

Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Turkey and Armenia

Derya Fırat, Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts

Barış Şannan, Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts

Öndercan Muti, Humboldt University of Berlin

Öykü Gürpınar, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales

Fatma Özkaya, Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts

Using the data from field research in Turkey and Armenia, this article examines the meaning of the Armenian Genocide for young Armenians. Based on 60 in-depth interviews, the analysis focuses on how the 4th generation affected by the crimes of 1915 remembers this crucial time, how familial memory has been transmitted, how this inherited memory affects them on daily basis, both emotionally and politically, and how they commemorate the event, which they know as Medz Yeghern (literally, the “Great Crime”). Inspired by Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory, we have shown how patterns of remembrance are influenced by specific contexts in Armenia and Turkey, such as the generational formations in the two countries. Accordingly, we discuss how there is not a singular postmemory of the Genocide, so much as several distinctive patterns, experiences, transmissions, and commemorations that shape and reshape a multiplicity of postmemories. With this variety in mind, modest suggestions for a possible politics of peace are listed.

A hundred years have passed since the Armenian Genocide. Today, the great-grandchildren of those who had experienced the massacres constitute the 4th generation affected by the Genocide. The memory of this generation, constructed through what has been transmitted by earlier generations, plays a key role in the process of confrontation with, and working through the past in Turkey as well as Armenia. As a research group from Sociology Department at the Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts, and Association for the Study of Sociology of Memory and Culture, we have conducted research on the memory of the Genocide among Armenian youth in Turkey and Armenia. The research team has interviewed sixty Armenians between the ages of nineteen and thirty-five, living in Istanbul, Turkey and in Yerevan, Armenia and Gyumri, Armenia. Throughout the interviews, the participants answered various questions about how they remember the past, how familial memory has been transmitted, how the knowledge of the Genocide affects their daily life and political attitude as well as their emotional state, and what kind of commemorative practices they prefer.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

In this article, our data is interpreted through the lenses of three concepts. The first is the concept of “postmemory,” which implies that those who have not personally experienced an event can construct memories nonetheless, as the experience has been transmitted to them so profoundly as to constitute a memory in own right.¹ In our attempt to comprehend the present memory of the 4th generation affected by the Armenian Genocide, we employ the concept of postmemory in a broader sense. By addressing postmemory as a social and affiliative concept, we argue that in the case of the Armenian Genocide, the transmission of traumatic memory to a post-generation can be traced even further, to a 4th generation constituted of the Armenian youth of today.

In this context, taking a sociological perspective on our second key concept, that of “generation,” becomes essential. In sociological terms, a “generation” is not only a chronological or biological category, but rather a formation of a social group consisting of individuals who share the same historical-social space and whose adoption of similar positions when facing the historical events of their era importantly distinguishes them from their predecessors.² In the course of the research, we have first sought to determine whether and how Armenian youth in Armenia and Turkey constitute a generation in this *sociological* sense. It is important to note that the participants in our research were not presupposed to be a generation in this sense; rather, they were initially selected based on a more *chronological* sense of the term, that of the cohort of great-grand children of the Genocide’s survivors. We also are concerned with whether Armenian youth living in the countries in question comprise diverse generational units. Therefore, we will discuss whether Armenian youth’s present contexts provide conditions suitable for them to constitute themselves as a generation.

Our final question is of how the 4th generation’s work through postmemories of the Genocide establishes “sites of memory,”³ the third of our organizing concepts. We analyze this phenomenon by examining their patterns of remembrance and commemoration practices. Finally, as an epilogue, we discuss the “politics” of postmemory in relation to reconciliation and demands concerning the Genocide.

¹ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997)

² Karl Mannheim, “The Sociological Problem of Generations,” *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (1952): 163-195.

³ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire,” *Representations* (26, 1989): 7-24.

On Methodology: The Fieldwork in Armenia and Turkey

The research began in the first months of 2015 and continued throughout a year marked by the 100th anniversary commemorations of the Genocide in both countries. Between June 7 and 14, 2015, the research team has conducted twenty interviews in Yerevan, Armenia and ten more in Gyumri, Armenia. The field study also permitted a compact period of ethnographic observation of traditions, attitudes towards Turkish people, and public reminders of the Genocide, as signified by the 100th anniversary commemorations. For the research group, it was the first time in Armenia; thus, these observations⁴ also challenged personal perceptions, assumptions, and prejudgements.

The field study in Turkey, however, did not take place in a narrow time period, but rather spread throughout 2015. Since the research group lived in Istanbul, the interviews there were conducted depending on interviewer and interviewee availability, which was somewhat affected by the political context of the country. For instance, two general elections and several terrorist attacks with heavy casualties occurred in the year in question. Given the political and social instability, the research group faced considerable difficulties sustaining the fieldwork. As a result, the first ten interviews were conducted in February, 2015, while the remainder were conducted in September and October.

The selection of interviewees in both sites involved snowball sampling, and strove for diversity in terms of age, political attitudes, and sex. Our aim was not to represent the overall population of Armenian youth in both countries. Since the research was designed to be comparative and interpretive, our data analysis avoided making claims about generalizability and instead focused on how certain backgrounds can inform certain beliefs and perceptions.

As our project aims to comprehend perceptions and remembrances of a specific traumatic event, the methodology naturally depends on a qualitative analysis of nuanced data gathered via in-depth interviews. Therefore, the fieldwork conducted in Turkey and Armenia consisted of semi-structured interviews. The interview topics fell into three groups. The first group of topics included the interviewee's general profile (e.g., age, sex, and occupation), their linguistic, educational, and cultural practices (e.g., mother tongue, disposition toward foreign languages, educational background, habits, and tastes), and religious attitudes and ethical dispositions. The second group included memories and memory practices related to the Genocide, the transmission of survivors' testimonies and narratives of history in familial and educational settings, and commemorative practices, such as genealogical research, visits to the homeland

⁴ For further information on the observations of the research group in Armenia, please visit our website, <http://en.memoryon.org/ermenistan/>

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, "Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

(which in a number of cases turned out to be in present-day Turkey, in what Armenians called “Western Armenia”), and communication with relatives in other countries. The final group of topics addressed the embodied effects of Genocide memory on everyday life, personality, and political attitudes. Specifically, questions were asked on topics such as: identity and everyday experiences of exclusion, integration, and self-definition; relations between Turkey and Armenia, spanning from Genocide denial and relations at the border, to the Armenian diaspora’s relation to Turkey; and demands for the recognition of genocide, reparation, reconciliation, and so forth.

Although a questionnaire had been established for each fieldwork site, the interviewers could take the initiative to restructure the interviews depending on the course of dialogue. This flexibility allowed us to establish a more sincere dialogue with the participants and also provided the opportunity to obtain additional data that could not be foreseen. Furthermore, the interviews were not necessarily performed as one-sided investigations, but rather could become open conversations that involved mutual disclosure. The interviewees also posed questions to researchers and, especially in Armenia, establishing that the research group was sympathetic to Armenian calls for Genocide recognition was an issue of prime concern. Interviewees became more eager to describe their positions once they had heard their interviewers’ views. Thus, establishing an open dialogue also aided the research, but more importantly, it re-located the research into a sphere of confrontation and reconciliation.

Establishing the Context: The “Crucial Event” for Armenians

Alessandro Cavalli establishes the concept of the “crucial event” (*événement crucial*) as one that marks the lives of individuals, groups, communities, or societies, serving as a historical turning point. In discussing the construction of memory after a catastrophe, Cavalli asserts that such an event disrupts temporal continuity, dividing the cycle of social life into a “before” and an “after.” Since the identity of an individual depends on the capacity to arrive at a continuous, stable perception of the self, such an event becomes a profound threat. Communities and societies endure the same process of loss of the capacity to sustain the continuity of their social identity. Therefore, Cavalli argues, a disaster requires that the discontinuity caused by the crucial event be mended and that continuity be reestablished.⁵ For Armenians, the catastrophe of 1915 is such a “crucial event.” More than a million Armenians were deported, murdered, or

⁵ Alessandro Cavalli, “La mémoire comme projet: les mémoires des communautés après une catastrophe,” in *Maurice Halbwachs: Espaces, mémoires et psychologie collective*, ed. Yves Déloye and Claudine Haroche (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004), 115-120.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

forced to leave their hometowns, never to return. The catastrophe shattered families, orphaned children, and created the Diaspora; because of it, more than half of the Armenian population is now dispersed across the globe. Many Armenians who remained in Turkey were forced to change their religion to Islam and their identity to Turkish or Kurdish. However, Armenians have had to face yet another critical obstacle to overcome the catastrophe: its denial. Turkey has long denied that such a thing as Genocide transpired. This persistent denial has been the primary obstacle in reestablishing the continuity of Armenians' social identity; in a sense, the Genocide still continues: neither recognition nor any attempt at reconciliation occurred concerning the Armenian Genocide.

The burdens of memory of the Genocide have thus continued to be shouldered by generation after generation. Today, after a hundred years, the 4th generation is their primary bearer. However, this memory differs significantly from that of survivors and witnesses, as the first generation's living memory of the crucial event no longer exists. Therefore, the transmitted memory, the memory that the 4th generation has inherited has no "organic connection" with the living memory of the first generation. In the absence of an organic connection between the transmitted memory and its roots, we must rely upon another conceptualization of memory: that of postmemory.

On the Concept of Postmemory

In her famous work *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch introduced this concept, arguing that the "guardianship" of Holocaust memory has been passed onto the second generation through a particular typology of memory.⁶ Hirsch constructs her argument using the artwork of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*,⁷ in which she discovers the attempt of a member of the second generation to re-narrate the testimony of a Holocaust survivor. In his artwork, Spiegelman captures his father's narration of the Holocaust through the frame of his own childhood, visualizing his own experience of unveiling the truth about the camps.⁸ In this context, Hirsch's concept of postmemory is characterized by the experiences of those "whose own belated stories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can be neither fully understood nor re-created."⁹ The generation of

⁶ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997)

⁷ Art Spiegelman, *Maus: My Father Bleeds History*, (New York: Pantheon, 1986)

⁸ Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* (29:1, Spring 2008): 103-128.

⁹ Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," *Poetics Today*, (17:4, Winter 1996): 659-686.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, "Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

postmemory is significant because it is driven to complete and integrate the inherited memory of genocide, which has already been fragmented, hollowed, and rendered incomplete. Consequently, postmemory is not the memory of the “crucial event” itself, but the children’s reconstructed memory of the testimony that their parents had transmitted, it is a “memory of memory.”¹⁰ The authenticity or originality of Hirsch’s concept stems from two factors: first, postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance, and second, it is distinguished from history by “deep personal connection.”¹¹

Critics have argued that Hirsch’s postmemory concept: i) shifts epistemological authority from survivors to the second generation, ii) is obscure about the distinctions between experience and the past, the past and the present, fact and fiction, and so forth;¹² iii) insufficiently differentiates memory from postmemory;¹³ and, iv) does not explicitly distinguish the enforced inheritance of parental trauma narratives from their imaginative appropriation.¹⁴ In order to respond to her critics, Hirsch revised her concept in her later work *The Generation of Postmemory*. Regarding the ontological concerns about her concept, she emphasized that postmemory connects to the past through imaginative investment, projection and creation rather than mediation or recollection.¹⁵ She explained that her concept “is not identical to memory: it is ‘post’, but at the same time, it approximates memory in affective force [...] These ‘not memories’ communicated in ‘flashes of imagery’ and ‘broken refrains,’ transmitted through ‘the language of the body,’ are precisely the stuff of

¹⁰ James E. Young, who also examines *Maus*, adopts the concept with a particular emphasis on how postmemory is not a substitute for living memory, so much as a vicarious experience of another’s memory. See James E. Young, *At Memory’s Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Hirsch is concerned that “post” prefix of the concept might imply that “we are beyond memory and therefore perhaps [...] in history.” She, therefore, underscores that the concept still falls within memory, yet conveys the significance of generational distance. See Marianne Hirsch, “Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory,” *Discourse* (15, Winter 1992-93): 3-29.

¹² Ernest van Alphen argues that the connection of memory to the past is indexical in the sense that it relies on the lived experience, and that Hirsch, by insisting on referring to “memory” in her concept, claims such connectedness and continuity between generations. Consequently, van Alphen finds Hirsch’s concept contradictory, asserting that it presumes an intergenerational connection through a *dis*-connected, indirect memory. See Ernst van Alphen, “*Second-Generation Testimony, the Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory*,” *Poetics Today* (27:2, 2006): 473-488.

¹³ Beatriz Sarlo criticizes Hirsch’s concept, stressing that because all memory is constructed and all experiences of the past are vicarious there is no justification for distinguishing a “post” or “vicarious experience” of a memory from other memory. See Beatriz Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado: Cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo*, (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2005).

¹⁴ Athanasios Anastasiadis, “Transgenerational Communication of Traumatic Experiences: Narrating the Past from a Postmemorial Position”, *Journal of Literary Theory* (6:1, 2012): 1-24.

¹⁵ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 107.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

postmemory.”¹⁶ Finally, Hirsch distinguished *familial* from *affiliative* postmemory, marking the first as “intergenerational vertical identification of child and parent”, while conceiving of the latter as the “intra-generational horizontal identification that makes that child's position more broadly available to other contemporaries.”¹⁷

We will show that in order to examine the 4th generation after Armenian Genocide from an appropriate theoretical framework, it is vital to consider Hirsch’s conceptualization of postmemory. In the case of the Armenian Genocide, since the organic connection between the living memory and the transmitted memory has been broken, the memory of genocide has indeed become a “post” memory. Therefore, we adopt the concept of postmemory in order to address two particular dimensions of our research. First, regarding familial postmemory, the memory of genocide in the 4th generation may be a transmitted, “post” and “vicarious” one that depends on the relation between the young Armenians and the crucial event. Second, regarding affiliative postmemory, this relation may vary depending on the socio-historical context in which Armenian youth live, producing not a singular pattern of remembrance, but instead several different ones.

The Constitution of Generations in the Sociohistorical Contexts of Armenia and Turkey

The main distinction between the Armenian and Turkish contexts emerges within the course of the primary crucial event, the Genocide: one is the country where the Genocide took place and yet where the denial persists, whereas the other is the homeland of Armenians who demand recognition of the Genocide. This distinction is reflected in participants’ characterizations of being-an-Armenian in the two contexts. In Turkey, where the Armenians are a minority in a conflictual relation with the sovereign nationality, Armenian identity can become a heavy burden, and one that creates a troubled sense of belonging. As stated by one of our participants in Istanbul, for instance, they, as Armenians, have to cope with the fact that when they go to Taksim Square, they are walking over a vanished Armenian cemetery. When they walk from the square to a famous recreation area, Gezi Parkı, they know that the steps on which they must tread are, in fact, old gravestones. Also, as stated by another participant, they feel the need to be careful about using their real Armenian names in public, seeing that being-an-Armenian may put them in harm’s way. A potentially endless list of ugly details about everyday life in Turkey afflicts Armenian youth’s existence. Thus, they have to

¹⁶ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 109.

¹⁷ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 115.

not only cope with the denial of the Genocide, but also make their way in an inimical everyday environment.

This one from my school years is quite famous: “Isn’t it hard to come from and go to Armenia every day?” [...] My friend got perplexed, he replied, “Pardon me, but I live here, *we* live here.” [...] Or there is this story, you know, “Armenian” is used as a swearword. For instance, my teacher told me his story of military service. He was educating a squad and there was an illiterate boy whom he liked. This boy was one day sitting under a tree, he asks him, “What’s wrong?” and the boy replies, “Sir, they say awful things about you, I’m very upset.” My teacher asks him, “Tell me, now, don’t be afraid.” The boy hums and haws around and then finally he says, “They call you Armenian.” [...] My teacher tells him, “Yes, I am Armenian.” The boy replies, “*Estağfrullah!*” (21, Male, Student, Istanbul)

The Turkish word “*estağfrullah*” originally was an expression of gratitude, but in common culture it bears another meaning. If speakers adopt a discourse that denigrates or underestimates themselves, their audience should customarily immediately deny this discourse in order to show their respect. For example, if your superior calls himself or herself “stupid”, you should reply “*Estağfrullah!*”

Aside from their diverse contexts for being-an-Armenian, the two countries also emphasize different historical moments in case of remembrance of the Genocide. In Armenia, 1988 is an important year. The earthquake in Gyumri that caused the death of 25,000,¹⁸ the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh War, and the beginning of the collapse of Soviet Union, which led to Armenia’s independence in 1991, all intersect in that year, rendering it a “zero point”¹⁹ in the remembrance of the Genocide. Ever since, remembrance of the Genocide has become a national responsibility: “In Soviet times, when there was the communist regime, we couldn’t even go to church. I was a child, but I remember. It was

¹⁸ The devastations of the earthquake were immediately compared to those of the Genocide. In order to stress the uniqueness of the Genocide, when architect Sashur Kalashyan was commissioned to build a monument in Gyumri, he took pains not to “replicate” the Memorial Complex in Yerevan, “avoiding an eternal flame and have not provided places for the flowers in the complex saying that ‘We did not want to establish a similar ritual.’” See Gayane Shagoyan, “Memorializing the Earthquake,” *Changing Identities: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia*, eds. Sophia Khutsishvili, John Horan (Tbilisi: Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office, 2011): 70-95.

¹⁹ Cavalli identifies a “zero point” as an historic juncture that enables the reestablishment of continuity and that marks a new beginning. When this occurs, the crucial event is generally monumentalized as a site of memory. See Alessandro Cavalli, “La mémoire comme projet: les mémoires des communautés après une catastrophe,” 120.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

before the earthquake. In 1988 a big earthquake happened in Gyumri. [...] After the earthquake, after independence, a lot of information [on the Genocide] entered our history textbooks” (35, Female, Chemist, Gyumri).

Even though these were historical events that could have provided conditions suitable to constitute a generation in sociological sense, our field study in Armenia showed that they occurred all too early to form the 4th generation of Armenians into what Mannheim has called a “generation as actuality.” For Karl Mannheim, “generation as actuality” is characterized with the “participation in the common destiny of this historical and social unit” that actualizes the “generation status”, that is, a social group chronologically situated in the same era and also sharing the same historical-social space. Generation as actuality implies that the historical-social events that have taken place during the socialization process of individuals have been effective in the formation of a generation in sociological sense.²⁰ In Armenia, since only a small minority of our interviewees – those who were old enough to remember those days – could adopt a relation to these events, it is possible to assert that this generation remains a cohort.

For Armenian youth in Turkey, the date that condensed and reshaped the patterns of remembrance of the Genocide was January 19, 2007, when a prominent journalist and member of the Armenian community, Hrant Dink, was assassinated. Even if one could not call this a “zero point”, most of our interviewees in some way related the genocide to Dink’s assassination, and asserted that it was after the assassination that their will to remember had become consolidated. Moreover, the assassination of Dink seems to have had a decisive effect on the Armenian youth in Turkey. A slow but evolving process has begun in which their perception of themselves as victims has diminished and a new, assertive political generation has emerged.²¹

We draw this term from Rudolf Heberlé, who introduces *political generation* as a generation that develops political attitudes towards social events occurring within its contemporary social context.²² When the majority of the members of a cohort “become aware that they are bound together by a shared age-group consciousness and mobilize as an active force for political change”²³ they are transformed into a political generation. In this perspective, the conditions that are amenable to the formation of such a generation are an interactive combination

²⁰ Karl Mannheim, “The Sociological Problem of Generations,” 163-195.

²¹ Öndercan Muti, “Gençler birçok şeyi yazıyorlar. Kendilerine roller, bir slogan belirliyorlar’: 19 Ocak Kuşağı ve Bellek Talepleri,” *Toplum ve Bilim* (132, 2015): 150-161.

²² Rudolf Heberle, *Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951).

²³ Margareth and Richard Braungart, “Life-course and Generational Politics,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 12 (1986): 205–231.

of “lifecycles” (a term related to maturing and aging), “cohort” (related to socialization and social experiences), and “period” (related to historical events).²⁴

One of the members of the Armenian youth political organization Nor Zartonk describes this organization’s founding as follows:

At first Hrant’s murder caused a massive shock. We would say he tricked us well. When we called him to our home, he would say, “Why would they do anything to me?” He had tricked us well when he was getting those threats. That was the first thing we felt. I can say that was the day we lit the fire of Nor Zartonk. [...] That day, on the 19th of January, Nor Zartonk was founded. We had not been organized before, but then we promised to Hrant to assemble Nor Zartonk. The following commemorations on the 19th of January and the 24th of April were a part of this. (31, Male, PhD Candidate, Istanbul)

As described by another participant, who is also a member of the same organization, Armenians in Turkey no longer hide, but make their presence felt. They demand, for instance, that the street where Hrant Dink was assassinated be named after him, and each 19th of January, they replace the “Ergenekon” sign with a sign that bears Dink’s name. Along with the other progressive elements of the youth opposition, they recently stopped a gentrification project, thereby saving the old Armenian orphanage, Kamp Armen, where Dink himself spent his summers and met his future wife, Rakel. In this respect, it is possible to assert that the 4th generation of Armenians in Turkey constitutes a political generation that can be identified as “the generation of 19th of January.”²⁵

²⁴ Margareth and Richard Braungart, “Les générations politiques,” *Généralions et politique* (Québec: PUL-Économica, 1989): 7-9.

²⁵ Even though the 19th of January could constitute a “political generation,” it is still too early to address whether this has become a generation as actuality. For Nora, “generation” has been a mixture of memory and history, with each generation being a fabricator of sites of memory, wherein the generation condenses, participates, and expresses itself. However, he states that the historical event that constitutes a generation must be proclaimed as such by the social-historical group in question. See Pierre Nora, “Generation,” *Realms of Memory Vol. 1: Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. Pierre Nora, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 500, 522-524, 526. It can easily be argued that the present Armenian youth in Turkey have their specific sites of memory, but not yet fully internalized them. See Öndercan Muti, ““Gençler birçok şeyi yazıyorlar. Kendilerine roller, bir slogan belirliyorlar’: 19 Ocak Kuşağı ve Bellek Talepleri,” 150-161.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

The Construction of Postmemory: Narrations of the Armenian Genocide in Family and Education

Since postmemory is based on transmission, it is essential to discuss just how the transmission of genocide memory to the 4th generation occurs. In general, the transmission takes place in different settings, such as within families, in education, and in the social environment. However, a particular moment must precede any transmission: the moment of realizing the traumatic truth of the past, the first encounter with the memory of genocide.

Among the participants in Armenia, knowledge of the Genocide seems to be inherited in a mysterious way that participants cannot recall, rather than transmitted intentionally. These participants find it quite hard to remember exactly how they learned about the Genocide for the first time. As asserted by one interviewee, “it is as if [they] are born with it” (21, Female, Student, Yerevan). This quotation refers to the transmission as akin to a hereditary process. Another interviewee asserts: “From my point of view, none of the Armenians could explain how they know about 1915, because this is written in our genetic memory” (21, Male, Artist, Yerevan).

On the other hand, in Turkey, Armenian youth have a very precise memory of when and where they learned about 1915. Most of them recall a moment in their childhood when they realized that something of the past lingers in the present, something that separates them from others, something that needs to be mentioned in whispers, something that is hidden and needs to be unveiled. Children have a peculiar condition in their relation with the past. Theirs is a wordless experience, in which their subjectivity is not yet constituted within and through the language.²⁶ Therefore, even though the participants can identify when and where exactly they became conscious of this moment, its associations are initially blurred and fragmented, making it difficult to attribute a precise meaning to them. Participants describe how it took them considerable time and effort to name this hidden, past event; only then were they able to recall the blurred images of childhood and resituate them into the framework of genocide memory:

You always know that there is something. When she [my mother] had said such a thing, your first reaction is not why she said it. You only see how she reacts to this occasion. Or else, even if you are a child, you have this awareness deep in you. You realize this thing going on, something silently spoken. It isn't maybe directly genocide, but there is something, some conflict you always realize.
(24, Male, Student, Istanbul)

²⁶ Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, Trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso Books, 1993): 50.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

This process of constructing their postmemory by aligning it with the general narrative is then followed by narrations of the Genocide within families. In Armenia, such stories are divulged almost spontaneously: a child only needs to trace a tiny narrative thread related to the catastrophe for the whole story to begin to unfold. Often, such threads are the fact that some members of the family live in other countries; sometimes the thread is an anguished lullaby that a grandmother sings, or expressions of hatred towards certain people. In some exceptional occasions, a family heirloom embodies the very memory of the genocide, serving as what Hirsch and Spitzer call a “testimonial object”²⁷: “When I was eight or ten, my father had a gift from my grandma, a bead [*tespih*]. There were images of a church and several people, the images of people followed one another. This [gift] caused my grandma to tell the whole story of her orphanage time, also the Genocide” (29, Female, Social Services, Gyumri).

In Turkey, however, the general disposition of Armenian parents is to not share anything directly related to the Genocide with their children in order to protect them. The first glimpse of the Genocide that these Armenian children catch comes from what they overhear at home during the murmured conversations of the elders. They can obtain further information on the genocide only through personal inquiries to elderly family members, and sometimes even then fail to achieve a satisfactory answer:

Well... I don't know, maybe it is spoken of in many Armenian families, but not in ours. [...] When I ask, still, the elders from both sides don't want to talk about it in detail. Only my grandma had said, “My mother escaped to Sinop, carried on her mother's back.” She tells only this, nothing detailed. I think this is because, maybe still, they are, the elders are afraid that we will say something in public and get ourselves in trouble. (22, Female, Student, Istanbul)

In Armenia, our participants told us, the transmission of the memory of the Genocide begins in the family and continues at school. History lectures cover the Genocide in considerable detail, addressing Ottoman rule, the Young Turks' revolution, western Armenian geography, previous massacres, survivor testimonies, heroic figures, and so on. Armenian Literature lectures can also provide indirect information about the Genocide:

In history textbooks, they give basic information. [...] Talat Pasha, Enver Pasha, Cemal Pasha, Bahattin Şakir Begh is taught to be the four perpetrators. The region where the Armenians used to live is taught. [...] Also you learn a lot about the Armenian intellectuals.

²⁷See Marianne Hirsch & Leo Spitzer, “Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender, and Transmission,” *Poetics Today* (27:2, Summer 2006): 353-383.

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, “Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey,” *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

The writers, doctors, politicians... In literature lectures, as well, you learn about the writers who were arrested and deported on 24th of April, 1915. So, not only in history lectures, but also in literature, you learn a lot. (23, Female, Anthropologist, Yerevan)

In Turkey, where Armenian schools are required to present the official national curriculum, Genocide is narrated in a denialist perspective by Turkish history teachers. Since the stories that Armenian children have heard from their families contrast with what they learn at school, these children not only face the denial of the Genocide, but also begin, at a very early age, to experience the denial of their own existence. Meanwhile, in Armenian Literature lectures, in which the students have their only opportunity to formally learn Armenian culture and language, information about the genocide unfolds almost accidentally. What follows is the recollection of an interviewee, who had become rather curious about why all the Armenian intellectuals have died on the same day:

At schools, during an Armenian lecture, a teacher told us this vague thing. There is a book in Armenian we read at school about the poets. I was curious about this... Their time of death is 1915, I thought this could not be a coincidence. I turn the page, it is 1915; turn the page, it is again 1915. Once our teacher told us, "Go ask your parents why their time of death is 1915" cause she, in a way, is afraid herself to teach us this at school, in the lecture, a lecture. (35, Male, Businessman, Istanbul)

In this participant's description, the Armenian teachers generally avoided questions concerning the Genocide and suggested that the children pose them to their families.

In sum, the construction of postmemory of the Genocide begins in childhood, with familial transmission, and continues through education. In a comparative perspective, Armenian youth in Armenia can be seen to experience a more harmonized transmission throughout these processes of socialization. However, in Turkey, since what Armenian children hear from their families conflicts with what they learn at school, the transmission becomes rather turbulent. Further, for the youth in Turkey, this turbulence emerges simultaneously with crises about Armenian identity.

Although education is an important part of the transmission process, the incorporation of the memory as one's own occurs at early ages, within the blurry images of childhood. Yet it is important to remark that, in addition to Hirsch's approach, in case of the Armenian Genocide, family is not the only element that constructs the postmemory. Our comparison between Armenian youth in Armenia and Turkey suggests that postmemory also is shaped by social, national, and

political connections. At this point, in order to further this assumption, we must analyze the sites of memory among members of the 4th generation.

The Work of Postmemory: Sites of Memory and Patterns of Remembrance in Armenia and Turkey

Hirsch draws upon Pierre Nora's concept of sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) to emphasize how *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman, attempts to "block the work of forgetting".²⁸ Nora has suggested that with the acceleration of history in the 20th century, we now speak of "sites" (*lieux*) of memory, instead of "environments" (*milieux*) of memory, because real memories are all but gone. The character of memory – one that is sustained by a living society, in continuous change and bound to an infinite present – is under threat. What has come to pass, Nora says, is the "eradication of memory by history."²⁹ Memory is embodied by that which is concrete, such as image, gesture, and site. History, on the other hand, binds itself "to temporal continuities, to progressions, and to relations between things."³⁰ For this reason, history is suspicious of memory and aims to eventually annihilate memory. It is this distinction between history and memory that constitutes sites of memory. Under the threat of being obliterated, memory finds sites where it can secrete, crystallize, and sustain itself: the sites of memory.³¹ They are the rituals of our deritualized societies, which prefers the young to elders, the new to old, the future to the past, and focuses on self-transformation and self-renewal. In the absence of a natural memory, such a society must establish archives, organize anniversaries and commemorations, prepare eulogies, and notarize bills, because none of this can occur spontaneously. Hence the sites of memory emerge from such necessity; the inevitability of annihilation of memory by history results in placing memory inside sites in order to protect it.³²

²⁸ Marianne Hirsch, "Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory," 8.

²⁹ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire," 8.

³⁰ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire," 9.

³¹ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire," 7.

³² Pierre Nora, "Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire," 12. It must be noted that Hirsch (1997, 22), as well as Frow, have their doubts about how sharply Nora distinguishes history from memory. Frow, in particular, remarks that to attain this divide, Nora conceives of memory as overly natural, unaffected by the social, and "incapable of reflexivity." See John Frow, *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1997): 222-223. In relation with our study, the distinction Nora draws between history and memory especially fulfills the need for underscoring the antagonism between the Turkish Republic's official historical narrative about 1915 and the historical memory of Armenians living in Turkey, as well as the social and political struggle for the Genocide's official recognition.

In the case of the Armenian Genocide, sites of memory can reflect different patterns depending on the process of commemorating and remembering the catastrophe. In Armenia, interviewees state that the 24th of April is the official day on which the country and the Armenians all over the world unite in memory of their lost ones. Almost all of the interviewees attend commemorations regularly in *Tsitsernakaberd*, the genocide memorial in Yerevan, which is the primary site of memory of the Armenian Genocide. As stated by one interviewee, it is as if the memorial is the place “where the lost souls of the genocide are buried” (24, Female, Psychologist, Yerevan). Some interviewees state that they visit the memorial more often than they visit church. The primary function attributed to these personal commemorations is that of blocking the work of forgetting, and reminding the world of what had happened in the past.

Every year it’s like it goes in different ways. Every time people are doing things to show that, you know, that it’s again the 24th of April, there are still people, there is something that holds us connected to history, holds us connected to the past. And if we want to go forward, there is something that doesn’t let us go forward. And every time people go to all that memorials, they take the flowers, they organize different kind of mass to all these victims. Every time both in Gyumri, both in Yerevan... like people do a lot of things on that day. (30, Female, NGO, Gyumri)

In Turkey, the 24th of April has likewise been the date of commemoration for Armenians since 1919, when the first genocide monument was erected in Taksim, Istanbul. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the monument was removed from the square and the commemorations ceased to exist, only to be resurrected in the 21st century. Today, because such unofficial commemorations continue in different places throughout the day, it can be said that in Turkey, the Armenian community lacks a shared, functional site of memory for the 24th of April. Almost all of our interviewees stated that they attend at least one such commemoration annually. Some emphasize the fact that the commemorations are considerably suppressed by the state, which reflects a mentality that they find peculiar:

In a country where I am an Armenian for 364 days of the year, they expect me to forget that I am Armenian on this particular day. It shouldn’t be a crime to mourn my dead, question the murderers, get out in the streets for believing so. Or a reason to get killed. You remember, in very recent history, we lost a young brother of ours

[*Sevag Balıkçı*]³³ on 24th of April to that mentality. (24, Female, Civil Engineer, Istanbul)

The 24th of April is not the only day on which the Genocide is marked in Turkey: January 19, the day of Hrant Dink's murder in 2007, also has a symbolic meaning. It has become a day of commemoration, on which people from different walks of life gather in front of the building of *Agos* – the Armenian weekly newspaper whose editor in chief was Hrant Dink – exactly where Dink had been shot. Not only Armenians but also Turks, Kurds, and others come together to condemn the assassination. Encouraged by their solidarity, Armenians in Turkey have seized the opportunity to express their long-denied past to the public. Moreover, the assassination of Hrant Dink is comprehended as a symbol of the continuity of the Genocide. For the generation of young Armenians in Turkey, the street in front of the *Agos* building, therefore, functions as a site of memory of both the assassination and the Genocide.

This is what we call 1.5 million plus one. This 'plus one' is critical. Hrant Dink's discourse always based on not hating the Turks, and Turks not hating Armenians. Let us speak, open a dialogue. If you wish, we won't call it 'Genocide' but just let us create this dialogue. We saw what this [discourse] has caused [i.e. he was assassinated]. Every time something new adds to the depression of the Armenian community. I never miss the commemorations on 19th of January. Every year I am there, in front of *Agos*. (19, Male, Student, Istanbul)

In Armenia, however, it would be difficult to say that the 19th of January is a special day of remembrance. Since the connection between the assassination and the Genocide is obvious for these Armenians, they do not commemorate Dink on the day that he was killed, but rather prefer the date of the Genocide's commemoration, the 24th of April. Some even criticize the Armenians in Turkey for over-valoring the commemorations on 19th of January. For example, this participant maintains that Dink, the "plus one", should instead be considered one of the 1.5 million:

It wouldn't be wrong for me to say that fewer people [in Turkey] attend commemorations on the 24th of April than the Hrant Dink commemorations. And that makes me think, okay, Hrant Dink is

³³ Sevag Balıkçı was an 25-year old Armenian who was shot and killed on April 24, 2011, during compulsory military service. Although there were eyewitness accounts and testimonies that characterized this act as intentional murder, if not a hate crime; officially, the court declared Balıkçı's death to have been accidental. Thus, the perpetrator was punished for involuntary manslaughter. See "Murder of Sevag Balıkçı," Wikipedia, accessed January 9, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Sevag_Bal%C4%B1k%C3%A7%C4%B1

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, "Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

Armenian, they killed him, but they've killed millions of people like him. We're talking about 1.5 million, a lot more than that were murdered. When I count the names of the intellectuals, writers that were killed then, the fingers of my hands won't suffice. (22, Male, International Relations Expert, Yerevan)

Hirsch's notion of "work" can be useful to understand this tendency of Armenian youth living in Turkey. While postmemorial work in general "strives to *reactivate* and *re-embody* more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression", "in the case of traumatic interruption, exile, and diaspora", the institutionalized historical archive connected to family, social group and individual, "has lost its direct link to the past, has forfeited the embodied connections that forge community and society."³⁴ It can be argued that, in addition to the Turkish state's official denialist narrative, countless ruptures and radical breaks following 1915 have broken any link between Armenians as a memory group and the rest of society. Not only were the national and archival/cultural memorial structures designed to deny the Armenian Genocide. Armenians with a living memory of 1915 have been deprived of any public expression of their losses, as their cultural archives were destroyed, their records burned, their possessions largely lost, their histories suppressed and eradicated. In the absence of institutionalized historical archives or memorial structures, Armenian youth in Turkey are striving to activate and embody their own memorial structures, and their specific sites of memory.

An important distinction regarding the patterns of remembrance in the two contexts has to do with the "duty of memory." As Nora emphasizes, modern memory, which is artificially assembled and subjected to the claims of history, primarily has an archival quality. Traditional memory having perished, it has become a duty to collect remnants – testimonies, records, images, in short, anything related to the event. This "duty of memory" transforms everyone into a historian of him or herself. Ethnic groups and minority communities bear the burden to conduct a research about their roots, and thus redefine their identity.³⁵ Massacres, genocides, and historical narratives that deny them all produce a duty of memory for survivors, who thus endeavor to sustain their identity. The duty of memory that these witnesses bear is an extension of modern memory, which Nora tells us is more individual, psychological, and subjective.³⁶

For the Armenian youth in Armenia, remembering the past is a social imperative. That is, their socialization itself creates and necessitates the duty to

³⁴ Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 111.

³⁵ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire," 13-14.

³⁶ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory & History: Les lieux de mémoire," 15.

remember the genocide and to pass memories on to the next generations. However, in Turkey, the duty of memory stems from the affiliation within the Armenian community and from its distinction from others. For Armenian youth in Turkey, the will to remember the past itself is an aspect of resisting the obdurate denial of their existence: thus, the duty of memory appears to be a precondition of being-an-Armenian in Turkey.

The duty of memory for Armenians from Turkey is also prey to a special kind of victimization connected with the Turkish state's practices of remembrance. On the centenary of the Armenian Genocide, when Armenians in Armenia and the diaspora remembered their lost ones, Turkish authorities commemorated the eight months long Battle of Gallipoli, in which, by major efforts of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of Turkish Republic, the crumbling Ottoman Empire managed to retain important territory. Although originally this victory had been celebrated on March 18, the anniversary of the day on which the tide of this battle turned, the Turkish state shifted the date, declaring April 24th as *the* day of victory for Turks who had battled against the entire world. The aim was to create a celebration in which world leaders would participate – a celebration that would rival the centenary of the genocide and contain its effects:

People would see that the mentality [of the state] does not change on the 24th of April. Don't even need to see. They [the state] showed it already by changing the date of Gallipoli [commemoration] [...] They don't have a policy, they are perplexed. [...] All of a sudden, "We will do this on the 24th of April": why? It is the 100th anniversary, a good time for a change. When the 100th passes, we will do it back on 18th [of March] again. (32, Male, Opera singer, Istanbul)

The Politics of Postmemory: Perceptions of Victimization and Demands Connected with the Genocide

As the bearers of the postmemory of the Genocide, young Armenians do not only work through this memory, but also are worked by it in their daily lives. The most apparent example of this is in their perceptions of victimization in relation to the legacy of the Armenian Genocide in Armenia and Turkey respectively. For those who are from Armenia, this is not as powerful as for those born and raised in Turkey. That the memory of the Genocide is regulated by a national policy of remembrance leads to a more or less stable subjectivity in Armenia. In Turkey, however, there is no significant state-sanctioned site of memory. Moreover, even speaking of the Genocide, claiming that such an event ever occurred, can lead to legal persecution, social exclusion, or worse. Much more important, as discussed

Derya Fırat, Barış Şannan, Öndercan Muti, Öykü Gürpınar, and Fatma Özkaya, "Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Armenia and Turkey," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (2017), Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change.

above, is that Armenians in Turkey have to deal with a sociality that makes it extremely hard to live as Armenian.

How do Armenian youth in Turkey respond to the dual victimization of the state's denial of memory and of their identity? Armenian youth in Turkey demand first and foremost their right to exist as Armenians. One interviewee mentions the Turkish Student's Oath as a daily life discrimination and describes their way to cope with it as Armenian children:

For example, we were reading the Student's Oath every day and there was this thing we used to do unconsciously. [The Oath goes] "I am Turkish, I am proud, I am hardworking," and every day we would interpret it as "I am Armenian, I am dishonest, I am lazy." We were actually the ones completely excluded from that way of thinking... [...] You know you are not like that, but you do that to mock it. [...] When that happened [the obligation to read the Student's Oath was removed] I was quite pleased. Then this thing happened, I was on a bus and there was an old man sitting next to me reading a newspaper. He said to me, "See, they have removed the Oath!" and I replied, "Finally!" and turned my back. (22, Female, Student, Istanbul)

From this quotation, we can see how the day-to-day existential challenges of being Armenian in Turkey lead them to seek not only that the Turkish state accept the fact of the genocide, but also – and even more importantly – that a secure environment be established in which they can live in peace with others. Given this priority, demands for compensation and territory are presently at most symbolic.

In Armenia, that the Genocide is used as a defining component of being an Armenian caused some participants discomfort. They felt uneasy about this definition of Armenian identity, which ignores other aspects such as a complex history and a rich culture. Although they all wish to embrace an Armenian identity, they do not want that identity to be reduced to one of victimhood. As one participant explains:

Many foreigners, especially in Europe, they don't know much about Armenians and when they say "Armenian" the first thing that comes to their mind is the Genocide. Aside from that, there are tons of things to know about Armenian culture, Armenian traditions. [...] I suggest to my friends, too, not to remember those experiences all the time, because we shouldn't spend our time crying. We have to live and be stronger in order to prevent such massacres from occurring in the future. If we cry all the time, speak about the Armenian victims all the time, our hands are tied. Now is the time to speak about

Armenian victories, the better pages of our history. (19, Male, Student, Yerevan)

The different subjectivities and perceptions of victimization or victimhood, coupled with geopolitical contexts, affect the demands that Armenian youth make in Armenia and Turkey. As a post-Soviet country, Armenia struggles with economic issues that limit youths' opportunities and welfare. Therefore, the main demand of youth there is for the opening of borders between Turkey and Armenia, which they believe would improve both the Armenian economy and Turkish-Armenian relations. For example, one participant said: "This is the worst side of Armenia, because the borders are closed it harms the country's development and the economic situation today depends on it. Armenia is under blockade for years and naturally it weakens." (29, Female, Social Services Expert, Gyumri) For most of our interviewees in Armenia, demands for compensation and territory seem secondary. For some, however, compensation is a must, because it would symbolically acknowledge economic, social, and cultural losses, and restore the Armenian nation's long-lost strength and honor: "First they have to accept it, then find a solution. Because until they accept the Genocide, they don't respect us. In our society honor comes first. Because they damage our honor when they say it didn't happen" (21, Female, Student, Yerevan).

As for the expected apology, in both countries, Armenian youth believe that the Turkish Republic as well as Turkish people should shoulder the burden of the responsibility. Although, to international eyes, the Armenians may seem to be demanding that Turks apologize, in fact, they demand that a demand be made by the other; that is, they demand that Turks seek to be forgiven. As one of our interviewees said: "It would be healthy for us to forgive; but one cannot simply forgive; the other must demand forgiveness" (23, Female, White Collar Worker, Yerevan).

In Lieu of a Conclusion: Towards a Politics of Peace

In this article, we have attempted to analyze what it means for the 4th generation of Armenians to have a "postmemory" of the Genocide, an inherited memory of a crucial event that had occurred long before they, as the present bearers of this particular memory, were born. We have shown how the specific contexts of Armenians in Turkey and in Armenia make for differences in the construction and work of postmemory, as well in the generational formations and sites of memory. In this respect, there is not a singular postmemory of the Genocide, so much as several distinctive patterns, experiences, transmissions, and commemorations that shape and reshape multiple postmemories. The most significant finding is that these postmemories should be considered and comprehended in relation to one

another as well as in their own right. As our fieldwork has demonstrated, the demands of memory are grounded on these multiple postmemories and, thus, any strategy towards a politics of peace must consider them collectively.

As a modest contribution to such a politics of peace, we would like to list suggestions for the agents who will carry the process forward. To establish reconciliation and peace between the two parties a number of demands and requirements must be met. Our research implies that it will be essential to understand how these differ from country to country; our larger research project also finds important differences from generation to generation that must likewise be considered. Second, since the Armenian youth in both countries address themselves to people instead of to governments, any process of reconciliation must aim to facilitate encounters and establish dialogues at this personal level. Finally, if governments are to play a constructive role in such a process, they must first and foremost listen to Armenian voices, including those of youth, and to accord them primacy.