] very aware of the impact of Armenians around the world. Chess champions. The things our people have done to fight back at [Turks], even although we are a small population, we are still keeping strong (Sydney, male, second generation).

Pride is directly related to trauma experienced by Armenians during the First World War and the survival and success of the Armenian nation is seen within the context of the
trauma. Success is seen as a form of resistance against the Ottoman Empire’s attempts to destroy the Armenian nation.

**Maintaining the Armenian Identity in Diaspora**

Maintaining the Armenian identity is viewed as part of fighting back against the Turks. It ensures that the Turks are not successful in destroying the Armenian community, culture and spirit. This notion of a fighting spirit within the Armenian community and the importance of maintaining the Armenian culture and heritage due to the past were highlighted by a second generation Armenian-Australian:

> Being Armenian we see ourselves as a hard rock nation because of the persecution we have endured. Every Armenian knows that, and anyone who knows Armenian history sees that as well. It’s the culture that has its uniqueness and advantages, and the migration patterns – you bring what you can bring to the country and you can learn from what they could give to you and from there you basically would like to keep that culture because you know the history and the history of the persecution leaves you to understand that the preservation of that culture is important (Sydney, male, second generation).

Maintaining the Armenian identity is directly linked to the genocide and traumatic dispersion during the First World War in two ways. Firstly, previous generations suffered yet prioritised their identity despite the challenges and dangers of being Armenian. This was communicated most strongly during a lecture hosted by ANC-Australia in Sydney entitled ‘Photographic Documentation of the Aftermath of the Armenian Genocide’ in August 2011 which was almost exclusively attended by Armenians. The lecture served
two purposes. The first was to educate attendees about the genocide and humanitarian efforts undertaken to support Armenian genocide survivors. The second was to highlight the importance of maintaining the Armenian identity. The lecture noted in the aftermath of the genocide, psychologists were sent from America to ascertain whether young children in Muslim orphanages were Armenians. The children were shown Armenian artefacts and played Armenian songs to see whether they recognised their Armenian heritage. If they did they were taken to Armenian orphanages or placed with Armenian families. This highlighted the importance in the past of ensuring Armenian children were raised to be Armenian, despite the traumatic conditions of the Armenian community at that time. This idea was linked to not assimilating with an Armenian member of the audience rhetorically asking: ‘How can people today assimilate?’ based on the importance placed by previous generations of Armenians on maintaining their Armenian identity.

Secondly, the Armenian nation was almost destroyed by the Ottoman government and dispersion is a continuation of this due to the difficulties of maintaining the Armenian identity in diaspora. If the Armenian identity is not maintained and passed on within the diaspora, Turks will have successfully destroyed the Armenian nation due to assimilation into other cultures as a result of dispersion. Maintaining the Armenian identity within the diaspora is viewed as resistance to the genocide.

In the same lecture a story was told about an Australian woman who wanted to adopt an Armenian boy who had fled Ottoman Turkey on the condition that he was willing to change his name to that of her late husband. He was offered a new life in Australia. The young boy refused to change his Armenian name stating that it was his only connection to his past. This was linked to the importance of identity maintenance today during the lecture with those who lose their identity betraying Armenians in the past that sacrificed so much to keep their Armenian identity.
The link between the past traumatic experiences and maintaining an Armenian identity was highlighted by those interviewed. An Armenian-Australian girl born in Sydney noted how her family taught her the importance of raising her children to be Armenian in order to ensure that the Armenian nation is not destroyed:

We were told [by our parents] remember your language wherever you go and whatever you do, pass it on to your children and make sure that your children marry Armenians in order to continue, so that we fight for the cause...We believe if you don’t [raise your children to be Armenian]...our customs and national histories will not continue and that is what the Turks want. They want us to just die off (Sydney, female, second generation).

The interviewee believes it is still the desire of Turkey to destroy the Armenian nation. The continued existence of the Armenian identity and Armenian culture is in danger because of the genocide and it is the responsibility of Armenians in the diaspora to ensure that the Armenian nation is not destroyed.

Boundary-maintenance and ensuring that the Armenian nation remains strong was emphasised by a second generation Armenian-Australian who highlighted the importance of Armenian institutions such as the school in Sydney:

It is important that the Armenian heritage continues through me onto other generations. I would only marry an Armenian. I think that is the purpose of the Armenian school as well. Recently we had a couple who had been together for 7 years. They met in school, and they are family friends as well, and they recently got married on national television
pretty much. They won this *Sunrise* contest for a wedding. It was all over the TV that they met in the school. It was really good to see, like the principal was saying this is what it is all about. This is why the school is there (Sydney, female, second generation).

The emphasis on identity maintenance is not restricted to first generation Armenians in Australia, but is also prioritised by subsequent generations. Once subsequent generations have learnt the ideas, they also become articulators of the importance of identity maintenance and boundary construction.

**Australia as the Hostland**

Two contrasting ideas were presented with reference to Australia as the hostland, with both influenced by the genocide and dispersion. The first idea highlights the sense of belonging to Australia. This is directly linked to instability experienced by Armenians since fleeing the Ottoman Empire and settling in Armenian communities in the Middle-East. As noted previously, these communities were often in unstable countries resulting in a number of the interviewees leaving those countries for Australia. The countries did not offer a sense of belonging with interviewees viewing themselves as stateless before arriving in Australia. An Armenian-Australian who was born in Egypt and moved to Australia during the Suez war noted:

> We always had this mentality of not belonging [in Arab countries]; on top of that, many of our fathers had *Laissez-passer*. They give you a piece of paper which says let them pass through because you are never

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10 *Sunrise* is a morning TV programme in Australia which offered a competition for an engaged couple to receive their dream wedding.
a citizen and you don’t have residency, you are passing through, until
the Armenian issue is resolved and then you go back, but where do you
go back to? (Sydney, male, first generation)

A similar sentiment was expressed by another interviewee, who had arrived in Australia
via Jerusalem and Jordan:

That’s the kind of mentality we had...I had a Jordanian passport...[and]
on the passport was a stamp that said ‘Article 3’, [which] means you
are not a Muslim, you are not an Arab, you are a Christian, so you don’t
belong here. Automatically you are labelled, when you go through
borders, they know who you are, that you really don’t belong. When
Israel took over, we never had a passport, because we had the
Jordanian passport, and when we lived in Israel we had an ID card, and
when we travelled with the Laissez-passer, it happened twice, they
said: ‘What is this?’, and I just said: ‘Say stateless’, and so when we
came here for a visit, I said: ‘What am I going to put?’, and we just put
stateless, because we didn’t belong anywhere (Sydney, male, first
generation).

This sense of not belonging had practical consequences on life choices. This is attributed
to the genocide and the instability of life in the diaspora:

I remember when I finished school I became a school teacher and in
those days it was respectable. But my mother wasn’t happy because
my mother wanted me to have an education because she never had
the chance to go to school herself and yet she said to me...if you really
had a profession you would be better. Then I went to England and did podiatry and then I came back, and she said now it is better, and I said why, she said because now you can take your tools in your hand, and it doesn’t matter which country you go to, if you can’t teach, you can earn some money (Sydney, male, first generation).

For the interviewees that expressed these ideas, living in Australia granted them security, freedom and a sense of home and belonging, which had not existed within their families following the violent dispersion from Ottoman Turkey in 1915. As noted by an interviewee who left Egypt for Australia:

So in a way, when we came to Australia, it gave us a peace of mind and an identity, to forget about all that political stuff and get on with our lives, build our families, get married, have kids, get an education, whatever we want to do. It gave us that security in a sense, a political security that we don’t have to think about anything else but getting ahead (Sydney, male, first generation).

The combination of living in the diaspora and the supportive environment created by Australia as the hostland was best communicated by a first generation Armenian-Australian in Sydney who had left Jerusalem shortly after the state of Israel was formed and resettled in Jordan. Instability in Jordan in the 1970s resulted in him migrating to Australia. Australia offered a sense of stability which his previous two countries had not:
There was no issues that we were ‘wogs’\textsuperscript{11} or anything like that [in Australia], because where we came from, they used to call us infidels. Here if you were called a ‘wog’, it just went over it. That gave us no problem to go on with our lives (Sydney, male, first generation).

The idea of support and stability provided by Australia was similarly presented by a second generation Armenian-Australian whose parents were born and raised in Iran. She noted how her parents had highlighted the greater opportunities available to her in Australia, and that they did not have these available to them growing up in Iran. Based on this, Australia provides her with stability and safety which her parents did not experience:

Growing up, I am always hearing from my parents that you guys are so lucky to be living here. They have said it 100 times. Before going to Iran [for a holiday] we knew that it wasn’t the best country to go there, and there is such a lack of opportunities, and there is a bad side, so they always wanted to show us that we are very lucky to be here, we have opportunity and education, which is very limited in Iran (Sydney, female, second generation).

The second idea demonstrates that the sense of dispersion impacts on the ability of some of those interviewed to settle into Australia and feel a sense of belonging. While Australia offers stability and safety, life in Australia is not out of choice but rather as a result of forced dispersion. As noted by one of the interview subjects who had arrived in Australia after escaping conflicts in Syria and Lebanon, this leaves them questioning why

\textsuperscript{11} ‘Wog’ is a derogative term used in Australia to refer to people from Southern Europe, typically Greeks and Italians.
they live in Australia, with their settlement viewed as directly linked to past violent dispersions and therefore forced on them:

We always question, if this genocide has not happened, where would we be now? I don’t think genocide happened in just 1915, I think genocide has been going the last 95 years. We are here and part of the genocide, we don’t feel comfortable, we have not rested, and we do not have closure. Why should I be here? Why should I not have my country? Why were my children not born there? Why am I not where I am supposed to be? Living here is a direct response of the genocide (Perth, female, first generation).

This idea was similarly expressed by a first generation Armenian-Australian in Perth:

With all my love to this country, but why we are here? Why are we scattered? Why we are (sic) in the Arab countries? We used to have very small pocket communities in Arab countries here and there, but after 1915 we were scattered all over the world, but first in Middle-East, part of Europe – Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and so on, and then gradually, because of the political upheaval in the Middle-East, they moved to America, Canada, South America, Australia and Europe – and France for example. The genocide forced us to be scattered all over the world. Again, I say we are very blessed to be in this country, but the reason we are here is the genocide and the after events of the genocide (Perth, female, first generation).
This sense of dispersion from Armenian traditional lands in the Ottoman Empire and Armenian communities in the Middle-East is not only felt by some of the first generation Armenian-Australians interviewed, but also by some of the second generation Armenian-Australians. While there were some differences based along generational lines, with those born in Australia experiencing a lower sense of dispersion to those born outside of Australia, this was not always the case. Half of the interviewees born in Australia expressed feeling a sense of dispersion. As noted by a 23 year old Armenian-Australian born and raised in Sydney:

[I]t is just sad knowing that we had to leave our country [Lebanon] because of war and we have a country that no-one knows of [Armenia]. It is difficult to think that we were in a country that we were forced out of, but didn’t choose to leave...Our ancestors fled Armenia to Lebanon, not by choice and then there was a war in Lebanon, and then my parents came to Australia. Otherwise my parents would still be in Lebanon (Sydney, male, second generation).

This connection to the diasporic communities outside of Australia was further illustrated by a first generation Armenian-Australian who had lived in Armenian communities in both Syria and Lebanon. While the Armenian communities are strong in both those countries, she considered her connection to be stronger to those countries than just to the Armenian communities. She compared her feelings of arriving in Australia to arriving in Lebanon or Syria, and despite not hearing Armenian being spoken at the airport and instead hearing Arabic; she felt a deeper sense of belonging than she feels to Australia:

When I fly to Lebanon or Syria, and I arrived at the airport, although there were no Armenian speaking employees there, they were Arabic
speaking, I felt at home. I felt I was back home. But when I come to Australia, nothing buzzes me. It’s sad. I have been here 37 years next month. I go away, months and months and when I come back, I don’t feel that I am back home (Perth, female, first generation).

The connection to Armenian communities outside of Armenia was further illustrated by a second generation Armenian-Australian living in Perth. For him, going to the area where his family had lived for a number of generations gave him a deeper understanding of his Armenian identity and a connection to his past and his family’s past. This is based on his family’s strong emotional and historical connection to that area. This is not a historical connection he has to the Republic of Armenia or Australia. Again this highlights the importance of the family in maintaining the Armenian identity in the diaspora and also in passing down important ideas about the family and connection to the Armenian community. This connection to his past, his family identity and his Armenian identity is not something he would have been able to develop or experience by going to the Republic of Armenia.

If you go to Kesab,\(^{12}\) it is all the tombstones of the [family surname]. It goes back to 1700...First time I knew where my home was, and the first time I sat there and all the stories from my mum, and dad and granddad always told, sort of came to – this is it, it is not just words, you can see it now. This is where grandma and granddad were married and raised the kids and mum and all that, and this is where they got married, this was the thing, and all these conversations for 21 years that were happening around us, it was like, I understand it all (Perth, male, second generation).

\(^{12}\) Kesab is a town in Syria.
A similar sense of belonging to the country where her parents were born was presented by a second generation Armenian-Australian:

> Australia is home in a kind of a way, but I find because it does feel different when you go back to [Lebanon] and you are mixing with your culture, dancing, food the music is your own kind. It is a different feeling. You feel like you might actually belong here (Sydney, female, second generation).

Australia offers physical safety and security, but living in and belonging to an Armenian community is missed. Australia does not create a cultural sense of belonging due to the importance placed by Armenians on maintaining the Armenian identity.

While there is a strong connection to the Armenian communities in a number of different countries around the world, the connection to the people in those communities is heavily influenced by living in Australia. The same second generation Armenian-Australian who felt a connection to his family’s village in Kesab struggled to fully connect with the people in the village because of the development of his Australia-Armenian identity. In this regard, Syria serves as his homeland and the impact of the hostland on him makes it difficult to relate to Armenians in Kesab. Despite believing that the Armenian identity ‘[i]s going to be bred out of us’, and the expectation from his family that he would marry an Armenian girl, this was challenged by the influence of his Australian identity:

> My mum used to say when I was young – ‘but you will have so much in common, you will be Armenian, you’ll speak it, and she will be a good wife’, and I was like ‘are you crazy?’ I went over to Syria, to Kesab, and
met a girl there, at a wedding – I was there for my cousin’s wedding – and the thing was I found it so hard. We are Armenian, but she didn’t understand Australian humour. Like stuffing around, ‘pulling the piss’ (sic),\(^{13}\) mucking around, straight down the line man. No left or right. I was born and raised here and she was born and raised there (Perth, male, second generation).

This illustrates that a strong diasporic Armenian identity does not work in all cases. Diasporic solidarity is paralleled by the creation of localised Armenian identities that do not always resemble those in other Armenian communities.

**Assimilation versus Integration**

Life in Australia is different from living in strong Armenian communities in Middle-Eastern countries where there are natural cultural barriers which mean that Armenians are more likely to associate with other Armenians. This is based on the strength of the Armenian community in those countries, with strong institutions, geographical proximity, and religious, cultural and language differences between Armenians and other people in those countries. In Iran, for example, the challenge is not avoiding assimilation, but rather in encouraging Armenians to learn Persian or develop relationships with non-Armenian Iranians (Barry 2011).

This is not the case in Australia where the community is quite small and it is far more difficult to maintain boundaries in Australia than in Iran or Lebanon, for example. These difficulties are attributed to three aspects of the Australian environment. The first is the

\(^{13}\) A colloquial Australian term which means joking and teasing friends.
Judeo-Christian tradition in Australia. The Muslim societies in Middle-Eastern countries served as a natural boundary which prevented assimilation and encouraged identity maintenance (Barry 2011). This was highlighted by a first generation Armenian-Australian when discussing the difference between living in Australia and in Jordan was discussed:

In the Middle-Eastern countries it was much easier to keep [children apart from other communities] and teach them about being Armenian because there was a big difference between the locals who were Muslims and we were Christian and there was no mixing either from them or from us. You couldn’t go out with a Muslim girl, but the other way also, they don’t want you, and it was much easier to keep it apart. It is much easier to keep it apart [in Jordan than in Australia] because all of a sudden [in Australia] you don’t have the separation of religion. In a way it is good, but how do you keep that identity here? (Perth, female, first generation)

The situation within Australia challenges maintenance of the Armenian diasporic identity. While integration into the hostland is viewed as positive and necessary for the Armenian-Australian community, assimilation is considered to be losing the Armenian diasporic identity and is to be avoided. Religion leads into the second difference which is the multicultural nature of Australian society. As a second generation Armenian-Australian noted:

Here you might feel like you forget who you are because everyone is so multicultural. Everyone is changing, and things are different here (Sydney, female, second generation).
The strength of Armenian communities in other countries and the natural boundaries which were created do not exist in Australia. Additionally, Australia is also multi-ethnic and multicultural, meaning that cultural lines are not distinct.

The third challenge is the size of the Armenian community in Australia. This is especially the case with Armenian-Australians living in Perth, who are fewer in number than Armenians in Sydney. As noted by one of the interviewees who moved to Australia via Syria and Lebanon, and lives in Perth:

[B]ecause we were here and there were not a lot of Armenians that [my children] could have interacted with, and there was no way, you come to a new country and start new life, and new job and new house and new mortgage, and plus you bring up children, and we thought it would be easy to bring up Armenian children in Australia, but we were mistaken. And we feel guilty about it (Perth, female, first generation).

Due to the smaller community, it is difficult to raise children with a strong Armenian identity. The guilt felt by the interviewee demonstrates the importance she places on raising her children to be Armenian.

The size of the community also influences second generation Armenian-Australians who are expected to not assimilate. One of the Armenians interviewed in Sydney highlighted the expectation from her family to marry an Armenian. However, the limited number of Armenians makes this difficult. Because of family and societal pressure she would probably end up marrying an Armenian man, in order to keep her family happy. She noted, when discussing the challenges of this expectation:
It’s difficult because you...are so limited in the scope of finding a husband, for example, so you are so limited in that sense. Sometimes I think it is not worth it and who cares, because it is difficult...and if you marry someone who isn’t Armenian; it is just going that extra level [of judgment] (Sydney, female, second generation).

Australia challenges the Armenian diasporic identity due to the importance placed on maintaining this, and the circumstances of Australia, including its multi-cultural nature, the small size of the Armenian-Australian community and the Judeo-Christian heritage of Australia. These three circumstances are profoundly different to the circumstances in previous Armenian diasporic communities in the Middle-East.

Conclusion

The genocide plays a constitutive role in the diasporic identity of the Armenian-Australian interview cohort. As a result of the genocide and subsequent dispersion, the ancestors of the majority of Armenian-Australians interviewed were forced into already existent diasporic communities mostly in the Middle-East. This helped to form a diasporic identity based around family, Christianity, loyalty to the homeland, association with other Armenians and an awareness of the achievements of Armenians despite the genocide. The diasporic identity was already in existence before Armenians migrated to Australia, and means that they did not have to create a new identity, rather adapt it to a different hostland. The genocide also fuels the importance of maintaining the Armenian diasporic identity. If Armenian-Australians assimilate, then the genocide has been successful and the importance of not assimilating is connected to the previous generations of Armenians who maintained their identity despite the challenges of the genocide and dispersion. The interview cohort is aware of their diasporic identity and
actively seeks relationships with other Armenians in different parts of the diaspora. The importance of maintaining the Armenian diasporic identity is passed down to second generation Armenian-Australians who embrace this and accept the importance of maintaining their Armenian identity. The genocide also gives context to life in Australia which is attributed to the genocide and subsequent dispersals.

Australia is not viewed as the homeland, but rather as a hostland. For some of the interview cohort, Australia provided stability after the instability of the genocide and living in Middle-Eastern countries often engulfed by conflict. Australia allows them to settle and continue with their lives. However, Australia is also fundamentally different to previous hostlands in the Middle-East which encouraged the maintenance of identity due to the strength of the Armenian communities and the differences between them and other communities in those countries. It is, however, far more challenging to maintain the Armenian diasporic identity in Australia due to the country’s multicultural nature, Judeo-Christian heritage and the small Armenian community. This results in the longing for a stronger space in which to be Armenian demonstrated by the longing for the Armenian communities in the Middle-East. These communities function as the homeland for a number of interviewees, where they feel a sense of belonging based on their Armenian identity.
Chapter 5

Armenian-Australians and the Significance of Genocide Recognition

Introduction

This chapter demonstrates that the family is critical for learning about the genocide and for genocide memory and recognition being mobilised as part of the Armenian-Australian identity. It highlights that genocide recognition is viewed as critical for personal, family and community, and international reasons and also has an important impact on Armenian-Australians developing a sense of belonging to Australia.

Family and Mobilising the Genocide Narrative

The family is the catalyst for Armenians to learn about the genocide. All of those interviewed had at least one great-grandparent, grandparent or parent who had died during the genocide or fled from the Ottoman Empire. This means that the genocide and deportations are family history. Due to family experiences, the majority of those interviewed were aware of the genocide and its impact on their family from a very early age. As noted by a first generation Australia-Armenian who was born in Syria:

At home, when we were growing up, you didn’t need to put in a lot of effort [to learn about the genocide]. It was there, everyone’s family and grandparents were [part of the genocide] (Perth, female, first generation).
Through experiences of family members and ancestors a connection to the past is developed. This was communicated by an interviewee whose father had fled from the Turks aged nine. The interest of his nieces and nephews towards Armenian history was directly related to their interest in their grandparents:

[It is] the family history. They see a picture of their grandfather or grandmother – what happened here? Where are they, where did they come from? They are always interested and they have always been interested. It must really lock somewhere in their minds, that they can’t forget and I think this is the only thing we are passing on to them. The more they grow up, the more they want to know what is happening (Sydney, male, first generation).

The long-term trauma attached to the events also plays a role in individuals trying to find out about and understand their past. A first generation Armenian-Australian highlighted this point:

As I child I remember spending a significant amount of time with my grandmother and [hearing] stories of survivors in my family, so like great grand fathers and grand uncles....It was a priority for her as my grandmother to teach us those stories but she used to make them like as adventurous as possibly could for children, but we always knew there was something that was very dark that happened in that era (Perth, female, first generation).

The importance and the impact of family stories in comparison to reading and researching about Armenian history were best described by an Australian born
Armenian living in Sydney. He related that while he read broadly on the issue, the family stories impacted on him more than reading historical accounts:

If you look at the media, and stories that you read, and point that there is genocide and explain to you what happened and that there is eye-witness accounts, but it hits home a little harder when you have someone telling you a story about what happened to them, or their blood line – I guess it leaves a deeper connection (Sydney, male, second generation).

Attitudes towards further understanding of what happened through additional reading and study were varied. For a number of those interviewed, additional study and education about the events was painful, especially regarding the politics surrounding the event. Note the following quote from an Armenian living in Perth:

I can’t sit for a very long time and read stories of the genocide because they impact on me a lot. They do. And I don’t know why, because I can sit there and read about other things that happened in the world, and I can empathise and sympathise but when I read about stories of the genocide, I can’t. It affects me a lot (Perth, female, first generation).

The way in which members of the Armenian community are taught about the past results in their understanding being shaped by family stories of brutality and survival. The majority of those interviewed reflected an understanding of the events in accordance with family stories, and what they had been told by their parents. An interviewee told a personal story related to his grandfather which had been shared with
him by his mother. His understanding of what happened to the Armenians was based on his understanding of his family history.

My mum tells a story of her dad having to flee his family because he was a boy at the time and stories of being on these people trains just marching across countryside trying to get away from the areas of conflict and having nothing else but the clothes that they are wearing and just trekking hundreds of kilometres to safety (Perth, male, first generation).

Other understandings of the past were restricted to individual stories shared by family members. These individual stories were often based on horrors experienced, and which had shaped and formed the lives of those who experienced the stories. In the following quote, the violence by the Turks witnessed by the family member had been passed onto the next generation, who in turn had told his children about the experience:

I used to listen to the stories of my father-in-law because he experienced the genocide. His father and his uncle were killed in front of him. When the Turks came he hid under the bed and he saw his father and his uncle beheaded, and their heads fell on the floor in front of him. It sort of seared his brain; I think I have heard that story 500 times. He kept repeating the same story, and sometimes I wanted to say, ‘Uncle I have heard this a million times’, and it was like he was mesmerised by how scared he was under the bed, and he saw these people come, and hold them, and despite the exhortations, they cut off their heads, and they let them bleed on the floor (Perth, male, first generation).
While the majority of Armenians depended on family stories as their source of information, some of the interviewees conducted additional research. This still displayed a strong connection to their family stories above the knowledge acquired through research. This can be seen in the following quote from a first generation Armenian-Australian living in Perth who had read widely on Armenian history. When asked what happened during 1915, she related a personal story rather than discussing the historical event:

Well, the part that my grandparents, I am not going to talk about the political things, but just where my grandparents were, I always sort of put myself in their place. We are working here, and we have our house and our properties, and we sort of are looking after our orchards, and fields and then a group of gendarmes come and take the men away, and they lit fires in their houses and had huge amounts of hay and wood collected, and there was fire there and the whole village was lit (Perth, female, first generation).

In this quote the interviewee spoke of the events on a personal level, as if she had experienced them. The past was not an academic or an historical account, but a deeply personally recollection of family stories and trauma. A similar story was related by a first generation Armenian-Australian living in Perth. The interviewee had conducted research into her family’s past, especially in relation to stories she had heard from her mother. This research, combined with her family’s stories had a profound impact on her when she came into contact with Turks in Australia:

I remember there was a time 10 years ago when I was immersed in the stories and the independent verifications, and the eye-witness
accounts and the diplomatic letters – it became real to me in a way that it wasn’t before, it became objectively real as well, that for the first time I went into my local Turkish bakery and stood across the counter, and I had been going to this bakery for years, and I thought, there was a part of me that just wanted to run away. I looked at them and my thought was did your grandfather torture my grandfather? And there is this other part of me that was saying that’s ridiculous, and I knew that even if that was the case, we don’t inherit that guilt, but it was still a really powerful moment that I had to process this, that I am here now living alongside people whose ancestors were there then as well, and if they knew I was Armenian, I wonder how that would change things, but they didn’t know, and it might not make the slightest difference to them (Perth, female, first generation).

The above quote highlights the impact of family stories above additional knowledge of the genocide. While additional knowledge was important in this example, it added to and was focused on family histories rather than functioning independent of the family history. This further demonstrates the significance of the family for teaching Armenian-Australians about the genocide.

Genocide

The Armenian-Australian understanding of the genocide highlighted a number of important points which relate the deaths to the concept of genocide. The first point is that the Armenians were attacked by the Turks within the Armenian homeland. The second point is the brutality of the Turks towards the Armenians. The third point is that
the massacres took place outside of the context of war. The first two of these points can be seen in the following quote from a second generation Armenian-Australian:

What they did, was like cross from like [Western Australia] to South Australia and killed all the Armenians, started killing anything that moved, took them on the death marches, and they were running out of bullets, so what they did was, they put them in a line, and would then shoot so that it goes through three or four of them; bayoneting kids, bayoneting pregnant women...There is a cave in Armenia in the desert there where they stick all these Armenian women and kids and just burnt them, raped the boys, shot the shit out of everybody (Perth, male, second generation).

Despite the ancestral lands inhabited by the Armenians being part of the Ottoman Empire, the quote argues that the Turks entered Armenian land. The brutality of the Turks is also highlighted with reference to Armenian women and children. This can also be seen in the next quote, which similarly highlighted the idea that the Turks entered Armenian lands while emphasising the brutality of the Turkish attacks against the Armenians and also that the attacks did not take place within the context of war:

Fair enough if we went to war against Turkey or Turkey went to war against us, we had troops, they had troops, and we ‘got our arses handed to us’ (sic)\(^4\) in a fight, then fair enough, we lost a war. But when you blatantly come over and have no reason but to kill every single person there that is an Armenian (Perth, male, second generation).

\(^{14}\) This is a colloquial term meaning defeated.
The brutality of the Turks was similarly emphasised in the following quote:

Yeah, we just got slaughtered. No remorse. They don’t think beyond. It was tragic – pregnant women getting raped and cutting babies open, things like that. They just tortured us, instead of killing. They really made us suffer before we died. When growing up, we believed that the things they would do is because it’s the kind of people they are that did it (Sydney, male, second generation).

The second point highlights that the genocide did not take place within a war. Armenians did not die as a result of war; instead they were purposefully targeted based on their ethnicity with the focus of the massacres being to torture and murder Armenians. It was this point which was important for the interviewees in illustrating that genocide was committed against the Armenians. As noted by another interviewee:

They didn’t just kill, it wasn’t just a war where they shot at each other and it ended there, they actually tortured the people. Killing people – that is what happens in war. Genocide is completely different (Sydney, male, second generation).

This point was taken further by a second generation Armenian-Australian in Sydney who drew the comparison between what happened to the Armenians and the deaths of Russians during the Second World War. Making the point that the number of deaths is not an indicator of genocide, he highlighted that the deaths of the Russians took place within the context of war, whereas Armenians were targeted.
I think genocide is an important word for them to recognise because the Russians suffered 20-30 million people dying in World War 2 and that isn’t considered genocide, it is just an outcome of war. Even although the Armenian number is significantly smaller, there was a different intent behind those deaths than war. It was a targeted, racial thing rather than an outcome of war, so I think it is important (Sydney, male, second generation).

This point was extended further to demonstrate why Armenians are unhappy with Turks, whereas other countries do not hate historical enemies:

That’s why I think Australians don’t mind Turkish people or German people or Japanese people or Vietnamese people. It was a war. This wasn’t. Australians go over to Gallipoli every year. We (Australia) had ‘our arses handed to us’ (sic)\(^\text{15}\) in Gallipoli, but it was a war, simple as that. Do you see Americans hating Japanese people? Or Japanese people hating Americans? It was just war (Perth, male, second generation).

At the heart of this is the idea of the intent of the actions by the Ottoman government against the Armenians. The Armenian deaths were not a consequence of conflict or an unfortunate outcome of government actions. The intent of the actions of the Ottoman government was to murder and torture Armenians. It is because of this intent that those interviewed view the deaths of Armenians as genocide. The next quote is placed within the context that the evidence clearly demonstrates that the Turkish government committed genocide against the Armenians, and that despite this evidence, the Turkish

\(^{15}\) An Australian colloquial phrase meaning defeated.
government still refused to recognise what happened. Again, this quote highlights the importance of family stories serving as evidence:

If my family was murdered, and the evidence is black and white, and documented, and they sit there on a box and [are] found not guilty or get acquitted, of course it gets me ‘pissed off’ (sic)¹⁶ (Perth, male, second generation).

This demonstrates the significance attributed to the concept of genocide being applied to the Armenian case by some of the Armenian-Australians interviewed. It also highlights the perceptions of Armenian-Australians towards Turkish denial. Turkey does not reject the allegations based on their belief that they did not commit genocide, but rather on the stigma it would bring if they did accept that the Ottoman government had committed genocide. Turkey’s refusal to accept that they are guilty of genocide is viewed as being for political reasons. Turkish denial results in the pain of the past being kept alive. Turkish refusal to recognise the deaths as genocide is seen as a continuation of the genocide:

If you think about it in a strict sense, it kind of is a continuation. But literally it’s not, but strictly speaking it kind of is. I guess it is just, like, you are killing the spirit because it is just where the Armenians are speaking out about it and getting recognition and it is just being cut off. That’s like; it is in a way a continuation. Whatever [Armenians] are saying is not making a difference (Sydney, female, second generation).

¹⁶ A colloquial term meaning angry.
Anger towards Turkish denial was highlighted by Kalayjian and Weisberg (2002) who demonstrate that Armenian-Americans felt a ‘general paralysis and a deep sense of helplessness’ towards Turkish denial and that ‘all participants [in their study] expressed experiencing feeling an attack on their personhood, feeling like a non-person [and] generalized pain and confusion’. Because of the importance placed on the events being tagged as genocide, the failure by Turkey to politically recognise the events as genocide is essentially denial of Armenian history and the individual suffering and family stories which Armenians have been raised with and which fuel their sense of identity. Anger at Turkish denial was also experienced amongst Armenian-Australians. A second generation Armenian-Australian noted:

It angers me that they don’t recognise [the genocide]. Every time I try to understand it and delve into it, it angers me and infuriates me (Perth, female, first generation).

Turkey’s denial is framed within the social and political significance of the concept of genocide. It is understood that Turkey is reluctant to politically recognise the deaths as genocide as it would have repercussions for them in international politics. The following quote emphasises the emotional impact of the concept of genocide:

I guess [denial] is the connotation of genocide. It is the same reason why [Turkey] would oppose the use of the word. It seems that you could describe an event and give it numbers and not call it genocide and people would take it less seriously than if you didn’t quote any numbers and said genocide. I think it is this preconceived notion of the emotions that it brings out when people hear the word - that is why it is considered so important (Sydney, male, second generation).
Despite political recognition of the deaths as genocide not having legal repercussions, it is argued that Turkey’s refusal to politically recognise the deaths is based on their fear of being rejected by the broader international community. If they were to recognise the deaths as genocide, Turkey would be treated as a pariah. A second generation Armenian-Australian argued:

If I was convicted of a crime, I would deny it. Deny world politics man. No country would ever do business with you; no country will ever want you to be in the Olympics or the Soccer, or this or that. You would just be like that drunken uncle you don’t really want to invite to a party (Perth, male, second generation).

The deaths being recognised as genocide is important to Armenian-Australians due to the normative significance attached to the word. It describes something beyond deaths as a result of war and is also viewed as a descriptor of the suffering endured by Armenians. Tagging the deaths as genocide is significant for emotional reasons rather than legal reasons.

**Oppression of Armenians Today**

Denial of the genocide is linked to Turkey’s ongoing treatment of Armenians in Turkey and the Republic of Armenia. Within the Armenian-Australian community, the situation of Armenians in Turkey is widely discussed where it is highlighted that Armenians in Turkey are not able to live as Armenians. It is also suggested that the history of Armenians in Turkey is denied, with the official Turkish narrative avoiding any reference to Turkish-Armenians. This is especially in rural areas of Turkey which the interviewees
view as their ancestral lands. Turkish repression of Turkish-Armenians was highlighted by a first generation Armenian-Australian:

A lot of the [Armenian] children who stayed behind [during the genocide] were taken by Muslims and became Muslims. My daughter has a friend from Istanbul, who went all around Maresh, and an old man came to him crying, and he was so emotional. [The old man] knew he was Christian, but he became Muslim, and they still keep their identity, they are originally Armenians. There was something on YouTube, [and a lady] said she was Muslim, and then the [interviewee] asked ‘who do you pray to?’, and she said ‘Allah, but in my mind, I pray to Jesus. Like for the show I have to, otherwise they kill me, but in my heart, I pray to Jesus’ (Sydney, female, first generation).

This has a dual impact on the Armenian-Australian community. Firstly it highlights that discrimination against Armenians in Turkey is still ongoing, continuing the genocide. Secondly, it emphasises the importance attributed to maintaining the Armenian identity by people who live in a hostile environment. An Armenian-Australian told the following story about a priest living in Turkey:

There was a gentleman that came to Sydney a couple of years back; he is an Armenian priest from Turkey. He lives in Turkey. For the early part of his life, he didn’t know that he is Armenian, and then he found out. He has a Turkish surname, and then went down the religious path and he has a church and everything, and he has a constant challenge being an Armenian religious leader, in the state of Turkey. While at the same time trying to make sure he keeps his culture and educates his
followers as to what happened [to the Armenians] (Sydney, male, second generation).

Another interviewee related their story of visiting Turkey and noticing firstly discrimination against Armenians in Turkey and secondly the strength of the Armenian culture despite Turkish discrimination:

In 1972 we were going to Greece, and we landed in Turkey in Istanbul, and it was very sad. Sometimes something keeps bugging you, and we went to this shop, it was an Armenian guy, and he was so happy, and he said ‘Shhhh, don’t talk in Armenian’. Two places we went, there were Armenians, and they told us don’t speak Armenian, they were so scared. We stayed in an Armenian hotel in Istanbul, and they have all their feasts and celebrations there, and the tourists are on this side, and the Armenians on the other side (Sydney, female, first generation).

These stories add to the sense of outrage towards Turkish denial and discrimination against Armenians in Turkey. In addition to repression of Turkish-Armenians, interviewees also related stories they had heard of Turkish authorities currently destroying Armenian buildings and churches in eastern parts of Turkey. This was viewed as a further attack on their Armenian culture and heritage. While it was noted by a representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church that the Turkish government, with support of UNESCO, has set about preserving a number of Armenian churches and buildings, interviewees argued that this was not the case and that Turkey undermined and destroyed Armenian culture within Turkey.
Perceived Turkish denial and ongoing discrimination against Armenians negatively influences the way in which interviewees relate to Turks. A second generation Armenian-Australian told a story of his experience with Turks in Lebanon which pointed to them being untrustworthy and was linked to the genocide and the continued denial:

I was in Lebanon in 2006 and it was during the war. I was there and stuck there and the Australian Embassy took us in and said the next day the Turks are bringing a ship in to take us. We got to the boat and just as the first person started climbing on, the Turks said ‘sorry’ and ripped up our contract because Canada gave them more money, and we came off the boat thinking – you know what? They haven’t changed. You can’t trust them and they are not to be trusted (Sydney, male, second generation).

Another second generation Armenian-Australian also highlighted his animosity towards Turks in Australia based on the genocide:

I like Turkish delights, but I like those fried ones that they dip in chocolates, so I say they are Australian delights. I don’t eat anything that is Turkish man, I just don’t like Turks. You notice a lot of them, they are very standoffish, they look at you and start talking to you in Arabic, and I say I am not an Arab, and they start talking in Turkish, and I say – I am Armenian, and they step back a bit, and then you give them a nod and walk off (Perth, male, second generation).

A first generation Armenian-Australian had a similarly strong emotional reaction to a Turkish client:
There were strange things that happened. I remember about 30 years ago, I had a patient, a nice young lady, beautiful, very well spoken, and I was [serving her] and everything was fine, and then I said to her: ‘What background do you come from?’, and she said: ‘I am a Turk’. And I said to my mother that night: ‘You know mum I had this Turkish girl, and when she said she was a Turk, I nearly froze. I just didn’t know whether I could continue doing the treatment or not’. And then [my mother] said to me: ‘It has nothing to do with you. You just get on with your life’. She said that has nothing to do with you and the way you think (Sydney, male, first generation).

Armenian-Australian perceptions towards Turks are still heavily fuelled by the genocide and ongoing Turkish denial.

**Turkey and Genocide Recognition**

The demand for Turkish genocide recognition by Armenian-Australians is based on four reasons. These are:

(a) Recognition of the past;
(b) For family and friends who survived the genocide and fought for genocide recognition;
(c) For the Armenian nation – Armenians in the diaspora and the Republic of Armenia;
(d) To prevent future genocides.
Turkish denial causes additional pain and suffering on top of the genocide. Political genocide recognition by Turkey would recognise that Armenian deaths and trauma happened and that the family stories which Armenian-Australians are raised on are true. This was expressed by a second generation Armenian-Australian:

I just want acknowledgement that this terrible thing that happened to my family and so many other people, we are not making it up, and that is what I hope for. It is just for Turkey to be able to say, yes you are right (Sydney, female, second generation).

The importance of Turkish recognition was expanded to the suffering experienced by family members in the aftermath of the genocide. The personal nature of the genocide and the impact on families are highlighted by the following quote. Denial casts doubt on the family suffering, whereas recognition acknowledges that it happened:

For me, as I was saying in the beginning, its recognition. That is all it is – being recognised. It happened. For them, and my grandma – my grandpa passed in Feb – my grandma, they lived through hard times because after the genocide, she said that she was born, men weren’t working. My grandma doesn’t leave – she cooks a meal in a saucepan, she gets a piece of bread and scrapes the thing clean. They eat everything from the front to the end of the animal. That’s how they learnt because everything was tight, everything was tight man. Cause they found it hard (Perth, male, second generation).

Similarly, the importance of recognition by Turkey was extended to family members, friends and members of the Armenian community who had fought for genocide
recognition. This is extended to community leaders and members. As noted by a second generation Armenian-Australian:

I would feel like all the very passionate Armenians and all the Armenians that have worked for hard for the recognition and that stuff, I would think that their work paid off, and I would be happy for them in particular...I would be happy for my parents, and the principal, and the teachers and the community, and everyone. All the people that have put the hard work in to teach us and encourage us (Sydney, female, second generation).

This opinion was especially communicated by second generation Armenian-Australians and demonstrates the role of Armenian society in ensuring that the issue remains relevant. Rather than desiring genocide recognition for themselves, second-generation Armenian-Australians desire genocide recognition for their parent’s generation and for members of the Armenian community who have taught them about the genocide and importance of recognition. The work done by first generation Armenian-Australians in educating the next generation serves to keep the issue alive. This idea was reflected by a first-generation Armenian-Australian in the following quote:

[Genocide recognition] would be very important. There won’t be closure, because in my experience there is no such thing, you kind of come to terms with something and make a space for it and carry it around with you, and that is certainly something I am still having to do...I will be so delighted because so many people have waited for that, an acknowledgement, maybe even an apology and that died waiting and it would be wonderful if I could see it, I would really like
that, and my mother wanted it so much (Perth, female, first generation).

The third reason for Turkish genocide recognition is to the benefit the Armenian nation – both in the diaspora and in the Republic of Armenia. The lack of justice is viewed as holding the Armenian nation back and adding to the pain of the past trauma. Recognition by Turkey would free Armenians from their past. This can be seen from the following quote by a second generation Armenian-Australian.

We just want to be recognised, because then that would push Armenia forward – as a country and as a people. It will push us forward beyond belief (Sydney, male, second generation).

This point was expanded on in the following quote which highlighted challenges faced by the Republic of Armenia based on the past. If Turkey was to recognise the deaths as genocide and take steps towards rebuilding their relationship with the Republic of Armenia, it would allow Armenia and the diaspora to move forward:

Once we get genocide recognition, that psychological scarring of the Armenians will pass, and when we can live freer, we will do better as a nation as well, because we believe that the issues in our communities are because of the psychological damage of the genocide. A lot that will be much better for us once there is recognition and I think Armenia would benefit from recognition through repartitions, and they might – whatever the situation is, with the sea, or with borders open with Turkey and with that fear that there could be another genocide, cause we are surrounded by enemies, they will be able to work towards
more important things such as building the economy and infrastructure rather than spending all the money on the army. And try to keep alliances just to survive. Once they show a different mindset, then we can continue with our lives and we can see there is reconciliation and move forward with open borders and maybe even be good friends, because we are neighbours now, but we need justice, as anyone wants justice (Sydney, male, second generation).

The lack of recognition by Turkey is considered to hold the Republic of Armenia back and contribute to animosity between Turkey and Armenia. Turkey’s unwillingness to recognise the genocide means that there is a chance that they might commit genocide against Armenians again. The fear of Turkey means that Armenia cannot focus on developing its economy and society, as the country is forced to defend itself against Turkey and other perceived enemies.

The implicit idea in this quote is that if Turkey recognises the genocide they should pay reparations which are viewed as necessary to support Armenia. When the issue of reparations was raised, it was suggested that these should be paid to Armenia rather than individual Armenians or the diaspora. This illustrates support from the Armenian diaspora to the Republic of Armenia. An additional reason for reparations was given as being for the purpose of punitive action against the Turkish state. In this regard the idea was also that the reparations should be paid to the Republic of Armenia in order to support the development of the state. Both of these ideas are highlighted in the following quote:

[Reparations] aren’t important to me, but they are to my culture and my race. I would want reparations from the Turkish state to go to the
Armenian state. I see it as a basic logic thing. If you commit a crime in Australia, you will get punished for it. You don’t just get told don’t do it again, you get punished for it. You can’t exactly put a country in jail, but some sort of punishment for it, whether it be reparations, or giving back land, or whatever it may be. I think there is something that needs to happen (Sydney, male, second generation).

The fourth reason for Turkey to recognise the Armenian genocide is to ensure that future genocides are prevented. Not recognising the Armenian genocide encourages people who might consider committing genocide in the future. A second generation Armenian-Australian argued:

If you let – the famous lines – who remembers the Armenians? Now, imagine the next dictator says, ‘there were 2 or 3 genocides this century, and one of them was forgotten about, so we have a pretty good chance’. If the Armenian genocide is recognised, people might think twice about going forward, and realise they might not get away with it, basically (Perth, male, second generation).

The idea of ensuring that those who are guilty of genocide are held to account in order to ensure other genocides do not take place is well established within the genocide literature and is often used as the biggest reason for the importance of genocide recognition. This is an important aspect of recognising the Armenian genocide for non-Armenians who advocate for recognition of the Armenian genocide; it is not the case with the Armenian-Australians interviewed, apart from one interviewee. The reasons given were personal based on family experiences, or for the sake of the Armenian nation.

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17 As discussed in chapter 1.
– in the diaspora or the Republic of Armenia. This demonstrates the highly personal nature of the Turkish refusal to recognise the deaths of Armenians as genocide and the extent to which the lack of recognition influences those interviewed.

**Australia and Genocide Recognition**

While Turkish denial heavily impacts on interviewees, the lack of recognition by broader society also has a profound impact on Armenian-Australians. Kupelian et al. (1998) emphasised the impact of silence and a lack of understanding from broader society on members of the Armenian diaspora in Australia. They note that the lack of acknowledgement from the broader society, especially from the societies in which refugees had settled, resulted in Armenians feeling ‘alienated and dishonoured, their sufferings pointless’ (Kupelian et al. 1998, p. 195). The lack of acknowledgement from the outside world rendered many Armenians (both the survivors and later generations) unable to ‘mourn, integrate, and heal’. This was also the case for Armenian-Australians, with the lack of understanding from the Australian government and Australian society adding to the pain of the past.

Political genocide recognition by Australia serves two functions. Firstly, as the hostland of members of the Armenian community, the Australian government is viewed as representing ‘their’ citizens of Armenian descent. The issue of recognition of the deaths as genocide is local to Australia and important for integration and developing an Armenian-Australian identity. The lack of Australian genocide recognition is viewed in two ways. Firstly it is the lack of recognition of the massive trauma suffered by Armenians which serves as a lack of recognition of Armenians in Australia. Armenian-Australians have a distinct understanding of themselves as a minority group, and as such take pride in their identity, of which the genocide is an important part. They therefore
struggle with not being widely known about and recognised, especially in Australia, the
country where they have settled. A number of people interviewed noted that lack of
knowledge in Australia about Armenians and the genocide made it difficult to settle into
Australia:

It was also difficult to settle in because when we went to a church here
in Perth no-one knew anything about the genocide, and they couldn’t
understand it (Perth, female, first generation).

Genocide recognition was viewed as similar to the recognition of Armenians in Australia.
Because of the centrality of the genocide to the Armenian identity, genocide recognition
served as recognition of the Armenian identity. Within Australia, therefore, political
recognition of the genocide would assist Armenian-Australians in developing a sense of
belonging to Australia:

I want the Australian government to recognise [the genocide]. It’s
important because Armenians are more recognised in America, we
have always been a very small population and everyone knows about
the Italians and the Greeks but they don’t know about the Armenians,
and it’s like the first genocide, so it is important for them to
understand that. It would help show what a strong nation [Armenians]
are and some important things of us (Sydney, female, second
generation).

The same idea was expressed by a first generation Armenian-Australian:
[Genocide recognition] would have helped my integration into Australia if they had recognised it. I think because, until recently at least it has been difficult to have to explain it to people, because if they don’t know anything about it, they are shocked to hear about it, and the response is very often how come we don’t know about that, if it really happened, we would know about it (Perth, female, first generation).

The second reason for genocide recognition is the role that Australia can play in advocating for political genocide recognition on the international stage and the pressure it can place on Turkey. This is tied into the first point. Australia’s international role is premised in the responsibility of the government towards Armenian-Australians and the importance of Australia taking a stand for Armenian-Australians. By Australia taking a stand on the issue and advocating for political genocide recognition, Armenian-Australians would feel a greater sense of belonging to Australia. It would be recognition of Armenian-Australians in Australia:

There are Australian citizens living here whose families were destroyed and lost their language and their culture and everything and they are just waiting for somebody to force the issue (Perth, female, first generation).

This idea was similarly supported by a second generation Armenian-Australian who argued that if the Australian government was to recognise the genocide and take a stand in this area, it would assist in their integration into Australia:
I would have to say that it would definitely improve my feeling of identity with Australia if they did recognise it, as it shows the understanding of the plight of the Armenians as a country and they are officially taking a stand saying they are recognising it, and in order to avoid these things happening in the future, we are taking the stance of recognising it and saying it can’t happen in future to other nations (Sydney, male, second generation).

Australia can play an important role in creating a sense of belonging for the Armenian-Australians. However, this sense of belonging needs to be created in recognition of the Armenian identity and the Armenian past. The failure to recognise the genocide results in Armenian-Australians feeling a lack of acceptance, support and understanding from the Australian government and broader Australian society. Their sense of belonging to Australia is therefore created by recognition of their ethnic and diasporic identity, on this occasion through genocide recognition. This highlights the importance of the Armenian diasporic identity for Armenian-Australians and the tension between being Australian and being Armenian. The recognition of the Armenian identity and history serves as the manner in which Armenians are better able to feel a connection and create a sense of belonging to Australia as their hostland.

An important part of genocide recognition and developing a sense of belonging is memorials commemorating the Armenian genocide. This is strongly present in Sydney where there are three genocide monuments. The first is in the remembrance garden of the Parliament of NSW and was erected in 1998 after the Parliament had recognised the Armenian genocide in 1997. The second is in a park in the eastern suburb of Ryde, built in 2005 after lobbying from the local Armenian community, and ‘commemorate[s] the 90th Anniversary of the Genocide of the Armenians perpetrated by the then Ottoman government during 1915-1922 that claimed the lives of 1.5 million men, women and
The third monument, also in the eastern suburbs of Sydney in Lane Cove, is located in a graveyard. Built in 1989 by the Armenian Near East Relief Society with support from the Armenian Apostolic Church in Sydney, it is to serve as a ‘memorial in sacred memory of the Armenian Martyrs of the 1915 Holocaust’.

The memorial at the NSW Parliament is viewed as more significant than the other two memorials as it was not created by the Armenian community but by the NSW government. An Armenian-Australian community leader in Sydney involved in the creation of the memorial noted:

The monument we have in Parliament was, they passed the resolution – government and opposition, and the next year they passed another resolution to erect a monument and they approached us and we had a committee and discussed it with the government and everything and they said we had to erect the monument. I said ‘no – not us. You passed the resolution, you have to make the monument, our contribution will be a cross stone to the monument’. So the monument in a way wasn’t Armenians’ monument, but NSW government’s monument. There is nuance to that. The Turks can’t say that we built a monument, it was the NSW government.

No longer is it only Armenians claiming that genocide was committed against them, but also the NSW government who are willing to erect a memorial to Armenian genocide victims. This point was made by another community leader in Sydney:

In terms of political meaning, having a memorial inside the NSW state Parliament in the Garden, politically is very important because it is an
affirmation by the state that the genocide occurred, so it’s an identification. It is also a reminder to the newly elected MPs, that when they go to the garden, that such a resolution was passed.

The two other memorials serve important commemorative purposes. Due to the nature of the deaths of Armenians and the forced dispersion of Armenians from Turkey, very few of those that died were properly buried. The memorials in Sydney are viewed as important places where Armenian-Australians can honour family members who died during the genocide. A second generation Armenian-Australian noted:

A memorial for me and individuals of the Armenian-Australian community is just a place where we can gather to remember. It doesn’t necessarily mean more than that. You have to remember that those that perished in 1915 don’t have a burial site and many of us have cousins and relatives who perished in 1915, and for us it is a place to remember (Sydney, male, second generation).

While there are no genocide memorials in Perth, one of the interviewees requested that the Western Australian government build a genocide memorial, which was rejected with no reason given. The failure by the Western Australian government to allow a genocide memorial is viewed as not recognising the existence of Armenians in Australia. This is especially important as there are two memorials which commemorate the Australian landing at Gallipoli and the relationship between Turkey and Australia which has developed from this. For the interviewee who had requested the erection of an Armenian genocide memorial, it is viewed as the Western Australian government choosing sides between the Armenians and the Turks. In Western Australia for example, in the town of Albany, a statue of Atatürk was erected in 2005. The lack of a memorial in
Perth challenges the sense of belonging of Armenian-Australians. A memorial would be viewed as active and conscious recognition of Armenians in Australia, and that they belong to and are part of Australia:

I would like to say to recognise who we are and give us a spot in Kings Park so that we can go there. It’s sad, we go and sit there and watch the monument there, but feel like we don’t have one. Not long ago, the Turks had one, and we wonder why are they giving it to the Turks and not us? You talk about discrimination not happening in this country, a democratic country and whatever, and yet to a small group, there is, whether they like it or not. I would like to have a spot there, and say this is ours, and feel like we belong to something. Now we don’t have anything that we go to and belong to (Perth, female, first generation).

A sense of belonging in Australia is dependent on Australia recognising key aspects of the Armenian identity, and providing a place where those aspects of the Armenian identity can be commemorated and appreciated. The sense of belonging is dependent on the recognition of the Armenian diasporic identity, and without this recognition, members of the community feel they do not belong to Australia. Australia therefore plays a critical role in creating a sense of belonging and in allowing members of the Armenian-Australian community to feel at home within Australia and feel connected to Australia through the recognition of the deaths of Armenians as genocide and the commemoration of their deaths.

One area in which Armenian history and perceptions of Turks clashes with Australian collective memory revolves around the Australian founding narrative based on their
involvement during the Gallipoli campaign in the First World War. The Gallipoli campaign is viewed as the first campaign in which Australia, as a young nation, was involved in a conflict without being compelled to do so by the British Empire. Additionally, the success and skills of the Australian soldiers is emphasised. This has developed into an important part of the Australian national identity (Donoghue & Tranter 2013), with ANZAC day, falling on the 25th of April, commemorating Australian casualties and celebrating the ‘ANZAC spirit’ which was formed on the shores of Gallipoli, Turkey (West 2008). The ANZAC spirit emphasises a number of attributes of Australian soldiers and therefore of the Australian nation. This includes the hardworking nature of the soldiers, their larrikin attitude, and their commitment (West 2008).

A significant part of the Australian founding myth of Gallipoli and the growing relationship between Turkey and Australia is the celebration of the Turks as noble and gentlemanly victors.18 This highlights the decency of the Turkish troops in their engagement with Australian troops and of Turkey respecting the Australian war dead. In Canberra, Australia’s capital city, there is a monument to Kemal Atatürk. He is the only Australian ‘enemy’ to have a monument on ANZAC Parade, which is the principal memorial parade in Canberra. The relationship between Australia and Turkey surrounding the battle at Gallipoli can be seen in a poem written by Atatürk in 1934 and posted on his memorial in Canberra which highlights the shared cost of war experienced by both Australia and Turkey during the Gallipoli campaign and the friendship between Australia and Turkey resulting from this conflict. The poem reads (Australia.gov.au 2009):

Those heroes that shed their blood
and lost their lives...
You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country.

18 This will be discussed below.
Therefore rest in peace.
There is no difference between the Johnnies
and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side
here in this country of ours...
You, the mothers,
who sent their sons from far away countries
wipe away your tears;
your sons are now lying in our bosom
and are in peace,
after having lost their lives on this land they have
become our sons as well.

This poem highlights that Australians and Turks, despite being enemies at Gallipoli, are
no longer so and that Australia’s dead rest in peace in Turkey, not as enemies but as
friends. The perceptions of Australians towards Turks is further expressed in a poem by
Charles Bean, entitled ‘Abdul’ written in 1916 (ANZAC 2010), which highlights the
gentlemanly nature of the Turkish soldiers:

For though your name be black as ink
For murder and rapine
Carried out in happy concert
With your Christians from the Rhine,
We will judge you, Mr. Abdul,
By the test by which we can -
That with all your breath, in life, in death,
You've played the gentleman.
In this regard, the Armenian identity clashes with the Australian identity. The Australian identity, broadly defined in relation to Gallipoli and the developing relationship with Turkey, conflicts with the Armenian-Australian identity and the attempt to forge and create an Armenian-Australian identity which unites both the Armenian memory of the past with an Australian identity. Whereas the Armenians view the Turks as guilty of genocide and committing the most abhorrent crimes against their ancestors and family members, the Australian narrative views Ottoman soldiers in exactly the same time period and in the same region as a noble and valiant enemy who ‘played the gentleman’.

The unique bond between Turkey and Australia was given during the interviews as a reason for the reluctance of Australia to recognise the Armenian genocide. It is suggested that in order for Australia to maintain its relationship with Turkey, and build on the Australian historical narrative of Gallipoli, it is necessary to avoid any discussion or any analysis of that conflict as it negatively influences the relationship between those two countries. Interviewees suggested that it is necessary for Australia to ignore the Armenian genocide as it would undermine the relationship between Turkey and Australia. A first generation Armenian-Australian argued:

There has been this rapprochement between Turkey and Australia that completely overlooks the genocide and the beginning of the genocide and its coincidence with the massing of the fleet of the Dardanelles, and that there must have been Australian soldiers there or military personnel, just as there were American, and French and German and British who knew what was going on. But it’s like, all that has to be silenced in order for the friendship between Turkey and Australia to grow. And it’s not that I don’t want that friendship, I understand that it’s important for former foes to move beyond that and it’s important
to the Australian narrative but it’s such an insult (Perth, female, first generation).

It is difficult for some of the Armenian-Australians interviewed to develop a sense of belonging to Australia based on this. While the Turkish soldiers and leadership during the campaign are praised as great and noble adversaries by Australians, Armenian-Australians are not recognised in Australia. Commenting on feelings towards ANZAC day, a day after Armenian Genocide Memorial day on the 24th of April, a first generation Armenian-Australian communicated how split she felt as an Armenian-Australian:

It really feels like such a slap in the face, and it comes around every year, and we go to the memorial for the souls of the dead on the 24th and we wake up to, and when my children were young and they were at home and it was part of their culture and culturally important to watch the ceremony on TV and listen to the speeches and in some years, especially during the time there was, Howard (a former Australian Prime Minister, 1996-2007) was in power there was the connection built and the memorial was built in Albany, it would make me fiercely ill to have to be there and so split, in terms of identity, irreconcilably. I don’t know what the answer is really (Perth, female, first generation).

One way in which the identity clash is countered is through connecting the history of the genocide to Australian history and more specifically the ANZAC tradition. This combines the Armenian identity with Australian identity, uniting the two histories. Babkenian (2008), for example, focuses on the humanitarian role that Australia played in assisting Armenian refugees who fled from Ottoman Turkey. He discusses the creation of the
Armenian Relief Fund of NSW, which was led by Edith Glanville and also supported by other notable Australians of that time, including the first Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Charles Lloyd Jones and Oscar Lines, the general manager of the Bank of NSW. Babkenian (2008) notes that the Armenian Relief Fund raised ‘more than $100,000 worth of supplies (about $19 million in today’s value) within months’. The Australian Prime Minister of that time, Billy Hughes, ‘promised free freight would be provided by commonwealth steams for any contribution to the fund’ and a prominent religious leader of that time, Rev. JE Cresswell, helped to establish an Australian funded orphanage which housed 1,700 Armenian orphans. Babkenian’s (2008) article combines Australia’s history with that of the Armenians, demonstrating the connection between Australia and the Armenian refugees, which has been under researched and largely forgotten. As noted in the article “[o]ne group who remembers the Armenians are a handful of Australians who were at the forefront of the relief effort, yet their stories have been largely hidden. Not one Australian historian has devoted any attention to these remarkable Australians, who have been forgotten along with the “forgotten genocide”’. The point is strongly made in this article that Australia is neglecting their own humanitarian history, which was clearly expressed by the high levels of charity offered to Armenian refugees and that there is a strong historical relationship between Armenian refugees and Australia. Armenian history and Australia is therefore directly linked in a positive way. Through celebrating Australia’s humanitarian past, the injustice suffered by the Armenians is highlighted and becomes part of Australia’s collective memory. This forges a stronger identity for Armenian-Australians.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that the family is central to teaching Armenian-Australians about the genocide. Family stories form the central basis of knowledge which is then extended through individual research. The deaths are viewed as genocide.
due to the innocence of Armenians and the violent methods used by the Turkish government to kill Armenians. The genocide is essentially viewed as ongoing due to Turkish denial, which ties into Armenian perceptions of Turkey and Turks today. Recognition by Turkey of the Armenian genocide is desired for personal, family, community and international reasons. Genocide recognition by Australia would provide for a greater sense of belonging to Australia as it would be recognition of the central part of the identity of Armenian-Australians. The genocide is used as a means of creating a sense of belonging to Australia through the erection of genocide monuments and the adaptation of the Australian founding narrative of Gallipoli to include Australia’s humanitarian assistance to Armenian refugees. This serves to link Australian history to Armenian history and makes the genocide and its aftermath part of Australian history. This demonstrates an active construction of an Armenian-Australian identity through demonstrating the links between Australia and Armenians.
Chapter 6

Turkish-Australians and the Armenian Question

Introduction

This chapter discusses how Turkish-Australians learn about and view the Turkish historical narrative and the Armenian Question. It demonstrates that engaging with the narrative in Australia is reactive to Armenian-Australian or international Armenian activism campaigning for genocide recognition. It also highlights that the Armenian Question and genocide allegations do not lead to Turkish-Australians questioning the Turkish narrative, but rather strengthens their Turkish identity in Australia.

Turkish-Australians

In the 2011 Australian Census, 66,926 people claimed Turkish ancestry (ABS 2013). This figure is contested by the Turkish community organisations and the Turkish consulate who claim that there are 155,000 people of Turkish heritage in Australia, including first, second and third generation Turkish-Australians. The difference between the Census and community estimates is attributed to a lack of knowledge from the Turkish community regarding the importance of filling out the Census form to indicate their Turkish heritage. As such, the Turkish Consulate General tries to ensure that members of the Turkish-Australian community complete their Census forms by highlighting their Turkish heritage, with the Turkish Consulate General emphasising that this is the expectation of the Australian government. While this might play a role within explaining the large discrepancies in the Census data and Turkish-Australian community estimates,
it is not clear whether the Turkish identity has been passed onto second or third generation Australians with Turkish heritage. They might not view themselves as Australians with Turkish ancestry, but instead as Australians.

A limited number of people from the Ottoman Empire lived in Australia during the 19th century. The majority of these were non-Muslims, ‘consisting mostly of Jews, Armenians, Georgians and Greeks’, with the ‘Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 excluding non-Europeans, including those born in Turkey from entry to Australia’ (DIAC 2012). This trend continued through the first half of the 20th Century with 281 Turkish-born people living in Australia in 1933 and 252 in 1947. Turkish migration to Australia started properly in 1967 through a bi-lateral agreement on assisted migration which aimed for ‘an intake of 30 per cent skilled and 70 per cent unskilled migrants’ (DIAC 2012) moving from Turkey to Australia. The number of Turks in Australia rose from 1544 in 1961 to 11,589 in 1971 (DIAC 2012). The intention of the assisted migration agreement between Turkey and Australia differed from migration agreements between Turkey and European countries. The focus of the migration schemes with European countries was on using Turks as ‘guest workers’ on short term visas, who would return to Turkey after a short period of time. The intention of the Australian government was to populate the Australian continent by acquiring long-term migrants who would settle in Australia (Şenay 2010). This was not the intention of the Turkish government, which preferred guest workers who would earn money outside of Turkey and then return (Şenay 2010). The Australian government aimed for Turkish migrants to settle long term in Australia. This is reflected in the Australian government granting citizenship and allowing Turks to become dual citizens, which differed from a number of European countries.

Immigration from Turkey to Australia ‘declined in the first half of the 1980s and resumed growth in the second half due to high inflation and unemployment in Turkey’ (DIAC
Immigration from Turkey to Australia has further declined since the 1990s with the majority of Turkish immigrants arriving in Australia through the family migration programme and the general skilled migration scheme.

There are a number of Turkish organisations within Australia. These reflect the complex and diverse nature of the Turkish community which is split along religious, ethnic and political lines. There are four main Turkish organisations in Perth, each serving a different purpose. The Turkish Islamic Association of WA is affiliated to the mosque in Queen’s Park, a southern suburb of Perth, which was founded by Turkish migrants; the Turkish-Australian Culture House focuses largely on Turkish nationalistic events such as Republic Day and Youth Day; the Baris Foundation is a school association attached to Damla College; and the Turkish Business Association of Western Australia.

There are also a number of different Turkish organisations in Sydney. Similar to the Perth environment, these can be split into organisations which are religious (attached to mosques or focused on Islam); educational organisations based around schools; business associations; community welfare groups; and Turkish cultural and nationalistic organisations which are numerous and split between different political and ethnic groups. These different groups are also based along ethnic lines, such as Alevi, Kurdish and Cypriot groups as well as leftist and rightist groups. In Sydney, for example, there is the Australian Turkish Cultural Trust and the People’s House, which are both Turkish cultural organisations, the Alevi Cultural Centre, an Alevi group which is focused mainly on providing assistance to new Alevi immigrants within Australia, although they are also involved in organising cultural events, and the Australian Turkish Kurdish Association, a Kurdish group. There is a large split within Turkish-Australian organisations between leftists and rightists, although these are not as pronounced as they were in the past (Şenay, 2010). The rightist organisations include the Turkish Welfare Association (often called the Turkish House or TWA) which assists in the integration of Turkish migrants and
functions as a cultural and social centre which hosts seminars and lectures for the Turkish community, organised by various organisations including the Turkish Consulate in Sydney. The Australia Atatürk Cultural Centre, rather than focusing on issues of welfare, has focused on cultural and social activities within Australia for the Turkish community with a Kemalist ideology.

The large number of groups within Sydney, and to a lesser extent within Perth, makes for a fragmented community within Australia (Şenay, 2010). No community group can claim to represent the interests of the Turkish community and there are no Turkish public affairs organisations which campaign on behalf of the Turkish-Australian community. Other than organisations which are part of the Fettullah Gülen movement,¹⁹ there are no examples of transnational organisations or organisations with ties to Turkish organisations in other countries. Nor are there Turkish political parties which have formed in Australia. Cooperation between Turkish-Australian organisations in different Australian states is also informal, with no national Turkish-Australian umbrella organisations.

The Turkish state maintains links with the Turkish community in Australia in a number of ways. This is part of the growing interest by the Turkish state in mobilising Turkish communities around the world (as discussed in chapter 3). It provides Imams for mosques with a Turkish connection in Australia through the Presidency of Religious Affairs from the Republic of Turkey.²⁰ However this influence is limited as the mosques are not exclusively led by Turkish Imams and do not provide religious space only for Turkish-Australians. The Turkish Imams are losing relevance as the second and third generations of Turkish-Australians are not able to speak Turkish.²¹ The two mosques in

¹⁹ This will be discussed in detail in chapter 7.
²⁰ This was confirmed during interviews with community leaders and Turkish government representatives.
²¹ This was noted during interviews with community leaders and second generation Turkish-Australians.
Sydney with a strong Turkish connection proactively provide English speaking Islamic teachers for non-Turkish Muslims and also for younger generations of Turkish-Australians. Alongside this connection, textbooks for Turkish Saturday schools are sourced through the Turkish Consulate from Turkey.\footnote{This was confirmed during interviews with community leaders and Turkish government representatives.}

Another important connection between the Turkish-Australian community and Turkish government is through conscription into the Turkish army, which has to be undertaken in order for first generation Turks to maintain their Turkish citizenship and for second generation Turks to acquire Turkish citizenship (Cektir 2010). If Turks outside of Turkey want to maintain their Turkish citizenship, they are expected to complete military service or pay a fee to avoid this (Today’s Zaman 2012). While data regarding the number of Turkish-Australian conscripts is not available, three interviewees had undergone training in the Turkish army in order to maintain their Turkish citizenship.

There are also informal connections between the Turkish state in Australia and Turkish-Australian community members. Contacts within the Turkish-Australian community were provided through the Turkish Consulate and Turkish government representatives are in contact with members of the Turkish-Australian community. Turkish state representatives are also in contact with members of the Turkish community through email lists and publishing letters in Turkish-Australian media.\footnote{This information was provided during interviews with Turkish-Australian community members and leaders.}

Turkish migrants to Australia reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of Turkey. Within Australia, there are: Kurdish, Alevi, Cypriot, Jewish and Christian Turks and ethnic Turks. The research sample did not aim to include Kurdish, Cypriot or Alevi Turks as these three groups have their own history and conflicts with the Turkish state, with the Armenian
Question less relevant to them for this reason. Their ethnic identity in Turkey is in conflict with the dominant Turkish identity and this would likely carry through into the migrant situation. The research therefore focused on the mainstream Turkish-Australian perceptions towards the Armenian Question.

Interviews were conducted with ten Turkish-Australians in Perth and nine in Sydney to assess their views on the Armenian Question and its impact on notions of identity. All interviewees viewed themselves as Turks living in Australia. The sample can be broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>First Generation Australian</th>
<th>Second Generation Australian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quotes used below will be marked with location, gender and generation of the interviewee. Interviews were also conducted with a representative of the Turkish Consulate General in Sydney and the Turkish Ambassador in Canberra. The purpose of this was to understand the Turkish government’s perceptions towards the Armenian Question, how the Turkish government is counters the allegations and their interaction with the Turkish-Australian community.
State and Education Institutions in Turkey

The majority of interviewees who received their primary and secondary education in Turkey were not taught about the Armenian Question in school. Dixon (2010b) highlights that the curriculum in Turkish schools with reference to the Armenian Question has changed over the years. She notes that it is only recently that the Turkish state has begun to teach a counter-narrative to the Armenian allegations through the education system. While in the past nothing was said about Armenians within the history curriculum, recent developments in the education system have resulted in a direct rejection of the Armenian allegations being taught. The Turkish state has changed their historical curriculum with reference to the Armenian Question in accordance with Armenian success at having their narrative accepted around the world. The Turkish state has therefore been reactive to Armenian political lobbying.

The majority of interviewees who received their education in Turkey did so before the Armenian Question was taught within schools. A first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth highlighted a lack of education on the topic:

That is one thing we lack in [the] Turkish education system, although it is probably the common norm. We weren’t really enlightened about these things before university. To be honest I didn’t have a clue when I was in high school because it was all formal history that they show[ed] (Perth, female, first generation).

While the majority of the interviewees had not learnt about the Armenian Question during school, one of the interviewees who lived in Perth and moved to Australia after
completing her university education did note that she had completed a project on the topic:

When I was in high school [during the 1970s], we were picked to do a subject in history and do a literature survey on it and I picked the Armenian genocide. I think it must have been when the Armenian militia of terrorists attacked Turkish diplomats in Europe. I think that is why I chose it. I did huge research on it and that’s how I know about the Armenian militia and things like that (Perth, female, first generation).

A project completed in a Turkish school during her teens, served as the basis for her knowledge and understanding on the issue. In this example Armenian activism served as the catalyst for research about the Armenian Question at school in Turkey.

Another interviewee highlighted that she learnt about the Armenian Question at school in Turkey, however the emphasis was not directly on the allegations. Turkish history was not taught as a direct counter-narrative; however it provided the interviewee with an understanding of Turkish history which allowed her to question the Armenian allegations. When asked how she learnt about the Armenian Question, she replied:

Mixture of family and school. Probably didn’t talk about genocide, we talked about the war and after that what happened, when the Ottomans became the Turkish republic, so from 1918 to 1923, when Turkey became Republic, we had war, and what Turkey is today, was occupied. So we studied a lot about that (Perth, female, first generation).
The Armenian Question is covered in some university courses in Turkey and ignored in others. A first generation Turkish-Australian in Sydney, who believes that genocide was committed, highlighted the lack of engagement in either direction with the topic, stating:

There was nothing in Turkey [about the Armenian genocide] and I studied Political Science. There wasn’t much visibly from the other side, probably the Armenian uprising was mentioned but there was no real discussion around what actually happened in 1915. A discussion just giving one side of Turkey’s story. I don’t recall anything significant being studied (Sydney, male, first generation).

In contrast to this, a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth studied the Armenian Question at a Turkish university. This served as the basis for his view that genocide had not been committed. While having been encouraged to read the Armenian point of view, his opinion had been formed by authors such as Bernard Lewis, who argues that the Ottoman government did not commit genocide. The existence of a formal, academic narrative, authored by Turkish and American academics, which counters the Armenian claims and was learnt in Turkey, was critical to shaping his understanding and views on the issue.

The Turkish army serves as an important institution of the Turkish state and teaches a nationalistic version of Turkish history. This is significant for Turkish-Australians who undertake conscription. A first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney had recently completed his conscription in Turkey. Although he did not think the Ottoman government committed genocide, he did believe that the Ottoman government had murdered a number of Armenians and committed unnecessary crimes against Armenian
citizens. He highlighted that the Turkish army taught that Armenians had committed genocide against the Turks, and that they had been assisted by a number of Christian Western Powers. Very few of the interviewees learnt about the Armenian Question in Turkey and for those that did, the knowledge highlighted that genocide was not committed by the Ottoman government.

**The Role of the Family**

The Armenian Question is not regularly spoken about within the Turkish-Australian community or Turkish-Australian families. The majority of interviewees were not taught about the Armenian Question within the family environment and did not discuss the Armenian Question with their children. This is the case for two reasons. Firstly, the issue is not personal for Turks as it is for Armenians. The accusations are aimed at the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish state, rather than individual Turks. For the Armenians it is personal as it involves the death and suffering of family members and the loss of land and culture. This was highlighted by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth:

> If, for example, you are coming from an Armenian family, and your grandparents have come from Turkey or been killed, and you don’t have any relatives, how would you explain this to your children? It has affected their lives significantly. It is their history (Perth, female, first generation).

Secondly the Armenian allegations are viewed as untrue and it is therefore not necessary to discuss the Armenian Question. A second generation Turkish-Australian made this point:
To Turkish kids growing up it’s not an issue. They are not taught about it because we don’t believe anything happened, whereas the Armenians and some others are taught while they are growing up that these people [Turks] are your enemy (Sydney, male, second generation).

The discussion of the genocide allegations rarely comes up during Turkish-Australian cultural events, discussions at home or discussions with friends. This means that many Turkish-Australians, especially second generation Turkish-Australians, do not understand the Armenian allegations and are not aware of the Turkish counter-narrative. This was clear during the recruitment phase of the research. A Turkish-Australian leader in Sydney highlighted the low levels of knowledge regarding the issue within the second generation. He stated that the allegations lead to confusion and anger for second generation Turkish-Australians and many of them thought that the allegations referred to a current war between Turkey and Armenia. This was highlighted by an interviewee in Sydney:

I think there is a lot of Turkish pride at stake, especially from the knowledgeable ones, who are the older ones because they are more open to reading or listening to the media via satellite, and every year in April you will get the same issue from the USA coming out. The youngsters won’t be watching it. They might pick up the news here, and they don’t understand the issues (Sydney, male, second generation).

The Armenian Question is therefore rarely discussed within the family or community by Turkish-Australians. This leads to a low level of knowledge regarding the Armenian
allegations and confusion when members of the community are confronted by the allegations, especially amongst second generation Turkish-Australians.

Encountering the Allegations in the Migrant Space

For the majority of the interviewees, learning about the Armenian Question and the Armenian allegations of genocide occurred in Australia, most often through Turkish media. The majority of those interviewed read Turkish news online, and six of the interviewees watch Turkish satellite TV. The allegations were often only encountered when news of an Armenian attempt at genocide recognition was discussed in the Turkish media. This was most often with reference to Genocide resolutions in America. This means that learning about the Armenian Question is reactive to successful Armenian activism and only becomes relevant to Turkish-Australians when it is successfully raised politically by Armenians. As one of the interviewees noted:

What happens is that every year [on the 24th of April, the commemoration day for the Armenian genocide] the US try to have this resolution passed through. Is it going to pass, is it not going to pass? I see this in Turkish newspapers, and then read a couple of articles about it (Perth, male, first generation).

Similarly, another interviewee, who was born in Turkey and moved to Australia after completing her university studies, noted:

I haven’t done research on [the issue on whether or not it was genocide]. Here or there I read that one Parliament accepted that, and
then I read in a Turkish newspaper it didn’t happen, but I don’t go in depth. It is possible [that genocide did happen] (Perth, female, first generation).

The allegations of genocide remain largely irrelevant for the majority of interviewees. The allegations are encountered with regards to political debates in other countries, as covered in the Turkish press. When asked how often the issue was raised amongst the Turkish-Australian community, one interviewee noted:

Very seldom. Very, very seldom. Only if it’s on the news and we have seen it in America or something, and then that’s it, and it will be a one day topic (Perth, female, first generation).

The Armenian Question when raised internationally is not of immediate significance or relevance to the lives of Turkish-Australians. It becomes relevant when it is raised in Australia and serves as the catalyst for some of the interviewees to learn about the Armenian Question. The decision from a number of interviewees to learn about the Armenian Question was responsive to Armenians raising it in Australia. This point was made by a second generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney. He highlighted his general lack of knowledge regarding the Armenian Question and the allegations of genocide and how his decision to learn about the allegations was fuelled through reading about it in the media:

I understood that [the Armenians] were once part of Ottoman lands, but I never really understood the story and I would hear the genocide in the media, and hear about it here and there and until I came to the time that I decided to learn about it (Sydney, male, second generation).
While there was not one clear instance which resulted in him conducting research into the matter, it was through media coverage of the Armenian Question being raised in Australia that he learnt about the genocide allegations and researched the Turkish narrative. The outcome of his research was that genocide was not committed by the Ottoman government against Armenians.

For another Turkish-Australian interviewed in Sydney, a campaign by Assyrian-Australians to build a genocide monument in Fairfield, the suburb where he was born and had lived his whole life, served as the catalyst for learning about the Assyrian claims of genocide and the Armenian Question. Before encountering the Assyrian genocide allegations within Australia, he had spent little time researching them and had also not been taught about the Armenian Question or Turkish counter claims:

I wasn’t taught anything about this and I was like [younger Turks who don’t know about the allegations of genocide] five years ago, I didn’t feel this strongly about [the allegations of genocide]. But over time, once I started doing research, I became knowledgeable about the issue and I started to care more. I didn’t understand what genocide meant until I was 30 (Sydney, male, second generation).

24 The significance of the Assyrian Monument, as will be discussed below, is that it challenges the Turkish understanding of their past in the same way as the Armenian genocide does. Although not as widely acknowledged or researched as the Armenian genocide, Assyrians claim that at the same time as the Armenian genocide, the Ottoman government also committed genocide against them and that the Armenian and Assyrian genocides took place in the same way and at the same time (Khosroeva 2007, 2007b, 2009). It became clear during the interviews that Turkish-Australians especially in Sydney saw these two sets of allegations similarly and spoke about them as if they were the same allegations. The essence of the allegations is the same and the impact on the Turkish identity is the same. The Ottoman government is accused of committing genocide against a Christian minority group. The main difference is that the Assyrian genocide allegations are not as well known as the Armenian allegations by Turkish-Australians and Assyrians have not had as much success at gaining political recognition and publicising their genocide allegations as the Armenians have.
Encountering accusations in Australia against the Ottoman Empire of genocide resulted in him conducting research. His research concluded that the Ottoman government was not guilty of committing genocide against the Armenians or the Assyrians. This was the likely outcome of the sources he had used during his research which included a number of Turkish state sources, Turkish language sources and Turkish state websites. His faith was placed in the opinion of the Turkish state and Turkish language sources and it was not necessary to look at other sources which are available online.

Engagement with the Armenian Question within the migrant space also influenced those who believe that genocide was committed by the Ottoman government. Exposure to the Armenian Question came about either as a result of media coverage of an event or interaction with Armenians in Australia which was not possible in Turkey. A first-generation Turkish-Australian who completed his undergraduate studies in Political Science at a Turkish university first properly encountered the genocide allegations after having moved to Australia to undertake post-graduate studies:

While I was in Turkey, I didn’t have any Armenians around me. I grew up in Ankara, and in contrary to Istanbul, we don’t have many Armenians or non-Muslims, or Christians. So in my social circles I never had Armenian friends, or if they were, I never had that information...so the real realisation of what actually happened to Armenians in 1915 started when I came to Australia and started to talk to Armenians that I meet here, so it is a very late realisation of that fact that it was a genocide...I actually started to read about 1915, and read many different books and also talked to Armenian friends that I met here, it just happened when I actually left the comfort zone that we have in Turkey (Sydney, male, first generation).
There is an important geographical point to make about encountering the Armenian Question in Australia. There has been no political activism from Armenian-Australians in Perth, while there has been significant political activism in Sydney. This includes the New South Wales Parliament recognising the Armenian genocide in 1997, three Armenian genocide memorials and the Assyrian genocide memorial. Knowledge about and interest in the Armenian Question was higher amongst Turkish-Australians interviewed in Sydney than Perth. Only four interviewees in Perth knew that the NSW Parliament had recognised the Armenian genocide in 1997 and they did not know about genocide monuments in Sydney. All of those interviewed in Sydney knew about the NSW Parliament decision and the Assyrian genocide monument. In Australia exposure and interaction with the Armenian Question differs from state to state (NSW with Western Australia). This partly explains why the majority of Turkish-Australians interviewed in Perth highlighted that they only encountered the genocide allegations with reference to overseas jurisdictions. Turkish-Australians in Sydney were more likely to have conducted research into the Armenian Question as they were confronted with it in Australia making it more relevant to their lives.

The Turkish Counter-Narrative

The majority of those interviewed (seventeen out of nineteen) did not think that the Ottoman government committed genocide against Armenians. While within academic discourse and broader social understanding (as discussed in chapter 2) the Turkish viewpoint is considered to be genocide denial, this is not the case for Turkish-Australians who do not think genocide happened. Despite societal support for the Armenian allegations, Turkish-Australians view them as made by Armenians who politically influence governments around the world. Broader societal views which support the allegations are not taken into consideration, despite the availability of literature on the internet and some discussion in the Australian media which advocates for genocide
recognition (see for example Toscano 2009; Babkenian 2008; Cosgrove 2010; Tatz 2010, Robinson 2010; Manne 2007). Non-Armenians who claim that the events were genocide are viewed as biased against Turkey. The Armenian allegations are therefore treated with a sense of bemusement by Turkish-Australian interviewees. Armenians are viewed as retelling their grandparent’s stories, which are not based on historical fact and are factually incorrect. This idea was presented by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney:

[Armenians say] ‘[Turks] massacred us, they did this they did that’ and it has been history ever since. But the [Armenian] children and the grandchildren that didn’t witness those days are blindly following what their grandparents told them, and [the allegations are] not based on any facts (Sydney, male, first generation).

The next part of the chapter will discuss the narrative as it was related by interviewees who did not think that the Armenian allegations were true. The Turkish narrative is viewed either as clear historical fact which discredits the Armenian allegations, or as an historical opinion which should be accepted as a counter to allegations of genocide. The existence of the Turkish historical narrative which discredits the allegations of genocide or calls for debate on the issue is at the heart of the Turkish objections to the claims of genocide.

The narrative as understood by Turkish-Australians who do not believe that genocide was committed against Armenians is largely based on the counter-narrative (discussed in chapter 3). Because the Armenian allegations are not experienced as personal by Turkish-Australians, they are rarely countered from personal history but through an understanding of Turkish history acquired from research conducted in response to the
Armenian claims or through Turkish institutions. The allegations are not countered through specific historical facts or data, but through historical ideas which argue that the Ottoman government would not have committed genocide because of characteristics of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish state serves as an important provider of information.

**Rejection of the Genocide Claims**

All interviewees maintained that some Armenians died in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and many noted the tragedy of the deaths. Some interviewees suggested that 600,000 Armenians and others accepted that between one and two million Armenians died, the figure broadly cited by advocates of genocide recognition. The deaths are viewed as tragic. Five interviewees advocated that Turkey should apologise for the number of deaths, and others advocated for Turkey to apologise and pay reparations. However this would have to take place within the correct historical context which is that the deaths were not genocide.

The narrative presented by Turkish-Australian interviewees argues that Armenians rebelled against the Ottoman government at the start of the First World War. The purpose of this rebellion was to gain land in order to break away from the Ottoman Empire. The rebellion took place due to the weakened and weakening Ottoman Empire which was attacked on a number of different fronts by European nations, who were supplying and supporting Armenian revolutionaries. The Ottoman government was within its rights to defend itself against the Armenian revolutionaries through counter-insurgency activities, which resulted in Armenians deaths. As illustrated by a first generation Turkish-Australian who argued that genocide was not committed:
[The Ottomans] were fighting to keep their country as one part. I believe [Armenians] have the right to determine their destiny, if they want to be independent. If [Armenians] chose to fight they should accept there will be casualties, because it is their choice. If [Armenians] want to be independent, it is their right, and then [the Ottoman Empire] has the right to defend their borders. If you chose to kill, then the other person has the right to fight (Perth, male, first generation).

Central to this is that the Ottoman Empire was a bastion of multiculturalism and tolerance, especially when compared to other European nations, and would not have targeted Armenians unless the Ottoman government was provoked. As noted by a first-generation Turkish-Australian in Perth:

Let’s compare that time with the 15th Century, and the 16th Century for example, where within a Muslim country there are Christian and Jewish communities living, and then you look in Europe and there were issues between different Christian sects, who didn’t even allow certain people to live within their area, and you look at that and compare that to Europe. So [the Ottoman Empire] was quite a big step ahead of Europe at that time in terms of tolerance and things like that. For that reason it can’t be called genocide (Perth, male, first generation).

This point was made by the majority of interviewees. Christian minorities within the Ottoman Empire were allowed to maintain their language and traditions and the Ottoman government did not impose Islam or Turkish on Armenians and other minorities. The Millet system allowed Christian minorities to maintain autonomy from the Ottoman government, while still prospering. This is evidenced by Armenians within
the Ottoman Empire reaching some of the highest positions of government. Armenians were also often richer and more privileged than Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, and this prosperity continues today. A first generation Turkish-Australian argued:

[[In Turkey you will find that a lot of the Christian minorities became very rich and wealthy...So when you look at Turkey, a lot of the gold and jewellery is made by Armenians and Assyrians in Turkey. They own the whole market in Turkey and others – the Greeks own half the islands and Turkish Jews own half the islands off Istanbul, multi-million dollar properties. No Turks live there (Sydney, male, first generation).]

A second generation Turkish-Australian raised the point that the tolerant nature of the Ottoman Empire needs to be considered as part of the argument regarding the Armenian Question. After discussing the tolerant nature of the Ottoman Empire, he drew a legal analogy:

If the court was trying you today, they would look at you from the day you were born to the day of the incident. Look at the lead up events to prove your character and it should be done on this issue in the same way (Sydney, male, second generation).

The multicultural Ottoman Empire also served as a safe haven for Jews who fled from Spain and other parts of Europe during the Spanish Inquisition. The Republic of Turkey maintained the tradition of Ottoman tolerance and humanitarianism by protecting Jews from the Nazis during the Holocaust. This is relevant to the debate about the relationship between the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust, and serves as a point of humanitarian and moral importance. Turkey’s actions during the Holocaust are an
indication of the moral fabric of the country which can be traced to the Ottoman Empire. A first generation Turkish-Australian illustrated the humanitarian nature of the Turkish state towards Jews during the Second World War:

In the 20th Century, during World War Two, our Embassies in France and Germany told Hitler we want our Turkish Jews back in Turkey, and Hitler accepted to do that because he felt Turkey was going to be his ally, and he needed Turkey, so 20,000 Jews went on trains back to Turkey, to Istanbul, and those 20,000 Jews were academics and music teachers etc. The University in Istanbul was full of Turkish Jews, academics, lecturers. So Atatürk gave them the highest post, and triple the salary of every Turk. Would any-one in any other country do that to any-one else? (Sydney, male, second generation)

Armenians and other Christian minorities were happy living within the Ottoman Empire, but the influence of European powers resulted in Armenians revolting against the Ottoman government. As argued by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney:

Armenians and Turks lived together in peace and happiness with no issues at all, and it was the French and the Germans who put us against each other. The French tricked the Armenians and the Germans tricked the Turks. And they became enemies; otherwise there would be no reason for us to become enemies (Sydney, male, second generation).

The Ottoman government had to defend itself against the Armenian revolutionaries through anti-insurgence tactics. These included moving the Armenian population from
Anatolia where they were based, to a different part of the Ottoman Empire. The deportation of the Armenian revolutionaries was an acceptable anti-insurgent tactic, and has been used on other occasions throughout history, most notably by Americans during World War Two. This point was made by a second generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney:

When you look at historical fact about deportation and movement of population, it happened during World War Two in the US. The Japanese were locked up. They were pulled away because the Americans were scared they might be used against them (Sydney, male, second generation).

The Ottoman government did not intentionally kill Armenians; the deaths were a result of anti-insurgent deportations. The Ottoman Empire was under attack on a number of fronts and the Ottoman government was overstretched and under resourced. They were unable to provide resources to their own soldiers. The security situation was unstable. It is understandable in such a situation that some Armenians would die during deportations through attacks by bandits, ill-disciplined soldiers and villagers and also starvation and exposure to the elements:

If asked were the Ottomans unable to provide for the security of these people, then yes. But again it is obvious. [The Ottomans] couldn’t even provide for their army...It doesn’t take a huge leap to understand that if an entire Ottoman army can perish during that year, in the winter, what would have happened to these civilians that were required to march (Sydney, male, second generation).
The Armenian deaths were clearly an unintended result of the process of deportation, rather than the intentional purpose. The unstructured nature of the deaths shows that they were an unexpected consequence of the deportations rather than the intent. The fact that there are still Armenians living in Turkey today is further proof that genocide was not committed against them. If genocide is the complete destruction or annihilation of a group of people, then no Armenians would have survived. A second generation Turkish-Australian made this point by arguing the following:

If there was a genocide, how come there is a healthy Armenian population in a large part of Turkey? How come there are 15 or 20 schools in Turkey still? All the churches are still around and just goes to show that there was no *mens rea*\(^{25}\) to this (Sydney, male, second generation).

Because the deaths of Armenians took place within the context of Armenian revolution and necessary anti-insurgent activities, the concept of genocide does not apply. Armenian deaths were not based on their ethnic identity, as the Genocide Convention stipulates, but as a result of their attempts to break away from the Ottoman Empire. The intent of the Ottoman government was not to kill Armenians but to quash revolution meaning the deaths were not genocide as the intent was not kill Armenians. This is in direct contrast to the Armenian argument which states that genocide occurred outside of a war situation and Armenians were targeted based on their ethnicity. This point was communicated by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth:

I think genocide is [when] one power kills the group because they belong to a certain group, and they are innocent people and there was

\(^{25}\) Criminal intent.
no threat on each side. But I know what happened in Turkey between Turks and Armenians was part of war, and I know so many innocent people have been killed and I don’t exactly know how many Turks were killed, but no-one cares [about the Turks] (Perth, female, first generation).

This quote also argues that the application of genocide to deaths of Armenians does not consider the complexity of the historical context within which the deaths took place. It ignores the Armenian revolution, invasion by European forces and Muslim Turks who also died. Calling the deaths genocide creates a simplistic, reductionist and biased view of history which paints the Ottoman government as the perpetrators of genocide and Armenians as innocent victims. This argument was presented by two different interviewees. The first was a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney:

For me, and that is what we believe, to say it as genocide and put it in the same place as the Holocaust, is the thing we don’t agree with and the thing I kind of get, most people who don’t know too much about it believe that the Armenians were just sitting there and the Turks killed them. And from what I have read and seen, the Armenians knew that the Russians were coming from the east and were preparing themselves to have their own land and they knew the Russians were coming, and they were basically getting ready to take a portion of [Ottoman] land for themselves (Sydney, male, first generation).

A first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth presented the same argument. While not sure if the deaths constituted genocide, she highlighted that calling the deaths genocide simplified history:
I don’t know [if it was genocide]...It is possible; I believe that [Armenians] were moved from one area to another. Was it to wipe out the Armenian population? I don’t know. But I am also looking at it from the other part, the Western part, and also I have connection to Bosnians, my grandparents came from Bosnia, and how they suffered, and how many people suffered during this World War One, coming from Balkans to Turkey. They were treated so badly because they were Muslims...I would also like more information about Russians and Armenians sharing the same religion. How [many] Armenians were involved in killing Turks etc.? (Perth, female, first generation)

Calling the deaths genocide paints Ottoman history as genocidal without acknowledging that Turks died during a complex conflict which involved a number of different parties in a number of different areas of the Ottoman Empire.

The Holocaust was also used as frame of reference. A first generation Turkish-Australian in Perth argued that it could not have been genocide because the deaths were not similar to the Holocaust. He questioned: ‘Who put the Armenians in the gas furnace?’ directly referencing the Holocaust. The organised and planned nature of the Holocaust serves as his conceptual understanding of genocide. Because there were no similarities between the unorganised deaths of Armenians and the Holocaust, the Ottoman government could not have been committing genocide.

The Holocaust was also an important frame of reference for another interviewee in Perth who had moved to Australia as a teenager. Based on his understanding of genocide through the paradigm of the Holocaust, the interviewee took offence to the
accusations that the Ottoman government had committed genocide against the Armenians:

When they say genocide, the term genocide, we quite well know the Nazi’s and what happened to the Jewish people during that time, so like that is just inhumane killing of people because they are of a particular faith or race, and that has not happened, it is a very, very bad thing, and genocide is just horrible, and therefore calling it genocide is offensive and incorrect (Perth, male, first generation).

Turkish Perceptions in Relation to Political Lobbying

Turkish-Australian interviewees view Armenian political genocide claims as manipulative. They maintain a moral high-ground by highlighting that Armenians are only looking for political recognition rather than legal recognition and countries which recognise the Armenian genocide are also guilty of historic human rights violations, but they refuse to acknowledge these.

Wanting to gain political recognition proves that Armenian claims are disingenuous; if the accusations of genocide were true then they would be willing to engage with Turks and also take the Turkish state to court. That they are unwilling to do this, illustrates that the accusations are false. This is why Armenians are interested in manipulating the political situation in countries in which they are based. This point was articulated by a second generation Turkish-Australian in Sydney:
The material isn’t there [to prove that the Ottoman government committed genocide] and what frustrates me is they don’t have sufficient evidence to bring charges. No court will find the Ottomans guilty of genocide. But for them, that isn’t important: ‘We will just find some declarations from parliaments, politicians will give us what we want’...It’s a criminal act, so it will be like someone deciding by vote that you have committed murder without actually being convicted. So it would be a farce if that happened (Sydney, male, second generation).

If the Armenians are not willing to take the Turkish state to court to prove the allegations, then they should be willing to allow historians and scientists to debate the allegations. This idea was clearly presented by a second-generation Turkish-Australian who lives in Sydney:

If these people really believe what they are doing is correct, why don’t these people appoint a historical commission like Turkey wants and accept their findings? Turkey has put that on the tables many times. It should be left to the historians. There are a lot of quotes by the Turkish Prime Minister and President saying it should be left to the historians. And historians are people who, as far as I understand, look at fact, and determine fact (Sydney, male, second generation).

The Turkish government maintains a central position in the minds of a number of the interviewees. They trust and believe the Turkish government’s offer to be part of a historical tribunal with Armenians. An interviewee in Sydney argued that the Turkish government has offered to open Turkish archives, whereas the Armenians have not
(Hurriyet 2008). This is a direct contradiction of what Armenians and academics claim. Some of those interviewed suggested that if such a historical tribunal found the allegations of genocide to be correct, then Turkey should be willing to accept that and apologise and pay reparations. However, it was suggested by a second generation Turk living in Sydney that ‘the findings of such a tribunal should be closely inspected’ due to the complexities of the issue.

Political genocide recognition by other countries is viewed as political hypocrisy and political brinkmanship. For European countries this is connected to their attempts to break up the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and their encouragement of Armenians to rebel against the Ottoman government. If European powers had not encouraged the Armenians to revolt against the Ottoman government, Armenians would not have died. Any lives lost are therefore the responsibility of European powers which supported Armenian revolutionaries. European countries that attacked the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and then recognise the Armenian genocide are viewed within the historical framework of nations who tried to conquer Ottoman Turkey but were unable to do so. Political genocide recognition is viewed as targeting Turkey due to failures to conquer the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This point was highlighted by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney when asked why he thought European countries were interested in politically recognising the Armenian genocide:

The [European countries] should question: ‘What were we doing [in Turkey during the First World War]?’ And they were there to take Turkish country, but the Turks didn’t let them. I think they are sore losers. If Turks let England take over the country, it would be another British colony, but it didn’t happen and I think they are sore losers (Sydney, male, first generation).
European countries serve the role of the ‘Other’ within Turkish nationalistic discourse. The Ottoman government was forced to defend themselves against the European powers, against Armenians who were supported by European powers and political recognition of the genocide serves as a continuation of European hostility towards Turkey.

Another first generation Turkish-Australian argued that Australia also has historical examples of human rights violations and political genocide recognition would be hypocritical within this context. It would not be for humanitarian reasons or justice but to attack Turkey as the Australian government and other governments are not willing to engage with their own past. A Turkish-Australian who moved to Australia as an adult communicated this point:

It kind of makes you think, because it’s an obvious fact that countries use some issues they can make bigger against other countries. With the aborigines in Australia, it is very close in history and it is systematic and it has been documented, and no one talks about it because the Australian government definitely handles that very well in the political arena. When you see that, when you see how tolerant those people are towards it and what has been done to native Americans and what has been done to Dutch in South Africa – when you see how tolerant people are with these things, then it is very intolerant with the Armenian genocide issue, it makes me wonder if it isn’t really the issue itself, but how [they] can use it to force other countries to retreat within the diplomatic fight.
The interest from other countries in political genocide recognition is not sincere as other countries are not willing to deal with their own political and human rights issues from the past and nor are they willing to address issues in other countries. The American government and the Australian government ignore their own treatment of indigenous people and instead target Turkey for diplomatic reasons.

**Turkish Forgiveness and Armenian ‘Hatred’**

The interviewees highlighted that Turks have taught their children forgiveness for past historical tragedies while Armenians have not. Turks went through traumatic events during the First World War and after the First World War and have not held grudges against ethnic minorities within the Ottoman Empire or European powers. While the majority of the Turkish-Australian narrative has been communicated historically, this point was made referencing family history. A first generation Turkish-Australian in Perth argued:

> From what I know, there are a lot of Armenian people who have been moved, obviously, losing [their] land and [their] family members because of this, and it is not something that can be forgotten easily, and they went through hard times...[I]t is something I can sympathise with the hardship because I know from my father’s side moving from Balkans to Turkey, it is very unfortunate. And it’s an unfortunate event and that is why they are unhappy about it (Perth, female, first generation).
Despite these similarly turbulent times, Turks have not taught their children hatred against Turkish enemies. Turks decided to move on and lived together side by side in modern Turkey, with the past forgotten. A second generation Turkish-Australian argued:

With my ancestors, they were peasants. Their villages were being raided, people were being killed and they decided to leave. And then they came – new land, new life and moved on. I have never heard anything bad said about a Greek, an Albanian or a Yugoslav by my grandparents. I did hear it from my great grandfather who said it about the soldiers he fought against, but it wasn’t about his Greek neighbours for example. When they moved back to Turkey, they moved next to Greeks, who were their neighbours, so there was no point in holding a grudge (Sydney, male, second generation).

This positive view towards people who could traditionally have been viewed as enemies extends to life in Australia. Turks have embraced other ethnic groups and live side by side with Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians, as they did in Turkey. Part of the reason for this is that Turks share a similar culture with Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians as they all come from the same region, eat the same types of food, and have similar traits in their music and other forms of culture. The same interviewee noted:

[The conflict is] in the past. It’s not seen as something important. They are our neighbours. Armenians lived with the Turks, the Greeks are our neighbours, the cultures are very similar and in Australia it is more so. My parents came here in 1976. I was born that year. I remember growing up and calling my Greek neighbours Aunty and Uncle in Turkish. They would be over for coffee, dinner, whatever. There
weren’t many Turks around. The Greeks, Italians, Maltese, and they were the same in Australian culture as my parents. We are in the Aegean. They were the natural friends and family friends of my parents (Sydney, male, second generation).

This point was extended to European nations. Turks have also been willing to forgive countries such as France, the United Kingdom and Russia who tried to destroy the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This point was also extended to Australia, who also invaded Turkey during the First World War. However, both Australia and Turkey had moved past this conflict and have used the conflict to form a strong friendship. This point was raised by a first generation Turkish-Australian:

As Australians, Gallipoli obviously means a lot to [Turkish-Australians], and as a Turk, it also means a lot to them because their forefathers fought in Gallipoli, so I feel Turks in Australia have a look at the situation and say ‘our country was attacked, and our forefathers country was attacked, and they defended their nation, they didn’t invade any-one and after 95 odd years, Turks are accepting Australian, New Zealanders and English to their country as if nothing happened’. That means our people forgive and that reconciliation and forgiveness is unique to Turks. We forgive. But on the other hand, what happened in history, Armenians and Greeks haven’t forgiven us. But we forgive, and forget. If Australia had attacked Armenia or Greece, I wonder what the situation would have been like then. The Armenians would have accused Australia of genocide (Sydney, male, first generation).
Against the backdrop of Turkish forgiveness, Armenian genocide claims are viewed as hatred against Turks. Armenians are not able to move on from the past and instead carry resentment against Turks and the Turkish state. This point was emphasised by a Turkish interviewee who had moved to Australia as a young boy:

In Turkey there was a very famous Armenian journalist...and he came to Australia, he is excellent. He rang me because I have affiliation with [a] newspaper in Turkey and he works for them as well. And he said ‘I am going to be speaking at an Armenian conference in Willoughby and there are going to be over 600 Armenians there’, and I said ‘I would love to come and see you’. He said, ‘You had better not, because the Armenians will attack you because you are a Turk’. And I said: ‘You are kidding?!’, and he said, ‘Unfortunately that is the situation’. But he has tried to be a peacemaker, but what can you do when [Armenians] have so much anger inside of [them] (Sydney, male, first generation).

Armenian hatred towards the Turkish state and Turks is further highlighted by Armenian attacks from the 1960s until the 1980s against Turkish diplomats and academics who argued against the Armenian genocide. They were targeted by Armenian organisations such as the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), with a number of Turkish diplomats murdered, including in Melbourne and in Sydney. These examples serve as further illustration of Armenian hate against Turkey and Turks, especially considering how Turkey and Turks have been forgiving about past historical conflicts. A first generation Turkish-Australian in Sydney highlighted:

One of the other things I read was that there was an Armenian terrorist organisation that was killing Turkish nationalists around the world and I
think there was a killing [in] Australia. That’s something that is quite uncomfortable, so when you bring this issue up, if you just take all the issues that happened in the past, if I think of my background, I should just be taking a gun and killing people. So taking all these issues just makes people remember the problems and creates hatred, which I am not really happy about (Sydney, male, first generation).

A second generation Turkish-Australian argued a similar point:

I guess the other thing is that the first act of terrorism in Australia was the Armenians and the second act of terrorism in Australia was the Armenians. They bombed the Melbourne Consulate General’s building and killed the Sydney Consulate General. Again, Turks don’t feel hatred (Sydney, male, second generation).

One person noted that there is a plaque within the Turkish Consulate in Sydney that memorialises the Turkish Consulate General and his body guard who died as a result of the Armenian attack. This plaque does not mention that the attackers were Armenians, only that lives were lost as a result of terrorism. This further illustrates the forgiving nature of Turks.

The Turkish government is viewed as behaving towards the Republic of Armenia and Armenians in accordance with Turkish forgiveness. A first generation Turkish-Australian in Sydney noted that the Turkish government had ‘reached out to Armenians and Armenia’ despite Armenians accusing the Ottoman government of genocide. The interviewee was referring to The Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of
Armenia and the Republic of Turkey which were signed in 2009. The Turkish government was willing to sign the two diplomatic Protocols which would have allowed for the opening of borders between the two countries alongside development in the area of trade. The interviewee argued that this highlighted the Turkish government’s willingness to forgive and engage with Armenians.

This point was further illustrated by a second-generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney who noted that the Turkish government had also extended the hand of friendship to the Armenian diaspora. He had read that the Turkish government had called the Armenian diaspora ‘our diaspora’, the diaspora of Turkey. This is based on the majority of the Armenian diaspora having their roots in lands which are now part of Turkey. This illustrated that the Turkish government is willing to embrace the Armenian and highlights the faith placed by this interviewee in the Turkish government.

Conclusion

The Armenian allegations are not significant for the everyday lives of interviewees until encountered in the Turkish media or raised in Australia. Engagement with the issue in Australia differs from state to state, with interviewees in Sydney conducting more research than interviewees in Perth based on Armenian activism in New South Wales. The Armenian allegations are rejected by the majority of interviewees. The Turkish narrative is conveyed largely through an understanding of Turkey’s history which demonstrates the tolerant nature of the Ottoman Empire and the support of European powers for Armenian revolutionaries. Armenian deaths are attributed to anti-insurgent tactics undertaken by the Ottoman government to stop the Armenian revolution. Political recognition by European countries highlights their animosity and Armenian animosity which can be traced back to the First World War. This is compared to Turkey’s
willingness to forgive European countries and ethnic minorities who rebelled against the Ottoman state. The Turkish government further displays this forgiving nature by approaching the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora for consultation. The Armenian allegations do not therefore challenge the Turkish-Australian identity, but instead supports it by highlighting a number of positive moral views which the interviewees held about Turks and Turkey, such as their ability to forgive.
Chapter 7

Turkish-Australians, the Armenian Allegations and Political Recognition

Introduction

The Turkish-Australian perceptions towards the Turkish historical narrative and Armenian Question inform their migrant identity. This chapter discusses the perceptions of the interview cohort towards their Turkish-Australian identity and the impact that Armenian-Australian political activism for recognition of the Armenian genocide has on it, as well as the impact of support for genocide recognition from Australian state governments and, potentially, the Federal government.

The Turkish-Australian Identity

The majority of those interviewed had arrived in Australia as economic migrants or were born to parents who had arrived in Australia as economic migrants. A commitment was made to settling in Australia, based on the opportunities that life in Australia provides in comparison to Turkey. The majority of recent migrants have arrived in Australia as a result of skilled workers migration. An early commitment to settling in Australia and making a success of life in Australia was important for Turks who arrived following the migration programme. As one second generation Turkish-Australian noted about his parents:
My dad never regretted coming to Australia. For him, it was the best thing that ever happened and he still loves this country for what it stands for, and he came here and made a better life for himself. He was living a hard life in Turkey. The 1960s were not the greatest time to live in Turkey. There was a lot of political turmoil going around, and job security was low, so he saw coming here and having a great opportunity. He got here in 1970, and bought a house. Most people had the idea that we will be here a few years, save up some money, and go back. But I think my dad realised that his kids were going to grow up here, and was happy here and laid his roots quickly (Perth, male, second generation).

A similar view was expressed by an interviewee who was born in Turkey and moved to Australia at a young age:

I’ve had most of my life here, my family, my friends, my education my work, everything is here. You know we came for the intention of living here, staying here, becoming Australians, not going back [to Turkey] after a few years of working and making some money (Perth, male, first generation).

The manner of migration to Australia meant that there was not a sense of being dispersed, or being unable to return to Turkey, as was the case with some Armenian-Australians. Instead Turkish migration to Australia was voluntary and desired, based on economic reasons and the quality of life offered by Australia. Additionally Turkish-Australians are able to return to Turkey to carry on their life in that country if they are not comfortable in Australia. On a very basic level, therefore, Australia is viewed as a
homeland based on Australia being where family members are and where work and opportunities are. The fact that their lives are based in Australia fuels a connection to Australia:

When I go [to Turkey], it’s my home, but I have a connection here also. I have an aim, target, life, when I came to this country I wanted to do some good stuff, educate myself. I feel home here, because after one month I get bored in Turkey. Australia is my home because I have lived here for 5 years. Wherever you work and get your money and your life, that’s your place, that’s it (Perth, male, first generation).

As noted by another interviewee who moved to Australia from Turkey at the age of 17:

I have my family here, and in fact sometimes when I leave Australia, I went on Hajj pilgrimage in 2009, and that was the first time I realised I really love Australia and I am very attached to Australia. I consider Australia to be my homeland (Perth, male, first generation).

On a similar level, a connection to Turkey also exists for many of the interviewees, especially those belonging to the first generation, based on being born and raised in Turkey. In this regard, the interviewees viewed themselves as belonging to two countries, with both of those countries influencing them as people. However their home is firmly in Australia. As the previous interviewee noted, when asked if he considered himself Turkish or Australian:
Half-Half. Because 17 years here, and 17 years there...I think I am more settled here, I got more used to lifestyle over here, so in that regard, am I going to be more comfortable living in Australia, than in Turkey. Happier in Australia (Perth, male, first generation).

The exposure both to Australia and Turkey is viewed as beneficial, enriching and fulfilling. A first generation Turkish-Australian explained this point in the following way:

I came here as an adult and graduated [from university] in Turkey, so I was an adult, as I say, I enriched my personality and knowledge and world experience by living here and I didn’t do the same things I would have done in Turkey (Perth, female, first generation).

The interviewee went on to argue:

I am happy in Australia. Having dual citizenship, having lived both in Turkey and Australia and living in other parts of the world, I feel that I am lucky and enriched as a person (Perth, female, first generation).

The natural development of a person, who lived in Turkey and Australia, and this richness, was similarly expressed in relation to raising children. It was highlighted that the children would be a natural mix of their Turkish parents and their Australian environment. A first generation Turkish-Australian expressed the following:
As I said, I consider myself to be a Muslim, my husband is also Turkish, but he is atheist, but he also respects everyone’s beliefs. We raise our children like that, to respect other people’s beliefs, but they were also born in Australia, and both are adults...I am thinking that they are a mixture of us as their parents [and] a mix of Australian society (Perth, female, first generation).

The influence of Turkey and Australia also extends to the importance of maintaining Turkish culture while living in Australia. Turkish and Australian cultural influences are viewed as a benefit to the individual. Keeping aspects of what it means to be Turkish and combining this with what it means to be Australian is considered to be beneficial to the individual and broader society. When a second generation Turk was asked what it meant to be a Turk living in Australia, he commented:

For me it means I am fortunate enough to be able to enjoy a more diverse and enjoyable life because I can look at issues with the Australian perspective and also look at it with a Turkish perspective having lived in Turkey. It gives me multiple perspectives, because I can look at Turkey with the eyes of an Australian and likewise Australia. So it’s a richness and I think that is why I am pro multiculturalism. Anyone who has any sort of ethnic background that can experience that is a source of richness and wealth and it would be a shame to not be able to experience that and enjoy it (Sydney, male, second generation).

The idea of richness of two cultures was similarly expressed by a first generation Turkish-Australian:
We commemorate Turkish holidays and national days. It is part of my enriched culture. Why do we have to lose something in order to gain something? I am greedy and want to take everything (Perth, female, first generation).

The benefit of this to the broader Australian society was highlighted during another interview from a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth. When asked about maintaining the Turkish identity in Australia, after the interviewee stated that he found it important, he remarked:

It’s a richness. I think personally that is what makes Australia a really good country, a really good country. You can see, when you go outside, there are many choices, many kind of food, and I believe that you can share your ideas, background, information, culture, because Australia doesn’t have a culture, it is just a multicultural country, it’s a mix of people from everywhere (Perth, male, first generation).

Similarly, as noted by a first generation Turkish-Australian, when discussing raising his children:

I don’t think you can adjust them, they will be whatever they will be living in Australia. But what I would like to see of my kids is that they utilise the best of both worlds. The best of Australian and the best of Turkish culture (Perth, male, first generation).
Maintaining a Turkish identity should not be done to the detriment of also adopting an Australian identity. It was highlighted that if people wanted to raise their children purely as Turkish, then they are able to do that in Turkey. This point was made by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth:

I have given [my children] Turkish names, I think it is quite important that we keep our cultural values; I don’t want everyone to be called by the same name. I think it is quite good and our duty to keep the culture going, but I think I am raising them as responsible Australians....It’s important that they have to be successful, happy Australians and then they can speak [Turkish]...If [I] wanted them to be Turkish why am I keeping them here. (Perth, female, first generation)

Similarly, another interviewee who was born in Turkey presented her views of childrearing practices as it relates to notions of identity. She noted about her children:

[My children] would have a Turkish identity. They will speak Turkish, and visit Turkey, and have relatives in Turkey, and visit back and forth, and have the option of staying in Turkey if they wanted to. But I would also definitely be happy for them to stay in Australia and be Australian at the same time (Perth, female, first generation).

Another interviewee suggested that if people are not able to settle into Australia and that if they view Turkey as their homeland, then there is no point in staying in Australia. When asked which country she considered to be her homeland, she noted:
[Australia]. It has been here for a long time. I think after 2 years you realise where your home is. If you feel your home is in Turkey and you are still here, I don’t see the point. You better go back early enough so that you don’t waste your life (Perth, female, first generation).

A similar point was argued by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Perth:

In Australia, I don’t think being Turkish or something else is that important. If I felt being Turkish was very important for me, I would not have come or stayed. I would have gone back [to Turkey] (Perth, female, first generation).

Turkish-Australians therefore did not view maintaining their Turkish identity within Australia as critical. They consider it important for themselves and their children to adapt to Australia and to become part of the broader Australian society. If they wanted to remain Turkish, they would have remained in Turkey however, it is also positive both for them and the broader society to blend their Turkish culture with the Australian culture.

**Australia and Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism was highlighted as important in encouraging migrants to develop a sense of belonging to Australia, as the hostland. Interviewees argued that Australian multiculturalism encourages them to maintain their ethnic identity instead of forcing them to reject it, making it easier to live in Australia. For the interviewees, their Turkish identity functions as an ethnic identity which they practice in Australia. This is done
comfortably without wanting to return to Turkey, while being part of Australian society. The interviewees considered themselves to be Turkish-Australians, with both identities interacting and complimenting rather than excluding each other:

I don’t think I’m just Turkish being brought up in Australia, I would rather call myself a Turkish-Australian and being Turkish I enjoy the culture, the food the social interactions, the music (Perth, male, first generation).

An interviewee, who raised her children in Australia, highlighted the benefits of multiculturalism in Australia, and of adopting an Australian identity to compliment the Turkish identity:

My kids mostly call themselves Australian. Some people see multicultural as I can live as I did in my village in Turkey or Lebanon, in my ghetto. I don’t really need to learn English. All I need is my job, and food and money from social security. Multiculturalism should be you can cook in a different way, but you need to integrate you abilities and skills in this country. If you feel like you have to call yourself Turkish that is fine, but don’t forget this in the country in which you live (Perth, female, first generation).

Similarly, the importance of maintaining Turkish culture within Australia is framed within the benefits that it offers Australia. As noted by a second-generation Turk, when asked if it was important to pass aspects of his Turkish culture onto his children:
Maybe it’s because you are brought up in [the Turkish culture], and [you] feel strongly about it. It is a part of you. It doesn’t mean that I would want them to live in a glass jar; I would want my kids to be aware of Australian culture. There is nothing wrong with keeping [the Turkish culture]. It adds to the diversity of Australia, as Australian culture is very open to different people and accepts people for who they are (Sydney, male, second generation).

The openness of Australia in allowing migrants to maintain their migrant culture was highlighted as important, and without this it would have been difficult for the interviewees to integrate into Australia. Australian multiculturalism engenders a sense of belonging. A first generation Turkish-Australian emphasised this point:

I am...proud that [Turks] have settled in Australia, and are much more settled in than Turks in Germany or the Netherlands. I think that is the case because Australian culture and the system allow them, accepts them in a way, and allows them to carry on with their culture and actually promotes it. I have found it easier to adopt Australian culture because they have allowed me to maintain my Turkish culture. If they had, for example, told me that I had to forget my Turkish heritage or culture I would have struggled to settle in. It would have been a big burden in settling in and adapting (Perth, male, first generation).

The importance of Australian multiculturalism was further expressed during another interview, with a first-generation Turkish-Australian also highlighting the similarities between Australian and Turkish culture:
I am quite happy to be here [as] someone with [a] different background. In Australia everyone has different background, it is not something negative and also...The values I have as a Turk are not any different to the values I have as an Australian. It’s just the same basic principles. Food, language and history are a bit different but if you take away the dates and the names, it’s the same thing. It’s just the fight for power or the fight for land and the same thing here (Perth, female, first generation).

**Perceptions towards Turkey as the Homeland**

Through embracing the Turkish identity within Australia and being encouraged to do this, an important link is made between Turkish-Australians and Turkey. Australia was viewed by the interviewees as a physical homeland in which to settle and live. While there might be no desire to be physically located in Turkey, Turkey is viewed as the land in which the Turkish culture was created and therefore is considered to be the motherland. Australia is therefore the country in which the Turkish culture, birthed in Turkey, is practiced. This is illustrated by the quote below, from a first generation Turk when he was asked what role Turkey plays in his life:

[Turkey] is a very nice holiday destination, but also there are...a lot of cultural and moral values that Turkey has. I do read Turkish books, and develop this side of me. I really enjoy that part of Turkey, which is very rich in that regard. I also don’t have anything in Australia which will fulfil me in that regard. For example, I learned the fact that doing good for the community, from Turkish sources. I didn’t learn it from Australia. For that reason there are quite valuable ideas that flourish in
Turkey, and it is really good to have access to that...That part of me is very fulfilled by what I learn and what I read, and Australia is a perfect place because it is a comfortable environment. There aren’t so many financial pressures. It’s quite an easy place to raise children, and this doesn’t take all of your time, so it is easier to look around and at other things (Perth, male, first generation).

The connection to Turkey is therefore not with regards to a desire to return there, with all those interviewed wanting and choosing to live in Australia, but rather a connection to Turkey based on the notion that the Turkish culture which is now practiced in Australia was created in Turkey. Şenay (2010) noted this distinction by arguing that Australia is the Vatan (Homeland) of Turkish-Australians, however, Turkey is their Anavatan (Motherland). In quoting Dökmen, Şenay (2010) notes this difference: ‘I was born into...my Anavatan [motherland] and the one I feed myself is my second Vatan. My Anavatan is like my mother. I can only have one mother and no one else can be like my mother’. This is a subtle but important difference, and directly related to maintenance of identity and the prioritisation of cultural identity. Turkey remains the motherland, the home of the Turkish identity practiced in Australia. Turkey is considered as the ‘original homeland out there regardless of...affiliation with the host country. There can be second, even third, homes depending on what those new homes might materially provide, but wherever they are, Turkey is the true and eternal Anavatan for Turks abroad’ (Şenay 2010, p. 104). For a number of Turkish-Australians interviewed, this was how they viewed the relationship between themselves and Turkey. While they may live in Australia and enjoy the material benefits of Australia, culturally their connection is to Turkey as the country where their culture was born. This point was communicated by a second-generation Turk:
Australia is my homeland, and Turkey is a cultural connection, where my ancestors are from. It’s where the culture that I practice here in Australia was born (Perth, male, second generation).

The same idea was communicated by a first generation Turkish-Australian, when discussing how he wanted to raise his children:

I would like to raise them like me, to know Turkish culture and also if they live here they will need to understand and find out Australian culture...If they become just Australian, I don’t think it would make me happy. I don’t want them to lose their culture, they should know where they came from, but they should know Australian culture, where they live (Perth, male, first generation). (Emphasis added)

The importance of fusing the Turkish and Australian identities was highlighted during an interview with a member of the Turkish community in Perth. He is involved with Damla College which is part of the Fetullah Gülen movement. The movement is based on the ideas of a Turk, Fetullah Gülen, and was started in Turkey in the 1970s. While the movement has strong Turkish links through Fetullah Gülen, and a strong support basis in that country with an estimated 10 million supporters (Stourton 2011), the schools within Australia are not strictly Turkish or Muslim schools. Gülen schools do not base their teachings on orthodox Islamic teachings. While they might attract a number of Turkish and Muslim students, they focus on providing education and promoting and fostering dialogue and bridge building between all cultures in Australia.

While Damla College is not restricted to members of the Turkish community, or run by Turkish teachers, a number of the teachers and staff involved are of a Turkish
background and the school also attracts a number of Turkish students. The school functions as a private school which is open to children of any background. The school is not viewed explicitly as a place for raising children to be Turkish. Instead it is viewed as a place where the best of both worlds can be combined. Turkish culture should not be rejected, just as the benefits provided by Australia should not be overlooked. Turkish culture is important whereas the opportunities provided by Australia should also be embraced. As noted by a teacher involved in the school in Perth:

We are really interested in just fostering these kids. But before that, we just want to be a bridge in between [cultures]. We want to teach these kids that this is a great country to live in, there are a lot of opportunities, but don’t forget all these good things that come from your culture. Don’t forget your language. Try to keep that (Perth, male, second generation).

The school in Perth and two schools in Sydney are run by associations which are supported by a variety of ethnic groups within Australia. The associations are connected to Muslim foundations, rather than foundations which are focused on Turkey and the Turkish identity. The schools therefore, are not clear boundary creators for the Turkish identity in Australia as is the case with Armenian schools.

Through Islam the Turkish identity in Australia also fuses with the broader Australian society, and more specifically, the broader Australian Muslim society. While religious organisations linked to Turkish mosques in Perth and Sydney are connected to the Turkish-Australian community, they are not exclusively organisations for Turkish migrants. The religious organisations, such as Affinity, connected to the Gallipoli Mosque in Auburn, Sydney, have non-Turkish Muslim members and support the larger Australian
Muslim community. They do not function as ethnic Turkish groups. They are Muslim organisations which provide services for Muslims and encourage dialogue between Muslims and broader Australian society.

Turkish-Australian interviewees argued that the characteristics of Islam in Australia mean that the majority of Muslims attend the mosque which is closest to them geographically, rather than attending a specific ethnic mosque. Turkish-Australian Muslims attend the same mosque as Muslims from other ethnic groups. While it has been traditional for Turkish Muslims to congregate in a specific area close to a mosque (this can be seen both in Perth and in Sydney), other Muslims also congregate in the same area as a result of the mosque. The mosque does not serve as a specific Turkish ethnic mosque, but rather as a mosque for the Muslim population in that specific area. Islam in Australia is therefore not strictly demarcated along ethnic or national lines. A number of the interviewees suggested that while there are mosques which have traditionally been viewed as Turkish mosques, the mosques are not only for Turks to attend, but places dedicated to Islam, rather than Turkish Islam. Mosques, therefore, do not provide boundary maintenance for the Turkish identity in Australia. The mosque serves as a space in which Islam is practiced. An interviewee in Perth, who had moved to Australia as a teenager, emphasised this point. When asked if he attended the mosque in Perth which has a Turkish connection, he noted:

I live in [a part of Perth which is not close to the mosque], so I don’t get to go the Turkish mosque that often. If I lived closer I would. You attend the mosque which is the closest to you (Perth, male, first generation).
Turkish-Australian interviewees argued that it is not a priority to attend a mosque which encourages or embraces the Turkish ethnic identity within Australia. The practice of Islam by Turkish-Australians serves as a way of encountering other ethnic groups, and integrating into a larger Australian-Muslim community, rather than an activity which excludes other ethnic groups. This is in contrast to the Armenian Apostolic Church and other Armenian language churches which cater only for Armenians with the ability to speak Armenian, and pressurises Armenian-Australians who attend non-Armenian churches, as illustrated in chapter four. Neither religious institutions nor schools are an extension of Turkish ethnicity or explicitly promote Turkish ethnicity within Australia. This is in contrast to Armenian schools and churches which serve as an extension of the Armenian community and promote the Armenian identity within Australia.

**The Armenian Allegations and the Turkish-Australian Identity**

As will be illustrated below, Turkish-Australian views regarding their connection to Australia and freedom to follow their ethnic identity is at the forefront of their objections to genocide allegations being raised in Australia. As noted in the previous chapter, the Armenian Question becomes significant to Turkish-Australians when raised in Australia by Armenians. Turkish-Australian objections to Armenian genocide allegations and potential Federal government recognition in Australia are based on how they view their Turkish-Australian identity. The primary point made by Turkish-Australians regarding the politicisation in Australia of the genocide accusations is that within a country which is made up of many different ethnic groups and which encourages migrants to maintain their migrant identity: historical accusations by migrant groups are likely to cause divisions and conflict within Australia. A second generation Turkish-Australian argued:
The Armenian allegations could end up dividing Australia into lots of different ethnic groups, instead of being a multicultural country. It could have this result, especially if other countries and people groups are constantly willing to bring past issues up (Sydney, male, second generation).

This quote argues that multiculturalism in Australia creates unity amongst ethnic groups rather than separation. Unity is provided through the Australian identity which encourages ethnic groups to maintain their ethnicity while belonging to Australia. Historical conflicts between different ethnic groups based in Australia will undermine multiculturalism and the unity it encourages and will cause division and conflict.

Multiculturalism in Australia creates a responsibility among migrant groups to behave in a way which will benefit Australia. Ethnic groups should not undermine harmony within the multicultural society, and should not only focus on what benefits their particular ethnic group, but rather on that which encourages further harmony and is beneficial for the broader Australian society. The Armenian genocide allegations do not do this as they are only focused on the interest of Armenian-Australians and also undermine harmony between Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians. This idea was best explained by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney, who is involved in an organisation which promotes inter-faith dialogue between Islam, other religions and broader Australian society. His response was given after he was asked if he or the organisation he is involved in would assist in fighting against the Armenian allegations of genocide:

We would support any work which is done anti, to defend the Turkish cause, but not something that is done against Armenia, such as build a genocide monument against them. I am totally against that. I think it is
Un-Australian, and Un-Australian for us to do it, and Un-Australian for them to do it, and for anyone to do it. We are here, we are one, we are all Australian and we should forget about the history. Let’s leave that in the background and let’s unite and work together on how we can improve things (Sydney, male, first generation).

The response is strongly framed by a connection to Australia, a sense of belonging to Australia, and a sense of responsibility to Australia and the broader Australian community. The idea of being ‘Un-Australian’ is a colloquial term which does not have a clear definition. However, it is used to illustrate, in a patriotic and nationalistic manner, that an action or decision does not match up with the principles and values of what it means to be Australian and of what is acceptable in Australia. Therefore, politicisation of allegations of genocide, and alternatively, a similar Turkish-Australian response which negatively influences relationships between ethnic groups in Australia, should not happen. The quote argues that the connection to Australia shared by the different ethnic groups that live in Australia should override the ethnic identity which a number of Australians maintain, especially when these ethnic identities bring about conflict.

The perceived responsibility of migrant communities and ethnic groups in Australia to keep peace and to contribute to the broader development of Australia was similarly noted by a second-generation Turkish-Australian. He employed an example from within his own community to illustrate that Turks in Australia did not only focus on their own development but instead contributed to the broader Australian society:

Do you see the Auburn Mosque saying Turkish mosque only? No. Every nationality is welcome there. Yes Turkish people did start the

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26 Named the Gallipoli Mosque on Gelebolu Avenue (Turkish for Gallipoli).
fundraising, but at the end of the day we built a beautiful mosque for Australia to have, not just the Turkish people. That’s what upsets me. If we are going to come to Australia, we have to build Australia to be a better country, not build Australia to be hateful, where there is discrimination and community conflict (Sydney, male, second generation).

Allegations being raised by Armenian-Australians are therefore viewed as undermining community harmony and counter-productive towards creating a multicultural society within Australia. Turkish-Australians are reluctant to actively oppose the genocide allegations politically as they do not want to be part of undermining harmony between different ethnic groups. The genocide allegations are viewed as coming from a minority group within Australia and undermining the sense of belonging of another minority group.

While there is resistance towards Armenian-Australians raising the allegations, they become more significant when politically recognised by Australian political representatives as happened in the New South Wales Parliament in 1997 and South Australian Parliament in 2009. Turkish-Australians expressed concern that Armenian-Australians would be successful in gaining political genocide recognition on a Federal level. Political recognition by the Australian Federal government was considered more serious than recognition by state governments. This was for a variety of reasons. Federal recognition would serve as the official Australian policy on the Armenian Question and support and legitimise the Armenian allegations. The issue would no longer be viewed as the opinion of an ethnic-minority in Australia, but as the opinion of the Australian government. It would undermine the Turkish narrative and also Turkish-Australians who do not think that genocide was committed. These points were made by a second-
generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney. When asked if Federal recognition would be taken more seriously than state recognition, he answered:

It will, definitely it will. Because then it will be official. I remember issues coming up at university where one of the Armenians would get up and say the customary line of the diaspora, and someone one would say, ‘Oh shut up, you are all brothers and sisters in some way’. So that’s the mentality [Turks] have here. We are larrikins, we don’t take the stuff seriously, but if there was [Federal] government recognition, that would be a slap in the face of the Turkish-Australians and we would take that seriously (Sydney, male, second generation).

‘Larrkin’ is widely used to refer to Australians and especially Australian soldiers. The word is founded in the tradition of Gallipoli where one of the trademarks of the original ANZAC soldiers is that they were ‘larrikins’, meaning jokers and laid back. As was the case with the idea of the allegations being ‘Un-Australian’, this is another example of Australian colloquialisms used by Turkish-Australians to describe their resistance towards the allegations. It demonstrates a connection between the Turkish-Australian identity and the rejection of the genocide allegations through the use of the Australian aspect of the Turkish-Australian identity. It also illustrates a strong sense of belonging to Australia, and that Turkish-Australians consider themselves to be part of the broader Australian society.

The Turkish-Australian objections to the genocide allegations being raised and recognised by the Federal government in Australia are not based on a defence of the Turkish nation, but rather on how they undermine the Turkish-Australian identity. Resistance towards the allegations in Australia comes from a sense of belonging to
Australia as a group of people who maintain their Turkish identity in Australia. The Turkish-Australian identity is intertwined, and the allegations and possible political recognition of the allegations target the Turkish aspect of the identity which in turn undermines the Australian identity. A second generation Turkish-Australian argued this point when asked if his activism against Armenian genocide recognition was in support of the Turkish state:

I think more my Turkish identity. It doesn’t have anything to do with Turkey. I live [in Australia], I was born [in Australia], I have no intentions of going anywhere else, this is my homeland, and my kids have been born here, so why should I have to live with this sort of tar? It might influence how my children feel about their Turkish heritage, and I have spoken to a lot of people who feel like that (Sydney, male, second generation).

This supports the previous points about Australia being the country in which the Turkish identity is lived. It demonstrates a strong connection to Australia which is related to being Turkish within Australia. Federal political recognition of the allegations would undermine the Turkish identity of Turkish-Australians and would then in turn undermine their connection to Australia.

A similar point was argued by another second generation Turkish-Australian in Sydney. When asked how he would feel if the allegations were politically recognised, he answered:

It would impact how I feel about my Australian identity. I would be very disappointed and heartbroken. I wouldn’t know how to deal with
it to be honest. It would be a problem within. Anyone to me today bad mouths Australia in anyway; my first suggestion to them is that I am happy to pay your ticket out of here. Don’t stay here. If you are prepared to live a life in Australia and reap its rewards and its benefits, and then to be here and bad mouth it, I am against that sort of thing. I will be very disappointed if something like [genocide recognition] was to happen (Sydney, male, second generation).

This quote similarly indicates a strong sense of belonging to Australia which would be undermined if the Federal government would recognise the Armenian genocide. It would be experienced as an attack on the identity of Turkish-Australians and as undermining multiculturalism.

The impact of political genocide recognition on the sense of belonging of Turkish-Australians ties into the broader political environment in Australia. A second generation male Turkish-Australian highlighted that political recognition would attack his Turkish heritage and ethnicity. This would take place after attacks on his Muslim identity following 9/11. This viewpoint was expressed with direct reference to some of the political lobbying that had taken place with reference to the Armenian allegations. The interviewee noted the support of Fred Nile for the Armenian allegations. Rev. Fred Nile, MLC is the leader of the Christian Democrat Party (CDP) and is an MP in the NSW Parliament. He is against Islam in Australia and has used the Armenian genocide allegations as a means of attacking not only Turkish-Australians, but also Islam. While it was not clear which speech or quote from Fred Nile the interviewee was referring to, the politician has expanded the Armenian issue by highlighting that Armenians were a ‘Christian community’ and emphasising that Turks were ‘Muslims’ (Nile 2007). Fred Nile has also expanded the debate by comparing the genocide to current instability in the Middle-East by saying, when discussing the Armenian genocide in Parliament, ‘[t]hat is
the same mankind that has lost its meaning in the Middle-East because of dictatorial regimes and fanaticism’ (Nile 2010).

Another second generation male Turkish-Australian suggested that the political recognition of genocide might lead to an isolation of some younger members of the Turkish-Australian community. Younger Turkish-Australians might not understand the genocide allegations, but could view it as exclusion from broader Australian society. This would combine with the current negative sentiment towards Islam, leading to further alienation. Political recognition of the deaths of Armenians as genocide has been extended to be viewed as an attack on Islam rather than only an attack on Turkey. It is therefore viewed as an attack on both religious and ethnic identities.

It is on this point that a number of the Turkish-Australians suggested that the Australian government needs to reject the Armenian accusations of genocide. It is maintained that within a country such as Australia, which is based upon principles of multiculturalism, the Australian government should act for the good of Australian society and support multiculturalism by protecting ethnic groups and ensuring there is no conflict between them, especially as a result of historical accusations which are considered to be untrue. This point was best made by a first generation Turkish-Australian in Sydney:

I think we have a big job at our hands, and Australia needs to not support these things. Australian government has to say: ‘Look, this is Australia. You can’t support anything like this, it is ridiculous’. We need to get on with our lives. We are all Australians. These Turks that are here, have not done genocide against you, in history it has happened, there is no proof of it, but even if it did, the Turks here haven’t done anything, so to slap us on the face is not a good thing...So we need to
pray, and hope Australian government can be a peacemaker rather
than an instigator of more hatred and violence (Sydney, male, first
generation).

The Armenian, Assyrian and Hellenic Allegations

While the purpose of this research was to understand Turkish-Australian perceptions
towards the Armenian Question, during field work in Sydney it became clear that
Assyrian allegations that the Ottoman government committed genocide against them
were also relevant. The Assyrian allegations, while factually different, are similar to the
Armenian claims. They argue that the Ottoman government committed genocide against
Assyrian Christians within the Ottoman Empire during the First World War (Khosroeva
2007a, 2007b, 2009). The deaths were not the result of revolution, but rather a pre-
meditated plan orchestrated against Assyrians by the Ottoman government under the
cover of the First World War. The Assyrian allegations stipulate that between 500,000
and 750,000 Assyrians, or two thirds of the Assyrian population, were killed by the
Ottoman army, with the rest forced out of Ottoman lands into neighbouring countries.

Just like the Armenian allegations, the Assyrian allegations are viewed by Turkish-
Australians as unfounded, unproven and an attack on their Turkish identity. This is
considered even more so because the Assyrian allegations are not as well-known as the
Armenian allegations. The Assyrians have not been as effective as Armenians in
campaigning for genocide recognition. The opposition to the Assyrian claims by the
Turkish-Australian community is similar to the rejections of the Armenian claims. They
are rejected due to the stigma associated with the concept of genocide and an
understanding of Turkish history, as outlined in the previous chapter.
The Assyrian genocide allegations have become relevant due to the erection of a monument in the Western Sydney suburb of Fairfield commemorating the Assyrian genocide and a growing movement from the Assyrian community to push for political genocide recognition in the New South Wales Parliament. Interviewees in Sydney combined their perceptions towards the Armenian and Assyrian allegations. The allegations were viewed similarly, with both sets incorrectly accusing the Ottoman government of genocide and being unfairly raised in Australia. The one difference was that whereas a number of the responses to questions about political recognition of the Armenian allegations were theoretical, based on if the Australian Parliament was to politically recognise the allegations, the responses to the Assyrian allegations were based on the recent erection of the Assyrian genocide monument.

While the reaction of Turkish-Australians to the Assyrian allegations cannot serve as a predictor of Turkish reactions to the Armenian allegations on a Federal level, it does illustrate the impact of political recognition of genocide allegations against the Ottoman government within Australian and the seriousness with which these allegations are treated. Below, therefore, the Turkish perceptions towards the political recognition in Australia of the Armenian genocide will be discussed alongside the reaction towards the Assyrian genocide monument. It will demonstrate that the perceptions towards the Armenian allegations have already played out on a micro level within the suburb of Fairfield in reaction to the Assyrian monument which has impacted on the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging in that suburb.

The Assyrian genocide monument is built on council land, and received permission from the local Fairfield council.27 The Assyrian genocide monument was built after lobbying from the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA), a transnational organisation who has a

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27 This information was supplied during interviews with Turkish-Armenians and representatives of the Assyrian Universal Alliance.
chapter in Sydney. The AUA first sought and received recognition of the Assyrian genocide from the NSW Council Association in 2003, which oversees the 176 councils in NSW. This was necessary in order to gain council permission for the monument. The construction of the monument was put on hold due to funding issues and AUA providing support to Assyrians in Iraq during the Iraq War which started in 2003 rather than focusing on the monument. The organisation started pursuing the construction of the monument again in 2008, raisings funds and also petitioning the Fairfield council for the monument to be built on council land. The first application for the monument was put to Fairfield council 5th July 2009. After lobbying from the AUA, and counter-lobbying from the local Turkish-Australian community and opposition from the Turkish government (which will be further discussed in chapter 9), the Fairfield council granted permission for the construction of the monument on the 15th December 2009 (Cumberland Courier 2009). The monument was unveiled on 7th August 2010; Assyrian Martyr’s day (wlolham 2010). Fairfield was chosen by the AUA as the location of the monument based on the large Assyrian community living in the area, with 14,592 Assyrians out of 179,862 people living in Fairfield City and only 1,353 Turks living in the area according to the 2011 Census (profile.id 2013). The council’s links to the Assyrian community were also important. Five out of twelve councillors and one mayor within the area of Fairfield were Assyrian when the decision was taken reflecting the political strength of the Assyrian community.

The location of the Assyrian monument is significant. The suburb of Fairfield is home to large migrant communities and situated in the western suburbs of Sydney which is home to the majority of Turkish-Australians. Turkish-Australians in Sydney have come into direct contact with the Assyrian genocide monument and opposed the erection of the monument, 28 with all Turkish-Australian interviewees in Sydney discussing the monument.

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28 This will be highlighted in chapter 9.
Fighting the Allegations

The Assyrian genocide monument upset Turkish-Australian interviewees. It was suggested during the interviews that the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument had already created conflict within the community and impacted on the sense of belonging of some Turks within the area. For many Turks, the Assyrian genocide accusations appear to be a recent development. This is because Assyrian-Australians and Turkish-Australians have lived peacefully together for a number of years in the western suburbs of Sydney. The genocide allegations had never been raised before the erection of the monument, despite Turkish-Australians and Assyrian-Australians going to the same schools, living on the same streets, sharing the same shops and playing on the same soccer team – the Nineveh football club. From the perspective of some of those interviewed, since the erection of the Assyrian genocide memorial, community cohesion within the area has been damaged, as have previously good relationships between Turks and Assyrians. The monument also impacts on future relationships between Assyrian-Australian and Turkish-Australian children in the area. This point was expressed by a second generation Turkish-Australian who grew up in the suburb of Fairfield:

In Fairfield, you are friends one day, and the next day the monument goes up, and you are awkward thinking why did this happen? I haven’t been to the [Nineveh football] club since [the erection of the monument] and I don’t think I will go...I played for Nineveh football club and [Assyrian-Australians] treated us like family. I said to some of the Assyrian politicians, ‘If you think that plaque is there, do you think
if we have kids that our kids will be able to come to the same club, with this plaque hanging over our heads?’ (Sydney, male, second generation)

A Turkish-Australian interviewee took this further, suggesting there have been examples of Turkish-Australian children being bullied in school by Assyrian-Australian children as a result of the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument:

My brother is married and he has a son, and [his son] goes to [a school in a suburb close to the Assyrian genocide monument] and 90% of that school is Assyrian and he gets picked on because he is Turkish. And that monument has created that hatred. All the kids from high school from year 7 to year 9 know about this monument and they hate Turks (Sydney, male, second generation).

The Assyrian genocide allegations in this case are viewed as a form of hate directed against Turks, and because the monument is in Australia, they are directed against Turkish-Australians. The genocide allegations and the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument have impacted on community cohesion, which directly impacts on the sense of belonging of some of the Turkish-Australians within that area. A second generation Turkish-Australia noted the following:

I have been living in Fairfield for 30 years. To be honest, I feel like packing up and leaving. I have told my mum and dad that we should be selling this house very soon, there is an Assyrian family that lives around the corner here, and they already hate us, they know we are Turkish-Australian. I am thinking of packing up and leaving, and either
buying in another area, or possibly going back overseas. It has put us in a difficult situation...[T]he idea is probably to move out somewhere else because it feels uncomfortable (Sydney, male, second generation).

Resistance is not limited to Assyrian-Australians for raising the allegations and building the monument, but also to the council for approving the monument. The council is meant to represent all Australians and not only a particular ethnic group. The council’s support of the monument is therefore seen as undermining the sense of belonging of Turkish-Australians in Fairfield. This point was made by a second-generation Turkish-Australian who told of a recent discussion he had with an older member of the community:

There are people who have considered leaving. I was speaking with an older person in our community who said if he could find two friends to move out with him, because of the monument, he would. I asked ‘What is that going to achieve? Is anyone going to care that you moved?’ He said, ‘I don’t want to pay rates to this bloody council’. I said ‘It’s not going to achieve anything’ (Sydney, male, second generation).

Political support for genocide allegations is viewed as support from political leaders for one ethnic group over another ethnic group. Political leaders are supposed to be representative of all Australians and should not support one ethnic group to the detriment of another ethnic group. This was expanded on by a first generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney:
When I saw the Assyrian MPs and lobby in the NSW Parliament criticising Turkey, when they were saying this occurred in Turkey against the Assyrians, it was shocking. In NSW Parliament, this was the people’s Parliament, this Parliament represents everyone, and anyone that criticises any ethnic group in this Parliament, should be stopped (Sydney, male, first generation).

In this quote, criticism of Turkey is viewed as criticism of Turkish-Australians and anger towards the criticism is based on how it undermines Turkish-Australians rather than on how it undermines the Turkish state. The Assyrian genocide allegations and the erection of the monument have therefore created a real or perceived sense of community division for Turkish-Australians. Although different, the Armenian allegations being recognised federally in Australia could likely cause the same sense of real or perceived community division and also undermine the Turkish sense of belonging to Australia.

Baser (2010) found a similar trend in Sweden amongst the Turkish community following the Swedish government’s recognition of the Armenian genocide in 2010. She argues genocide recognition resulted in a ‘diasporic turn’, where Turkish-Swedish organisations ‘organized various protests; issued journals specifically on this issue; and, recently formed lobby groups in order to make an impact on the politics of their host country’ (Baser 2010). A similar trend is demonstrated in Australia where political recognition of the Armenian genocide results in Turkish-Australians politically organising in attempts to influence the political system of the hostland. The extent to which this has had a lasting impact is limited; however Federal recognition might see an acceleration of this and result in the formation of a stronger Turkish identity amongst Turkish-Australians and a stronger political influence, as is the case in Sweden.
Conclusion

Turkish-Australian interviewees are in Australia by choice. They migrated due to the opportunities offered by Australia. Australia is therefore viewed as the homeland based on the opportunities provided and the fact that the lives of the interviewees are in Australia, including family and work. A sense of belonging has been established in Australia based on this and because Australia allows them through policies of multiculturalism to maintain their Turkish identity. Being Turkish-Australian is viewed as enriching as the interviewees can adopt parts of two different cultures. Ensuring that their children remain Turkish is not important and integration and assimilation into Australian culture is viewed as a natural outcome of living in Australia. Maintaining their Turkish heritage to the detriment of becoming Australian is not considered to be good. Turkey is viewed as the motherland rather than the homeland. It is viewed as the country in which the Turkish culture which is practiced in Australia was founded, although the interviewees did not want to return to Turkey. This is reflected in Turkish-Australian institutions such as the mosque and schools which are part of the Gülen movement. These are not focused on exclusively maintaining the Turkish culture, but on developing connections to the broader Australian society, whether that is Muslims or non-Muslims.

Rejection of the Armenian allegations being raised and politically recognised in Australia comes out of ideas of multiculturalism and a sense of belonging to Australia. The allegations are viewed as causing division and conflict between ethnic groups within Australia, which is not beneficial for the broader society or multiculturalism. Political recognition of the Armenian allegations impact on the Turkish sense of belonging to Australia as it criticises their Turkish identity which is practiced in Australia and encouraged through Australian multiculturalism. If the allegations are federally recognised they might result in Turkish-Australians feeling less part of Australia and
bring about conflict between ethnic groups. This has been reflected on a micro scale in Fairfield council where an Assyrian genocide monument was erected. This impacted on the sense of belonging of Turkish-Australians living in the council and led to alleged bullying of Turkish-Australians by Assyrian-Australians, demonstrating the possibility of community conflict. Permission by the council to erect the monument resulted in Turkish-Australians feeling isolated by local politicians, who they view as representing all Australians not just a particular ethnic group.
Chapter 8

Armenian-Australian Activism for Genocide Recognition

Introduction

The previous chapters have demonstrated differing views and narrative creation processes within Turkish-Australian and Armenian-Australian communities. Turkish-Australians have a strong sense of belonging to Australia and do not have strong connections with other Turkish communities outside of Turkey. Australia is considered to be their homeland and Turkey the motherland, where their Turkish identity is formed. Rejection of the Armenian allegations is not based on defending the Turkish state, but on defending their sense of belonging to Australia. While Armenian-Australians have developed a sense of belonging to Australia, this interacts with a sense of dispersion based on the genocide, forced migration, and instability in Middle-Eastern states where they had settled. There is a longing for a stronger space in which to be Armenian and living in Australia is forced due to the turbulent Armenian history. The significance of genocide recognition is personal, local and global. It would serve as recognition of the suffering and trauma experienced by family members and ancestors. It would provide a stronger sense of belonging to Australia as it would recognise Armenian trauma and the central aspect of their identity. Additionally, genocide recognition would also benefit the Armenian nation, both in the diaspora and the Republic of Armenia by freeing them from the past. While genocide recognition within Australia is important, ultimately, it is hoped that Turkey will recognise the Armenian genocide.

The next two chapters demonstrate how these ideas and differences affect the politicisation of genocide recognition of the Armenian genocide in Australia. This chapter
highlights that Armenian-Australian lobbying, led by the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-Australia), has been successful in advocating for genocide recognition and that genocide recognition is instrumentalised by the organisation as a means of defending the Republic of Armenia.

**Armenian Political Lobbying**

ANC-Australia has been the most relevant Armenian diasporic organisation in mobilising the Armenian-Australian community for genocide recognition and communicating the genocide narrative to the broader society. ANC-Australia serves as the public affairs organisation of the Armenian Revolutionary Front (ARF) outside of Armenia, and as the public affairs organisation for a number of cultural, educational, social and charitable organisations in Australia. This includes Armenian day schools in Sydney, the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) and the Armenian Weekly Newspaper. ANC-Australia claims to have a collective membership of 5,500, and additional support from a significant amount of Armenian-Australians associated with organisations represented by ANC-Australia.29

The ANC operates in 30 countries around the world and on six continents. There are five permanent offices, including the office of Europe, Russia, the Middle-East, the international Socialists and one in Armenia. ANC-Australia reports directly to the office in Armenia, demonstrating a strong link to the homeland. The ANC is a grass-roots organisation, and the Armenia Apostolic Church is not affiliated with the organisation although they do act as the spiritual leader of the community. ANC globally is a decentralised organisation, although political issues which are approached need to be agreed upon centrally.

29 The information in this chapter was provided by representatives of ANC-Australia, unless otherwise stated.
The decentralised nature of the Armenian National Committee means that ANC-Australia is able to form alliances and relationships with any relevant group within Australia, even if similar groups in other countries might oppose advocacy for political recognition of the Armenian genocide. In America, for example, the ANC has not been able to form ties with particular American Jewish organisations based on the support of the Jewish organisations for the Turkish government as a means of supporting Israel. ANC-Australia has been able to form relationships with Jewish organisations within Australia. The basis of alliances with Jewish organisations in Australia is on the shared experience of both groups having been victims of genocide. One of the most important aspects of the relationship between ANC-Australia and Jewish organisations can be seen in the inclusion of the Armenian genocide in an education programme in NSW aimed at high school students, which is conducted with support of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. The focus of the education programme is on fighting racism and the negative influence that racism can have on society. Within this programme, genocide is illustrated as being the ultimate and most serious outcome of racism. ANC-Australia actively lobbied for the inclusion of the Armenian genocide alongside the Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide and genocide against indigenous people in Australia within this education programme, with a representative of ANC-Australia providing an educational presentation regarding who the Armenians are, what happened to them during the First World War, and Turkey’s failure of acknowledging that the deaths of Armenians was genocide. As noted by a representative of ANC-Australia:

We hold an education seminar for school children at the Holocaust Museum in Sydney. We have students from public schools across NSW attending a day of education at the holocaust museum during which they will learn about the Armenian genocide. Since that programme came into effect, we have held so far 16 presentations to a collective audience of so far 1,000 NSW students to teach them about the Armenian genocide.
Additionally, the decentralised nature of the ANC means that each chapter can politically target the issue of genocide recognition as it is relevant within their particular jurisdiction. In Australia, for example, the focus has been on gaining political recognition for the deaths of Armenians as genocide on a state level originally, and following success in NSW and South Australia, in the Federal Parliament. ANC-Australia has not targeted city councils for recognition, as Australia’s Federal system, the make-up of the Armenian-Australian community, and its political strengths has allowed them to target political recognition on a state and Federal level.

While the decentralised nature of the ANC serves as an important strength in its ability to adapt and function within each different political context, the transnational ties between the different branches of the ANC are also important. It gives ANC-Australia a sense of contributing to work done on a transnational basis; it assists in giving them direction and provides resources which ANC-Australia can employ within their jurisdiction. This share of resources can be seen between ANC-Australia and ANC-America, for example, with ANC-Australia’s website copying content of ANC-America’s website. Alongside this, the pressure placed on other countries once one government has politically recognised the genocide, is also important within the transnational movement. This is not only through pressure placed on Turkey if one country recognises the deaths as genocide, but also through growing international momentum which can then place pressure on other countries to politically recognise the deaths as genocide. An attempt at gaining political genocide recognition in Australia does not only serve the Armenian community in Australia, but also serves the Armenian community all over the world. Therefore, activism in Australia is part of an international movement combined with other chapters of the ANC to lobby for political recognition of the Armenian genocide. The transnational ties between ANC-Australia and other ANC chapters around the world therefore allow each chapter to function within their own environment as is relevant to that chapter while also providing cooperation through information sharing and support.
ANC-Australia refines the narratives provided by Armenian-Australia interviewees and also articulates the importance of political recognition. While the majority of interviewees gave personal reasons for the importance of genocide recognition, the focus of ANC-Australia’s political activism is the defence of the Republic of Armenia. The focus of the organisation can be seen in its name - the Armenian National Committee. The two main issues highlighted by ANC-Australia as crucial for defending Armenia are: bringing about a peaceful and secure resolution to the conflict in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh\textsuperscript{30} through self-determination for the territory or a union with the Republic of Armenia and most importantly, a just resolution of the Armenian genocide.

A just resolution of the Armenian genocide is at the centre of ANC-Australia’s political activism.\textsuperscript{31} ANC-Australia argues that the desperate situation faced by the Republic of Armenia is directly related to the Armenian genocide. The Republic of Armenia is unsustainable due to the genocide, the subsequent dispersal of Armenians, and the current size of the country which does not include important parts of historical Armenia. In 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres, with arbitration conducted by Woodrow Wilson, commissioned the creation of a sustainable Armenian homeland. This was not done and the Republic of Armenia is currently unsustainable. The conditions of the Treaty of Sèvres are still relevant meaning that a sustainable Armenian homeland needs to be granted.

\textsuperscript{30} Nagorno-Karabakh is a territory within Azerbaijan which has a majority ethnic Armenian population. A war was fought between Armenian secessionists and Azerbaijani troops in 1988 which left the territory under control of Armenians. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan were still parts of the Soviet Union at this stage. There has been a truce since 1994. Armenians within Nagorno-Karabakh desire to either be joined to the Republic of Armenia or self-determination.

\textsuperscript{31} This was communicated during an interview conducted with representatives of ANC-Australia. It indicates the perceptions of the leadership of ANC-Australia regarding Armenia and its relationship with Turkey. Quotes supplied below are taken directly from these interviews unless otherwise stated.
The unsustainability of the Republic of Armenia is due to the policy of Pan-Turanism advocated by Turkey. Pan-Turanism ‘is an ideology that aims to create a Turkic super state stretching from the Balkans in Europe, eastwards across Turkey, Iran (Persia), the Caucasus, Central Asia up to an including northwest China. The logic behind this is that all people who speak Turkish must be incorporated into this Turkic super state’ (Farrokh 2011). ANC-Australia contends that Turkey actively advocates and pursues Pan-Turanism and its actions towards the Republic of Armenia are part of this policy. This can be seen through Turkey:

Actively campaigning with the Georgian government to settle Turks in the northern part [of Georgia], and completely surround[ing] the current state of Armenia with Turkish populations. Of course you know Turkey is populated by Turks, Azerbaijan is populated by Turks, the northern part of Iran is populated by Turks, and if Georgia, or the southern part was to become populated by Turks, Armenia would be completely surrounded by Turkish populations.

Pan-Turanism is also evident from Turkey’s attitude and cultural repression of Armenians in Turkey, including the ongoing destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage. Additionally, the threat posed by Turkey and the policy of Pan-Turanism is clear through the closed border between Turkey and Armenia:

Although we are not actively at war, the current border between Armenia and Turkey is actually a ceasefire line. It’s an official blockade of Armenia which goes against international norms. There are two
blocked borders in Europe – one is between Armenia and Turkey and one is between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Turkey’s attitude towards Armenia and Armenians mirrors the attitude of the Ottoman government. Turkey, like the Ottoman government, wants to destroy Armenia, and all memory of Armenians in the region. The Turkish government’s current policy is aimed ‘against the existence of the Armenian state’.

ANC-Australia argued that Turkey’s refusal to recognise the Armenian genocide highlights its attitude towards Armenians and means they can commit genocide against Armenians again as they are not willing to admit what they did so in the past. The Armenian diaspora has a responsibility to ensure the existence of the Armenian state. The most important way in which this can be done is by fighting for genocide recognition. Highlighting the atrocities suffered by Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman government ensures that Turkey does not commit genocide against the Armenians again:

It’s harder for Turkey to implement its policy [of Pan-Turanism] if other nations are actively passing [genocide] decisions and resolutions against them.

Turkey should pay reparations if it recognises the Armenian genocide. This should be paid to Armenia and institutions such as the Armenian Apostolic Church who lost buildings and suffered as a result of the genocide. This would ensure the sustainability of Armenia and Armenian institutions. Personal gain for individual Armenians, such as reclaiming land or wealth lost by family members is not the priority.
ANC-Australia argues that due to the attitude of the Turkish government towards Armenia and tabooin of the Armenian genocide in Turkey, Armenians outside of Turkey are forced to fight for genocide recognition as this cannot be done in Turkey. Additionally, genocide recognition by countries serves to educate Turks about their history so that they can pressurise the Turkish government to recognise the genocide. ANC-Australia’s advocacy for recognition of the Armenian genocide in Australia is therefore a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Genocide recognition is used instrumentally by ANC-Australia to defend Armenia from Turkey and their policy of Pan-Turanism and through this to ensure the sustainability of Armenia.

Armenian-Australian interviewees highlighted personal, local and global reasons for genocide recognition. Genocide recognition in Australia is important on a personal level, for developing a sense of belonging to Australia and also for the progress of Armenia. ANC-Australia does not pursue political genocide recognition within Australia for personal reasons or for the Armenian-Australian community. Their activism is part of a transnational campaign using the political environment in Australia as a means of influencing the global. While it is not focused on developing a sense of belonging for Armenian-Australians, this is a natural outcome of political recognition.

**Alliance Building**

ANC-Australia is highly organised and politically affective. This can be seen through their tactic of alliance building. The main difference between the NSW Parliament Commemoration in 1997 and the South Australian Parliament recognition in 2009 is cooperation between ANC-Australia and other ethnic lobbying groups. The formation of alliances allows ANC-Australia to gain support from other groups, and also to form a stronger and more concerted push for political genocide recognition. These alliances are
forged with Assyrian-Australian and Greek-Australian\(^{32}\) groups which have similar claims of genocide directed against the Ottoman government. The development of alliances between ANC-Australia, Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA), Return to Anatolia (RTA) and the Australian Hellenic Council (AHC) is logical. Both the AUA and AHC prioritise remembrance of the Assyrian and Pontiac genocides and political genocide recognition within Australia, amongst other issues which are relevant to the two communities, while RTA was founded with the sole purpose of education, remembrance and striving for political recognition of the Armenian, Hellenic and Assyrian genocides. Despite the historical differences, RTA focuses on all three genocides. The connection between ANC-Australia and the other organisations, including AUA and AHC, is more prominent in Australia than in other countries, and serves the purpose of strengthening the work and position of ANC-Australia. ANC-Australia, AHC and AUA are all part of larger transnational organisations, whereas RTA is an Australian organisation.

Cooperation between ANC-Australia, AHC and AUA originated during political recognition of the genocide in South Australia. The South Australian Legislative Council passed a motion politically recognising only the Armenian genocide on 25\(^{th}\) March 2009 (Hansard 2009a). This followed lobbying by ANC-Australia. The South Australian Lower House passed a motion politically recognising: ‘Genocide of the Armenians, Pontian Greeks, Syrian Orthodox and other Christian Minorities’ in April of that year (Hansard 2009b). Recognition in the Lower House was the first time that the deaths of Armenians, Pontian-Greeks and Assyrians were politically recognised together internationally with the second recognition taking place in Sweden in 2010. Since this recognition, it has become the trend in Australia for organisations involved in campaigning for the political recognition of any of the three genocides to campaign for the political recognition of all three simultaneously. The AUA successfully campaigned in 2013 for recognition of the

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\(^{32}\) Like the Assyrians, Greeks claim that the Ottoman government committed genocide against Greek minorities in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This genocide is referred to as the Greek, Hellenic, Hellene or Pontiac genocide. As is also the case with the Assyrians, these allegations have not be as widely recognised politically as the Armenian genocide, and have not received as much attention.
Assyrian, Armenian and Greek genocides in the NSW Legislative Assembly, despite the Armenian genocide already having been recognised by the NSW Parliament (Jovic 2013).

The change between the motion in the Legislative Council only acknowledging the Armenian genocide (Hansard 2009a) and the motion in the Lower House in South Australia acknowledging the Armenian, Pontian-Greek and Assyrian genocides (Hansard 2009b) demonstrates firstly the strength of ANC-Australia and secondly their willingness to cooperate with other groups. The South Australian Legislative Council politically recognised the Armenian genocide after lobbying work from ANC-Australia and members of the Armenian-Australian community in South Australia. After this was recognised in March 2009, members of the Greek community in South Australia contacted a South Australian parliamentarian who was planning to introduce the same motion in the Lower House. After encouragement from the Greek community to include the political recognition of the deaths of Pontian-Greeks as genocide within the motion in the Lower House, ANC-Australia was contacted to see if they were willing for this to happen. They agreed and re-drafted the motion to include the genocide of the Pontians and Assyrians. The Assyrian Universal Alliance did not play a role in South Australia as they are based in Sydney, with some representation in Melbourne and no representation in South Australia, however, ANC-Australia was willing to include the Assyrian genocide in the motion.

The Greek-Australian community in South Australia used the efforts undertaken by the Armenian-Australian community in South Australia and ANC-Australia. This demonstrates the political capital of ANC-Australia, and their ability to utilise experience of the political system alongside the passion of the Armenian-Australian community in order to effectively communicate their viewpoint and campaign for genocide recognition. The Greek-Australian community in South Australia is considerably larger than the Armenian-Australian community, something which is true for the whole of Australia, and the Armenian effectiveness despite their relatively small population in Australia and South Australia specifically (numbering an estimated 200), highlights the
effectiveness of ANC-Australia as a lobby group, and its ability to mobilise members of the Armenian-Australian community at a grass-roots level.

Through cooperation with other groups and the development of alliances, ANC-Australia can potentially mobilise far more people to lobby politicians for genocide recognition. The Greek-Australian community is large, with informal estimates suggesting there are 600,000 Greek-Australians, although the 2011 Census recorded 99,937 Greek-born people in Australia and 378,300 Australians claiming Greek ancestry (DFAT 2012). Through cooperation and focusing on joint recognition of the Armenian, Assyrian and Hellenic genocides, ANC-Australia can support Assyrian and Hellenic organisations to mobilise voters to push for genocide recognition. The importance of alliances as a means of pressuring politicians to advocate for genocide recognition was highlighted by a representative of ANC-Australia:

You also look at seats controlled by Greek-Australian and Assyrian-Australian communities; it’s quite a large number of seats where the communities for whom it is important to have recognition of the Assyrian, Armenian and Greek genocides can have a significant voting influence.

Cooperation between ANC-Australia, AHC and AUA allows for a well organised lobby such as ANC-Australia to leverage Greek-Australians and Assyrian-Australians in order to encourage politicians to advocate for recognition of the Armenian genocide, alongside the Assyrian and the Hellenic genocides.

While the example of political recognition within the South Australian Lower House was mostly as a result of work done by ANC-Australia and the Armenian community in South Australia, a great deal of cooperative work has been undertaken since then. In
November 2011 a combined delegation of 25 representatives from ANC-Australia, the ANC World Council, and members of the AUA and AHC undertook an advocacy week meeting with 30 members of the Senate and Federal Parliament in Canberra (AINA 2011a). The outcome of this combined delegation was seven members advocating for the political recognition of the three genocides within the Federal Parliament (Neo Kosmos 2011).

Another area in which political genocide recognition was sought and achieved for all three genocides was in the National Women’s Conference of the Labor Party. While ANC-Australia has taken the advocacy lead, the other organisations, especially RTA have been able to offer assistance to ANC-Australia through their own campaigning independent of ANC-Australia. Due to work conducted by RTA, the National Women’s Conference of the Labor party made it their official policy in 2011 that the Ottoman government committed genocide against the Armenians, Assyrians and Hellenes. The resolution states (AINA 2011b):

That this conference recognises the genocides of the Armenians, Hellenes and Assyrians from 1915 to 1923 is one of the greatest crimes against humanity and;
(a) Joins the Australian Armenian, Australian Hellenic and Australian Assyrian communities in honouring the memory of the innocent men, women, and children who fell victims to the first modern genocide;

While cooperation between the different organisations representing the ethnic groups in Australia assists all those involved, the reasons for political recognition vary from group to group. As noted by a representative of ANC-Australia, when discussing the difference between the Greek and Armenian communities within Australia with reference to political genocide recognition:
I think the Greek state is a viable state. I think that the Republic of Armenia may be a viable state with the support of the Armenian diaspora, however just resolution of the Armenian genocide is critical in creating a sustainable Republic of Armenia. Turkey must also acknowledge its history so that Armenia doesn’t face that threat again.

A similar sentiment was expressed by a Greek-Australian representative of RTA. When asked the significance of political recognition within Australia, she suggested it was for the purpose of remembering those that died rather than for the purpose of defending the Greek homeland, or for regaining lost land. For AUA, the priority is assisting Assyrians in the Middle-East who are faced with persecution, especially in Iraq, and trying to create an Assyrian homeland. While political recognition of the Assyrian genocide serves an important role in remembering past martyrs and those that lost their lives within the Assyrian community, it also raises awareness of the Assyrian plight, in the past and currently. Therefore, like the motives of ANC-Australia, AUA has a purpose beyond the inherent value of political genocide recognition. The concept of genocide is instrumentalised in order to serve additional goals. While ANC-Australia has been able to form ties with AUA, RTA and AHC based around political recognition of the three genocides, each group advocates for genocide for their own individual reasons.

Narrative and Political Activism

Framing the debate is central to political lobbying. Rohlinger (2002) states ‘framing is the process of constructing and defining events for an audience through the control of the

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33 This information was acquired during an interview with a representative of RTA.
agenda and vocabulary’. Framing involves ‘words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker uses when relaying information to another’ and demonstrates and influences an ‘individual’s cognitive understanding of a given situation’ (Druckman 2001). Gerrity (2006) argues that ‘[a] frame can assign blame, define a problem, point out the cause, or imply a solution’. Through framing a debate, an organisation is able to influence policy-makers and convince them to support the issue raised by the organisation. As noted by Salmon et al. (quoted in McGrath 2007):

Why do politicians, media gatekeepers and vast segments of the population care about and devote their energy and attention to some social problems but not others?...[T]he answers tend to rest less with the objective characteristics of social problems themselves and more with the power, resources and skills of those who seek to mould public sentiment about them.

Mack (1997) points out that ‘[i]ssues should be framed to show how the public benefits from your side of the argument. Don’t go public with a narrow, self-serving issue’. While Wolpe and Levine (1996) state ‘[b]ehind every issue is a morass of detail and nuance that must be reduced to a central theme leading to one unyielding conclusion: support for your initiative is the right choice’.

ANC-Australia’s success in having the Armenian genocide recognised in South Australia and NSW is largely due to how they have framed the issue. They have ensured that genocide recognition is relevant to policy-makers and the wider Australian community rather than just Armenian-Australians. This is especially important in Australia where little is known about Armenians generally, about the Armenian genocide specifically, and
due to the small Armenian-Australian community who cannot form a relevant voting bloc, outside of a few electorates.

ANC-Australia has presented the genocide narrative in two ways. The first is connecting genocide recognition to preventing future genocides and demonstrating the danger of genocide denial. This uses global arguments about the link between genocide recognition and genocide prevention to engender support from policy-makers. The second is highlighting the connection between Armenians, the Armenian genocide and Australia. Australians are used as sources of authority, Australia’s involvement in supporting Armenian survivors is highlighted, and the connection between Armenian-Australians and Australia is illustrated. This employs ideas relevant to Australia to gain support. ANC-Australia has refined how the issue is framed, with notable differences between the NSW Commemoration in 1997 (Hansard 1997) and the South Australian recognition in 2009 (Hansard 2009a; Hansard 2009b). These differences will be highlighted below.

**Using the Concept of Genocide**

Recognition of the Armenian genocide in Australia is tied to preventing genocide from occurring in the future. ANC-Australia argues if the Armenian genocide is recognised, it can be learnt from, and future genocides can be prevented. Recognition of the Armenian genocide in Australia is not only relevant for Armenian-Australians but for broader society as it contributes to genocide prevention. This argument makes recognition of the Armenian genocide a humanitarian and human rights issue and combines with international arguments which prioritise genocide recognition, as discussed in chapter 1. By framing genocide recognition as humanitarian and a manner of preventing genocide, recognition of the Armenian genocide becomes relevant for Australian politicians and
broader Australian society. By recognising the Armenian genocide, Australian politicians are campaigning against genocide and working to prevent future genocides.

The Holocaust paradigm is an important part of this argument. It is argued by ANC-Australia that the failure of the international community to punish the Ottoman government and learn the lessons of the Armenian genocide emboldened Adolf Hitler to implement the Holocaust. ANC-Australia uses this argument to support genocide recognition. As noted on the Synopsis of the genocide on ANC-Australia’s website (2013c):

In effect, the Turkish government had succeeded in its diabolical plan to exterminate the Armenian population from what is now Turkey. The failure of the international community to remember, or to honour their promises to punish the perpetrators, or to cause Turkey to indemnify the survivors, helped convince Adolf Hitler some 20 years later to carry out a similar policy of extermination against the Jews and certain other non-Aryan populations of Europe.

The ANC-Australia website (2013b) also directly quotes Hitler:

Adolf Hitler - While persuading his associates that a Jewish holocaust would be tolerated by the west stated...’Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?’

This point was highlighted during the debates in the NSW Parliament and South Australian Parliament, illustrating the successful use of the narrative to persuade
politicians of the significance of genocide recognition. The Hon. M. J Atkinson, the
Attorney General and first speaker during the debate on genocide recognition in the
South Australian Lower House noted: ‘German Fuhrer Adolf Hitler told his commanders
on the eve of Germany’s invasion of Poland, “Who, after all, speaks today of the
annihilation of the Armenians?” That was in 1939’ (Hansard 2009a). Bob Carr, the then
Premier of NSW, spoke second during the debate about the Genocide Commemoration
in the NSW Parliament and noted (Hansard 1997):

Adolf Hitler is on record as justifying the Nazi genocide of European
Jewry. He said he could get away with it because, after all, who in the
1940s recollects what happened to the Armenians...Those chilling
words for the Nazi tyrant remind us that the Armenian genocide
ushered in a century of huge crimes against humanity: it was the first
of a series of crimes in this century.

The failure to recognise the Armenian genocide and bring its perpetrators to justice is
also linked to other genocides during the 20th century. This was best highlighted during
the debate in the NSW Lower House. Carr developed his point by stating (Hansard 1997):

...we think about the Balkans, the Hungarian minority in Romania, the
hill tribes in South-east Asia, the indigenous people in Australia and
North America and some of the terrible genocides in Africa...This is
something we are forced to reflect on following the experience of
Armenians this century.
Peter Collins, the local member for Willoughby and the then leader of the Liberal Party in NSW was the first to speak during the debate (Hansard 1997) and initially raised this theme:

While the genocide was being carried out, almost all major powers condemned the Ottoman government’s campaign of executions. Yet it continued unchecked. History will forever record that odious fact, in the same way it will record the world’s seeming inaction over genocide in Germany, Eritrea, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia and, as we speak, in the jungles of Africa.

The preventative aspect of recognising the Armenian genocide and its connection to the Holocaust and other genocides serves to make political recognition relevant to Australia. It is not only recognition of Armenian deaths, suffering and tragedy, but also a means of learning from history and through this preventing genocide.

This point was explicitly highlighted in the Commemoration in the NSW Parliament and the recognition in the South Australian Parliament. Point (c) of both commemorations states that the different Parliaments (Hansard 1997; Hansard 2009a; Hansard 2009b):

(c) recognises the importance of remembering and learning from such dark chapters in human history to ensure that such crimes against humanity are not allowed to be repeated.

Silencing the Turkish Narrative
The manner in which the genocide narrative is framed by ANC-Australia silences the Turkish historical narrative globally and locally by labelling it as genocide denial. The Turkish historical narrative is painted as genocide denial, rather than an historical account of what happened during the First World War. The issue cannot therefore be debated. As was the case above, the Holocaust paradigm is critical. Denial of the Armenian genocide is viewed as the same as denial of the Holocaust. ANC-Australia demonstrates this on the organisation’s website (2013a):

Imagine a country that denies the Holocaust. Imagine that the same country insists that Jews were killed because they were disloyal to Germany and were also guilty of killing German soldiers during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Bizarre? Fiendish? Ridiculous statements which do not deserve a response? Yet something very similar has been asserted by Turkey – for over 90 years.

It dismisses Turkey’s account that Armenian deaths were due to an Armenian uprising and labels this view as genocide denial. The Turkish counter-argument is made void and it is impossible for the Turkish government or members of the Turkish community to counter the genocide accusations. The impact of ANC-Australia’s argument can be seen in the debate within the South Australian Lower House. Before the Commemoration in the Lower House, Senator Alan Ferguson, of the Liberal Party in South Australia, raised the issue of genocide recognition in Parliament. Ferguson took exception to a speech made by the South Australian Attorney-General, The Hon. M.J. Atkinson who made the following statement to the Greek association in South Australia (Ferguson 2009):
The nationalist Turks led by Mustafa Kemal’s forces and their frenzied followers began to persecute [the Pontians] through beatings, murder, forced marches and labour, theft of their properties and livelihood, rape, torture and deportations.

Ferguson’s response to the Attorney-General’s speech focused on the division which can be caused by such speeches within Australia and also presented the Turkish opinion as presented to him by the Turkish ambassador during an earlier meeting. Ferguson noted (Ferguson 2009a):

The Turkish ambassador found that most offensive...It can only cause ill-feeling...There were atrocities in the past. We are talking about events that took place almost 100 years ago. There are always debatable issues. We have the situation with the Armenians, with the Pontian Greeks and with a range of other people who currently are trying to put today’s moral judgment of events that took place 100 years ago...Members of the Turkish community have integrated into Australian society and become wonderful Australians. To be reminded of events that took place in history that long ago, and a biased interpretation if I may say so, is certainly not warranted.

Ferguson’s response was based on ensuring community harmony within Australia and he also communicated the Turkish historical narrative. This was discounted as genocide denial. In response to his speech, ANC-Australia directly challenged him on his denial of the Armenian genocide and launched an internet campaign against his viewpoint. Greek-Australian organisations similarly organised online campaigns which demanded that Ferguson apologise for his genocide denial (Go Petition 2009). He was also called a
I am very disappointed with Senator Ferguson’s remarks. I do not think there is a person in this building today who can look that senator in the face, because I consider him to be on the same level as people who deny the holocaust. Of course, there are offences in place in many European countries for denying the holocaust, but Senator Ferguson sits nicely in red leather in the Senate. I find that offensive...Senator Ferguson needs to apologise to all these groups. If he had said those words that he had said in the Senate about the Jewish holocaust in Germany he would be in prison. However, for some reason, he is a Liberal Party senator who is held in high regard.

Representatives of ANC-Australia stated that politicians within the South Australian Lower House told ANC-Australia that after Senator Ferguson’s speech in Parliament, which they viewed as genocide denial, their resolve to politically recognise the Armenian genocide was strengthened. The Turkish historical narrative and argument regarding the dangers of genocide recognition in Australian parliaments was shut down as it was viewed as genocide denial rather than a valid counter-argument.

The Turkish counter-narrative was painted as genocide denial in the motion carried by the South Australian Parliament in 2009 and the Commemoration in the NSW Parliament in 1997. As quoted from the South Australian motion (Hansard 2009a; Hansard 2009b):
(d) condemns and prevents all attempts to use the passage of time to deny or distort the historical truth of the genocide of the Armenians and other acts of genocide committed during this century.

Australia’s Inclusion in the Narrative

ANC-Australia highlights Australia’s link to the genocide narrative. This is done in two ways. Firstly through eyewitness accounts of ANZAC soldiers and prisoners-of-war who witnessed the genocide. ANZAC soldiers maintain an important legacy within Australia and are used in order to add further weight to the claims that genocide was committed against the Armenians. ANC-Australia also highlights the humanitarian nature of ANZAC soldiers, further contributing to the ANZAC legend. Note the following account from an ANC-Australia website which educates Australians about the Armenian genocide (AHSA 2011):

There are also a number of cases where Imperial Camel Corps personnel [Australian soldiers] provided sanctuary for Armenian Genocide survivors in the Jordan River Valley in 1917 and 1918. In a touching display of humanity amid the horrors of war, Australian soldier Colonel Arthur Mills carried a 4-year-old Armenian girl, sleeping in his arms, on his camel to safety.

Another account from the same website highlights how the humanitarian assistance provided by Australia is an important part of Australia’s history (AHSA 2011):
As a result of the Australian response to the Armenian Genocide, a significant number of Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians were saved from death and destitution. In Australia, this landmark response was an early manifestation of the humanitarian ethos that formed part of the nation’s engagement with international movements in the interwar period. It is also considered to be Australia’s first major international humanitarian relief effort.

The website explicitly notes that this part of Australian history has been neglected and that it should be highlighted (AHSA 2011):

A neglected part of Australia’s military history, the ANZAC eyewitnesses to the Genocides and the ANZAC rescuers of survivors is one of the brightest legacies of Australian military service beyond our shores.

These points make the Armenian genocide part of Australia’s historical narrative. A representative of ANC-Australia noted that the humanitarian actions of Australia and Australians in the aftermath of the genocide are used in meetings with Australian politicians when advocating for genocide recognition. Eye-witness accounts from ANZAC soldiers are also used. These points highlight to Australian politicians that the Armenian genocide is also Australia’s history and that recognition of the Armenian genocide is recognition of Australia’s humanitarian legacy.

This is a highly successful way of bringing political recognition to the fore. The trigger for genocide recognition in the South Australian Parliament was an art exhibition held in Adelaide which highlighted the role that Australia and South Australia played in assisting
Armenian refugees who fled from Ottoman Turkey. The exhibition was hosted by an Armenian-Australian in South Australia along with an ANC-Australia researcher from Sydney. The art exhibition was attended by South Australian politicians at the invitation of members of the Armenian-Australian community in South Australia. Relationships were formed with members of the South Australian Parliament on both sides of politics through the exhibition. As noted by a representative of ANC-Australia:

Essentially [the art exhibition] was a trigger. Politicians need a reason to be able to take an issue up and that laid the foundation for them to be able to do so. They became aware of it officially; they attended a function that gave them the impetus to then pursue it.

The trigger is significant as there is not a large Armenian community within South Australia, with community estimates suggesting that there are only 200 Armenians in the state. Armenian genocide recognition does not gain extra votes. Based on the interest shown from South Australian politicians, the Armenian-Australian community in South Australia invited ANC-Australia to pursue the campaign of political genocide recognition within South Australia. ANC-Australia drafted a resolution which was relevant to South Australia and was introduced into the Legislative Council in March 2009. The link between the deaths of Armenians and Greeks to Australia was highlighted by politicians throughout the debate in South Australia. As noted by Mitchell Hanna during the debate in the Lower House (Hansard 2009b):

I am indebted to the research of Dr. Panayiotis Diamadis,\(^\text{34}\) a scholar who researches these matters. It was due to the information I heard

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\(^{34}\) Dr. Payayiotis Diamadis is a Greek-Australian researcher based in Sydney. His work has focused on the relationship between Australia and the Greek and Armenian genocides. This has especially focused on the
from him that I realised that this is an issue for South Australians, particularly because our own South Australian soldiers witnessed a lot of these deprivations. The soldiers, who were taken prisoner at Gallipoli and in Syria, among other allied forces in Mesopotamia as well, were sent on death marches, too. They were sent to prison camps where they were forced to hard labour, as well. There are many memoirs of soldiers (sic) written about these times. They saw the hordes of Armenian and Greek women and children being forced along the countryside in death marches. They saw their pitiful, bedraggled state. They joined with them in some cases in prison camps. The truth of the massacre and what happened to those Armenian-Greek people is undeniable. It is there in the records and even in the records of our own Australian soldiers.

The member for the South Australian electorate of Unley, Pisoni highlighted Australia’s humanitarian assistance and noted ‘[t]hese are just some of the hundreds of Australian stories of generosity, hope and moral decency that have been unearthed’ (Hansard 2009b) The resolution highlights the effectiveness of ANC-Australia in presenting the genocide narrative as relevant to South Australia. The declaration (Hansard 2009a; Hansard 2009b):

(e) acknowledges the significant humanitarian contribution made by the people of South Australia to the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide and Pontian Genocide.

accounts given by Australian soldiers of what they witnessed. He has also presented lectures for ANC-Australia, and other lobby groups who campaign for genocide recognition, such as Return to Anatolia.
The Australian humanitarian contribution and ANZAC eye-witness accounts were also recognised in the motion carried at the National Labor Women’s Conference. The motion stated that it (AINA 2011b):

(e) Recalls the testimonials of ANZAC prisoners of war and other servicemen who were witness to the genocides of the Armenians, Hellenes and Assyrians;
(f) Recalls the testimonies of ANZAC service men who rescued Armenian, Hellene and Assyrian genocide survivors; and
(g) Acknowledges the significant humanitarian relief contribution made by the people of Australia to the victims and survivors of the Armenian, Hellene and Assyrian genocides.

This demonstrates that Australia’s humanitarian contribution and ANZAC eyewitness accounts have become a fixed feature when framing the importance of recognition of not only the Armenian genocide, but also the Assyrian and Hellenic genocides.

The 2010 recognition in South Australia provides a stronger link between the genocide, aftermath and Australia. Through recognising the Armenian genocide, South Australia is also recognising their humanitarian history. It also develops the Australian historical narrative to connect with the Armenian genocide narrative.

Australia’s humanitarian link to the aftermath and witness of the genocide had not been researched before the 1997 NSW Commemoration. Without this, genocide recognition was framed as representing Armenian-Australians and demonstrating the Armenian-Australian connection to Australia. As noted by Collins (Hansard 1997):
For the past three decades the Armenian community has played a significant role in helping shape the vibrant, cosmopolitan culture that characterises my electorate...In citizenship, as in commerce, the Armenian community is invaluable to our nation. I know that Armenian community leaders make great efforts to instil values of citizenship within the young members of their community....Nothing could be more Australian than the Armenian fair go mentality...Most of the Armenians who have made proud new lives here are the children or grandchildren of the survivors of the genocide.

The then Premier of the state, Bob Carr, was the second speaker during the commemoration and also highlighted this point (Hansard 1997):

[!]It is appropriate that the Parliament carry this motion because the Armenian community is part of the Australian community. Armenians in Australia understand that we welcome them to our shores as part of one of the world’s unique cultures, and they wear their Australian citizenship with pride. That is what we mean by our multiculturalism.

The issue was framed as relevant for Armenian-Australians as Australian citizens. The Commemoration recognises an ethnic group in Australia and a critical aspect of their identity. This point was not raised during the debate in South Australia, suggesting that the humanitarian contribution of Australians in the aftermath of the genocide serves as a strong enough hook for politicians.

Australian Genocide Recognition and Turkey
As noted above, an important purpose of ANC-Australia’s activism is to highlight the current perceived dangers faced by Armenia from the Turkish government. The debate in the Lower House of the South Australian Parliament served as an important space in which the Turkish government was criticised. While this was not as a direct result of activism from ANC-Australia, their lobbying for genocide recognition provided the opportunity for this to happen. Direct criticism of the current Turkish government was given by members of the South Australian Parliament. A minister of Greek heritage was the most vocal in this regard. The Hon. A Koutsantonis used the opportunity to criticise the present day Turkish government (Hansard 2009b):

Today, oppressions are still being carried out by the Turkish regime. They say that these offences are in the past and are behind modern Turkey. Let me remind the house of modern Turkey’s record. There are 40,000 Turkish troops illegally occupying a European nation as we speak. Religious freedoms in Turkey are being held back. The spiritual leader of the world’s 300 million orthodox is being oppressed. The School of Halki, the theological college has been closed. The Turkish government is attempting to say that our patriarch is simply a local church leader rather than the spiritual leader of the orthodox world. Turkey claims to be a secular nation yet discriminates against ethnic minorities in favour of Islam and it still oppresses its Kurdish minorities. There are continued border incursions on Greek islands in the Aegean. This is a country that talks as though it is a western nation which wants to enter Europe, but they behave like barbarians. Until the modern country of Turkey understands that it must apologise unequivocally for its actions in the past and in the present it can never become a modern European nation....Modern Turkey has a lot to learn, and it will never reform itself until it accepts the tragedies of the past.
The intention of ANC-Australia to use genocide recognition to highlight the perceived threat of Turkey against Armenia is achieved. While the speech during the debate focused on Turkish policies towards Greek communities within Turkey, it also shed light on Turkey’s threat towards Christian minorities and the threat posed by Turkey’s failure to recognise past genocides. Criticism of modern day Turkey was not evident during the debate in the NSW Lower House in 1997 (Hansard 1997) which demonstrates ANC-Australia’s ability to refine and improve its narrative to fulfil its goals.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that ANC-Australia is able to campaign for genocide recognition due to the professional and politically savvy nature of the organisation. The reason for activism is not to develop a sense of belonging for Armenian-Australians to Australia through genocide recognition but instead to defend the Republic of Armenia. The organisation considers Armenia to still be in danger of genocide from the Turkish government due to the policy of Pan-Turanism and highlighting the genocide is a means of shining a light on Turkey and ensuring that the international community is aware of the dangers faced by Armenia. The organisation has been able to develop alliances with other ethnic organisations that also campaign for recognition of genocide committed by the Ottoman government against Christian minorities during the First World War. This strengthens ANC-Australia. It has also been able to frame the debate in a way which persuades Australian politicians of the importance of genocide recognition and the framing of the debate has developed between genocide Commemoration in NSW in 1997 and genocide recognition in South Australia in 2009. ANC-Australia uses international and local arguments to frame the debate. The international argument includes highlighting the importance of genocide recognition for preventing future genocides from occurring. This effectively silences the Turkish historical narrative as
genocide denial and support for this is reflected in arguments made during the debates in both the NSW and South Australian Parliaments. An important part of this is referencing the link between the Armenian genocide as a precursor to the Holocaust, as demonstrated in the genocide narrative. Local arguments focus on the connection between Australia and the Armenian genocide through Australian humanitarian support for Armenian refugees and ANZAC eye-witness accounts of the genocide. Recognition of the Armenian genocide is therefore recognition of Australian history and not only Armenian history. Support for this is also demonstrated through arguments provided by politicians during the debate in the South Australian Parliament. This demonstrates development in Armenian-Australian activism and how the issue is framed. The activism by ANC-Australia is successful in highlighting the current situation of minority groups in Turkey and therefore fulfils ANC-Australia’s goal of defending the Republic of Armenia by applying pressure to Turkey to recognise the Armenian genocide.
Chapter 9

Turkish-Australian Activism

Introduction

This chapter discusses the Turkish-Australian and Turkish government’s reactions to Armenian-Australian activism. It focuses on activism conducted to counter the Armenian allegations because Turkish-Australian interviewees who believed that the Ottoman government was guilty of genocide did not think that the issue should be raised in Australia. They argued that it is an issue for Turkey to address and Australia should not be involved in it. They do, therefore, not engage in political activism within Australia.

The chapter demonstrates that there has been limited activism from Turkish-Australians due to their perceptions towards the allegations and political activism. The little activism that does take place is motivated by ensuring a sense of belonging to Australia; however it is largely unsuccessful and reactive. While the Turkish government does try to counter the Armenian allegations, they are also reactive and cannot effectively influence the Australian political system at a state or council level, although they can have a greater impact at a Federal level.

Reason for Limited Activism

Many of the Turkish-Australian interviewees view the Armenian allegations with a sense of bemusement. They do not understand what the point of raising the allegations in
Australia is. A Turkish-Australian community leader in Sydney remarked that while Turkish-Australians are focused on integrating and developing a sense of belonging to Australia, Armenian-Australians are not doing this. Instead, they are focused on what happened to them in the past. Another interviewee clearly expressed this opinion, by highlighting that the Armenian focus on genocide recognition does not influence Turkey because of the current strength of the country. The genocide allegations are viewed as historical issues being raised by a group who are not as well off as Turks without the allegations having any negative consequences for Turkey. A second-generation Turkish-Australian argued:

There is a slight bemusement because there are two national prides at odds with each other, and deep down, the Turks know they are better off in the scheme of the world than what the Armenians are. Turkey is a prospering nation, it has international sway and reputation, and the Armenians are kind of being robbed by the Soviet Union, with their growth being retarded by the Soviet Union, so I think that’s the kind of thing that Turks think. [Armenians] can whinge about this all [they] like, but there is no-way [they] are going to get any of [their] land back. Because I know Turkey will fight to the death before they do that and it is going to be very hard for the Armenians to rally an army which is going to match the second biggest army in NATO. So I think that is why the Turks find it a little kind of, whinge all you like but it isn’t going to help your situation (Sydney, male, second generation).

The allegations are viewed as irrelevant and Armenians are viewed as focusing on historical matters which will not benefit them. Because the Armenian allegations are viewed as irrelevant, it is not necessary to mount an active campaign against them. These views also provide a moral high-ground for Turkish-Australians (also discussed in
chapter 6). They have been able to move on from the past and develop a sense of belonging to Australia. Armenian-Australians have not and constantly raise the genocide allegations instead of looking to the future. The allegations are raised needlessly and will not benefit Armenia, meaning that Armenian-Australians are wasting their time.

The Armenian allegations are also not considered to be true. Turkish-Australian interviewees maintained that if they were true, Armenians would be willing to have the issue debated by academics and historians or taken to a court of law, where a legal judgment would be made. Politicians should not be involved in the issue. The politicisation of the issue is viewed as unnecessary and manipulative, and political recognition is viewed as based on political reasons rather than attempts at understanding what happened in the past and a genuine recognition of historical fact. Politicians are only willing to recognise the Armenian genocide for political expediency, such as gaining votes, or because they have been swayed by Armenian lobbyists who have provided financial donations. This point was communicated by a second generation Turkish-Australian living in Sydney:

You have a well organised Armenian group, probably outside Armenia that is pushing this and knowing how and where to push it and getting a political point across rather than an historical point across. I know you have in Australia, local councils and to some extent state governments for political reasons, they are going ahead with this talk, that genocide may or may not have happened. Obviously the Armenian lobby is great in certain parts of Australia, so they are accepting it based on politics, not because they have done research, not determining it on any international court decision, which there hasn’t been and logic says if you had the evidence and felt strongly about it that is what you would do (Sydney, male, second generation).
An example was given by the same interviewee to highlight this point. When the NSW Parliament commemorated the Armenian genocide in 1997, a representative from the Turkish government in Australia tried to contact Peter Collins who presented the motion within Parliament in order to open dialogue on the issue. Collins refused to meet with the Turkish government representative and later shared with the government representative that there was pressure on him from Armenian-Australians to place the motion:

[Turks in Australia] are Australian at the end of the day, and there is no denying that factor and it upsets [Turks in Australia] when certain Australian MPs in Parliament accept the genocide because of Armenian votes. It’s because they feel they are in an Armenian seat, or a majority Armenian community seat and they need to vote for it, otherwise they won’t be in power. I feel that is wrong in politics, if someone should recognise something which is in their hearts, they shouldn’t vote in that instance. I heard a case of a former MP of Willoughby who didn’t answer any calls of the Consul General of Turkey. This is going back 15 years or so. He didn’t answer any of his calls regarding the Armenian genocide issue. He made a statement, and the Consul General wanted to ask him why he made that statement, and his response was no response, and after a while when they met at a function together and [the Consul General] asked, ‘Why aren’t you returning my calls’, [and the politician said], ‘Look, I’ll be honest with you. I am in a very safe Armenian seat and if I vote against them, there will be trouble’ (Sydney, male, second generation).

While it is not clear if this story is true, the interviewee argued that the Turkish government took the initiative of responding to the genocide allegations. The response
of the politician in ignoring the Turkish government and expressing that he was forced to present the Commemoration by Armenian-Australians demonstrates that political support for the allegations is motivated by electoral politics and the ability of Armenian-Australians to manipulate the situation. Turkish-Australians do not want to play this game because they view the issue as one which should be argued out of truth rather than politics. Again, Turkish-Australians take what they view as the moral high ground. They believe that the allegations are false and that they should debated by academics and historians. Politicians who recognise the allegations do so not for reasons of truth, but because they are manipulated into doing so. Turkish-Australians are not willing to do this and therefore do not want to engage with the political system.

As noted in chapter 7, Turkish-Australians feel a sense of belonging to Australia and believe that ethnic groups should work to benefit Australian society rather than manipulating the political system for their own good. Based on this notion, interviewees argued that Turkish-Australian political energy would be better spent in areas which would help the Australian community, rather than fighting the allegations. When asked why he was not interested in fighting the Armenian allegations, a second generation Turkish-Australian community leader in Sydney argued that Turkish-Australians should focus on other issues:

In my opinion, it could be local government type stuff, it could be Auburn Town council, and it could be Parramatta council that needs better roads or things like that that are better for the whole community. Because we have such a big presence here, we could do things which help the whole community (Sydney, male, second generation).
Therefore, some of the Turkish-Australian interviewees are reluctant to engage in activism which benefits only the Turkish-Australian community generally or against the Armenian allegations in Australia specifically. They view the allegations as unfounded, unnecessary, unthreatening to Turkey, and would engage in political issues which can benefit Australian society, rather than issues which only benefit Turkish-Australians.

**Motives of Turkish-Australian Activism**

Based on the above reasons, there are limited examples of Turkish-Australian activism to counter the Armenian allegations in Australia. As noted in chapter 7, Turkish-Australian objections to the Armenian allegations being raised and recognised as genocide in Australia is based on the allegations undermining the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia. Activism is not undertaken out of defence of Turkey’s national interest, but rather for local reasons. Turkish culture is practiced in Australia by Turkish-Australians because Australia encourages this through policies of multiculturalism. When Australian politicians recognise the Armenian genocide, Turkish-Australians feel that their sense of belonging based on being able to practice their Turkish identity in Australia is under threat. It is for this reason that activism is undertaken. This is reflected in the relationship between Turkish-Australians and the Turkish government.

As noted in chapter 3, the Turkish government actively tries to engage with members of the Turkish community in countries around the world, including Australia, to encourage them to act as a political lobby for Turkey’s interests. A direct example of the Turkish state encouraging Turkish-Australian community activism was published in Dayanışma, a Turkish-Australian newspaper published in Sydney, on the 5th June 1998 — the year after the NSW Parliament commemorated the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government
called on the Turkish-Australian community in Sydney to politically organise in order to counter the Armenian allegations. As quoted by Şenay (2010):

> There is now a duty falling on you. Exert pressure on the State ministers working in your area and tell them that the decision taken by Carr does not reflect the reality. Make copies of the documents that we will provide, which will have correct information about the reality and post them to the parliamentarians. The protest letters can be accessed from the Council of Turkish Associations.

Turkish-Australian interviewees in Sydney also highlighted that the Turkish government tried to mobilise them to campaign against the Armenian allegations. A second generation Turkish-Australian community leader in Sydney noted:

> The Consulate just tells us when things are happening. I spoke to the current ambassador, I went to Canberra and visited him and he was telling me that I represent the Turkish government, and I can’t accept [the genocide] claims and that it is kind of stored in our national identity and pride and we need to defend ourselves (Sydney, male, second generation).

There is an important difference between the motives of the Turkish-Australian community and the Turkish government regarding activism in Australia. The motivation of the Turkish government is focused on defending the Turkish nation with the Turkish government considering the Turkish-Australian community to be their representatives in Australia. The Turkish government’s interest is on Turkey, rather than the interests of the Turkish-Australian community. Interviews with representatives of the Turkish
government demonstrated that their focus was on the influence that genocide recognition would have for the relationship between the Turkish government and the Australian government. The Turkish government, therefore, tries to mobilise the Turkish-Australian community to defend Turkey.

The Turkish-Australian motivation is very different. Interviewees do not want to defend Turkey but rather their Turkish identity in Australia. They consider Turkey to be strong enough to defend itself and the Armenian allegations as not endangering Turkey. They also do not view Turkey as their homeland, but as the land in which the culture they practice in Australia originates from. They do not view themselves as representatives of Turkey or the Turkish government. They view the genocide accusations as impacting on their Turkish-Australian identity meaning that their activism is internally and locally orientated. They are focused on how the allegations in Australia impact on their sense of belonging rather than their impact on Turkey.

While the Turkish government tries to mobilise the Turkish-Australian community, they do not provide financial or intellectual support. Other than sponsoring Turkish Saturday schools, which uses textbooks from Turkey, provided by Turkish Consulates in Australian, the Turkish government does not provide education or support to the Turkish-Australian community. A Turkish official noted that the Turkish government does not need to provide education to the Turkish-Australian community, as they can learn about the Turkish historical narrative and Armenian Question on the internet. The Turkish official also suggested that because the Turkish-Australian community is settled into Australia, they are able to bring their own speakers from Turkey to teach about Turkish history and the Armenian Question and do not need support from the Turkish government. The Turkish government therefore wants to mobilise the Turkish-Australian community without providing resources or support. They do not think that the Turkish-Australian community requires support as they consider them to be well integrated and
able to support themselves financially. The Turkish government therefore expects the Turkish-Australian community to act as representatives of Turkey in Australia without offering support and without realising that the perceptions of the Turkish-Australian community towards the allegations are fuelled by their sense of belonging to Australia rather than their impact on Turkey.

**Turkish-Australian Organisations**

As noted in chapter 6, the Turkish-Australian community is split along religious, ethnic and political lines. This is reflected by the large amount of Turkish-Australian groups which are similarly split along religious, ethnic and political lines. There is not an organisation with the purpose of engaging with the Australian political system, focused on public affairs from a Turkish-Australian perspective, or to advocate on behalf of the Turkish-Australian community. There is also not an Australia-wide Turkish organisation, an umbrella organisation which unites all the Turkish-Australian organisations, or facilitates national cooperation. This means that the Turkish-Australian community does not have a political voice or a united voice.

Divisions within the Turkish-Australian community were highlighted during an interview with a second-generation Turkish-Australian community leader in Sydney. He formed his organisation without a political basis, and does not align with any political groups or viewpoints to ensure that the organisation does not fracture and that it can function as it should. When asked about the Turkish-Australian response to the politicisation of genocide recognition within Australia, and the role his association might play in combating political recognition in Australia, he noted:
Turks are hopeless when it comes to coming together and being organised. Me as the leader of [a Turkish-Australian] Association, I have found it so hard to get them to stop being jealous of each other and work together and that’s the reason...To avoid this problem of people going their own ways, I have kept my association strictly a-political and I have distanced myself from things like [the issue of the Armenian genocide allegations] (Sydney, male, second generation).

The divisions within the Turkish-Australian community were highlighted as a problem for the political effectiveness of the community by Turkish government representatives in Australia, who addressed this in the Dayanışma community newspaper in April 1995 (quoted in Şenay 2010):

It is not possible for all human beings, wherever they may be, to think and act alike. However, if the preservation of our national culture and patriotic feelings are concerned, we should join our hands and get involved in activities towards this aim. In Australia, what a sadness to say this, there are far more Turkish associations that are necessary and no coordination exists among them. There is no doubt that the TWA\textsuperscript{35} is working with firm intention to fill this gap as much as possible. It is only through the work of expert and non-partisan people in the community that we will learn more about our history, our national culture, our language and about our homeland.

The lack of community harmony and a group engaged in political activism means that the Turkish-Australian community is not able to counter the Armenian allegations.

\textsuperscript{35}Turkish Welfare Association. It is one of the oldest Turkish-Australian organisations in Sydney.
effectively. While there is one Armenian-Australian organisation at the forefront of activism for political genocide recognition who works with other ethnic organisations, the Turkish-Australian organisational structure is highly fragmented. This means that in relation to public affairs there is not one particular organisation around whom the Turkish community can stand or which has the infrastructure and knowledge to counter the Armenian allegations. The lack of an organisation focused on Turkish-Australian political interests means that when the genocide allegations are raised, there is not an organisation which can counter the allegations. As was demonstrated in chapter 3, the Turkish Coalition of America is not only focused on countering the allegations but is also involved in other areas which benefit the Turkish-American community and Turkey. The organisation is part of the political system and can then work to counter the Armenian allegations in America when the allegations are raised. There is however not a generalist Turkish-Australian community engaged with the political system which can also counter the Armenian allegations. The lack of a Turkish-Australian political organisation is not only due to the fragmented nature of the community. As noted above, Turkish-Australians also do not want to participate in political activism which will only benefit Turkish-Australians and therefore do not see the need for a political organisation which represents their interests.

**Reactive Turkish-Australian Activism**

When it does occur, Turkish-Australian activism against the genocide allegations is reactive. As noted in chapter 7, Turkish-Australians only become aware of the Armenian allegations when they are raised in Australia. They are not taught about the allegations as they do not consider them to be true and countering the allegations is not an important part of their identity. They do not know about the Armenian allegations until confronted by them in Australia through Armenian-Australian activism and do not engage in pre-emptive lobbying. This confrontation normally happens when Armenian-
Australians campaign for political recognition. This means that when the allegations are raised in Australia, Turkish-Australians are unprepared to counter the Armenian allegations.

Additionally, Turkish-Australian organisations are focused locally, in their particular state. As noted previously, the majority of Turkish-Australians interviewed in Perth did not know that the NSW Parliament had commemorated the Armenian genocide in 1997. Community leaders in Perth knew about the NSW Parliament’s Commemoration in 1997 but not of the South Australian Parliament’s recognition in 2009, and community leaders in NSW also did not know about the South Australian Parliament recognition. When discussing genocide recognition in other states, one community leader in Perth noted that luckily there had not been any Armenian activism in Western Australia. A Turkish-Australian interviewee in Sydney noted that the Turkish-Australian community in Victoria was considering mobilising to counter the genocide allegations following the opening of an ANC-Australia branch in Melbourne, but not as a result of Commemorations in other states. This demonstrates that the Turkish-Australian reaction is localised. Turkish-Australian organisations only focus on the allegations when they are raised in their state, meaning that they are reactive to Armenian-Australian activism in their state.

This is compared to the well-organised and dedicated lobbying work of ANC-Australia and cooperation with AUA, RTA and AHC. These organisations and ANC-Australia especially, are focused on genocide recognition and actively campaign for this before the Turkish-Australian community is aware that the organisations are campaigning for genocide recognition. The lower levels of knowledge about the allegations means that activism is reactive and largely ineffective against professional and dedicated ethnic community organisations supported by their communities and working with each other. This extent of lobbying cannot be matched by the Turkish-Australian community, who
are often only aware of the activism and lobbying attempts when the issue is raised in Parliament or after a decision has already been made in Parliament to politically recognise the Armenian genocide. Two examples illustrate this point.

AUA had campaigned for the construction of the Fairfield monument for a number of years before meeting any Turkish-Australian opposition. They started in 2003 by gaining genocide recognition from the NSW Council Association. This recognition was critical as they could then lobby for the construction of the monument. AUA started raising funds and petitioning the Fairfield council for permission to erect the monument in 2008 and received approval in December 2009. Turkish-Australian activists were first aware of the Assyrian Universal Alliance’s (AUA) desire for the genocide monument in 2009 when it was officially raised by the Fairfield council, after AUA had laid the ground work and lobbied Fairfield councillors. This meant that Turkish-Australian activists were a number of years behind in their attempts at preventing the erection of the monument and only started their protest after the Assyrian-Australian community had gained recognition from the NSW Council Association and traction with the Fairfield council. The Turkish-Australian counter-activism was led by a second generation Turkish-Australian with limited support from the Turkish-Australian community or organisations. The individual noted that he was not able to gain access to many of the Fairfield councillors and when he did, they communicated their support for the monument and that they were unable to retract this support due to community pressure. AUA had already gained too much traction with Fairfield councillors and Turkish-Australians were not able to influence their decision.

The lack of experience in political lobbying was also evident. Another second generation Turkish-Australian who campaigned against the monument sent a letter, by e-mail, to every state and Federal politician in Australia voicing his opposition. The majority of the

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36 This was communicated during interviews with Turkish-Australian community leaders in Sydney.
responses he received were highlighting that he had not followed the correct procedure in voicing his complaint and that the politicians could therefore not assist him. He did not have experience in dealing with politicians and was not aware of which channels to use in trying to combat the erection of the monument.

The inability of Turkish-Australian activists to gain traction with Fairfield councillors and politicians restricted their activism. They were reduced to protest marches and organising petitions (Frost 2009) which did not influence the decision of the Fairfield council. The reactive nature of Turkish-Australian lobbying is best illustrated by the example of a Turkish-Australian organisation holding a protest against the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument after the monument had already been erected.

The second example of reactive activism was in South Australia. ANC-Australia with assistance from the South Australian Armenian-Australian community, received genocide recognition in the Legislative Council of the South Australian Parliament on 25th March 2009. According to ANC-Australia, this received no opposition from the Turkish-Australian community in South Australia or the Turkish government. Opposition to genocide recognition in South Australia started after the Legislative Council had recognised the Armenian genocide, and focused on preventing recognition in the South Australian Lower House. By this time, ANC-Australia had already secured bi-partisan support and formed an alliance with the AHC, gaining additional support for the genocide recognition which was passed in the Lower House in April 2010. The reactive nature of the Turkish-Australian activism meant that their response to genocide recognition was limited. As demonstrated in chapter 8, ANC-Australia had been able to frame the issue to the extent where the Turkish narrative and fears of genocide recognition undermining community harmony as argued by Senator Ferguson, were viewed by South Australian politicians as genocide denial. Turkish-Australians were not able to gain the support of politicians and as was the case in Fairfield, were reduced to
piecemeal and ineffective lobbying activities. This included presenting online petitions and writing letters to politicians which were rejected as genocide denial. The Hon. Atkinson, who spoke first in the debate during the South Australian Lower House in 2009, discussed a letter he received from Ramazan Altintas, the President of the Turkish sub-branch of the Victorian Returned and Services League (RSL). The RSL is an organisation for men and women who are currently or have served in the Australian Defence Force and includes sub-branches for Turkish-Australians who have served in the Turkish army. Altintas wrote in his letter ‘Yet, great nations don’t cry, they bury the pain into history, do not even teach them to their children’. Atkinson noted, ‘I think Mr. Altintas captures the essence of the Turkish rejection of this motion’ and then highlighted Ottoman acts of violence, including: ‘Even the diplomatic officials of Turkey’s allies – Germany, Austria and Hungary – were shocked by the pre-emptive strikes off its allies against its own Christian civilians’. Letters sent by Turkish-Australians to counter the allegations were not successful in preventing genocide recognition due to the ability of ANC-Australia to frame the debate.

The reactive nature of the Turkish-Australian activism, combined with the lack of a united front undermines the Turkish-Australian attempts to counter the Armenian allegations. Turkish-Australian interviewees highlighted that they would oppose the Armenian allegations should Armenian-Australians campaign for Federal genocide recognition. Community leaders also believed that they would be able to successfully organise political activism to counter the genocide claims at a Federal level. However, their activism would still be reactive. ANC-Australia, according to their own estimations, conducted almost 1,000 meetings with politicians between 2007 and 2011, and has received support from Federal politicians who have advocated Federal genocide recognition, something which none of the Turkish-Australian interviewees were aware of. This demonstrates that at a Federal level also, Turkish-Australian activism would be reactive and would already be a number of years behind Armenian-Australian activism.
A second-generation Turkish-Australian who had heavily and publicly campaigned against the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument highlighted the challenges that he faced against Assyrian-Australians and also campaigning against ANC-Australia:

[Politicians] seem concerned when it is an issue, and it is votes for them, but one person is not enough against a group that systematically approaches the issue. The Assyrians and Armenians are approaching the issue on both sides of politics, and not only one side and they are just very smart and well organised. They have functions with politicians, and you will see the number from both sides attending their meetings. You can’t beat that. It has nothing to do with being Armenian; they are just getting traction every-where (Sydney, male, second generation).

When Turkish-Australians become aware of the genocide allegations being raised by ANC-Australia or other groups, it is often already too late to campaign against political recognition. The lack of a Turkish-Australian political organisation, the approach of Turkish-Australian organisations to only respond to the allegations in their state and the low-levels of knowledge regarding the allegations result in Turkish-Australians being reactive to the genocide allegations being raised in Australia. This prevents successful lobbying against the allegations and reduces activism to piecemeal activities which do not sway the decisions of politicians.

**Turkish Government Activism**

As has been the case in other countries around the world (discussed in chapter 3), the Turkish government has played a critical role in opposing the genocide allegations in
Australia. As noted in chapter 3, the Turkish government uses diplomatic channels in order to challenge political genocide recognition. The Turkish government has limited power within the domestic environment of other countries and cannot ultimately stop a country or a jurisdiction within a country from recognising the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government is restricted by the domestic political system of the country considering genocide recognition and can only pursue the allegations through actions of foreign policy and diplomatic channels. This includes withdrawing their ambassador, reducing trade or threatening cooperation between Turkey and the country considering genocide recognition.

The Turkish community in the country can play a more active role within the domestic political environment. However, as demonstrated above, the Turkish-Australian community either does not counter the Armenian allegations within Australia, or is not effective in doing so. They also counter the Armenian allegations for different reasons to the Turkish government, meaning that cooperation between Turkey and the Turkish-Australian community is limited, reducing the effectiveness of the Turkish government.

In Australia, for example, the Turkish government has opposed the political recognition of genocide when it has occurred (in Fairfield and the South Australian and NSW Parliaments) however, their opposition to these matters has not been successful due to the political system within Australia. So far, the genocide allegations have been politically recognised within Australia either at the council level (in Fairfield) or at a state level (NSW and South Australian Parliaments). The Turkish government, officially through their ambassador, and unofficially through other representatives of the Turkish government in Consulates in Melbourne and Sydney, has highlighted their opposition to political recognition to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT).\(^37\) For the Turkish government, the issue of political recognition of the Armenian genocide by governments

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\(^37\) This was communicated during interviews with Turkish government officials.
around the world is an issue of foreign policy, and therefore not an issue about which state governments or local councils should make a decision. Their objections to genocide recognition are regularly communicated to DFAT, with DFAT also contacting the Turkish government when the genocide allegations are raised in Australia. Local councils and state governments, however, do not fall under the authority of DFAT, meaning that the complaints of the Turkish government to DFAT have no influence when local councils and state governments make such decisions. This can be seen with the case of the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument in Fairfield. The Turkish government voiced their disagreement with the erection of the monument to DFAT through official diplomatic channels. The Turkish objections were shared with the Fairfield council, most notably through a fax sent by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Steven Smith to the Fairfield council. The fax stated that:

Under Australian law, whether or not Fairfield City council supports the construction of such a monument is a matter for council. However, I must impress upon you in the strongest possible terms that the construction of such a monument would run the very grave risk of causing significant tension in the Australia-Turkey relationship, and for this reason I request that the proposed construction not proceed.

This fax was not read out at the council meeting where permission was given for the erection of the monument and was ignored by the Fairfield council. Steven Smith indicated to the Turkish government that the Australian government was not able to overturn the council’s decision, and regretted that the erection of the monument had been accepted.

38 This was communicated during interviews with Turkish-Australian community leaders who had attended the Council meeting. The fax was also provided by the same community leaders.
While DFAT was officially unable to stop Fairfield council from granting permission for the erection of the genocide monument, there have been examples of the Australian government applying high levels of pressure on councils to not make decisions which might influence Australia’s foreign affairs position with other countries. The most notable of these occurred in 2011 when Marrickville council in Sydney, under the control of the Greens political party, decided they would boycott products and services with connections to Israel. In this example, the State Premier of NSW threatened that he would sack the council, under powers which are available to him, if they did not rescind the resolution within 28 days (Aikman & Shanahan 2011; Tovey & Davey 2011; Benson 2011). Similarly, the Australian Federal Senate also denounced the resolution, placing further pressure on the Marrickville council to drop the resolution. This demonstrates that while the Federal government is not able to directly prevent councils from making resolutions which could harm Australia’s relationship with other countries, they are able to pressurise councils, as are the state governments. Such a degree of pressure was not placed on the Fairfield council. This was not lost on Turkish officials, who highlighted the contradiction during interviews. A Turkish official noted that he was not convinced that DFAT took the Turkish objections to genocide recognition seriously and used the example of the limited pressure placed on Fairfield council in comparison to the pressure placed on Marrickville council.

This is also the case with the decision by state Parliaments (both NSW in 1997 and South Australia in 2009) to commemorate the Armenian genocide. In these two cases, the Turkish government recorded their disappointment to the Australian Federal government through diplomatic channels. The Australian government highlighted that they were unable to influence decisions made by state Parliaments. At the state and council level, the Turkish government is unable to influence the decisions made regarding genocide recognition, due to the lack of authority of the Federal government and DFAT over state and council politics.
Turkish officials highlighted that political genocide recognition at state and council levels in Australia are not viewed as seriously as Federal recognition would be viewed. So far, the majority of activism and political debate within Australia has taken place at the council or state level, meaning that the response of the Turkish government has not yet been as serious or as focused as it would be if the issue was up for debate at a Federal level. The Turkish government did not withdraw their ambassador from Canberra or undertake serious diplomatic action in response to the South Australian or NSW Parliaments politically recognising the Armenian genocide, or for the erection of the Assyrian genocide monument in Fairfield. Additionally, it is only at the Federal level where the Turkish government has any influence over the issue of political genocide recognition through diplomatic channels. While they can voice their opposition, and undertake symbolic actions to highlight their opposition to the allegations, these were not able to influence the decisions made by the South Australian or NSW Parliaments or the local council in Fairfield.

ANC-Australia, for example, highlighted DFAT as the major obstacle in their attempts to have the Federal Parliament politically recognise the Armenian genocide. ANC-Australia suggested that the influence of the Turkish government, through DFAT, played a role in their ability to encourage Federal politicians to discuss the importance of political recognition within Parliament. They argued that when approaching politicians on a Federal level, politicians who are members of the ruling party have been prevented from advocating for genocide recognition within Parliament, as it would be viewed as criticism of Turkey which is contrary to Australian foreign policy. ANC-Australia noted that Federal politicians, who had been positive towards the issue of genocide recognition when their party was in opposition, were reluctant to fulfil election promises of acknowledging the Armenian genocide within Parliament for that reason. One example was Maxine McKew who confirmed to ANC-Australia that she would advocate for genocide recognition if she was voted into Parliament in the lead up to the 2007 election (ANC 2007). After being voted in, she did not advocate for genocide recognition at first due to pressure placed
on her by DFAT. It was only after ANC-Australia confronted her on the issue (ANC 2009b) that she was willing to do so (ANC 2010), and then confirmed DFAT’s opinion on the Turkey-Armenia Protocols, which ran counter to ANC-Australia’s opinion.

Additionally, ANC-Australia also highlighted that an important part of their lobbying involved convincing Federal politicians that the reaction of the Turkish government when other countries have politically recognised genocide did not influence trade between Turkey and that country and nor did it influence the relationship in the long-term. Instead, ANC-Australia argue that Turkey have typically postured politically following political recognition of the Armenian genocide, and then allowed relationships between Turkey and the particular country to return to normal and in many examples, improve. Through this, ANC-Australia tries to convince DFAT that the negative repercussions promised by Turkey should Federal Parliament recognise the Armenian genocide, have not in other examples been followed through by the Turkish government.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that some of the Turkish-Australians interviewed do not engage in activism to challenge the Armenian allegations because they do not take them seriously; they view the allegations as politically manipulative, something which they do not want to be involved in; and they want to use their political power to benefit Australian society as a whole. When political activism is undertaken, it is done to protect their sense of belonging to Australia rather than to defend Turkey. This is because Turkish-Australians view Australia as their homeland and Turkey as the motherland where their Turkish identity which they practice in Australia is created. The allegations of genocide and political genocide recognition endanger their Turkish identity as practiced
in Australia. This places them at odds with the Turkish state which tries to mobilise the Turkish-Australian community to counter the allegations in defence of the homeland.

Turkish-Australian activism is not effective due to the lack of an organisation which is focused on political activism in the interest of Turkish-Australians; the state focus of Turkish-Australian organisations; and the divided nature of the community. When activism does occur it is run by individuals with limited community support. Activism is also reactive, only starting after ANC-Australia and other ethnic groups have already laid the groundwork for political recognition or the erection of genocide monuments. This means that Turkish-Australians cannot gain traction with politicians and are forced to engage in ineffective activism such as signing petitions or demonstrations against genocide recognition. This leaves the Turkish government to counter the allegations through diplomatic means. This has not been successful as political recognition has taken place at state and council levels, with diplomatic means only successful at a Federal level.
Conclusion

This thesis has analysed how the Armenian genocide constructs and reflects on the diasporic identity of Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians. It has argued that for Armenian-Australians, the genocide constitutes a central part of their diasporic identity. The memory and impact of the genocide fuels the Armenian-Australian diasporic identity in three ways. Firstly, the suffering of the past and ability of Armenians and family members to be successful and overcome the challenges of the genocide and dispersion fuels pride in being Armenian. Secondly, it gives understanding to dispersion and the reason for living in Australia, away from the Armenian homeland and established Armenian communities. Thirdly, the importance of maintaining the Armenian identity is attributed to the genocide. Because Armenians were almost wiped out during the genocide, assimilating would be allowing the genocide to be successful.

The diasporic identity is passed down to second and third generation Armenian-Australians, with the family playing a critical role in teaching about the genocide and also acting as a space in which the Armenian identity can be lived out in Australia. The importance of teaching second generation Armenian-Australians about the genocide is based around family history which is then constructed to inform the importance of maintaining the Armenian identity and building a connection to other Armenians. While Armenian-Australian diasporic institutions are important, the family is the central agent of identity construction and mobilisation. This is demonstrated by the importance attributed to maintaining the Armenian identity by interviewees in Perth who do not have diasporic institutions, and who are able to ‘be’ Armenian in the family environment. However, diasporic institutions do also play a role in mobilising the Armenian diasporic identity in Sydney. The Armenian Apostolic Church functions as a religious institution but also as a diasporic institution which promotes the Armenian diasporic identity. This is also the case with Armenian schools in Australia. Part of the
reason for the strength of the Armenian-diasporic identity is because the majority of Armenian-Australians arrived in Australia from diasporic communities in countries mostly in the Middle-East including Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Jordan. They were therefore already part of the Armenian diaspora and understand the Armenian diasporic identity and living in the diaspora. This is also the case with Armenian diasporic institutions. It was not necessary to define the Armenian diasporic identity upon arriving in Australia but rather to redefine it for a new hostland.

Although Australia provides a safe environment in which to live, after generations of dispersal from the Ottoman Empire into the Middle-East and the Middle-East to Australia, it also challenges the Armenian diasporic identity. Life in Australia as a hostland is different from life in previous hostlands which had strong Armenian communities and characteristics which prevented assimilation and encouraged maintenance of the Armenian diasporic identity. Due to multiculturalism in Australia, the Christian heritage and a smaller Armenian community, integration into the host society is a threat and something which Armenian-Australians work against. This is especially the case for first generation Armenian-Australians who try to raise their children to be Armenian and ensure that they do not assimilate.

The Turkish-Australian experience of Australia as a hostland is opposite to the Armenian-Australian experience. Ideas of Australian multiculturalism assist in developing the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging to Australia. They do not require recognition of a particular part of their identity; instead they consider Australia as allowing them to maintain their Turkish identity and this promotes integration into the broader Australian community. The importance of maintaining the Turkish identity and integrating are reflected in the ideas communicated to second generation Turkish-Australians. Interviewees do not want their children to remain Turkish while living in Australia and actively encourage their children to integrate and enjoy the opportunities in Australia.
They also do not fear assimilation and the loss of Turkish identity amongst their children and later generations of Turkish-Australians and acknowledge that integration and assimilation is the likely outcome of settling in Australia. The Turkish-Australian research cohort therefore does not mobilise or construct a Turkish diasporic identity within Australia. They do not view themselves as part of a larger Turkish diaspora or actively connect with Turks outside of Australia or Turkey. Their connection to Turkey is symbolic rather than material. They view Turkey as the country where their Turkish identity, which they practice in Australia, was created. Turkey is therefore not the homeland, but the motherland, with Australia viewed as the homeland. This view is based on the opportunities offered in Australia and that Australia allows them to maintain their Turkish identity.

The experience of the same hostland is profoundly different for Turkish-Australians and Armenian-Australians. This difference is due to the internal diasporic narratives and views on the importance of maintaining identity. The Turkish-Australian narrative highlights the importance of integrating and the opportunities offered by Australia. It also highlights the freedom offered by Australia to be Turkish through multiculturalism. There are no aspects of the identity which are mobilised or constructed to encourage actively maintaining the Turkish identity. This is different for Armenian-Australians who mobilise through genocide memories and genocide recognition and prioritise identity maintenance as a result of the genocide. This in turn influences their perceptions towards the hostland and they desire for the hostland to recognise their identity in order to develop a sense of belonging.

The significance of genocide recognition functions on the personal, local and international level for Armenian-Australians. Recognition by Turkey serves as an important recognition of the suffering endured by family members during the genocide and in the resultant dispersal. The denial that genocide was committed adds to the pain.
as it serves as the denial of a constitutive part of their identity. Recognition by Turkey will allow the Armenian nation – both the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora – to move on from the past, which holds them back due to Turkish genocide denial. The importance of genocide recognition by Turkey is mobilised through the family and diasporic institutions. This is demonstrated by second generation Armenian-Australians desiring for Turkey to recognise the genocide for the sake of their parents and community elders who have taught them about the importance of genocide recognition.

Armenian-Australians desire for Australia to recognise the Armenian genocide as this will provide them with a strong sense of belonging to Australia and allow them to feel more at home in Australia as Armenians. They desire for the Australian government to recognise a critical aspect of their identity in order to facilitate their belonging to Australia. The Australian government therefore has to actively acknowledge them in order to assist integration, rather than only providing a space in which they can practice their Armenian identity. This demonstrates a desire for a stronger space in which to be Armenian in Australia. This idea is also reflected by a number of interviewees noting a longing for life in and connection to Armenian communities outside of Australia. While this does not relate to the Republic of Armenia, it relates to communities especially in the Middle-East where they were able to live as Armenians with strong Armenian institutions. It demonstrates a sentimental link to a secondary homeland to which a sense of belonging exists based on the Armenian diasporic identity. Their sense of belonging to Australia is limited as there is not a strong space created in which they can be Armenian due to the lack of recognition of the Armenian genocide.

There is a disconnect between Armenian diasporic activism and the desire of the Armenian-Australian community to feel a stronger sense of belonging to Australia. The Armenian-Australian community, through the guise of ANC-Australia undertakes long
distance nationalism. They act within Australia in support of the Republic of Armenia. They view their political activism in the best interest of Armenia, although it may negatively impact on the Republic. This is done through campaigning for recognition of the Armenian genocide. This is not focused locally, but rather internationally to place pressure on Turkey to recognise the Armenian genocide as a means of defending Armenia from the perceived threat of genocide from Turkey and Turkic nations. A natural outcome of the Armenian genocide being recognised is a greater sense of belonging to Australia for Armenian-Australians; however this is not the focus of ANC-Australia.

Another manner in which long distance nationalism is demonstrated is through desiring for any reparations which would be paid by Turkey to be paid to Armenia to support the development of the republic. The focus of Armenian activism is not on developing a sense of belonging to Australia or on challenging the Turkish-Australian community. Instead it is focused on gaining political recognition from the Australian government of an historic event which happened in a different country in order to assist the Republic of Armenia. This activism takes place in Australia as there is an Armenian community which can be mobilised.

The Armenian allegations are not an important part of the Turkish-Australian identity. Turkish-Australians are not taught about the allegations and only interact with them when they are raised in Australia by the Armenian-Australian community. The allegations when raised by the Armenian-Australian community do not impact on the Turkish-Australian community. They view the allegations as false. Rather than making them question their identity, the allegations strengthen the Turkish-Australian identity. They view themselves as a nation which is able to forgive and which does not hold grudges. They view Armenian-Australians as raising irrelevant and untrue historical allegations which they have not been able to move on from. They also view political
recognition as manipulative and based on funds being provided to politicians rather than as recognition of the truth. When Australian politicians recognise the Armenian genocide, as has been the case in New South Wales and South Australia and by the council of Fairfield, with reference to the Assyrian genocide, it impacts on the Turkish-Australian sense of belonging. The reason for this is that it undermines ideas of multiculturalism which Turkish-Australians base their sense of belonging to Australia on. Recognition of the Armenian genocide undermines the ability of Turkish-Australians to live as Turks within Australia. They view it as a manipulated political recognition of an incorrect view of history which unfairly taints Turkey and all Turks, including Turks in Australia, as guilty of committing genocide. They do not feel free and encouraged to maintain their Turkish identity in Australia. This results in a more inward focus, a limited sense of belonging to Australia, and a greater desire for interaction with Turkey. Activism against the Armenian allegations is undertaken out of a sense of defending their Turkish identity in Australia. It is not to defend Turkey but rather to secure their sense of belonging to Australia and their ability to maintain their Turkish identity.

This is a significant point. It demonstrates the role that activism from a diasporic group within Australia related to an international issue and in defence of their homeland can play in impacting on the perceived sense of belonging of other minority groups in Australia with the Australian government acting as the mediator. The actions of the Armenian-Australian community in advocating for genocide recognition in order to defend their homeland, if supported by the Australian government, can have a domestic impact on Turkish-Australians, despite this not being the intent. This is an under-researched aspect of diasporic political activism and opens up new areas of research which address the domestic impact of diasporic activism and long distance activism which targets international issues.
The success of Armenian-Australian activism is based on three reasons. Firstly, they are able to mobilise international arguments regarding the importance of genocide recognition for genocide prevention. This means that it is not only the Armenian genocide which is being recognised, but future genocides are also being prevented. Secondly, they are able to make the Armenian genocide relevant to Australia by highlighting the link between the genocide and Australia. This is through demonstrating that recognising the Armenian genocide is also recognising Australian history as Australia assisted humanitarianly in the aftermath of the genocide and Australian soldiers also witnessed the genocide. These two points are significant for framing the debate in a way which silences the Turkish historical narrative and makes the genocide narrative relevant to Australia. Thirdly, ANC-Australia is a highly professional organisation which is focused on gaining recognition of the Armenian genocide. They are able to mobilise the Armenian-Australian community; have developed alliances with other ethnic organisations; and are able to present the Armenian genocide narrative in a way which gains support from Australian politicians.

This is in contrast to the Turkish-Australian community which is highly fragmented, does not have a political organisation and is reactive to the Armenian genocide claims. The Turkish-Australian community engages in limited activism at a stage when the Armenian-Australian community has already developed strong relationships with politicians. The Turkish-Australian activism indicates that Turkish-Australians are willing to engage in activism in order to develop their sense of belonging to Australia and not in order to defend Turkey or the Turkish government. The Turkish government has tried to mobilise the Turkish-Australian community; however the Turkish-Australian community does not want to assist the Turkish government. The limited and poorly organised Turkish-Australian activism and the lack of engagement between them and the Turkish government results in the Turkish government attempting to counter the Armenian and Assyrian allegations at an official level through DFAT which has proved to be ineffective at state and council levels.
The thesis therefore presents two clear arguments. Firstly, the experience of the same hostland is different for different diasporas. This is based on internal narratives about the importance of maintaining the diasporic identity; developing a sense of belonging to the hostland; the extent to which the hostland is considered as encouraging integration; and the importance of maintaining a sense of identity to the homeland. Further comparative research could be conducted into experiences of different diasporas of the same hostland and why different diasporas or migrant groups are more likely to develop a stronger diasporic identity than others, and experience the homeland as more or less welcoming than others. Secondly, the impact of diasporic activism within their hostland on an international issue can also impact on other diasporas in the same hostland. This opens up further opportunities into researching examples of diasporic activism designed to defend the homeland and how this impacts on other migrant groups in the hostland.
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