

# **ARMENIAN ETHNIC IDENTITY IN CONTEXT: EMPIRICAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE**

Collection of works

By

Aghop Der-Karabetian

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

Beirut 2018

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By  
Dr. Aghop Der-Karabetian  
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## Dedication

To Armine, my wife  
To Veero and Shahan, our sons  
To Tanya, our daughter-in-law  
To Emme and Roman, our grandchildren  
And  
To all current and future grandchildren everywhere  
who will claim an Armenian Identity



## **A Few Words**

Dr. Aghop Der-Karabetian is one of a handful of researchers in Lebanon, forerunners who initiated unique and original field studies and research on sociocultural issues related to compound societies and on the relationship between multi-communal polities, dominant groups, subgroups and the self.

Lebanon, with its diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, social, and regional communities characterized by primordial, traditional mindsets and a confessional political culture, was the type of ground where sociopolitical researchers would dream of doing field work.

Dr. Der-Karabetian, a fervid scholar, enthusiastically dedicated several of his post-graduate years to teaching at Haigazian University (then College) and to the study of the formation and reshaping of identity, the sociocultural processes of acculturation, integration, assimilation, etc. His Armenian background gave him additional sensitivity towards issues of survival, genocide trauma, rigidifying ethnic boundaries and ethnic rejection.

During the early years of the Lebanese civil war he settled in the USA, where he furthered his studies in the issues of most interest to him. The Armenian community of California-Los Angeles was a mixture of newly arrived Diaspora Armenians (particularly from the Middle East), second generation American Armenians and those of mixed parenthood. The study of these subgroups would lead to new insights about features and aspects of issues of identity, language learning, culture preservation and heritage awareness, biculturalism and bicultural identity, stereotyping, disengagement from the group, correlations of livelihood dependencies and attachment/detachment from the in-group, identity and religion. Such a study would uncover the ongoing processes, transformation and trends of the above-mentioned concepts.

As was the case in Beirut, likewise, in the USA Dr. Der-Karabetian combined his efforts and collaborated with Armenian and non-Armenian scholars and researchers and generated original material on Armenian Diaspora sociocultural preoccupations. Moreover, Dr. Der-Karabetian's research studies in the USA followed and reflected the changes in Armenian identity, which is naturally not static and, like any ethnic identity, reshapes itself over time according to sociopolitical transformations and context.

This book, a compilation of a number of research articles and presentations, reflects the academic path of Dr. Der-Karabetian. It shows how his research deepened and broadened as well as the scope and aspects of the topics he tackled and the critical role of different conditions and variables. It is a significant contribution, particularly to Armenian Diaspora Studies.

One can hardly exaggerate the pivotal role publications such as this may play in Armenian Diaspora studies, where a paucity of research has been felt for decades now.

Scholars of Diaspora studies are challenged to carry on from where Dr. Der-Karabetian has left off. They should develop his clear interdisciplinary path, methodology and mode of studying issues of identity and integration, symbolic characteristics of ethnic culture, universal characteristics of Armenian identity, psychosocial perspectives, etc. These topics have become core issues of current academic Diaspora studies as well as the preoccupation of migrant groups.

Haigazian University Press is proud to publish such an important academic volume.

Dr. Antranik Dakessian, Director  
Armenian Diaspora Research Center

## PROLOGUE AND SYNOPSIS

This volume explores the variations and the core of Armenian ethnic identity and belonging in relation to different social, political, cultural and psychological factors in the Armenian diaspora. The articles and papers included here represent the work of the author in collaboration with colleagues and students over a period of some 35 years. Many of the articles are previously published, scattered in different venues, and brought together here to capture common themes that have emerged. The primary approach of the works is empirical in nature using social-psychological research methodology and statistical analyses. Conceptual articles that take a more integrative and global perspective are also included.

The *Introduction* gives a general historical overview of Armenians, highlighting ethnic and national boundary-defining events, such as the invention of the Armenian alphabet and the declaration of Christianity as the national religion. In addition it describes a general theoretical framework based on empirical works on the subject from different ethnic groups in the USA and around the world that identifies different contextual domains related to the sense of ethnic belonging and identity in general. The contextual domains are broken down into a) *external-relational domains* such as demographic, behavioral, social and political, and b) *internal-psychological domains* such as other identities, personality, wellbeing and spirituality. Articles, papers and dissertations that examine Armenian identity in various contextual domains that fit into the theoretical framework are identified.

The first article, *Personality Change Over Time: Assimilation of an Ethnic Minority in Lebanon* (also published in 1977), compares Lebanese Armenian and Arab Christian university students on 15 personality characteristics at two different points in time separated by 17 years (1957 and 1971). In the 1957 samples there are significant differences on 10 of the characteristics. In the 1971 samples there are differences on only two of the characteristics. On the characteristics that were not different Arab Christians remained stable and Lebanese Armenians moved to become more similar to the Arab Christians. Such a shift could suggest, perhaps, a subtle merging of psychological traits as possible markers of integration into the dominant culture.

The second article, *Ethnic Orientation of Armenians in Lebanon* (published in 1977), describes the development of a survey instrument to assess the various aspects of ethnic identity. The questions touch on issues of heritage awareness, national character, ethnocentric pride, hyphenated Lebanese-Armenian identity, attitudes toward Armenian history, language and culture. Comparisons are made across different age groups, rural and urban settings, as well as political party affiliation. Findings suggest subtle



differences in the way Armenian identity is manifested in relation to these contexts and factors.

These two articles set the stage for the further exploration of Armenian ethnic identity presented in the remainder of the papers and articles. The themes and issues that emerge touch on different contextual elements. In relation to issues of personality and psychological wellbeing, it is demonstrated that young adults with stronger American identity tend to be challenged in taking the lead in a group, being self-assured, and being sociable. Those with stronger ethnic identity tend to have a higher ability to adopt an active role in a group, make independent decisions, and be sociable. Another theme points to the presence of bi-cultural identity where majority dominant cultural identity and Armenian ethnic identity appear to be co-existent rather than bi-polar or opposites; for instance, one can feel strongly Armenian as well as strongly American or Lebanese. However, this tendency may be somewhat tempered by variables such as native-born or immigrant status, age, or ethnic involvement. Turkish Armenians find themselves in a context where the minority (in-group, Armenian) and majority (out-group, Turkish) identities tend to be somewhat polarized. Another trend that shows up is the distinction of “acting” versus “feeling” Armenian. First generation immigrants and older individuals tend to be attached more closely to the concrete aspects of their ethnic identity, such as language, religion and customs, while native-born or younger individuals tend to be more inclined to express their ethnicity in more symbolic terms such as awareness of national origin, family ties and feelings of belonging.

The degree of salience or intensity of Armenian ethnic identity appears to vary in situations of social conflict and strife, such as the Lebanese civil war, that tend to rigidify ethnic boundaries and increase in-group allegiances. Interestingly, in spite of the civil war, the younger generation in Lebanon appears to have maintained its overarching sense of Lebanese national identity. Other situational contexts tend to enhance or elevate the sense of belonging as well, for example participation in a summer-long internship program in Washington DC with fellow Armenians, active membership in Armenian political and cultural organizations, experiencing higher acculturation stress, or living in neighborhoods with more Armenian families. Perceived impact of the genocide in Turkish and American Armenian samples shows a similar relationship to ethnic identity in both; greater perceived impact of the genocide tends to be associated with stronger ethnic identity. Interestingly, the Turkish Armenians express a preference to look more to the future than dwell on the past.

The empirical and theoretical studies reviewed here suggest that ethnic identity involves group self-image and the internalized image of the group held by other dominant groups sharing the same social-political-economic context. These images are descriptive, connotative and evaluative. They can

be positive, negative or neutral depending on the nature and extent of perceived interdependence or cooperation, and perceived competitiveness for resources and relative political power. It should be acknowledged that in-group self-evaluation tends to involve an element of positive attribution bias where the in-group tends to see itself in a more positive light. This dynamic is well illustrated in the Lebanese-Armenian case. In the 1981 survey of California Armenians, age and generational differences were observed among respondents as to what they consider to be important in defining Armenian identity, and the kind of issues needing attention in the community, as well as what priorities should be endorsed in sustaining the community.

One of the more prominent themes emerging in the works included here is the variation in the ways Armenian identity is manifested in different communities and countries as well as demographic and situational factors. Given the widespread transnational nature of the Armenian diaspora, one would expect that Armenians living in different countries would feel and act somewhat differently and manifest their Armenian identity somewhat differently. It is important to recognize that Armenian cultural, educational, religious and political organizations that span the Armenian diaspora communities promote and reinforce a core sense of belonging based on awareness of historical memory and language as well as religious and cultural traditions. Of course, looking forward, when diaspora Armenians increasingly claim ownership and affiliation with the independent Republic of Armenia, it can provide yet another anchor to sustain and reinforce the sense of Armenian belonging and identity.

I gratefully acknowledge the work of the following individuals who are co-authors in a number of the articles included in this collection: Anny Bakalian, Natalie Balian, Suzanne Berberian, Adrineh Der-Boghossian, Tom Martinez, Maral Mavlian, Levon H. Melikian, Emma Oshagan, Armine Proudian-Der-Karabetian, and Tara Yarialian.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank for their professional assistance Dr. Antranik Dakessian, Director of the Haigazian University Armenian Diaspora Research Center, the editorial staff, as well as the sponsors for making possible the publication of this volume, in a readable and presentable format.



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## INTRODUCTION AND A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sense of identity is part of an ongoing public discourse among the Armenian communities around the world. This issue has become especially important among the third-and fourth-generation survivors of the 1915-1923 genocide of Armenians by the Ottoman government that resulted in the horrible deaths of an estimated 1.5 million children, women and men. Having to live and thrive away from one's millennia-old ancestral land has been seen as a threat to Armenian identity through assimilation, sometimes referred to as the "White Genocide." Maintenance and nurturance of Armenian identity in the subsequent generations has been a central priority. Armenian schools, churches, cultural, and political organizations throughout the diaspora communities have made identity maintenance critical to their mission and existence, perhaps as a form of "counter punch" to the devastating blow of the genocidal attempt.

The intent of this volume is to present empirical and conceptual perspectives of the psychosocial factors operating in different contextual realities that impact the sense of identity and belonging among Armenians living in the diaspora. Also, in this introduction, a general working theoretical framework is suggested to organize the various contextual factors that contribute to the richness, fluidity and complexity of ethnic identity as such, with citations from the abundant research literature on the topic of ethnic identity among different ethnic groups in the United States and globally. The chapters present stand-alone works that use the case of Armenians in multiple countries and circumstances to illustrate the roles different social, political and psychological contexts play in understanding the nature, salience and implications of ethnic identity.

The works span approximately four decades and are grouped into three categories. The first group includes articles that report original data published in refereed journals and include statistical and scientific language. The second group includes papers presented at professional conferences, several of which use formerly published empirical data, or use original analyses of data previously collected but unpublished by the author. The third group includes public speeches and presentations in the community that are free of scientific and statistical language and may be accessible to the general reader. These speeches incorporate material from the empirical works included in this volume and other scholarly works. Within each group the material is presented in chronological order. The order of the material does not necessarily represent any fundamental development or maturation of ideas, or an inherently growing complexity of the works. The idea that binds and weaves the material together is the organizing value of context,

and how it may help shape the understanding of ethnic/racial identity in general and Armenian identity in particular.

### **Historical Overview**

The present volume focuses on the ethnic identity of Armenians living in the diaspora (outside the Republic of Armenia) and the bordering lands of the Anatolia region (Cilicia) of today's Republic of Turkey. The history of Armenians in Asia Minor is quite ancient; Indo-European tribes gathered there back in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries Before the Common Era (BCE) (Bournoutian, 2006; Hovannisian, 1997; Hovannisian & Payaslian, 2008). As a people, Armenians have a relatively strong historical continuity (Baggs, 1957; Baliozian, 1975; Kurkjian, 1958; Toynbee, 1916). For instance, the first organized entity of historical significance dates back to the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when the state of Urartu was organized (Burney & Lang, 1971). It included an integration of several social groups that lived in the area for hundreds of years. Urartu disintegrated, and by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE three semi-independent states were formed, the largest of which is known as Great Haik. In time it began to develop and expand as a uniquely Armenian state that included distinctively Armenian speaking people between the Caspian Sea and the Euphrates River. After this period, the history of the Armenian people is characterized by occasional periods of self-government, interspersed with long spells of foreign domination by such conquering nations as Romans, Persians, Assyrians, Seljuks, Mongols, and Ottomans (Bournoutian, 2006; Hovannisian, 1997).

Two significant events took place during the Arsacid self-rule that lasted from 63 ACE (After the Common Era) to 428 ACE (Morgan, 1965). The first of these events took place in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, when king Dertad II declared Christianity the official religion of his kingdom. Thus, Armenians purportedly became the first people to proclaim Christianity a state religion. While the exact causes of the act are not clearly delineated, the consequences are quite evident. As a political act it helped unify the king's subjects. At the sociological and political level it became a boundary-defining act. It helped define the collective as a distinctive entity in comparison to other groups in the region and solidified the collective as a more integrated whole. This act is perhaps an early major step in the dynamic process of nation building (Bell & Freeman, 1974). Christianity as a distinctive mark became important. In fact, throughout their history this distinctiveness has often been used as justification for persecution by their neighbors and invading armies. In 451 ACE, in order to preserve their religious faith, the Armenians fought the Persians, against impossible odds, under the leadership of Vartan Mamigonian. They lost the battle but preserved their faith. This battle became a symbol of national preservation. As collective suffering and struggle, it contributed to the basic process of national affirmation.

The date 451 ACE is also important in another way. This was the date of the Council of Chalcedon. The Armenian Church had until then accepted the creeds of church councils, even though it had been a separate administrative unit within universal Christendom since the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequent to the Council of Chalcedon, in which Armenians did not participate, differences in dogma also evolved. Thus, by the 5<sup>th</sup> century the Armenian Church had established a structural uniqueness. It may also be fair to say that by then the church had developed as a primary criterion of ethnic-national identity, both internally and externally. It had acquired the function of defining the “boundary within,” the culture itself, and the “boundary without,” the mark of collective distinctiveness (Arpee, 1948; Barth, 1969; Isajiw, 1974).

The second important event during the rule of the Arsacid occurred in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century due to the invention of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrob Mashdots. Mashdots was a priest and a scholar of languages. He was well-traveled and familiar with many languages including Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Persian and Syriac. It was only natural that a priest made the invention, since the priest-scholar at that time was the norm. What is significant about the event itself is that it was sanctified as a divine revelation. Consequently, Mashdots became a saint. It is very likely that this made the alphabet more readily acceptable among the general population as well as among the clergy. Furthermore, the motivation behind the efforts of Saint Mashdots is said to have been strictly religious, namely, the dissemination of the Christian faith in a language accessible to the Armenian masses. In fact, the translation of the Bible into Armenian, in which the inventor played a leading role, immediately followed the invention of the alphabet. Independent of its religious impact, the alphabet formalized the distinctiveness of the language used by the people and became yet another boundary-defining mark. Although the initial usage of the language was within a religious context, eventually lay writers such as historians and poets took advantage of it.

Records of the dispersion of Armenians date the origins of a diaspora back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century ACE (Aghanian, 2007). Armenians left their ancestral lands for many reasons including trade, educational opportunities, instability, conquest, and uprooting by foreign armies. The populations of the diaspora communities ebbed and flowed until the Ottoman genocidal attempt and forced deportations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century ACE. The Hamidian harassments, deportations, and massacres toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the genocide of 1915 had no precedence in the long history of the Armenian people. An estimated 1.5 million souls perished (Akcam, 2006; Charny, 1999; Daderian, 1995; Hovannisian, 1986; Miller & Touryan-Miller, 1993). These atrocities nearly succeeded in destroying and eliminating an ancient nation. As survivors spread throughout the world,



they fueled the growth of many diaspora communities in the Middle East, Europe, the United States and Latin America. The uncertain conditions of the diaspora communities, exacerbated by the incoming survivors of the genocide, did not last very long. Within approximately one generation these communities began to flourish and sustain vibrant social, political, professional, educational, and cultural organizations, contributing to the emergence of a robust transnational diaspora, and at the same time engendering variations of fluid diasporic identities (Sahakyan, 2015).

The discourse on the meaning and definition of the term diaspora underscores the complexity of the concept and the different ways it has been used in the social science literature (e.g. Butler, 2001; Kokot, Tololyan, & Aflonso, 2004). In its most general form the concept of diaspora refers to communities that have settled in a variety of locations, countries or territories after voluntary or involuntary dispersion or migration from a traditional homeland. Bournoutian (2006) and Aghanian (2007) provide a broad description of various Armenian communities around the world in their historical context.

For instance, in an edited volume Kokot *et al.* (2004) present examples of such transnational communities, including Armenians, with their unique organizational infrastructures and transnational superstructures. It is convincingly argued that it is difficult to speak of a uniform diaspora. Diaspora communities are colored and shaped significantly by the contexts of their host cultures or countries, while attempting to maintain a sense of collective connectedness and belonging based on shared history, language, religion, cultural customs and traditions (Sahakyan, 2015).

Thus, when we discuss the Armenian diaspora, it is important to keep in mind the diversity of the cultural contexts of the host countries where Armenians live, and caution is warranted when making assumptions about a singularly cohesive way of being. The transnational superstructures of Armenian churches, schools, political parties, and cultural and professional organizations around the world espouse the promotion of a common set of beliefs, ideologies, perspectives and ways of viewing the world. While this may be somewhat true of these transnational structures, it is important to note that their operations and functions are shaped, and their ideologies lived out, within the context of their host countries and cultures. Moreover, the diversity in faith traditions (Apostolic, Protestant, and Catholic) and the different historical and ideological bents of Armenian political and cultural organizations allow much room for differences in the construction of a cohesive global diaspora. And yet, these transnational superstructures appear to provide some sense of virtual and vicariously experienced collective, all-encompassing identity as a diaspora community.

One powerful collective trauma that colors the shared identity of Armenians around the globe is the 1915 - 1923 genocide by the Ottoman

government. Up to this day Turkey vehemently denies that genocide took place despite overwhelming evidence (i.e. Akcam, 2006; Daderian, 1995). The effort to continue to obtain recognition of the genocide by the world community of nations and to achieve some semblance of social justice and reparation for the children and grandchildren of the survivors has been a strong cohesive force (*The Armenian Weekly*, 2015). The commemoration in 2015 of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of these atrocities has been a unifying cause that has reinforced the sense of unity and national identity.

Deep roots, anchored in a strong sense of place mark the history of the Armenian people. Their history is also periodically peppered with the domination of passing empires that have left their marks on the history and culture of the Armenian people. Throughout historical vicissitudes and the collective trauma of the genocide, Armenians have tenaciously clung to a collective identity characterized by resilience, flexibility, and historical continuity. This sense of identity is sometimes referred to as a “national” identity and sometimes as an “ethnic” identity. Both ways of referring to this sense of belonging have merit. But the distinction should be pointed out. While reference to a national identity is based on historical and territorial realities anchored in a place of origin, ethnic identity implies a minority status in the dominant mainstream majority context of a different country and culture (Sherif, 1966; Tajfel, 1978). Ethnic identity as part of one’s overall social identity is essentially comparative and context bound. It encompasses a tension between similarities and differences among groups in contact in a shared physical and socio-political space with inherent power differentials (Brewer, 1991; Trimble, Helms, & Root, 2002; Yip, Douglass, & Sellers, 2014). Armenian identity in the diaspora should be understood in the light of such comparative and contextual dynamics.

### **Conceptual Framework of Ethnic Identity Context**

Different models of ethnic and racial identity have used some combination of Tajfel’s (1981) social identity theory and Erikson’s (1968) developmental theory to articulate the underlying construct. The developmental models imply different stages one goes through to achieve minority or ethnic/racial group identity. The social identity perspective examines different elements that compose one’s sense of belonging to and membership in a group in relationship to other groups. Helms and Cook (1999) review social identity and racial identity development assessment models for African Americans. Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1998), and Sue and Sue (2013) describe a more generalized racial/cultural identity development model with five psychological stages (Conformity, Dissonance, Resistance and Immersion, Introspection, and Integrative Awareness). In their model a person begins with an acceptance of dominant cultural values, questions those values and is eventually able to integrate ethnic/racial and

dominant mainstream cultural aspects. Dana (1998) presents various elements that compose the cultural self of different minority groups including Latino/Hispanic American, African American, Asian American, Native American/Alaskan Native, and European/Anglo American. Dana demonstrates that the constructs of the cultural self vary across groups as well as incorporating common elements. The constructs may include immediate and extended family values and norms, spirituality and religious beliefs, cultural traditions, language, physiognomic factors such as skin color, natural and geographic reference points such as country of origin, and social contexts with clearly delineated and perceived boundaries between groups (Barth, 1969). Furthermore, historical and collective traumatic experiences such as the slavery of African Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans, the holocaust of the Jews of Europe, the oppression of Kurds in Turkey, and the genocide of Armenians further shape the way racial and ethnic identities are constructed (e.g. Cross, 1995; Herman, 1989; Hovannisian, 2007; Kurashige, 2002; Laber & Whiteman, 1988; Takaki, 1993).

One of the most salient concepts in the theoretical and empirical discourse on ethnic and racial identity is context (e.g. Jackson & Smith, 1999; Liebkind, 2006; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Sherif, 1966; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Context is what gives meaning to human experiences. It helps shape the nature of the relationship of an individual to a group and the relationships of different groups as well as the relationship among different aspects of one's sense of self, personhood and identity (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Bazire and Brezillon (2005), after analyzing 150 different definitions of context, proposed a model where context represents different components of a situation that includes the environment, as well as the characteristics of the entity experiencing the contextual situation. They acknowledge the complexity of the concept and its variations across disciplines. However, it is fundamentally seen as a construction tool to give meaning to experience. Context can have elements external to the experiencing entity or observer, as well as internal psychological states and cognitive references that shape the interpretation and understanding of the experience (Brezillon, 1999; Kwan & Sadowsky, 1997; Quelhas & Pereira, 1999). Ethnic identity may be seen as experiencing and observing one's self, who is shaped by the external and situational factors. These factors may be stable or transient as well as influenced by attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, psychological states, and historical memories. It is also important to consider the shaping and reshaping of ethnic identity as the person develops socially and psychologically over time.

Reinforcing the internal (psychological) and external (situational/sociopolitical) notion of context, Yip et al. (2014) and Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) underscore the importance of incorporating

content and process factors when formulating an integrative multidimensional model of ethnic and racial identity. In their formulations content factors include internal, affective and cognitive elements such as self-categorization, in-group attitudes, exploration of origins, cultural values and beliefs, and perceived salience of group membership (e.g. Phinney, 1990, 1992; Phinney and Ong, 2007; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bamaca-Gomez, 2004). Process factors include external, situational and demographic conditions that shape the sense of ethnic self such as family, school and work environments, historical events, neighborhoods, social, economic and political circumstance, and interfaces with a dominant culture (e.g. Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Byrd & Chavon, 2009; Cameron, Duck, Terry, & Lalonde, 2005; Liebkind, 2006; Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006).

Variables and factors that are related to the sense of group belonging are used to define and measure ethnic/racial identity. These factors are the elements that shape and define context. In the current theoretical and empirical literature, contextual elements which are used as measurement criteria (empirically defining it) and/or are related (correlated) to sense of ethnic/racial identity may be combined and captured in a working framework under two **Areas** and four **Domains**; it may be called the **Ethnic Identity Contextual Framework (EICF)**.

Two domains may be classified under **Area I: External/Relational**:

(1) *Demographic/Behavioral Domain*, and (2) *Social/Political Domain*. Two domains may be classified under **Area II: Internal/Psychological**: (3) *Other Identities Domain*, and (4) *Psycho-Affective Domain*. Elements that fall under each of these four domains are identified in Table 1 with sample citation, and are graphically represented in Figure 1. Based on the empirical and conceptual literature, 39 elements altogether are identified across the four domains that compose the EICF. This list of contextual elements is highly inclusive but not necessarily exhaustive and will very likely be modified as the empirical and theoretical literature expands.

Reviewing and addressing the literature related to each of the elements identified in the framework is beyond the scope of this introduction. However, EICF is intended as an organizing tool for possible use in broader empirical and theoretical efforts in the study of ethnic/racial identity. For the purposes of the present volume, this framework may help situate the different contextual factors that are dealt with in the following chapters related to the construction and variations of Armenian ethnic identity. Although limited in scope and volume, the empirical literature on the ethnic identity of Armenians has grown within recent years, primarily through the dissertation and thesis work of graduate students in the social and behavioral sciences. However, there are some significant seminal works such as

Bakalian's (1993) *Armenian-Americans: From being to feeling Armenian*, and several others included in this volume.

**Table 1.** Ethnic Identity Contextual Framework with Sample Citations

**Context Area I:**

**External/Relational**

**Domain1:**

**Demographic/Behavioral**

- a. Age
- b. Educational level
- c. Ethnic/other friendships
- d. Ethnic language competence
- e. Gender/gender roles
- f. Generational/immigrant status
- g. Ethnic immersion/rituals/traditions
- h. Length of residence in host country
- i. Membership in ethnic/cultural/political organization
- j. National origin/emigrant country
- k. Preferences for ethnic/cultural elements (food, music, T.V., etc.)
- l. Seeking mental health services
- m. Skin color and physiognomic features

**Sample Citations**

- e.g. Ajrouch, 2000; Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977; Phinney 1992; Phinney & Chavira, 1992
- e.g. Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992; Ferdman, 1990; Min & Kim, 2009
- e.g. Barry, Elliott, & Evans, 2000; Kwan, 2000
- e.g. Felix-Ortiz, Newcomb, & Myers, 1994; Fishman & Garcia, 2010
- e.g. Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Gaines, Marelich, & Bledsoe, 1997
- e.g. Bakalian, 1993; Der-Karabetian, 1980; Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Masuda, Matsumoto, & Meredith, 1970; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Roysircar-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000
- e.g. Yamada, Marsella, & Yamada, 1998; Tsai & Curbow, 2001
- e.g. Schwartz, Pantin, Sullivan, Prado, & Szapocznik, 2006; Song, 2010
- e.g. Bakalian, 1993; Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977; Saylor & Aries, 1999
- e.g. Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Gordon, 1964; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Rumbaut, 1994
- e.g. Barakat, Gopalakrishna, & Vishal, 2014; Chattaraman, Rudd, & Lennon, 2009; Garcia & Lega, 1979
- e.g. Gamst, Dana, Der-Karabetian, Aragon, Arellano, & Kramer, 2002; Keyes, Martins, Hatzenbuehler, Blanco, Bates, & Hasin, 2012
- e.g. Coard, Breland, & Raskin, 2001; Telzer & Garcia, 2009

**Domain 2. Social/political**

- a. Family setting
- b. Interaction/contact with own or other groups
- c. Intergroup conflict/tension
- d. Minority status
- e. Power status
- f. Residence/neighborhood ethnic mix
- g. School/college environment mix

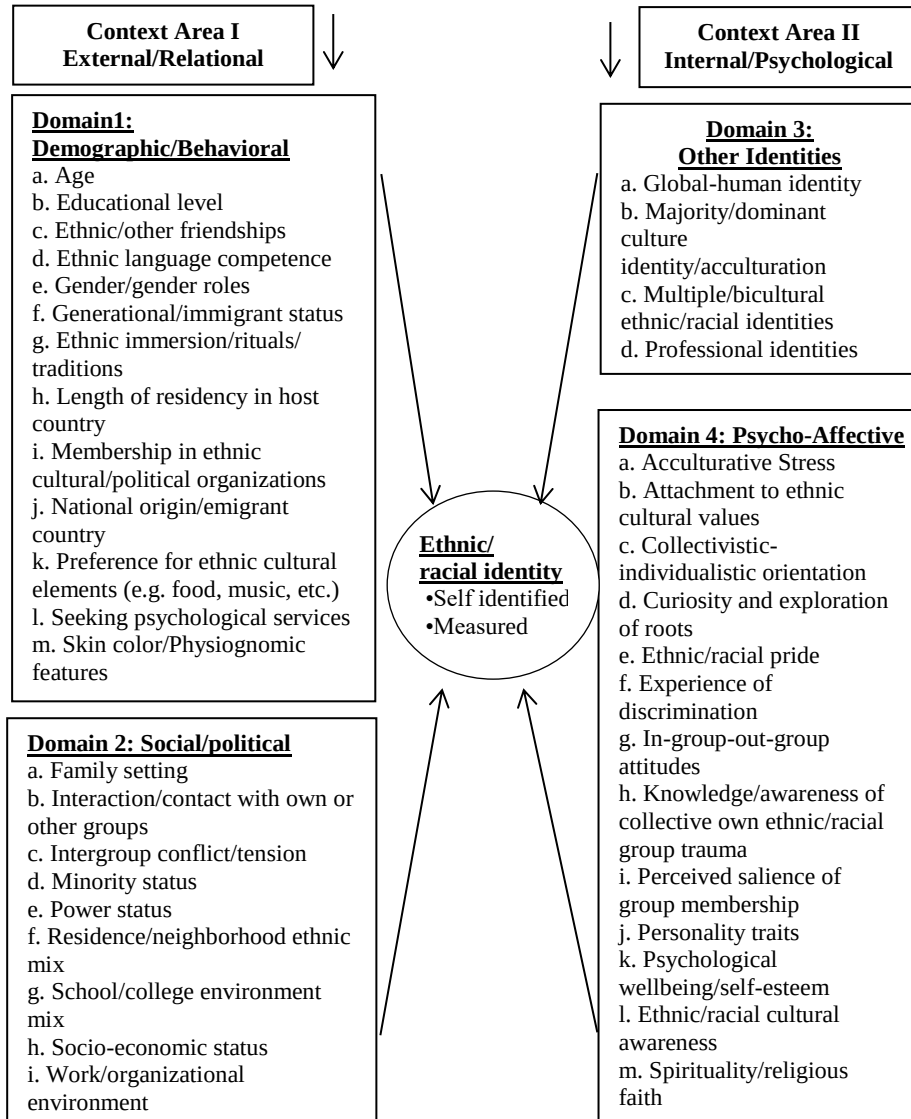
- e.g. Barry, Elliott, & Evans, 2000; Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk, 1998; Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1996; Yip, 2005
- e.g. Kiang & Puligni, 2009; Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk, 1998; Lee, Puig, Pasquarella-Daley, Denny, Rai, Dallape, & Parker, 2007; Yamada, Marsella, & Yamada, 1998
- e.g. Cheng & Lee, 2009; Eriksen, 2001; Pagliaro, Alparone, Iaconi, Paolini, & Aquino, 2013
- e.g. Smith, 1991; Smootha, 1990
- e.g. Jenkins, 1994; Tawa & Suyemoto, 2010
- e.g. Oyserman & Yoon, 2009; Bennett, 2006
- e. g. French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001; Sabatier, 2008

|                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| h. Socio-economic status                                               | e.g. Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Yarialian, Der-Karabetian, & Martinez, 2009                                                                                                                                          |
| i. Work/organizational environment                                     | e.g. Kim & Gelfand, 2003; Ely & Thomas, 2001                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Context Area II: Internal/Psychological</b>                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Domain 3: Other Identities</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| a. Global-human identity                                               | e.g. Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992; Der-Karabetian & Ruiz, 1997;                                                                                                                                                         |
| b. Majority/dominant culture identity/acculturation                    | e.g. Cheng & Lee, 2009; Cuellar, Nyberg, & Maldonado, 1997; Sevig, Highlen, & Adams, 2000; Khanna, 2011; Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977                                                                                 |
| c. Multiple/bicultural ethnic/racial identities                        | e.g. Der-Karabetian, 1980; Der-Karabetian, Berberian, & Der-Boghossian, 2007; Der-Karabetian & Ruiz, 1997; Liu, Lawrence, Ward, & Abraham, 2002; Phinney, Horenezyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Sabatier, 2008; Zak, 1973 |
| d. Professional identities                                             | e.g. Kusek, 2015; Slay & Smith, 2011                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Domain 4. Psycho-Affective</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| a. Acculturative stress                                                | e.g. Der-Karabetian, Berberian, & Der-Boghossian, 2007; Kim, Hogge, & Salvisber, 2014                                                                                                                                    |
| b. Attachment to ethnic cultural values                                | e.g. Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Wasienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1996; Gaines, Marelich, Bledose, et al., 1997                                                                                                                  |
| c. Collectivistic-Individualistic orientation                          | e.g. Kwan, 2000; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995; Tsai & Curbow, 2001; Yeh & Huang, 1996                                                                                                                                |
| d. Curiosity and exploration of roots                                  | e.g. Phinney & Ong, 2007; Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bamaca-Gomez, 2004                                                                                                                                                  |
| e. Ethnic/racial pride                                                 | e.g. Barry, 2002; Barry, Elliot, & Evans, 2000                                                                                                                                                                           |
| f. Experience of discrimination                                        | e.g. Mossakowski, 2003; Romero & Roberts, 2003                                                                                                                                                                           |
| g. In-group/out-group attitudes                                        | e.g. Resnicow & Ross-Gaddy, 1997; Romero & Roberts, 1998                                                                                                                                                                 |
| h. Knowledge or awareness of collective own ethnic/racial group trauma | e.g. Blunt, 2014; Midlarsky & Midlarsky, 2004                                                                                                                                                                            |
| i. Perceived salience of group membership                              | e.g. Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Rosenthal, Whittle, & Bell, 1989                                                                                                                                                          |
| j. Personality traits                                                  | e.g. Haritatos, & Benet-Matinez, 2002; Uba, 2003; Yarialian, Der-Karabetian, & Martinez, 2009                                                                                                                            |
| k.. Psychological wellbeing/self-esteem                                | e.g. Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Mossakowski, 2003; Iturbide, Raffaelli, & Gustavo, 2009; Phinney, Horenezyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Yarialian, Der-Karabetian, & Martinez, 2009; Yip, 2005                               |
| l. Racial or cultural awareness                                        | e.g. Bakalian, 1994; Baldwin & Bell, 1985; Phinney, 1990                                                                                                                                                                 |
| m. Spirituality/religious faith                                        | e.g. Barry, Elliott, & Evans, 2000; Juang & Syed, 2008; Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk, 1998                                                                                                                                     |

A short sampling of recent work on Armenian identity within each of the four domains is in order to identify some of the variables that have been the focus of interest. Contextual variables related to *Domain 1 (Demographic/Behavioral)* include relationship of Armenian ethnic identity to gender role ideology by Papazyan (2012); ethnic social immersion by Zakian (2009); generational difference and Armenian political identities by Simidian

(2007); religious participation and language proficiency by Koutrelakos (2013); and willingness to seek psychological help by Jernazian (2012) and Yesayan (2014). Contextual variables related to *Domain 2 (Social/Political)* include relationship of Armenian ethnic identity to public and private school settings by Samkian (2007); impact of college environments by Ekimyan (2008); and socioeconomic status by Yaralian et al. (2009). Contextual variables related to *Domain 3 (Other Identities)* include relationship of Armenian ethnic identity to acculturation by Shirikian (2006) and Zakian (2009); assimilation and bicultural identity by Yacoubian (2003) and Jendian (2001); and global-human identity by Der-Karabetian and Balian (1992). Contextual variables related to *Domain 4 (Psycho-Affective)* include relationship of ethnic identity to collective trauma and genocide by Kuzirian (2012) and Simidian (2007), psychological wellbeing by Zakian (2010) and Kassabian (1993); self-Esteem by Yacoubian (2003); psychological adjustment and functioning by Shirikian (2006) and Yaralian et al. (2009); and Christian spirituality by McCollum (2004).

**Figure 1: Ethnic Identity Contextual Framework**





## Material in This Volume

It may be helpful to note that the empirical and conceptual works included in this volume represent a social-psychological perspective. In the empirical studies the survey research methodology has been used. Most of the empirical works are reproductions of previous publications. Several of the conceptual papers incorporate previous publications. The appendices at the end of the volume provide the actual survey instruments and questionnaires used in the studies included in this volume. These are included for the benefit of future researchers, as well as for readers of the empirical articles to have a more detailed view of the methodologies used in the collection of data. *Permission from the author to use the surveys and measures is not required. They are to be considered public domain.*

The empirical data reported in the studies included here have come from samples of participants from the United States (primarily California), Lebanon, Canada and Turkey. In several of the studies and papers direct comparisons of responses to surveys across pairs of countries are presented. The purpose is to show variations in the way Armenian ethnic identity is constructed and manifested in different contexts. The Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ) (57 items), published in 1977 in *The Armenian Review* (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977 – See this volume), has been the foundation of several of the data collections on ethnic identity in different countries and in different social and political contexts. It has been somewhat modified (items added or subtracted) in some instances to reflect the needs and conditions of different settings. Also, to make the AEOQ more accessible and convenient for use by researchers; a shorter version was published in 2007 (AEOQ-R; Der-Karabetian et al. 2007 – See this volume). Significant revisions were made in this 15-item, psychometrically validated version.

Across the articles and papers in this volume, the contextual elements that are dealt with touch on each of the four contextual domains identified in the theoretical framework above. Almost all of the elements identified in *Domain 1 (Demographic/Behavioral)* are addressed across multiple articles and papers, dealing with age, generations, gender, education, language, length of residency, ethnic immersion, and seeking psychological help. From *Domain 2 (Social /Political)* the issue of intergroup conflict is addressed in the context of the Lebanese civil war and its impact on ethnic identity, issues related to socioeconomic status, power differential, and contact and involvement with own and other groups. From *Domain 3 (Other Identities)* ethnic identity is examined in the context of globalization forces and in relation to identification with American, Lebanese and Turkish identities, as well as bicultural identities. From *Domain 4 (Psycho-Affective)* ethnic identity is examined in the context of acculturative stress, collective trauma (genocide), ethnic cultural values, self-esteem and wellbeing, as well as the

role of religion and the church in shaping the sense of ethnic identity and belonging.

The expectation is that continuing systematic examination of the factors and situations that impact ethnic identity and the sense of ethnic belonging and identity in the diaspora context can advance the depth of understanding of the diversity of ways an Armenian may act and feel Armenian. As an organizing tool the theoretical framework suggested above may help extend the deeper analysis of ethnic/racial identities of other groups and transnational communities.

One of the major concerns of the Armenian diaspora as a transnational community with rich local variations is assimilation and loss of identity. The fact that Armenians around the world may manifest their way of being Armenian differently, depending on the majority and dominant cultures they live in, should somewhat mitigate the concern that assimilation and loss of identity is imminent. Different ways of being Armenian entail a strong and shared foundation of linguistic distinctiveness, historical and geopolitical continuity, as well as religious, cultural, educational, benevolent and political transnational organizations.

Ethnic identity and a sense of ethnic belonging are multifaceted, malleable, enduring and contextual. The context of ethnic identity may be external or relational as well as internal or psycho-affective. As research and scholarship of Armenian identity expand, the multifaceted nature of the sense of ethnic belonging should be kept in mind. Public discourse about Armenian identity should also be informed by the variety and richness of the ways of being, feeling and acting Armenian.



**Part I**

**Articles**



# PERSONALITY CHANGE OVER TIME: ASSIMILATION OF AN ETHNIC MINORITY IN LEBANON<sup>1</sup>

Levon H. Melikian and Aghop Der-Karabetian

## Summary

The Edwards Personality Preference Schedule (EPPS) was administered in 1956 to 37 male and 32 female Lebanese Armenians, and in 1973 to 32 male and 32 female members of the same ethnic group. The same test was administered to 32 male and 36 female Lebanese Arab Christians in 1956 and to 32 males and 32 females of the same group in 1973. All Ss were students at the American University of Beirut. Sex differences between males and females appeared in 1956 and 1973 but did not follow a consistent pattern except in the Change variable, in which females had a higher mean than males. A 2 x 2 analysis of variance showed significant interactions between sex and ethnicity for Affiliation, Dominance, and Nurturance in the 1956 samples only. A comparison of the overall means for each ethnic group showed that the Lebanese Armenians differed from the Lebanese Arab Christians on 10 of the EPPS variables in 1956, and on only two variables in 1973. The change was mainly in the scores of the Lebanese Armenians and was interpreted as an indication of their assimilation into the majority culture over time.

## Introduction

Acculturation refers to the process of learning a culture different from the one in which a person was born and raised. It is primarily experienced by immigrants and others who, by choice or circumstance, find themselves in a situation where they have to learn to cope with the demands and expectations of a new culture. Ideally, the end result of this process is their assimilation and eventual acceptance by the dominant group. The final outcome, however, depends upon the similarity between the home and host cultures, the number and age of the immigrants, their socioeconomic status and educational level, their predisposition to change, and the attitude of the new culture towards the foreigner (Berelson & Steiner, 1964).

The acculturation process becomes easier for the second and third generation of immigrants, although the second generation—i.e., those born in the new country—face serious conflicts (Child, 1943). Other things being equal, acculturation becomes easier as the person comes to accept not only

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced with permission from the publisher: Melikian, L. H., & Der-Karabetian, A., "Personality Change over Time: Assimilation of an Ethnic Minority in Lebanon", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 1977:103, pp. 185-191. Also, paper presented at the annual convention of the Middle East Studies Association, Los Angeles, California, 1976.

the externals of the new culture but also their meaning. This, of course, implies a change in the style of life that would be reflected in the personality characteristics of the indigenous population.

This study addresses itself to the above phenomena. It focuses on two groups of Lebanese college students: Lebanese Arab Christians and Lebanese Armenians. The Lebanese Arab Christians are part of the indigenous Arab population of Lebanon. The Lebanese Armenians are descendants of Armenian refugees from Turkey who found refuge in Lebanon between 1918 and 1936.

Lebanon is a conglomerate of religious groups. Different Christian sects form half of the total population. The other half of the population is made up of Shia and Sunni Moslems and some Druzes. Except for the Armenians, who form 4 percent of the total population, and possibly a small group of Assyrians, the rest of the Lebanese, irrespective of religion, are ethnically Arab. Consequently Lebanese Arab Christians have deep roots and a long uninterrupted history of residence in Lebanon.

Lebanon has historically provided a place of refuge for persecuted minorities from around the Fertile Crescent. Its present ethno-religious social structure is the end result of a process of settlement and slow assimilation. Each of the groups that it has been host to has maintained its religious identity, but over the years has come to share part of the indigenous culture. In a sense, one can say that Lebanon has been a "melting pot" in which the "melt" was not deliberately induced by the public school system as in the USA, but has been the end result of a long process of assimilation and interaction. Thus, the length of residence in the country is a vital factor in the assimilation of a particular group. Because of the geographical position of the country and its traditional openness to the outside, all newcomers to Lebanon, like the other Lebanese, have also come under the influence of foreign cultures, such as the French, English, Russian, and American, Lebanon provides a focal point where many cultures converge.

In comparison to the Arab Christians, Armenians are relatively recent immigrants to Lebanon. The first major wave of Armenian refugees to Lebanon came in the early twenties in the wake of the First World War. The last came in 1939 when the Sanjak of Alexandretta was ceded to Turkey. Even though recent arrivals, the Armenians have established themselves in the country and play an important role in the private economic sector. In spite of the hospitality shown to them by the indigenous Arab Lebanese, the Armenians resisted assimilation by maintaining their own school system and ethnic organizations. The majority looked for the day when they would return to an independent Armenia.

After Lebanon won its independence in 1946 and the development of a Lebanese national consciousness, an attempt was made in Lebanon to have a uniform educational system in which the teaching of Arabic, the official

language, became mandatory. The subsequent required teaching of the Arabic language and history in Armenian schools, and the improved economic situation of the second and third generations of Armenians, contributed to the assimilation of the Armenians into the Lebanese community. One index of their assimilation into the larger community is that of intermarriage. An examination of 272 Armenian Gregorian marriages in 1961 and 280 marriages in 1971 showed an increase from 7.3 to 10.7 percent in the number of Armenian males marrying from outside their community. A significantly large number of these marriages occurred among couples from a high socioeconomic bracket (Tashjian, 1974). Further evidence of this assimilation comes from a study by Prothro and Melikian (1952) which showed that in the early fifties Armenians were more accepted by the indigenous Lebanese population than they were in 1935—in terms of the Bogardus social distance scale. Though mild, the assimilation process is of concern to some of the Armenians. It poses a threat to their ethnic identity, a danger of losing it through assimilation. This problem of assimilation has also faced Armenian communities in the USA (Gregorian, 1971) and other parts of the world (Hovannisian, 1962).

## **Methods**

The Edwards Personality Preference Schedule (EPPS) was administered at the American University of Beirut in 1956 and 1973. This test measures 15 variables that have their origin in the list of needs presented by Murray and others (Edwards, 1954). The items had been originally screened for any cultural biases. The first set of data was collected in 1956 on over 500 students for the purpose of establishing local norms. This group included, among others, 37 male and 32 female Lebanese Armenians and 32 male and 36 female Lebanese Arab Christians. The 1973 sample included 32 male and 32 female Lebanese Armenians and 32 male and 32 female Lebanese Arab Christians. The Ss of this second sample were of approximately the same age as the first. Since English is the language of instruction at the university, the test was administered in English on both occasions.

## **Results**

The means and standard deviations for the male and female Ss of both ethnic groups were calculated for 1956 and 1973. A 2 X 2 analysis of variance for each variable on the two sets of data was conducted to find out whether differences between and within the two ethnic groups existed. The results showed that within the Lebanese Armenian group males were higher than females on Exhibitionism ( $p < .01$ ), Affiliation ( $p < .01$ ), and Nurturance ( $p < .05$ ), while in the 1973 sample the males were higher on Order ( $p < .05$ ), and Heterosexuality ( $p < .01$ ), and lower on the Nurturance and Change ( $p < .01$ ) variables. Within the Lebanese Arab Christian sample



in 1956 the males were higher on Autonomy ( $p < .05$ ) and Dominance ( $p < .01$ ), and lower on Intraception ( $p < .01$ ), Nurturance ( $p < .05$ ), and Change ( $p < .01$ ). In the 1973 sample the Lebanese Arab Christian males were higher than the females on Achievement ( $p < .01$ ), Dominance ( $p < .05$ ) and Heterosexuality ( $p < .01$ ), and lower than the females on the Affiliation ( $p < .01$ ) and Change ( $p < .01$ ) variables. These differences were reflected in the interaction between ethnicity and sex for Affiliation ( $p < .01$ ), Dominance ( $p < .05$ ), and Nurturance ( $p < .005$ ) in 1956, and on none of the variables in the 1973 sample. The consistently higher mean for females on the Change variable is in agreement with Edwards' findings for Americans (Edwards, 1954). Sex differences also appeared in the overall samples of 1956 and 1973. In 1956 males were higher than females on Autonomy, Dominance, and Aggression and lower on Change. In 1973, again in the overall sample, the males were higher on Achievement, Dominance, and Heterosexuality and lower on Affiliation and Nurturance, and continued to be lower than females on Change. All differences were significant at or above the .05 level of confidence.

**Table 1.** Group Means of Lebanese Armenians and Lebanese Arab Christians

|                 | 1956      | 1956   | 1973      | 1973   |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Variable        | Armenians | Arabs  | Armenians | Arabs  |
| Achievements    | 13.31     | 14.69* | 14.20     | 14.60  |
| Deference       | 12.84     | 12.37  | 11.85     | 10.65  |
| Order           | 13.88     | 11.56* | 12.55     | 11.80  |
| Exhibitionism   | 14.20     | 11.86* | 12.30     | 13.70* |
| Autonomy        | 13.48     | 13.68  | 14.65     | 14.70  |
| Affiliation     | 14.02     | 13.40  | 12.15     | 12.80  |
| Intrceptive     | 11.98     | 16.86* | 16.15     | 16.25  |
| Succorance      | 13.56     | 10.13* | 10.15     | 10.40  |
| Dominance       | 12.36     | 16.16* | 13.85     | 15.45* |
| Abasement       | 12.78     | 13.80  | 13.90     | 12.65  |
| Nurturance      | 12.06     | 16.45* | 16.35     | 16.45  |
| Change          | 12.64     | 16.04* | 16.65     | 17.50  |
| Endurance       | 12.51     | 15.00* | 15.45     | 13.70  |
| Heterosexuality | 13.08     | 12.70  | 13.45     | 13.20  |
| Aggression      | 13.07     | 15.02* | 16.05     | 15.40  |

\* Differs from figure to left at  $p < .05$  level

The main effect of the 2 X 2 analysis of variance on the ethnicity factor are seen in Table 1, which shows the overall means for each ethnic group in 1956 and 1973. An examination of this table shows that in 1956 the two groups differed on 10 out of the 15 variables. The Lebanese Armenians were found to be significantly lower on Achievement, Interception, Dominance, Nurturance, Endurance, Change, and Aggression and higher on Order, Exhibitionism, and Succorance. All differences were significant at the .05 levels. In 1973 the groups differed on only two variables, namely,

Exhibitionism and Dominance. These differences were also significant at the .05 levels. On both of these variables the Lebanese Armenians still scored lower than the Lebanese Arab Christians. Except for these two variables, the means of the Lebanese Armenians moved closer to the means of the Lebanese Arab Christians on the remaining variables.

The means of the Lebanese Armenians increased on Achievement, Intraception, Nurturance, Change, Endurance, and Aggression. In the case of Order and Succorance their means dropped to the level of the Lebanese Arab Christians. These results seem to indicate that, except for Dominance and Exhibitionism, the Lebanese Armenians in 1973 had become more like the Lebanese Arab Christians in term of the variables that the EPPS measures.

## **Discussion**

The results presented above show, beyond doubt, that the Lebanese Armenian youth in 1973 shared many more personality characteristics with the Lebanese Arab Christians than they did in 1956. Our Lebanese Armenian Ss became more flexible in their behavior as evidenced in the decrease of their need for orderliness and their greater receptivity for change. They became more secure in their interpersonal relationships as evidenced in the decreased need for succorance and increased need for nurturance of others, and for their ability to see the views of others and to put themselves in their place (Intraception). They also became more prone to achieve, to endure hard work, to persist in the face of failure, and became more predisposed to accept their aggression and even express it. Even though they still differed from the ethnic majority on Exhibitionism and Dominance, the other characteristics they displayed approached what could be considered an indicative of a socially well-adjusted person. They had become more like the Lebanese Arab Christians.

Differences in personality variables are generally accounted for either by differences in child rearing practices and/or by other sociocultural factors. In spite of the appeal of the first argument, and its widespread use, there is little empirical evidence to support it (Kline, 1972). However, an attempt was made to relate differences in child rearing practices that Prothro (1961) found for Lebanese Armenians and Lebanese Arab Christians to the scores of our Ss on the EPPS for 1956 and 1973. For the 1956 differences on the EPPS, the higher Achievement scores of the Lebanese Arab Christians agreed with their earlier independence training, the higher order scores of the Lebanese Armenians agreed with the greater expectations of their mothers in this respect, and the higher Lebanese Arab Christian scores on Aggression were in line with their mothers' great tendency to accept such behavior (Prothro, 1961). Even though Prothro (1961) provided further evidence for differences in child rearing practices vis-à-vis Autonomy, Affiliation, and Abasement, our two groups did not differ on these variables. Attempts to

relate child-rearing practices to EPPS scores in 1973 were not successful for any of the variables. Even if we assume that our 1973 Ss were raised under the same child rearing practices as reported by Prothro in 1961, we can see that the factor of child rearing fails to account for the changes which took place in the scores of our Lebanese Armenian Ss.

A sociocultural explanation may therefore partly explain the change that took place in our Lebanese Armenian Ss. Between 1956 and 1973 several things took place in Lebanon which could account for the increased assimilation of Armenians into the Lebanese Christian Community. In the first place the requirement that Arabic be taught in all Armenian schools, and that all Lebanese desiring to enter institutions of higher education must pass the government Baccalaureate examinations, which included Arabic language, literature, and history, could have played a part in the assimilation of our Armenian Ss. Many more Armenian students at the university level in 1973 than in 1956 spoke, read, and wrote Arabic. In the second place political events in Lebanon, especially the civil war in 1958, brought about a greater recognition of the role Armenians could play in strengthening the position of the Lebanese Christians. This becomes particularly evident when the argument for Lebanon's greater participation in Arab unity becomes an issue. In general, one may say that most, but not all, Lebanese Christians do not favor Arab unity for fear that it might threaten their identity as Lebanese and as Christians. This has in turn made the Armenians feel that they could play a vital role in the political life of the country. As further evidence of this Armenians are not only represented in parliament, but of late, and on three occasions, an Armenian has become a member of the Lebanese Cabinet. In the third place, as the prospects of returning to Armenia became more remote, the Armenians began to take their Lebanese identity more seriously. As their status improved from that of refugees to a recognized political and reasonably well-to-do group, they became more sure of themselves and more prone to participate in the wider community. What is most important, in the opinion of the writers, is the awareness of assimilation by the Armenians themselves. This is evidenced in increased discussion and debate of this issue in their organizations and clubs. In fact, the most nationalist of the Armenian groups is beginning to refer to Armenians as "Lebanese of Armenian descent," a phrase unheard of 10 years ago.

## ETHNIC ORIENTATION OF ARMENIANS IN LEBANON<sup>2</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian and Emma Oshagan

In spite of the ample opportunity that the Lebanese socio-cultural milieu has provided for the preservation and maintenance of the Armenian identity and character, subtle indications of assimilation have been detected (Der-Karabetian & Melikian, 1974; Hovannisian, 1974). Since their arrival in Lebanon as refugees, there has been a growing acceptance of Armenians by the indigenous groups, particularly Christians (Prothro & Melikian, 1952; Starr, 1974). Interestingly enough, Elmasian (1971) reported in 1971 that the Armenians felt closer to both Arab Christians and Moslems than these groups felt toward Armenians. There has also been a trend in the rate of intermarriages. Tashjian (1973) reported that of 272 marriages in the Armenian Apostolic Church in 1961, and 280 such marriages in 1971, there was an increase from 7.3 to 10.7 percent in the number of Armenian males marrying outside their community.

On a more psychological level, a growing similarity of manifest needs and personality characteristics of Armenians with Arab Christians has been demonstrated. Der-Karabetian and Melikian (1974) compared responses of Arab Christian university students in 1956 and 1973 to Edwards Personality Preference Schedule, which measures 15 different personality characteristics. In 1956 there were significant differences on 10 of the 15 characteristics, but in 1973 there were only 2 such differences. It was also reported that over the time period of 17 years both groups had changed to some extent. But, the magnitude of change in the Armenian scores was greater than that in the Arab Christian scores, and was in the direction of the Arab Christian scores.

Although limited in their scope, these reports point out an inconspicuous trend toward assimilation. In order to shed some light on this trend, questions may be raised about the extent and nature of ethnic orientation, as such, of Armenians in Lebanon. These questions gain increasing importance in face of the total lack of an empirical base on the nature of ethnic identity and ethnic orientation of Armenians in Lebanon. Such an empirical base may help keep systematic track of Armenian ethnic orientation over time. It may be important to track in the long run what qualitative and quantitative changes take place in ethnic orientation and identity as intergroup interactions continue and political events unfold.

The present report covers a survey that was conducted in 1974 in efforts to (a) partially answer questions about the existing nature and extent of

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<sup>2</sup> Reproduced with permission from the publisher: Der-Karabetian, A. & Oshagan, E., "Ethnic Orientation of Armenians in Lebanon", *The Armenian Review*, 1977:30, pp. 164-175.

ethnic orientation of Armenians in Lebanon, and (b) at the same time establish a data base in this respect. For this purpose, a special questionnaire was developed for administration to elderly, middle-aged, and young members of the community.

### **Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ)**

Initially, a list of 80 items written in Armenian was compiled; it referred to preferences for Armenian things (e.g. food, music), child rearing practices, use of the American language, Armenian institutions and customs, attachment to homeland, feelings of discrimination, intergroup attitudes, appreciation of Armenian cultural characteristics, etc. These 80 items were presented to 10 judges who were asked to rate how good each item was in terms of its face validity and relevance. The judges were all college educated Armenians living in Lebanon who had a variety of backgrounds in the social sciences and the humanities. Of the initial 80 items 57 were generally judged to be good and were retained (See Appendix A in this volume).

In the final form of the EOQ respondents were asked to express their agreement with each item on a six-point scale such that a score of six would indicate very strong agreement and a score of one would indicate very strong disagreement. The wordings of the items were so devised that on 31 of the items a high score would indicate high ethnic orientation, and on 26 a low score would indicate the same. The ratings on the 26 items were reversed to obtain the total ethnic orientation score, which was the sum of the ratings across the 57 items. The minimum and maximum scores obtainable were 57 and 342, respectively.

### **The Sample**

The EOQ was administered to three age groups defined in the following manner: The Elderly age group was composed of those born before 1920; the Middle-aged age group was composed of those born between 1921 and 1944; and the Young Group was composed of those born between 1945 and 1960. Biographic information was collected on sex, education, income, Armenian political party membership, and contribution to the "American Cause."

The questionnaire was distributed in Beirut, Lebanon, by 23 Armenian students of Haigazian College. Of the 350 contacts, 226 (about 65 percent) were returned. Table 1 indicates the distribution of the sample by age groups and demographic characteristics. Although the distribution looks fairly balanced, it may not necessarily be representative of all Armenians in Lebanon, because the sample did not (could not) follow a truly random procedure. The average ages of the elderly, middle-aged, and the young were 66.6, 41.7, and 22.5 years, respectively.

## Analysis

Before analyzing the total EOQ scores, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined as a measure of its reliability. This was done by calculating the Cronbach's *alpha* of internal consistency (Nunnally, 1967), which was found to be .89, indicating a very high reliability.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Lebanese-Armenian sample from Beirut by age group and demographic information

| Demographic Information                    | Age Group<br>Totals | Elderly | Young | Middle-aged |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|-------|-------------|
| Sex                                        |                     |         |       |             |
| Males                                      | 133                 | 71      | 32    | 30          |
| Females                                    | 93                  | 53      | 17    | 23          |
| Combined                                   | 226                 | 124     | 49    | 53          |
| Political Party Commitment                 |                     |         |       |             |
| Member                                     | 72                  | 39      | 17    | 16          |
| Sympathizer                                | 96                  | 57      | 12    | 16          |
| Neither                                    | 53                  | 28      | 9     | 16          |
| Contribution to the "Armenian Cause"       |                     |         |       |             |
| Contribute                                 | 102                 | 62      | 21    | 19          |
| Not Contribute                             | 106                 | 61      | 25    | 20          |
| Socioeconomic Status (Yearly Income)       |                     |         |       |             |
| Below L.L. 6,000.00                        | 68                  | 26      | 16    | 26          |
| Above L.L. 6,000.00 and<br>Below 12,000.00 | 90                  | 57      | 18    | 15          |
| Above 12,000.00                            | 60                  | 38      | 15    | 7           |
| Educational Level                          |                     |         |       |             |
| 10-18 years                                | 138                 | 105     | 23    | 10          |
| 0-9 years                                  | 86                  | 17      | 26    | 43          |

### Total EOQ Scores

Table 2 indicates the mean total EOQ scores of males and females in each of the three age groups. A 2x3 analysis of variance (Winer, 1971) revealed a significant age group main effect ( $p < .001$ ). The sex difference and the sex by age group interaction were not significant. A further comparison of the age group means (sexes combined) revealed that all three pairwise comparisons were significant. The elderly age group was higher than the middle-aged group ( $p < .001$ ) and the young ( $p < .001$ ), and the middle-aged group was higher than the young group ( $p < .001$ ).

**Table 2.** Mean total Ethnic Orientation score of Armenian Lebanese broken down by sex and age groups

| Sex      | Age Group |             |        |
|----------|-----------|-------------|--------|
|          | Elderly   | Middle-aged | Young  |
| Females  | 246.09    | 232.06      | 215.96 |
| Males    | 240.33    | 230.78      | 209.24 |
| Combined | 242.66    | 231.57      | 212.11 |

Analysis of variance was also carried out to test the relation of the other biographic information to the EOQ scores. Socio-economic status, educational level, and contribution to the “Armenian Cause” were not found to be significantly related to ethnic orientation scores. However, the 3x3 analysis of variance of age groups by Armenian political party membership did show a significant effect for the latter ( $p < .001$ ) and no interaction. The three categories in the membership factor were: (a) members of one of the Armenian political parties; (b) not members but sympathizers with the ideology of one or another of the political parties; and (c) neither members nor sympathizers. Their respective means (combining age groups) were 230.99, 223.89, and 209.05. A further comparison of these means revealed that members had scored significantly higher than sympathizers ( $p < .05$ ) and neither-member-nor-sympathizers ( $p < .001$ ), and the sympathizers had scored significantly higher than the neither-member-nor-sympathizers ( $p < .001$ ). Thus, in the overall sample, higher political party commitment was associated with higher ethnic orientation. Such an association may be taken as an indication of the concurrent validity of the questionnaire, since higher political commitment would be predicted to reflect higher ethnic orientation.

The analysis of the total EOQ scores seems to suggest that a progressive erosion of ethnic orientation has taken place. However, this trend should be seen in light of the following two qualifications: First, the differences between the age groups may represent cohort differences as well as age differences. We have no way of separating these effects at this time; in order to do so, the same cohort should be tested successively over time. The second qualification pertains to the level of the mean total EOQ scores of the elderly, middle-aged, and young. These were 242.66, 231.57, and 212.11, respectively, and well above the obtainable mean of 199.50, which suggests that, although there seems to be some erosion of ethnic orientation, there also seems to be a strong degree of residual ethnic orientation.

In order to have an idea about the nature of the erosion as well as the residual ethnicity, the endorsement of individual items by the three age groups was compared and examined.

### **Item Analysis**

Age group comparisons were made of items that showed high reliability. An item was considered reliable if responses to it correlated significantly ( $p < .005$ ) with the total EOQ scores. The mean scores of age groups on each of the items were tested for differences. This was done by means of a one-way analysis of variance. An overall significant age group effect ( $p < .05$ ) had to exist before individual comparisons of the age groups could be made. Furthermore, means were considered different if their comparison achieved a significance level of  $p < .05$  or better. Table 3 contains the 50 reliable items

and the mean scores of the three age groups, as well as notations of significant comparisons.

The age group comparisons of the items showed that there were 7 differences between the elderly and the middle-aged, 22 differences between the middle-aged and the young, and 29 differences between the elderly and the young. One observation from these differences may be that the elderly and the middle-aged are much closer in ethnic orientation than the middle-aged and the young, and the elderly and the young are the farthest apart.

**Table 3.** Age group mean-score comparisons of Lebanese-Armenians on the individual items of the Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire; higher mean scores reflect stronger Armenian orientation.

| <i>Items</i>                                                                                                                    | <i>Means</i>           |                         |                       | <i>Significant Comparisons</i><br>P < .05 |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|----|-----|
|                                                                                                                                 | Elderly<br>(E)<br>n-53 | Middle-aged<br>(M) n-49 | Young<br>(Y)<br>n-124 |                                           |    |     |
| 1. Armenians and Turks can never be friends                                                                                     | 4.49                   | 4.47                    | 3.57                  | -                                         | EY | MY* |
| 2. Armenians in Lebanon must accept that they are first Lebanese then Armenian.                                                 | 2.81                   | 2.88                    | 2.93                  | -                                         | -  | -   |
| 3. It is shameful for Armenians to speak in other languages with one another when they can speak in Armenian.                   | 5.09                   | 5.18                    | 4.82                  | -                                         | -  | -   |
| 4. Armenian private businesses should close down on Armenian national holidays.                                                 | 5.83                   | 5.55                    | 5.13                  | -                                         | EY | MY  |
| 5. Many old Armenian customs should be dropped because they don't make sense any more.                                          | 3.61                   | 3.72                    | 2.90                  | -                                         | EY | MY  |
| 6. Armenians in Lebanon should consider Lebanon as their homeland.                                                              | 2.72                   | 3.02                    | 3.22                  | -                                         | -  | -   |
| 7. It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian.                                                               | 5.19                   | 4.96                    | 4.51                  | -                                         | EY | -   |
| 8. Armenian schools should accept non-Armenian students without requiring them to learn Armenian.                               | 4.21                   | 4.04                    | 4.40                  | -                                         | -  | -   |
| 9. "Armenian is Beautiful." ( <i>Haigagan e badvagan e</i> ).                                                                   | 5.15                   | 4.63                    | 3.91                  | -                                         | EY | MY  |
| 10. Armenians should always speak Armenian with one another when they know the language.                                        | 5.87                   | 5.67                    | 5.24                  | -                                         | EY | MY  |
| 11. To preserve Armenian identity it is essential to be a fanatic Armenian.                                                     | 5.13                   | 4.59                    | 3.79                  | EM                                        | EY | MY  |
| 12. Armenians who are not involved in the "Armenian Cause" can be as good Armenians as those who are.                           | 2.72                   | 2.47                    | 2.81                  | -                                         | -  | -   |
| 13. It is a shame when Armenians in the diaspora who have achieved international recognition do not acknowledge being Armenian. | 4.74                   | 4.92                    | 4.63                  | -                                         | -  | -   |



|                                                                                                                     |      |      |      |    |    |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|----|----|----|
| 14. Armenians should not be blamed for preferring Western music to Armenian music.                                  | 4.02 | 3.63 | 2.90 | -  | EY | MY |
| 15. It is every Armenian's duty to support the Armenian national (Apostolic) church, both morally and financially.  | 5.68 | 5.33 | 4.05 | -  | EY | MY |
| 16. Sending Armenian children to non-Armenian schools has long term benefits.                                       | 4.00 | 3.18 | 3.56 | EM | -  | -  |
| 17. An Armenian should support another Armenian in a fight even if he is the guilty party.                          | 3.83 | 4.10 | 3.04 | -  | EY | -  |
| 18. Armenians who attend Turkish movies are as good Armenians as those who do not attend.                           | 4.25 | 3.94 | 4.06 | -  | -  | -  |
| 19. Armenians who are members of an Armenian political party and those who are not may be equally good Armenians.   | 1.90 | 1.94 | 1.95 | -  | -  | -  |
| 20. It is preferable to buy from an Armenian grocer two blocks away than from a non-Armenian who is one block away. | 4.38 | 4.08 | 3.73 | -  | EY | -  |
| 21. Armenians who openly disobey the law are a disgrace to the Armenian people.                                     | 5.06 | 4.96 | 4.19 | -  | EY | MY |
| 22. I consider myself to be a person before I consider myself to be an Armenian.                                    | 2.45 | 1.82 | 2.05 | -  | -  | -  |
| 23. A good Armenian would not belong to a non-Armenian church.                                                      | 5.38 | 5.27 | 4.27 | -  | EY | MY |
| 24. It is wrong for a Lebanese-Armenian to have a negative attitude toward the Armenian culture.                    | 5.23 | 5.33 | 4.90 | -  | -  | -  |
| 25. A good Armenian prefers to read Armenian newspapers.                                                            | 5.51 | 4.94 | 4.19 | EM | EY | MY |
| 26. Armenian political parties are better organized than other political parties in Lebanon.                        | 4.66 | 4.14 | 3.88 | -  | EY | -  |
| 27. It is bothersome to have many Armenian neighbors.                                                               | 4.02 | 3.67 | 3.90 | -  | -  | -  |
| 28. In general, Armenians are more hardworking than other minorities in Lebanon.                                    | 5.43 | 5.00 | 4.37 | -  | EY | MY |
| 29. In general, Armenian mothers are more attached and devoted to their children than other mothers.                | 5.21 | 4.43 | 4.77 | EM | EY | MY |
| 30. In general, Armenian fathers are more attached to their families than other fathers in Lebanon.                 | 4.89 | 4.33 | 3.52 | -  | -  | -  |
| 31. Armenian schools in Lebanon should not overload students with Armenian language and history requirements.       | 4.11 | 3.86 | 4.25 | -  | -  | -  |
| 32. It is rare to find an Armenian prostitute in Lebanon.                                                           | 4.09 | 3.86 | 3.62 | -  | -  | -  |
| 33. I prefer to be employed by a non-Armenian rather than an Armenian.                                              | 3.35 | 3.80 | 3.86 | EM | EY | -  |
| 34. The Armenians of the diaspora should finally settle in Armenia to avoid                                         | 5.49 | 4.96 | 4.31 | -  | EY | MY |

assimilation.

|                                                                                                                                                                          |      |      |      |    |    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|----|----|----|
| 35. In general, Armenian upbringing prevents delinquency.                                                                                                                | 5.30 | 5.10 | 3.92 | -  | EY | MY |
| 36. It is pointless to celebrate Christmas on the 6 <sup>th</sup> of January while most of the Christians of the world celebrate it on the 25 <sup>th</sup> of December. | 3.75 | 3.43 | 3.80 | -  | -  | -  |
| 37. A good Armenian always cheers the Armenian team in a match.                                                                                                          | 5.53 | 5.37 | 4.87 | -  | EY | MY |
| 38. The new Armenian generation should not be blamed for not learning the Armenian language well.                                                                        | 3.91 | 4.29 | 4.06 | -  | -  | -  |
| 39. The role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in preserving Armenian identity is not as important today as it used to be.                                                | 3.40 | 3.43 | 2.90 | -  | -  | -  |
| 40. Armenian compatriotic organizations are not needed anymore.                                                                                                          | 4.92 | 4.22 | 3.80 | EM | EY | -  |
| 41. The Aintabtzi and Marashtzi in Lebanon are really different in character.                                                                                            | 4.00 | 3.61 | 3.27 | -  | EY | -  |
| 42. A good Armenian should marry another Armenian.                                                                                                                       | 5.81 | 5.41 | 4.76 | EM | EY | MY |
| 43. Armenians taking up non-Armenian names for political or economic reasons are not good Armenians.                                                                     | 4.89 | 4.78 | 4.24 | -  | EY | MY |
| 44. Armenian children should be encouraged to play with non-Armenian children.                                                                                           | 3.04 | 2.37 | 2.92 | -  | -  | -  |
| 45. An Armenian should degrade the Turks whenever the occasion arises.                                                                                                   | 5.13 | 4.92 | 3.60 | -  | EY | MY |
| 46. Armenian literature matches international standards.                                                                                                                 | 5.02 | 4.67 | 3.68 | -  | EY | MY |
| 47. To strengthen the Armenian spirit it is essential to visit Armenia.                                                                                                  | 5.21 | 4.45 | 3.37 | EM | EY | MY |
| 48. In general, Lebanese-Armenian children are more gifted than other Lebanese children.                                                                                 | 4.36 | 3.90 | 3.49 | -  | EY | -  |
| 49. For an Armenian child, non-Armenian education may be more beneficial in the long run than Armenian education.                                                        | 3.70 | 3.39 | 3.89 | -  | -  | -  |
| 50. Lebanese cooking is as delicious as Armenian cooking.                                                                                                                | 3.06 | 2.45 | 2.96 | -  | -  | -  |

Note: Higher scores indicate stronger Armenian ethnic orientation

\*EM--Elderly vs Middle-aged; EY--Elderly vs Young; MY—Middle-aged vs Young

An examination of the scores on individual items revealed an interesting pattern. While the elderly seemed to indicate a greater attachment to the Armenian homeland and resentment for being removed from there (Items 1, 45, 47), the young seemed to indicate a tendency to break away from old traditional customs and institutions (Items 5, 11, 40), and a growing lack of belief in the existing traditional values in the Armenian family and its superior child rearing practices (Items 29, 30, 34). This pattern was obtained by looking at items that had generally high elderly scores and low young scores, and showed age group differences. It is possible that the apparent

erosion of ethnic orientation in the total scores may be reflecting these differences. Furthermore, low scores by all age groups and no differences between them on the following set of items shed further light on the overall erosion of ethnic orientation:

Item 2, "Armenians in Lebanon must accept that they are first Lebanese then Armenians."

Item 44, "Armenian children should be encouraged to play with non-Armenian children."

Item 6, "Armenians in Lebanon should consider Lebanon their homeland."

Concerning residual aspects of ethnic orientation, an examination of items that were scored highly by the three groups indicated a strong and positive endorsement of the use of the Armenian language (Items 7, 10, 25), attachment to symbols and situations that manifest pride in ethnic identification (Items 4, 11, 13, 15, 21, 23, 24, 43) and an awareness of the threat of assimilation (Items 34, 42).

Thus, it would seem that, on the one hand, there is a tendency to break away from traditional ways and values and, on the other hand, there is a tendency to preserve and maintain the Armenian language and symbolic aspects of ethnic identification that reflect ethnic pride.

### **Dimensions of Ethnic Orientation**

In order to assess the nature of ethnic orientation measured by the questionnaire, the data were subjected to factor analysis using principal components and Varimax rotation. Altogether 14 factors were derived but only 5 were significant and meaningful. The most important of these factors was called **Ethnocentrism**; it reflected the unquestioning and somewhat fanatical admiration of anything Armenian. The second was labeled **Character**; it reflected the nurturant, affiliative, hard-working, creative and law-abiding traits of Armenians. The third was labeled **Alter-Ego**; it reflected the hyphenated aspects of Lebanese-Armenian identity in terms of acceptance of the non-Armenian education of Armenian children, tolerance for the preference of non-Armenian aesthetic forms (music) by the young, and so on. The fourth factor was called **Heritage Awareness**; it reflected rejection of a negative disposition towards Armenian culture in general and the Armenian language in particular. And the fifth factor was called **Ethnic Rejection**; it reflected avoidance of social and professional ethnic associations and indifference towards Armenian language and history. Thus, Ethnocentrism, Character, Alter-Ego, Heritage Awareness and Ethnic Rejection seem to comprise the nature or the dimensions of the Lebanese-Armenian ethnic orientation as measured by the present questionnaire.

### **Urban Rural Comparison**

Subsequent to the analysis of the Beirut sample the EOQ was distributed in the all-Armenian town of Ainjar in the agricultural Bekaa Valley east of Beirut. Ainjar has a population of 3000. Of the 85 contacts, 48 responses were secured, about 62 percent. It was possible to divide the sample only into Middle-aged and Young groups. Although the mean total EOQ score of the Middle-aged was higher, it was not significantly so. One possible explanation for this no-difference is that more than 95 percent of the sample reported membership in the local ethnic political party. Such membership tends to be associated with stronger ethnic orientation, as shown above in the Beirut sample.

The overall rural sample was compared with a group of urban respondents chosen from the original Beirut sample and matched for age, sex and political party membership. Not surprisingly, the score of the rural, Ainjar, sample was significantly higher ( $p < .001$ ) than the urban, Beirut, sample. Their respective means were 242.12 and 210.63. This suggests that there is something to be said for the urban environment in terms of its contribution to the subtle erosion of ethnic orientation among Armenians. It is possible that the relatively greater exposure to the indigenous culture in an urban setting may be a contributing factor in this respect. From a psychometric perspective, the demonstration of such an urban-rural difference further supports the validity of the EOQ since such samples have been shown to differ in a similar manner in other societies (e.g. USA).

In brief, the slight erosion of ethnic orientation seems to parallel the other subtle indications, like intermarriages and personality convergence, of a trend toward assimilation among the Armenians in Lebanon. However, given the segregation of the social and institutional structures of the Armenian community (Hovannisian, 1974), the strong attachment to the Armenian language, the pride in ethnic identity and the awareness of the threat of assimilation, one may reasonably conclude that the loss of ethnic identity altogether may take a while, if it happens at all. It is important to note that the present results suggest the importance of the role of ethnic political parties in maintaining and enhancing the Armenian ethnic orientation in Lebanon.



## RELATION OF TWO CULTURAL IDENTITIES OF ARMENIAN-AMERICANS<sup>3</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

### Summary

The gap between the two cultural identities of 37 female and 43 male Armenian-American teenagers attending Armenian schools was studied. The effects of ethnic involvement and residency status (native-born and recent immigrant) were examined. The absolute difference between the Armenian and American identity scores defined the gap between the two cultural identities. It was hypothesized that more ethnic involvement and recent immigrant status would show a greater gap. A 2 X 2 analysis of variance of ethnic involvement and residency status produced significant main effects in the expected directions and no interaction. The ethnically more involved and the recent immigrants showed a greater gap in their American and Armenian identities than the ethnically less involved and the native-born, respectively. Some phenomenological explanations for the observed effects were considered.

The direct study of the relationship of two cultural identities has been largely ignored at the expense of studying the variability of minority identities (Larny, 1974; Teske & Nelson, 1973; Matsumoto, Meredith, & Masuda, 1971). However, some studies have examined both minority and majority identities directly in different social contexts and in relation to different social variables (Zak, 1973, 1976; Corrado, 1975). A minority status necessarily implies a majority context. Consequently, the simultaneous assessment of the two identities under different conditions may provide a more complete picture of the acculturation process and social conflicts in poly-ethnic societies.

In the framework of Lewinian field theory, simultaneous participation in two coextensive cultural groups exposes an individual to influences from two overlapping psychological situations (Cartwright, 1951). In the life space of any minority person, forces enhance positive identification with the minority group by its members, and other forces lead to greater identification with the majority culture. The interplay of these forces determines the relationship of the two identities, which would depend largely on the phenomenological situation in which the members of a minority find themselves (Patterson, 1975; Stonquist, 1961; Genesee, Tucker, & Lambert, 1978).

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<sup>3</sup> Reproduced with permission from the publisher: Der-Karabetian, A., "Relation of Two Cultural Identities of Armenian Americans", *Psychological Reports*, 1980:47, pp. 123-128. Also, paper presented at the annual convention of the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1979.

The present study deals with the relative magnitude of minority and majority cultural identities of Armenian-American teenagers as a function of ethnic involvement and residency status (Armenian should not be confused with “Arminian,” which refers to a religious group. The former refers to an ethnic-national group, which concerns us here).

The mass immigration of Armenians began around the turn of the century in the wake of deportations and massacres by Ottoman Turkey. The immigrants first settled in the major industrial centers of the East. After accumulating some funds, many moved to California and engaged in successful farming (Christopher, 1975). Recent waves of immigration followed instability in the Middle Eastern countries where close-knit Armenian communities prospered after the First World War. Presently, the number of Armenians in the US is estimated to be half a million, about one hundred thousand concentrated in Southern California (Avakian, 1977). Over a dozen Armenian churches and parochial schools are found in and around Los Angeles. Furthermore, an impressive number of Armenian American publications circulate regularly in both Armenian and English (Norehad, 1977).

The first hypothesis deals with the relative magnitude of the majority and minority identities of recent immigrants compared to native-born Armenian-American teenagers. Recent immigrants were first-generation immigrants who were trying to adjust to the new culture and struggling to reconcile their ethnic identity with that of the majority. They were in a state of culture shock (Hall, 1959). This state is known to be associated with feelings of anxiety and an excessive desire to associate with one’s own group (Heiss & Nash, 1967). Participation in the host culture is not a very attractive prospect because it is novel and presents potential threats. However, excessive desire to assimilate and identify with the majority culture could also be associated with culture shock. In contrast, native-born do not experience antagonism against the culture of the majority. According to Gordon (1964), they are acculturated to the “Anglo-Saxon” norms but at the same time tend to maintain group distinctiveness. With these considerations in mind, it is hypothesized that the magnitude of the two identities will differ more for recent immigrants than for native-born.

The second hypothesis deals with the relative magnitude of the two identities as a function of ethnic involvement. Greater involvement in one’s own group might imply less contact with the out-group or the majority culture in this case. Greater contact with the out-group is generally associated with more acceptance of it (Hofman & Zak, 1969; Basu & Ames, 1970), although the nature of the contact is also known to be important (Amir, 1969). Furthermore, according to Festinger’s (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, a greater investment of time and effort in a particular task or activity tends to be associated with a more positive attitude towards

that task or activity. Assuming that greater ethnic involvement means less contact with the majority culture and a greater investment of efforts in minority activities, the difference in the magnitude of the ethnic and majority identities may be expected to be greater among the ethnically involved.

## **Method**

The subjects were 43 male and 37 female high school students of Armenian descent. All were attending Armenian parochial schools in the Los Angeles area. The mean age was 17.47 yr. ( $SD = 2.4$ ). Two independent variables were defined, each having two levels, residency status and ethnic involvement. For residency status the two levels were native born Armenian-Americans and recent immigrants who had not yet been naturalized. The mean years of residency of the latter group was 4.67 ( $SD = 3.43$ ). The two levels of ethnic involvement were defined as more and less ethnic involvement based on the median-split of ethnic involvement scores. Ethnic involvement scores were obtained by summing (a) the number of memberships in ethnic-cultural organizations; (b) frequency of church attendance ranging from 0 = never to 4 = regularly; (c) participation in the "Armenian Cause" (1 = sometimes, 2 = regularly, 3 = organize activities); (d) Armenian language fluency ranging from 1 = no knowledge to 5 = read and write well; (e) proportion of Armenian friends (1 = mostly non-Armenian, 2 = half and half, 3 = mostly Armenian); and (f) proportion of Armenians in the area of residence as perceived by the subjects (1 = mostly non-Armenian, 2 = half and half, 3 = mostly Armenian). The selection of these indicators was based partially on those used by Teske and Nelson (1973) in their study of Mexican-American identity, and partially on what was thought relevant for the Armenian-American community.

There were no sex differences in the scores on ethnic involvement. Moreover, it was uncorrelated with residency status ( $r = .11$ ). Those who scored above the median were considered more involved and those below were considered less involved.

Based on the two independent variables, four groups were defined: (a) ethnically more involved recent immigrants, (b) ethnically less involved recent immigrants, (c) ethnically more involved native-born, and (d) ethnically less involved native-born. The original numbers of subjects in the four groups were 22, 21, 21, and 20, respectively. By random elimination within cells the number of subjects was equalized to 20 for statistical convenience.

The relative magnitude of the Armenian and American identities was operationalized as the absolute difference between the Armenian and American identity scores. The identity scores were obtained by the use of an instrument developed by Zak (1973) for Jewish-Americans, adapted for Armenians in the US the Armenian identity scale had 8 items and the



American identity scale had 9 items. Eight of the items in each of the two scales were similarly worded with appropriate identity words. Examples of the items are (a) “If I were to be born all over again, I would wish to be born an Armenian/American”; (b) “My fate and future are bound up with that of the American people”; and (c) “My fate and future are bound up with that of Armenians everywhere.” (See Appendix D and E in this volume.)

Ratings were made on a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. The questionnaires were administered in the fall of 1976 to small groups of 15 to 20 subjects each, in classroom settings. The questionnaire was administered in English because all subjects could read English but not all could read Armenian. This precluded testing the effect of language used in the questionnaire.

The levels of internal consistency of the Armenian and American identity scales, as measured by the *alpha* coefficient (Nunnally, 1967), were .72 and .79 for the native-born and .62 and .84 for the recent immigrants, respectively. Male and female subjects did not differ on either of the identity scores. Furthermore, the identity scales were uncorrelated both for native-born ( $r = -.13$ ) and for recent immigrants ( $r = -.26$ ).

## Results and Discussion

The two hypotheses were tested by means of a 2 x 2 analysis of variance with the independent variables of residency status and ethnic involvement. Two significant main effects were obtained but no significant interaction. The Armenian and American identity scores were more different for recent immigrants than for native-born ( $F = 9.68$ ,  $df = 1/76$ ,  $p < .005$ ). The two identities were more different for the ethnically more involved than for the less involved ( $F = 8.27$ ,  $df = 1/76$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Table 1 indicates the mean absolute differences of the two identity scores for the four groups.

**Table 1.** Mean absolute difference of American and Armenian identity scores and standard deviations for four groups of Armenian American teenagers ( $ns = 20$ )

| Residency status  | Ethnic Involvement |           |               |           |          |           |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                   | More Involved      |           | Less Involved |           | Combined |           |
|                   | <i>Mean</i>        | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i>   | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Native Born       | 1.69               | 1.04      | 0.95          | 0.73      | 1.32     | 0.98      |
| Recent Immigrants | 2.30               | 1.19      | 1.74          | 0.96      | 2.02     | 1.13      |
| Combined          | 1.99               | 1.16      | 1.34          | 0.94      |          |           |

Thus, there was a larger gap between ethnic and majority identities for the recent immigrants than for the native-born and the ethnically more involved compared to the ethnically less involved. Examination of the mean identity scores partially clarified the source of the observed gap (Table 2). While the Armenian identity scores were almost identical for the two groups, the native born scored significantly higher on the American identity ( $p <$

.001). This may be a reflection of the lesser degree of internalization of the majority culture by the recent immigrants than by the native-born. The differential gap may be a consequence of differential degrees of acculturation. The lower American identity of the recent immigrants may be an initial state that may be modified by socialization.

The mean identity scores in Table 2 further indicate that the differential gap may be a consequence of the stronger identification with the ethnic culture by the ethnically more involved and not a consequence of a differential rejection of the majority identity. While the mean American identity scores of the more and less involved were not different, the mean Armenian identity scores were significantly different ( $t = 3.21, p < .01$ ). Whether the stronger ethnic identity is a cause or a consequence of ethnic involvement may not be easy to assess, since in all probability, stronger ethnic identity and greater ethnic involvement may be mutually enhancing. However, there may be a partial resolution to this apparent circularity. According to the self perception point of view (Bern, 1967), the nature of the performed act can determine the nature of the attitude towards that act. Assuming that ethnic identity reflects attitude, it may be that the act of being ethnically more involved determines the higher level of ethnic identity. Also, according to Allport's (1954) in-group-out-group theory and Amir's (1969) contact hypothesis, greater ethnic involvement tends to preclude contact with the out-group. It is possible that less contact with the out-group could result in less attachment to it. However, it is conceivable that more contact could also lead to less attachment, depending on the nature of the contact. An approximate test of the effect of contact was made by correlating American identity scores with friendship patterns as indicated in question (e) of the "ethnic involvement" measure. For the native-born, higher proportion of Armenian friends was associated with lower American identity ( $r = -.44, p < .01$ ). The correlation was not significant for recent immigrants.

**Table 2.** Mean Armenian and American identity scores and standard deviations for four groups of Armenian American teenagers (ns = 40)

| Identity | Residency Status |      | Native-born |      | Ethnic Involvement |      |      |      |
|----------|------------------|------|-------------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|
|          | Recent Immigrant |      |             |      | Less               |      | More |      |
|          | Mean             | SD   | Mean        | SD   | Mean               | SD   | Mean | SD   |
| Armenian | 4.81             | 0.43 | 4.83        | 0.75 | 4.59               | 0.75 | 5.06 | 0.57 |
| American | 2.87             | 0.91 | 3.87        | 0.95 | 3.54               | 1.05 | 3.13 | 0.99 |

Although for recent immigrants and the ethnically more involved ethnic identities generally were of greater magnitude, for the less involved native-born the two identities coexisted equally strongly. This is consistent with Zak's (1973) finding that for Jewish-Americans the Jewish and the American identities are independent and coexisting dimensions. It is interesting that, for the native-born, less ethnic involvement was associated with high ethnic identity. Conceivably, this may be a salient effect of the

parochial school setting. Or, their ethnicity may be characterized more by symbolic content than concrete involvement. This would be consistent with the observations made by Nahirny and Fishman (1965) that, while recent immigrants tend to be attached to the concrete aspects of their culture, for later generations the symbolic characteristics of the ethnic culture become more important.

Finally, it must be recognized that the generalizability of these findings is limited by the fact that the subjects in the study were all attending Armenian schools.

## ARMENIAN IDENTITY: COMPARATIVE AND CONTEXT-BOUND<sup>4</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

To gain insight into the nature of Armenian identity it may be helpful to look at it as an aspect of the psychosocial dimensions of identity as such. The identity of a newborn infant is defused and undifferentiated, characterized by a few basic life supporting activities that define its life space (Lewine, 1936). Through socialization the life space of the infant acquires increasing differentiation. This may take the form of different roles people play, such as the role of a boy or a girl, little devil, mother or father, physician, lawyer, gas station owner, husband, wife or grandparent. These activities and roles help define a distinctive identity. The degree of differentiation in the life space varies from one individual to another and over time. It reaches a degree of relative stability around late adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Although life space activities may be well differentiated, they tend not to be mutually exclusive. Often different roles overlap and vary in importance at different times and in different contexts.

To understand the nature of identity further, it may be conceptualized as having both *content* and *value*. The content may be defined by the sum total of differentiations of the life space regions, each one of which may be said to be associated with some degree of negativity or positivity. For instance, a certain professional activity or identity may be negatively or positively valued depending on a variety of factors. Thus, the overall value of the self, or self-esteem, may be conceptualized as the sum total of positive and negative values associated with each of the differentiated life activities.

Individuals may be similar to the extent to which they have similar life space activities and the way they feel about them. A group identity exists when a large number of individuals share a similar life space activity and feel positively about it. Ethnic identity may be conceptualized as a life space region concerned with ethnic or cultural in-group activities, as well as feelings and attitudes acquired through ethnic socialization. It is an aspect of a person's overall identity. Its pervasiveness and importance in an individual's life depend on the extent to which the ethnic life space activities overlap and interact with other life space regions. The degree of salience and pervasiveness of ethnic identity is related to the degree of ethnic or racial distinctiveness, which is strictly context bound. For instance, a black African

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<sup>4</sup> Reproduced with permission from the publisher: Der-Karabetian, A., "Armenian Identity: Comparative and Context-bound", *The Armenian Review*. 1981:34, pp. 25-31. Also, paper presented at a symposium organized by the Armenian Commemorative Committee, Oakland, California, 1979.

person may not be distinctive in the streets of Khartoum, but may be quite distinctive on the streets of Copenhagen.

If the Armenian origin of an individual becomes an issue in many life space activities, then the Armenian ethnicity becomes a pervasive characteristic in defining the overall identity of the person. The racial or physiognomic characteristic of Armenians is not particularly distinctive in most western cultures. Under such circumstances distinctiveness would be achieved mostly through the externalization of learned cultural attributes such as language. This implies that there exists a degree of choice in the manifestation of distinctiveness. It would be up to the individual to determine the degree of pervasiveness by allowing it to become an issue.

The nature and content of the ethnic life space is determined to a great extent by the variety of other activities it overlaps with. This may vary from one individual to another and from one social context to another. Individuals within a certain cultural-social context may share similar content of ethnic identity, which provides the ethnic profile of that community. Such an analysis points toward the possibility of studying the nature of ethnic identity essentially in a comparative perspective. Because it is context bound, it becomes imperative to identify aspects of ethnic identity unique to a particular context. The best approach to determining culture-unique characteristics of Armenian identity would be comparing ethnic identity in different cultural contexts. Doing so would also reveal aspects of ethnicity that are common or universal across cultural contexts.

To demonstrate that valuable insight may be gained about the nature of Armenian identity through the analysis of such a phenomenological model, some relevant empirical evidence is considered. First, a comparison is made between the Armenian identity of young adults in US and Lebanon in an effort to identify some culture-unique as well as common attributes of Armenianness. Following this, a more detailed analysis of Armenian identity in the US is presented. It must be noted that the evidence presented here and conclusions derived therefrom should be considered exploratory rather than comprehensive because of their relatively limited scope. However, their scientific merit must be recognized.

The comparison of the US and Lebanese communities involved the assessment of the ethnic orientation of small groups of young Armenian people in the two cultures using a common assessment procedure in the form of a survey. The samples were comparable. The US group was composed of 41 native-born males and females from the Los Angeles Area. They were mostly students in the upper classes in two Armenian parochial high schools (Mesrobian and Ferrahian) and some university students. The Lebanese group was from Beirut, Lebanon. It was composed of 41 young people matched with the US sample in terms of sex, age, level of education and membership in Armenian political parties. These individuals were picked

from a larger population of Beirut subjects who had participated in a more extensive ethnic orientation survey in 1974 (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). The survey in the US was conducted in 1976 (See Appendices A and B in this volume for the Lebanon and US survey questions).

They were asked to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly agree = 6” to “strongly disagree = 1.” Higher scores reflected higher ethnic orientation. Statements dealt with different aspects of Armenian culture such as Armenian things (food, music), child rearing practices, use of the Armenian language, institutions and customs, the homeland, feelings of discrimination, appreciation of Armenian cultural characteristics, etc. The Surveys filled out by the two groups contained 32 statements that were common. The mean (average) agreement of each of the 32 statements was used in the comparison of the attitudes and opinions of the groups. The overall mean agreement across the 32 items was also compared, and this was taken as an index of general ethnic orientation. It could range from 1 to 6, with 6 reflecting stronger ethnic orientation.

### **Comparison of Armenian Identity in the US and Lebanon**

One of the questions that can be raised with regard to ethnic identity in two cultures is their relative strength: Who is a “better Armenian?” To answer this question on a limited but empirical level the overall ethnic orientation scores of the two groups were compared. Out of a possible high of 6.00 the Los Angeles sample scored a mean of 3.80 ( $SD = .67$ ), and the Lebanese sample scored a mean of 3.95 ( $SD = .56$ ). These means were not statistically different from each other, indicating that the overall ethnic orientation of the two groups was virtually identical. This runs counter to general popular expectations. Because of the apparent more closely knit nature of the Lebanese Armenian community, one would have expected a relatively stronger ethnic orientation of the Lebanese sample.

If the groups are not different in the magnitude of their ethnic orientation, it does not necessarily mean that the ethnic orientations are similar in nature. On the one hand, it is possible that the groups have similar scores because they agree and disagree on the same statements to the same extent. If this is true, then one can assume empirical similarity in the nature and quality of the ethnic orientation in the two samples. On the other hand, it is conceivable that while one group may tend to agree more strongly with one set of statements and the other with another set, they may still end up with similar overall scores of ethnic orientation. If this is the case then their Armenianness may be considered qualitatively different. To demonstrate the existence of such a possibility the mean responses to each of the 32 statements were compared and their statistical significance established at the probability level of .05. This means that the differences between the two

means had to be quite improbable by chance variation, and therefore considered as being different statistically.

Table 1 includes the statements to which the two groups responded differently (statistically significant) as well as similarly (not significantly different statistically). They are categorized according to relative agreement and disagreement. A close inspection of the table reveals interesting patterns. There is a tendency among the Lebanese subjects to be more ethnocentric and to emphasize the importance of the Armenian language, church and homeland to a greater extent. The US sample seems to have a tendency to feel more pride in ethnic uniqueness, downplays the significance of language and rejects fanaticism to a greater degree. The lesser importance given to the Armenian language on the part of the American Armenians was also reflected in behavioral manifestations; self-reported fluency in the use of the Armenian language was unrelated to the degree of ethnic orientation. Speaking better Armenian was not necessarily associated with higher ethnic orientation.

Concerning the church, although the US sample did not feel as strongly that it was every Armenian's duty to support the national church morally and financially, they seemed to feel more strongly about the role of the church today in the preservation of Armenian identity. This feeling is further manifested in frequency of church attendance. More frequent church attendance tended to be associated with a greater degree of overall ethnic orientation. The correlation between the two variables was statistically significant ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). This may be consistent with the notion that church attendance in the US may be an ethnically more salient activity than in Lebanon.

Besides differences there were also a number of similar agreements and disagreements in the two samples. It may be observed that both groups were concerned with the proper display of Armenianness and the projection of a positive image. Such similarities point toward the culture-universal aspects of Armenian ethnic orientation. Other similarities in the two groups involved the importance of membership in political parties. In the Lebanese sample members scored higher than sympathizers, who in turn scored higher than those who were neither. In the US, members and sympathizers scored equally high and scored higher than those who were neither. This may point to the important role of the political parties in fostering higher ethnic orientation. In both samples, sex, age, level of income and level of education were not systematically related to the strength of ethnic orientation.

Although the overall levels of ethnic orientation in the two groups were not different, they seemed to come from different as well as similar sources. If such a trend of differentiation and similarity is generalizable to different Armenian communities in the diaspora, then one ought to be careful in using the same yardstick in defining the ethnic identity of Armenians living in

different social and cultural contexts. It seems reasonable to conclude, within the limits of the samples in this study, that ethnic orientation may vary from one social and cultural context to another. The exposure of Armenians to host cultures may be influencing the way Armenian ethnicity is developed and manifested.

**Table 1.** Ethnic orientation statements to which the Lebanese and US samples responded differently as well as similarly

*Lebanese agree more than US*

1. Armenians in the diaspora should eventually settle in Armenia to avoid assimilation.
2. A good Armenian always cheers the Armenian team in a match.
3. A good Armenian should marry another Armenian.

*Lebanese tend to agree, US tend to disagree*

1. It is every Armenian's duty to support the Armenian national church morally and financially.
2. Today the Apostolic Church does not play as important a role in the preservation of Armenian identity as it used to in the past.
3. It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian.
4. Armenians should speak Armenian if they can speak the language.

*US agree more than Lebanese*

1. Armenian literature matches international standards.
2. In general, Armenian mothers are more devoted and attached to their children than others.
3. It is a shame when Armenians in the diaspora who have achieved international recognition do not acknowledge being Armenian.
4. "*Haigagan eh, Badvagan eh*" (Armenian is beautiful).

*US disagree more than Lebanese*

1. It is pointless to celebrate Christmas on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January while most of the Christians of the world celebrate it on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December.
2. To preserve Armenian identity it is essential to be a fanatic Armenian.

*US and Lebanese agree equally*

1. Armenian private businesses should close on Armenian national holidays.
2. Armenians who disobey the law disgrace the Armenian people.

*US and Lebanese disagree equally*

1. Armenian compatriotic organizations are not needed any more.
2. It is bothersome to have many Armenian neighbors.
3. Armenian schools should accept non-Armenian students without requiring them to learn Armenian.

## **Armenian Identity in the United States**

To better understand the nature of ethnic identity among the Armenians in the United States their Armenian and American identities are compared and related to different personal and demographic variables. Such a comparative view is important because simultaneous participation in two coextensive cultural groups subjects individuals to influences from two overlapping psychological situations. In the life space of any minority group forces exist that enhance positive identity with it by its members, and other forces that lead to greater attachment to the majority culture. To obtain an



understanding of the interplay of these forces and the relative pervasiveness of the majority and minority identities, a small-scale empirical study was conducted by the author (Der-Karabetian, 1980-See this volume).

Armenian parochial school students completed the survey. The participants were 40 native-born Armenian-Americans and 40 recent immigrants. The situations of these two groups are different. While the recent immigrants are in the process of struggling to internalize majority cultural patterns and ideas, the native-born are much more at home with the majority culture, since they have lived with it longer. Ethnicity may be important to different degrees in these two groups and may overlap with different life activities.

Comparison of the mean identity scores indicated that both groups scored higher on Armenian identity than on American identity. The highest score on the two identities was 6.00. For the native born, the Armenian and American mean identity scores were 4.85 ( $SD = .75$ ), and 3.77 ( $SD = .95$ ), respectively, which were significantly different ( $t = 5.37, p < .001$ ). For recent immigrants, the scores were 4.81 ( $SD = .64$ ) and 2.91 ( $SD = .91$ ), respectively, which were also significantly different ( $t = 10.07, p < .001$ ). But, while the two groups did not score differently on Armenian identity, native-born scored significantly higher on American identity ( $t = 4.26, p < .001$ ). This may imply differential salience of the two identities. However, Armenian identity seems to be more outstanding and salient than American identity. This would not be surprising considering the fact that participants in the study were students attending Armenian parochial high schools. Being in that context makes their Armenian identity more pervasive and a prominent aspect of their identity.

The strong American identity of the native-born is understandable. However, what may be significant is that they also harbor a high degree of Armenian identity. This suggests the coextensive nature of the two identities for the native-born. It also counters the misconception that having a strong majority identity implies having a weak ethnic identity; both identities can coexist and can be manifested to a high degree.

For further analysis the two identities were related to other psychosocial variables. Table 2 gives the correlations between the Armenian and American identities of the two groups with these variables (These correlational analyses were not reported in Der-Karabetian's 1980 study). Although Armenian identity was equally prominent in the two groups, it seemed to be related to different variables in somewhat different ways. In both groups it was related equally and positively to church attendance and membership in Armenian political organizations and unrelated to age, socio-economic status, Armenian language fluency and proportion of Armenian friends. However, for recent immigrants, self-esteem, membership in Armenian cultural organizations and contribution to the Armenian Cause

were significantly and positively related to Armenian identity. For the native-born these were not significantly related. It may be noted that more variety of ethnic involvement and activities tend to be coextensive with the higher Armenian identity of recent immigrants. This tends to suggest the relative importance of the more concrete and behavioral aspects in the Armenian identity of the recent immigrants. Such a tendency is consistent with the observation that ethnicity in first generation immigrants tends to be attached more closely to the concrete aspects of their ethnic culture (Nahirny & Fishman, 1965).

**Table 2.** Correlations of the Armenian and American identities of the native-born and the recent immigrants with different psychosocial variables

| Psychosocial Variables                         | Groups            |                   |                   |                   |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                                | Native Born       |                   | Recent Immigrant  |                   |
|                                                | American Identity | Armenian Identity | American Identity | Armenian Identity |
| Self-esteem                                    | .09               | .22               | -.15              | .27*              |
| Age                                            | .32*              | -.07              | -.03              | .11               |
| Socio-economic status                          | .25               | -.12              | -.12              | .02               |
| Membership in Armenian cultural organizations  | -.15              | .13               | -.06              | .33*              |
| Frequency of church attendance                 | .02               | .39*              | -.11              | .34*              |
| Membership in Armenian political organizations | -.42*             | .29*              | -.13              | .38*              |
| Contribution to the "Armenian Cause"           | -.34*             | .12               | .04               | .42*              |
| Fluency in Armenian language                   | -.50*             | -.07              | .04               | .23               |
| Proportion of Armenian friends                 | -.44*             | .23               | -.09              | .08               |

\* Indicates a statistically significant relationship. A negative significant value implies higher scores on one variable tend to be associated with lower scores on the other. A positive significant value implies higher scores on one variable tend to be associated with higher scores on the other. The larger the absolute value, the stronger the relationship.

In the case of American identity, there is only one low but significant correlation for recent immigrants compared to the six significant correlations for the native-born. This may be taken as a reflection of the relative isolation from American identity in the life space of the recent immigrant. Perhaps, identification with the majority culture has not permeated their lives in the period they have lived in the United States.

For the native-born, the negative correlations of the psychosocial variables with American identity are interesting. Membership in Armenian political organizations, contributions to the Armenian Cause, relative fluency in the Armenian language and having more Armenian than American friends seem to be associated with greater attenuation of the American identity. Whether this implies disloyalty to the larger social unit is an open question.

It may be interesting to see if involvement in the majority culture might be associated with lower Armenian identity.

In conclusion, although limited in scope, the present analyses suggest that caution be exercised in defining Armenian identity. Its content and nature seem to be subject to variation within and across cultural and social contexts. This raises some serious questions about the assumed universal characteristics of Armenian identity. There appears to be some merit in suggesting that Armenianness is manifested differently in different situations, which do not necessarily reflect better or worse Armenian identity.

# ETHNICITY AND CIVIL WAR: THE LEBANESE ARMENIAN CASE<sup>5</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian and Armine Proudian-Der-Karabetian

## **Abstract**

Results of a study that examined the impact of the Lebanese civil war on the ethnic orientation of Armenians in Lebanon are presented. A brief historical overview of the presence of Armenians in Lebanon is given first, focusing on the evolution of Armenian-Arab relations. A theoretical framework is then provided to guide the discussion of the survey data. Pre- and post-civil war surveys of senior high school and university students were conducted. Results showed that the civil war in Lebanon has sensitized the Armenian community to its differentiation from other groups, rigidified its ethnic boundaries, and increased in-group allegiances. However, an overarching sense of Lebanese national identity is maintained. The study shows that ethnic identity is not static but changes over time according to socio-political transformations and context.

## **Ethnicity and Civil War: The Lebanese Armenian Case**

Empirical studies of the impact of traumatic socio-political events are indeed rare. The ongoing civil war in Lebanon provided an opportunity to do such a study. In 1974, prior to the onset of open hostilities in the April of 1975, a survey of the ethnic orientation of Armenians in Lebanon had been conducted (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). During a visit to Lebanon in the spring of 1978 a similar survey was also carried out to examine the impact of the intervening years of inter-communal violence. Such an examination would provide a test of the situational principle of ethnicity, on the one hand, and shed some light on the dynamic nature of ethnicity under conditions of civil upheaval on the other hand. To understand the impact of the civil war on Armenian ethnic orientation it is important to see it in a historical context. Consequently, a brief historical overview of the presence of Armenians in Lebanon is given first, focusing on the evolution of Armenian-Arab relations. Then a theoretical framework is identified to guide the discussion of the survey results.

## **Brief Historical Overview**

In spite of its relatively small footprint (four thousand square miles) and population size (2.5 million) Lebanon is a complex mosaic of heterogeneous

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<sup>5</sup> Der-Karabetian, A., & Proudian-Der-Karabetian, A. (1985). "Ethnicity and Civil War: The Lebanese-Armenian Case", *ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 251 344*; Authors thank Dr. Paul Starr of Auburn University, and Dr. Nicol Schahgaldian of the Rand Corporation for their comments and suggestions.

groups. Presently, the government officially recognizes 18 religious-ethnic communities. The first seven of these, including the Armenian Apostolic community, are numerically the largest and are of major political importance. Historically, Mount Lebanon, the mountainous central region of the country, has been regarded as a refuge for various persecuted ethnic-religious groups in the Middle East and Asia Minor (Hourani, 1947). These minorities have been able to preserve their identity against numerous foreign occupations and intrusions. The 1926 Constitution of the country, drawn up during the French Mandate, further institutionalized and legalized the confessional system and legitimized the sectarian power structure that had existed in the country for centuries. The Constitution specifically states the right of every community to proportional representation in various governmental bodies including the parliament (Spagnolo, 1971).

Different Christian sects form about half the total population. The other half is primarily made up of Shia and Sunni Muslims and the Post-Islamic Druze Sect. In addition to Armenians, who form 8 percent of the total population, there are a number of other small ethnic groups that are ethnically non-Arab such as Kurds, Circassians, Turkmans, Jews and Yezidis.

The presence of Armenians in Mount Lebanon goes back to the Middle Ages (Hovannisian, 1974). However, the surge of recent immigration into Lebanon commenced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Ottoman government increased its oppression of Armenians in Turkish-held Armenia (Cilicia) and of other minorities throughout the empire. The contemporary Armenian community in Lebanon came into being only after the 1915-1923 massacres. The last major move came from Syria in the years between 1959 and 1966 (Schahgaldian, 1981). The presence of Armenians on the Lebanese socio-political scene was legitimized when they obtained citizenship in 1924 according to a stipulation of the Treaty of Lausanne. This helped define the relationship between the Armenians and the two dominant indigenous groups: Arab Christians and Muslims. While the Muslims, especially the Sunnis, opposed this decision because it strengthened the Christian majority, the Arab Christians, the Maronites in particular, were pleased since it preserved their dominant political power. In time both of the indigenous communities gradually accepted the Armenians because of their contribution to the reconstruction of the country after the First World War and their non-interference in internal confessional affairs (Bedoyan, 1979).

The Lebanese census of 1932 legitimized the anticipated role of the Armenians in the political power structure of the country, giving the Christians a six to five dominance over the Muslims (Hourani, 1947). Because of their higher ratio, Christians had greater representation in different governmental bodies including the parliament. Thus, while the

Arab Christians gained the edge in the political arena, the Armenians obtained political legitimacy and access to seats of power.

Initially, the legal integration of Armenians led to progressively greater acceptance of the Armenian community by the Arab Christians on the one hand, and to a greater tendency by the Armenians to borrow from Arab Christian culture, on the other. A mutual decrease in social distance between the Armenians and the Arab Christians was observed between 1935 and 1952 (Prothro & Melikian, 1952; Elmasian, 1971). Moreover, Arab Christians demonstrated a strong positive disposition toward Armenians until the late sixties (Der-Karabetian, 1981). As the Armenians began to prosper and have a larger share of the country's economic resources in the sixties and the seventies (Bouldoukian, 1979), the trend of decreasing social distance on the part of the Arab Christians leveled off and began to take a turn (Elmasian, 1971; Starr, 1976). For their part, parallel to their growing prosperity, the Armenians continued the trend of decreasing social distance (Elmasian, 1971). Furthermore, they demonstrated growing openness to the indigenous Christian culture through greater intermarriage, and internalization of manifest needs and personality characteristics (Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977). Also, younger Armenian groups manifested less intense ethnic orientation (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). However, despite their openness, the Armenians continued to maintain distinct ethnic confessional infrastructures (Libaridian, 1980; Corbin, Griffith, & Rahhal, 1975).

The reliance of the Arab Christians on the unconditional support of the Armenians in the political power structure suffered considerably during and after the 1958 civil war because certain Armenian factions sided with the Muslim-led leftist opposition. Furthermore, as the Muslims began to challenge Christian supremacy more openly in the sixties and seventies, the Armenians declined to throw their full weight behind the Arab Christians. They were passive and showed discretion in their support.

When the 1975 civil war broke out, Armenians took a neutral communal stance (Lang & Walker, 1976). Some Arab Christians regarded the Armenian posture as an open betrayal of trust developed over a number of decades, and they repeatedly pressured the Armenians to throw in their lot with the Christians. The Armenians refused to do so and were frequently harassed for their stance. Although it came at some cost to them, the neutral stance was probably politically a very prudent decision, since there were Armenians in both the western (Muslim) and the eastern (Christian) sections of Beirut.

Thus, cooperation and self-interest has affected the evolution of Arab-Armenian relations in Lebanon. These Arab-Armenian relations were dynamically related to the constantly evolving competitive-cooperative relationship with regard to political and economic resources.

## **Ethnicity and the Situational Principle**

The impact of the civil war on ethnic boundaries may be understood in the framework of Shil's (1957) situational principle. Situations that involve interactions between ethnic groups determine the salience of ethnic orientation. When there is competition for political and economic resources ethnicity acquires greater salience, resulting in stronger ethnic group allegiance (Barth, 1969; Bell & Freeman, 1974; Brass & Van den Berghe, 1976; Glaser, 1958; Patterson, 1975).

A civil war is the ultimate manifestation of competition for power and resources in a multiethnic society and is bound to raise issues of ethnic orientation and identity. Lebanon was a precarious republic from its very inception (Hudson, 1968). The fragile sectarian system has threatened to break down a number of times during its short life; there was an uprising in 1949, an attempted coup in 1961, and two civil wars, one in 1958 and another in 1975 (Barakat, 1977). The repeated civil upheavals attest to the built-in competitive socio-political structure of Lebanon, where ethnic boundaries are quite salient (Starr, 1978). Ethnicity fluctuates in times of open hostility and subdued competitiveness. Civil upheavals and social turmoil raise group consciousness and in-group solidarity. The strong group identifications that emerge serve a supportive function and reinforce ethnocentrism (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Volkan, 1979).

Thus, in the framework of the situational principle, it was expected that there would be a stronger ethnic orientation among Armenians in 1978 compared to 1974. Furthermore, those who participated more directly in the civil war were expected to demonstrate stronger ethnic orientation than those who did not. It was also expected that the relationship of the Lebanese and Armenian identities would reflect this same phenomenon.

## **Method**

### **The Survey Samples**

The 1978 sample was composed of senior high school and university students. To make the pre-war 1974 and the 1978 samples comparable, respondents that also attended high school and university were selected from the pre-war sample. The pre-war sample was originally part of a study that examined age group differences in ethnic orientation among Lebanese Armenians (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). Altogether there were 61 males and 46 females in the sample derived from the pre-war study, and 109 males and 137 females in the 1978 sample.

### **Measures**

*Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire:* This questionnaire was developed prior to the 1975 civil war by Der-Karabetian and Oshagan (1977). It comprised a list of 57 statements referring to preferences of

Armenian cultural manifestations, language, homeland, customs and institutions. A six-point Likert (agree-disagree) endorsement scale was used. The original questionnaire had high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .89$ ). It also showed strong criterion group validity, by showing predictable generational differences. The 1978 ethnic orientation questionnaire included 50 of the 57 items that showed significant item-total correlations ( $p < .005$ ) (See Appendix B in this volume). The ethnic orientation scores of males and females did not differ. The questionnaire again showed strong internal consistency. The average endorsement across 50 items for both samples, after reversing the negatively stated ones, determined the ethnic orientation scores. Examples of items include, "One cannot stay Armenian without speaking Armenian," "Good Armenians read Armenian newspapers," "Diaspora Armenians should settle in Armenia not to assimilate." This questionnaire assesses more of the cognitive and attitudinal aspects of ethnic belonging.

*Ethnic and Majority Identity Scale:* This measure was administered only to the 1978 sample. The scale is composed of 17 items originally developed by Zak (1973) to measure dual identity of Jewish Americans. Der-Karabetian (1980) successfully adopted and used the scale with Armenian Americans. For the present study the items were properly reworded for Lebanese Armenians. There were 9 items dealing with Lebanese identity and 8 items dealing with Armenian identity. The internal consistency  $\alpha$  of the Lebanese and the Armenian identity scales were .77 and .67, respectively, which are statistically acceptable levels. Examples of items include, "When an important newspaper insults Armenians, I feel it is insulting me," "As a Lebanese Armenian my most important duty is loyalty to Lebanon." (See Appendix D and E for items in this volume). This measure assesses more of the emotional and affective aspects of ethnic belonging.

*Demographic Questions:* Besides age, sex, socioeconomic status and Armenian political party membership, the 1978 respondents indicated their participation in the "Protection and well-being" of the Armenian community during the civil war. The loss of someone dear or close because of the fighting was also reported.

## **Results**

Table 1 summarizes the mean scores on the ethnic orientation questionnaire, the Armenian identity scale and the Lebanese identity scales of the different groups. First, the pre-war ethnic orientation scores are compared with the 1978 scores, then the Lebanese and Armenian identity scores in the 1978 sample are examined.



**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations, t-test, and correlations of the 1974 (pre-civil-war) and 1978 samples' scores on ethnic orientation, Armenian identity, and Lebanese identity

| Samples          | <i>N</i> | Ethnic Orientation<br><i>Means</i> | Armenian Identity<br><i>Means</i> | Lebanese Identity<br><i>Means</i> | Correlations<br>Arm. vs Leb. |
|------------------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1974             | 107      | 3.75 (.68)*                        | -                                 | -                                 | -                            |
| 1978             | 246      | 4.00 (.55)                         | 4.86 (.70)                        | 3.79 (.90)                        | -.08                         |
|                  |          | $t = 5.80$<br>$p < .001$           |                                   |                                   |                              |
| Participant      | 83       | 4.09 (.52)                         | 4.93 (.68)                        | 4.01 (.93)                        | .56**                        |
| Non-Participant  | 83       | 4.01 (.50)                         | 4.91 (.59)                        | 3.73 (.92)                        | .18                          |
|                  |          | $t = 1.01$<br>$p > .05$            | $t = .20$<br>$p > .05$            | $t = 2.03$<br>$p < .05$           |                              |
| Lose Someone     | 62       | 3.93 (.57)                         | 4.89 (.94)                        | 3.88 (.79)                        | -.19                         |
| Not lose Someone | 62       | 4.06 (.53)                         | 4.91 (.74)                        | 3.79 (.79)                        | .23                          |
|                  |          | $t = 1.93$<br>$p > .05$            | $t = .58$<br>$p > .05$            | $t = .17$<br>$p > .05$            |                              |

\* Numbers in parentheses represent Standard Deviations

\*\* Significant at  $p < .001$

The mean ethnic orientation score of the 1978 sample is significantly higher than that of the pre-war sample ( $t = 5.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Although the higher 1978 score is consistent with the situational principle, it must be interpreted cautiously. The difference is significant, but the magnitude of the increase is only a quarter of a scale point. The nature of the design does not preclude alternative interpretations of the observed difference, although the two samples are comparable in age, education and gender composition and political party membership. About 30 percent of each sample is composed of Armenian political party members, who tend to score higher on ethnic orientation (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977).

The impact of involvement was examined by comparing the ethnic orientation of those who actively participated in the "protection and well-being" of the community with those who did not. Such participation implied one or more duties such as night-guard, patrols, first aid, civil defense and street combat. The mean ethnic orientation scores of 83 individuals indicating active participation was not significantly different from that of 83 other randomly selected individuals of the 1978 sample. The impact was also assessed by comparing the mean scores of 62 individuals who indicated that they lost someone dear or close to them with 62 other randomly selected individuals who did not. The scores were also not significantly different.

Thus, the data suggest that there is an increase in the ethnic orientation scores in 1978 compared to 1974. In the absence of a control group that did not experience the war, it is hard to challenge the argument that the

difference may be due to the passage of time or other intervening events. However, the civil war was probably the most overwhelming social and personal preoccupation during the 1974-1978 period.

To explore the shifts in specific aspects of ethnic orientation, the scores of the 1978 sample on each of the 50 items were compared to the scores of the pre-war sample. Table 2 indicates the individual item scores of the two samples and the significance of the differences. Twenty-four of the items changed significantly. A close inspection of the changed items reflects a certain pattern. An increased endorsement of ethnicity seems to be apparent in the tendency to value and uphold traditions to a greater degree.

There is greater desire to maintain old customs (Item 5) and patriotic organizations (Item 40), increased support for the church (Items 15 and 39), higher evaluation of ethnic literature (Item 45) and the Armenian language (Item 38), and greater emphasis of ethnic identity in the definition of the whole person (Item 13 and 22). The stronger endorsement of ethnicity is consistent with the notion that shared ancestry is marked off by cultural attributes (Parsons, 1975; De Vos, 1975; Keyes, 1976) which are accentuated under conditions of intergroup conflict, possibly to the degree of group narcissism (Volkan, 1979).

In addition to the greater emphasis on heritage a heightened sense of differentiation from the indigenous non-Armenian culture is apparent. There is a stronger rejection of non-Armenian education (Item 16, 48) and business transactions (item 20). There is an increased tendency to see the ethnic group as more hardworking (Item 28), more nurturing (Item 29), and more family oriented (item 30). Moreover, there is a lesser tendency to identify as Lebanese first (Item 2). The rejection of the out-group stands in contrast to earlier trends of decreasing social distance (Elmasian, 1971) and growing acculturation of the younger age groups (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977; Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977).

Evidence of differentiation is also seen in the out-group marriage pattern after 1974. Examination of marriage certificates at the prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church revealed that the percentage of Armenian men marrying outside their group increased significantly from 9.8% to 13.0 percent between 1974 and 1977 ( $z = 2.46, p < .001$ ). For women, marriage outside decreased significantly from 12.5% to 10.5% ( $z = 2.38, p < .02$ ) (These data were collected for the purpose of this report). While men venture out to bring other women into the group, out-group men are not allowed to penetrate the group as effectively. Exchange of women in such a manner helps define and protect group boundaries (Levi-Strauss, 1953). In the present case, the observed pattern of intermarriage is consistent with the increased sense of differentiation felt by Armenians.

The comparison of ethnic orientation scores before the war and in 1978 suggests the presence of a closure effect of the war on ethnicity. The 1978

sample seems to display stronger in-group allegiance centered on the culturally distinctive aspects of the group. There is also a heightened sense of differentiation and hardening of the ethnic boundary. The effect of the war as well as the prior evolution of Armenian-Arab relations in Lebanon is consistent with the situational principle of ethnicity.

**Table 2.** Comparison of mean item ratings (6-point scale) in 1974 (pre-civil war) and in 1978 (while civil war was raging) on each of the 50 ethnic orientation items, and significant t-test results, with higher mean ratings indicating stronger agreement with statement  
Items (Translated and abridged)

|                                                                   | 1974    |     | 1978    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|---------|-----|
|                                                                   | N = 107 |     | N = 246 |     |
|                                                                   | Mean    | SD  | Mean    | SD  |
| 1. Armenian and Turks cannot be friends                           | 3.45*   | 1.7 | 3.86    | 1.8 |
| 2. First Lebanese then Armenian                                   | 4.04*   | 1.9 | 3.49    | 1.7 |
| 3. Shame to speak another language if speak Armenian              | 4.74    | 1.6 | 4.98    | 1.5 |
| 4. Armenian stores should close on Armenian holidays              | 5.03    | 1.4 | 5.19    | 1.1 |
| 5. Old customs should be dropped                                  | 4.12*   | 1.6 | 3.57    | 1.5 |
| 6. Consider Lebanon as homeland                                   | 3.81    | 1.6 | 3.52    | 1.6 |
| 7. Cannot stay Armenian without speaking Armenian                 | 4.46    | 1.5 | 4.30    | 1.6 |
| 8. Armenian schools should accept non-Armenians                   | 2.58*   | 1.7 | 3.38    | 1.7 |
| 9. "Armenian is Beautiful"                                        | 3.46*   | 1.9 | 4.17    | 1.6 |
| 10. Should speak Armenian if can speak it                         | 5.18    | 1.3 | 5.24    | 1.2 |
| 11. Need to be fanatic to preserve identity                       | 3.62    | 1.6 | 3.44    | 1.6 |
| 12. Those not involved in "Armenian Cause" as good                | 4.20    | 1.7 | 4.10    | 1.6 |
| 13. Shame when famous Armenians not acknowledge origin            | 4.49*   | 1.4 | 5.19    | 1.2 |
| 14. Not blame young for preferring non-Armenian music             | 4.14    | 1.4 | 3.98    | 1.6 |
| 15. Support Armenian Church morally and financially               | 3.97*   | 1.6 | 4.62    | 1.2 |
| 16. Sending Armenian children to non-Armenian school has benefits | 3.43*   | 1.6 | 2.87    | 1.6 |
| 17. Help another Armenian in fight                                | 3.20    | 1.7 | 3.10    | 1.7 |
| 18. Turkish movie-goers as good Armenians                         | 3.03*   | 1.7 | 2.53    | 1.6 |
| 19. Those not party members as good Armenians                     | 5.05*   | 1.3 | 4.75    | 1.3 |
| 20. Prefer to buy from Armenian grocer                            | 3.62*   | 1.6 | 4.06    | 1.5 |
| 21. Breaking law disgraces Armenian people                        | 4.16    | 1.7 | 4.49    | 1.4 |
| 22. First a person then Armenian                                  | 4.90*   | 1.5 | 4.06    | 1.7 |
| 23. Good Armenian not belong to non-Armenian church               | 4.31    | 1.7 | 4.53    | 1.5 |
| 24. Wrong to have negative attitude toward Armenian culture       | 4.93    | 1.3 | 5.03    | 1.2 |
| 25. Good Armenians read Armenian newspapers                       | 4.08    | 1.6 | 3.80    | 1.5 |
| 26. Armenian political parties better organized than others       | 3.90    | 1.6 | 3.74    | .8  |
| 27. Botherome to have Armenian neighbors                          | 3.07    | 1.6 | 3.02    | 1.4 |
| 28. Armenians are more hard-working                               | 4.31*   | 1.3 | 5.07    | 1.0 |
| 29. Armenian mothers more devoted to family                       | 3.68*   | 1.7 | 4.19    | 1.6 |
| 30. Armenian fathers more attached to family                      | 3.65*   | 1.7 | 4.05    | 1.5 |
| 31. Armenian schools not overload students with Armenian          | 2.75*   | 1.5 | 3.28    | 1.8 |
| 32. Armenian prostitutes are rare to find                         | 3.60*   | 1.6 | 4.06    | 1.4 |
| 33. Prefer employment by non-Armenian                             | 3.09    | 1.5 | 2.99    | 1.4 |
| 34. Settle in Armenia not to assimilate                           | 4.30    | 1.5 | 4.23    | 1.6 |
| 35. Armenian upbringing prevents delinquency                      | 3.96    | 1.4 | 4.05    | 1.3 |
| 36. Not celebrate Christmas on 6 <sup>th</sup> of January         | 3.27    | 1.8 | 2.99    | 1.7 |
| 37. Always cheer Armenian team                                    | 4.82    | 1.3 | 4.81    | 1.2 |

|                                                             |       |     |      |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|------|-----|
| 38. Not blame young for not learning Armenian language well | 2.99* | 1.5 | 2.58 | 1.8 |
| 39. Church not as important today in preserving identity    | 4.19* | 1.4 | 3.03 | 1.5 |
| 40. Compatriotic organizations not needed anymore           | 3.66* | 1.8 | 2.71 | 1.4 |
| 41. Aintabtzi and Marashtzi are different                   | 3.20  | 1.7 | 3.23 | 1.5 |
| 42. Armenians should marry Armenians                        | 4.64  | 1.6 | 4.88 | 1.5 |
| 43. Taking on foreign names not good                        | 4.11  | 1.6 | 3.75 | 1.6 |
| 44. Armenian children should play with non-Armenians        | 3.88  | 1.6 | 3.95 | 1.5 |
| 45. Armenian literature matches international standards     | 3.46* | 1.8 | 4.46 | 1.4 |
| 46. Essential to visit Armenia to stay Armenian             | 4.25  | 1.3 | 4.42 | 1.3 |
| 47. Lebanese-Armenian children more gifted                  | 3.74  | 1.6 | 3.67 | 1.4 |
| 48. Non-Armenian education more beneficial                  | 3.66* | 1.5 | 3.01 | 1.5 |
| 49. Lebanese cooking as good as Armenian                    | 3.08* | 1.5 | 3.93 | 1.5 |
| 50. Should degrade Turkey whenever possible                 | 2.92* | 1.5 | 4.22 | 1.5 |

\*statistically significant difference of the means at  $p < .05$  level or better

### **Analysis of the Relationship of Lebanese and Armenian Identities**

A minority status necessarily implies a larger context. If identification with a minority group is affected in the present context then it is conceivable that identification with the larger cultural context may also be affected. In the framework of Lewinian field theory, simultaneous participation in two coextensive cultures exposes an individual to influences from two overlapping psychological situations (Cartwright, 1951).

In the life space of minority persons certain forces enhance positive identification with the group by its members, and other forces lead to greater identification with the larger cultural context. The interplay of these forces in a given phenomenological situation determines the relationship of the two cultural identities (Genesse, Tucker & Lambert, 1978; McGuire, McGuire, Child & Fujioka, 1978; Patterson, 1975; Shil, 1957).

Studies by Zak (1973) and Der-Karabetian (1980) have shown that majority and minority identities do not have to be polarized. However, a study by Zak (1976) with Arab-Israeli students showed that the polarization of the two identities was totally accounted for by the perception of the conflict in the area. Given the sectarian conflict in Lebanon, it would be conceivable to expect a polarization of the two identities. But it must also be recognized that the sense of Lebanese nationhood is known to transcend and encompass identification with any one of the major groups in the country (Schahgaldian, 1981).

To test for the polarization of the two cultural identities, the Armenian and the Lebanese identity scores of the entire 1978 sample were correlated (Table 1). The result turned out to be virtually zero and insignificant ( $r = -.08$ ), indicating the independence of the two dimensions of cultural identity. A correlation reflects the trend in the relative standing of the two identity scores and not the difference in their levels. In order to examine their relative magnitudes the mean identity scores were compared. The Armenian identity ( $Mean = 4.86$ ) was significantly higher than the Lebanese identity ( $Mean =$

3.79),  $t = 14.68$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, although there is a stronger in-group identification, the two identities do not seem to be polarized.

The Lebanese and Armenian identities were also found to be un-polarized for those who lost someone and for those who did not lose someone close because of the civil war (Table 1). But for those who participated in the “protection and well-being” of their community the two identities were correlated positively ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The key to understanding this positive correlation lies in the active commitment of these individuals in the Armenian community, on the one hand, and their desire to maintain the integrity of Lebanon, on the other. This is consistent with the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Bem, 1967) which asserts that commitment to a cause and the investment of time and effort in it tend to generate a positive attitude towards that cause. This effect of participation on the relative strength of Lebanese identity is reflected in the mean scores of participants and non-participants. The participants ( $Mean = 4.93$ ) scored significantly higher than non-participants ( $Mean = 3.73$ ) on Lebanese identity,  $t = 2.03$ ,  $p < .05$  (Table 1).

Although there is a higher degree of endorsement of ethnic identity, it is not necessarily associated with lower Lebanese national identity. The two identities may coexist at high levels. The civil war in Lebanon has sensitized the Armenian community to its differentiation from the dominant group, rigidified its ethnic boundaries and increased in-group allegiances. However, an overarching sense of Lebanese national identity has been maintained (Schahgaldian, 1981).

In summary, the analyses presented here indicate that (a) ethnic identity is not static but changes over time according to socio-political conditions; (b) civil strife and upheaval tend to raise in-group solidarity; and (c) higher ethnic identity is not necessarily associated with lower majority identity.

# IN-GROUP, OUT-GROUP, AND GLOBAL-HUMAN IDENTITIES OF TURKISH-ARMENIANS<sup>6</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian and Natalie Balian

## Abstract

This study was an examination of the in-group (Armenian), out-group (Turkish), and global-human identities of Turkish-Armenians, a relatively inaccessible and politically sensitive minority in Turkey. Age, gender, nature and level of education, and involvement in Armenian ethnic organizations were explored as covariates of the three social identities. A convenience sample of 70 Turkish-Armenians participated in the study. A questionnaire was administered in Turkish. The results showed that men, older Armenians, and those who attended Armenian schools scored higher on in-group (Armenian) identity than did women, younger Armenians, and those who attended Turkish schools, respectively. The younger generation and those who attended Turkish schools scored higher on out-group (Turkish) identity, indicating possible acculturation, as well as on global-human identity, indicating a move away from parochialism. In-group and out-group identities tended to be negatively related, showing some polarity. Global-human identity was positively correlated with the majority Turkish identity and negatively with Armenian ethnic identity.

A group is defined as a collection of people who share the same common definition of themselves, who acknowledge their membership in the group, and who have a certain degree of understanding about their involvement in it. In-group and out-group identities refer to two levels of involvement. The in-group is strictly a person's primary group of identification, whereas the out-group indicates the group with which the individual identifies less strongly. The ethnic group may represent an in-group, and the majority culture may represent an out-group. For members of an ethnic minority who identify more strongly with the dominant majority, that majority becomes the primary reference group and promotes conformity and assimilation. The simultaneous assessment of the two identities in an interactionist context and in relation to different social variables provides a meaningful understanding of the assimilation process (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Some studies have examined ethnic identity formation among specific minority groups and their variability across generations (Constantinou & Harvey, 1985; Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977; Matsumoto, Meredith, &

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<sup>6</sup> Reproduced with permission of the publisher: Der-Karabetian, A., & Balian, N., "In-group, Out-group, and Global-human Identities of Turkish-Armenians", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 1992:132, pp. 497-504. Also, poster presented at the annual convention of the Western Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, 1991, April.

Masuda, 1973). Others have concentrated on in-group and out-group identity formations in an interactionist context, which states that self-identity is partially formed from an interaction of the two identities (Der-Karabetian, 1980, 1981; Rodriguez & Gurin, 1990; White & Burke, 1987). Allport (1954) emphasized the impact of contact on intergroup relations. Cook and Sellitz (1955) found that variables involved in intergroup contact are situation-based and depend on the individuals involved.

Amir (1969) showed that certain conditions such as equal status; contact between a member of an out-group and a member of a minority group of higher status; intimate, pleasant, and rewarding social climate; and common and superordinate goals are significant in reducing prejudice against minority groups. When prejudice is based on ignorance about a minority group, simple forms of contact are associated with greater acceptance of the group (Goldberg & Kirschenbaum, 1989). Education about a minority group or exposure to a foreign culture decreases social distance from the specific nationality (Broman, Neighbors, & Jackson, 1988; Case, Greeley, & Fuchs, 1989; Sell, 1987). The effect of contact on intergroup relations is also influenced by the nature of previous interactions between the groups and the nature of the contact in that context (Worchel, Wong, & Scheltema, 1989).

In this study, the in-group (Armenian), out-group (Turkish), and global-human identities of Turkish-Armenians were explored, along with their relationship to contact variables. Armenians as an ethnic group emerged in the beginning of the first millennium BC in Asia Minor. The Urartian Armenian Kingdom asserted its independence in the ninth century BC. Armenians developed their culture, language (including the alphabet), and other customs by maintaining their unity as a people while under different ruling nationalities such as the Persians, Arabs, and Romans. This trend generally continued throughout most of the Turkish rule until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During Ottoman rule, Armenians generally enjoyed comfortable treatment. However, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, a political faction in the Ottoman Empire called the Young Turks emerged and promoted Turkish supremacy. They seized the opportunity of World War I to try to eliminate the Armenians within their boundaries. Carrying out this aim reportedly resulted in the deaths of nearly 2 million Armenians (Hovannisian, 1973). Approximately 50,000 Armenians still live in Turkey, mostly in Istanbul (Gooch, 1965), with some semblance of community life and under the close scrutiny of the government.

Some studies have examined Armenian ethnic identity in the different countries where they have settled since the events of the turn of the century. Der-Karabetian and Oshagan (1977) investigated the nature of the ethnic orientation of Armenians in Lebanon and found that older Armenians maintained their ethnic identity more than younger Armenians did. Another

study indicated that, because of sociocultural factors, Lebanese-Armenian youths were becoming more similar to Lebanese Arab Christians than their peers in previous years (Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977). Der-Karabetian's (1980) study showed that Armenian-Americans who were recent immigrants and those who were more ethnically involved had a greater gap in their American and Armenian identities than those who were native-born and those who were less involved, respectively. For the less involved native-born the two identities were equally strong. Similarly, Kassabian (1987) found that, among Armenian-Americans, assimilation and ethnic pluralism exist side by side. Moreover, Bakalian (1989) has demonstrated that alongside assimilation tendencies, the nature of Armenian ethnic identity and its manifestations change across generations.

In this study of Turkish-Armenians, we also examined the notion of global-human identity, which implies a reference out-group further removed from the ethnic group than the Turkish majority culture and involving humanity as a whole (Glick, 1974). Because of the historically adversarial relationship between the Turkish and Armenian peoples, the global community may be a more viable reference out-group for Armenians in Turkey to identify with.

## **Method**

### **Subjects and Procedures**

Seventy subjects from the Kinali Island in Istanbul, Turkey, participated in the study. Kinali Island is a popular resort, where the population reaches approximately 40,000 during summer months. About half of the population is composed of Armenians, one fourth are Assyrians, and the rest are Turks. The participants were upper middle class, and because they were obtained through the accidental sampling method, they may not necessarily be representative of Turkish-Armenians. Of the total sample, 38 people made up the younger age group (40 years and younger; average age, 28 years) and 32 people made up the older age group (41 years and older; average age, 58 years). The data were collected during the summer of 1990.

### **The questionnaire**

Four demographic factors were used for comparison: gender, age, education (non-Armenian versus Armenian schooling), and ethnic involvement, which was measured on a 4-point scale by using four levels of involvement in Armenian organizations ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (4). We measured Armenian identity by rating subjects' agreement with statements about their willingness to be reborn as Armenian, willingness to tell others their origin, and their concern about other Armenians. One statement was, "When an important newspaper insults Armenians, I feel that it is insulting me" (Der-Karabetian, 1980; Zak, 1973).



There were 11 items in the measure; the *alpha* coefficient for internal consistency was .83.

We measured Turkish identity by rating subjects' agreement with statements about whether they liked Turks, whether being Turkish plays an important role in their lives, whether they are proud of being Turkish, and so forth. One statement was, "As a Turkish citizen, my most important duty is loyalty to Turkey" (Der-Karabetian, 1980; Zak, 1973). There were six items in the measure; the *alpha* coefficient for internal consistency was .60 (See Appendix D and E in this volume).

We measured Global-human identity by rating subjects' agreement with statements about their identification with non-Armenians and their concern about world events and people. One statement was, "My future is tied to the future of humankind as a whole" (Der-Karabetian & Rosen, 1990). There were seven items in the measure; the *alpha* coefficient for internal consistency was .80 (See appendix F in this volume).

We used a 6-point Likert scale to rate items, with higher scores indicating stronger identity. The questionnaire was originally constructed in English and was translated into Turkish. Back translation revealed that only minor adjustments were needed. The questionnaires were completed in informal settings. Some questions were occasionally translated into Armenian orally for those participants who were not very comfortable with Turkish, generally the oldest respondents.

## Results

The *t*-test, conducted on the differences between men and women, indicated no significant differences for Turkish identity (for men,  $M = 17.77$ ,  $SD = 2.89$ ; for women,  $M = 18.44$ ,  $SD = 2.89$ ), and global-human identity (for men,  $M = 32.81$ ,  $SD = 4.64$ ; for women,  $M = 32.18$ ,  $SD = 4.20$ ). There was a significant difference for Armenian identity, with men ( $M = 50.89$ ,  $SD = 6.24$ ) scoring significantly higher than women ( $M = 47.79$ ,  $SD = 6.58$ ),  $t(68) = 2.02$ ,  $p < .05$ .

The means and standard deviations of the social identities for the younger and older groups were compared. The *t*-tests showed a predictable difference on all three of the social identity measures. On Armenian identity, the younger group ( $M = 45.58$ ,  $SD = 5.61$ ) scored significantly lower than the older group ( $M = 53.91$ ,  $SD = 4.37$ ),  $t(68) = 6.83$ ,  $p < .001$ . On Turkish identity, the younger group ( $M = 18.97$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ) scored significantly higher than the older group ( $M = 17.06$ ,  $SD = 3.52$ ),  $t(68) = 2.78$ ,  $p < .008$ . And, on global-human identity, the younger group ( $M = 35.26$ ,  $SD = 3.33$ ) also scored significantly higher than the older group ( $M = 29.22$ ,  $SD = 3.10$ ),  $t(68) = 7.81$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The means and standard deviations of the social identities of the non-Armenian-educated and Armenian-educated groups showed predictable

differences. On Turkish identity, the non-Armenian-educated group ( $M = 19.21$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ) scored significantly higher than the Armenian-educated group ( $M = 17.47$ ,  $SD = 2.81$ ),  $t(54) = 2.88$ ,  $p < .01$ . On global-human identity, the non-Armenian-educated group ( $M = 35.25$ ,  $SD = 3.42$ ) also scored significantly higher than the Armenian-educated group ( $M = 30.94$ ,  $SD = 4.57$ ),  $t(54) = 3.88$ ,  $p < .001$ . As expected, on Armenian identity, the non-Armenian-educated group ( $M = 44.88$ ,  $SD = 6.27$ ) scored significantly lower than the Armenian-educated group ( $M = 51.50$ ,  $SD = 4.27$ ),  $t(54) = 4.70$ ,  $p < .001$ .

We used Pearson correlation coefficients to evaluate inter-correlations of social identities and involvement in ethnic organizations. Ethnic involvement had low positive correlation with Armenian identity ( $r = .24$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and moderate negative correlation with global-human identity ( $r = -.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ), but was unrelated to Turkish identity ( $r = -.06$ ). Higher ethnic involvement tended to be associated with higher Armenian identity and lower global-human identity. There was a low negative correlation between Turkish and Armenian identities ( $r = -.30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting a low but significant level of polarization between the two identities. Global-human identity was positively correlated with Turkish identity ( $r = .53$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and negatively correlated with Armenian identity ( $r = -.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Stronger global-human identity tended to be associated with higher Turkish identity and lower Armenian identity. Furthermore, the overall educational level correlated positively with Turkish ( $r = .50$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and global-human ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .001$ ) identities, and negatively with Armenian identity ( $r = -.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but was unrelated to ethnic involvement ( $r = -.12$ ).

## Discussion

The results of this study are generally consistent with the in-group-out-group identity formation processes suggested by Tajfel and Turner (1979). Men, older Armenians, and those who attended Armenian schools scored higher on Armenian identity, and the latter two groups scored lower on Turkish identity as well as on global-human identity. Also, the better educated subjects tended to show stronger out-group identity, which may be explained partially by the age factor, for age and educational level were negatively correlated ( $r = -.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Ethnic involvement tended to be positively related to Armenian identity and negatively related to global-human identity.

Men and women did not differ on the social identities except on Armenian identity. The finding that men scored significantly higher on Armenian identity may be explained in the context of a male-dominated society. Men, especially middle-aged men, tend to spend their spare time in social settings working for the betterment of the Armenian community (improving the conditions in Armenian schools, trying to raise the attendance in Armenian schools, organizing receptions and dinners for the benefit of poor Armenians, organizing cultural activities for the Armenian

youth, etc.). Women's participation in these activities has been relatively low. Men's direct involvement in the problems facing Armenians seems to coexist with stronger in-group identity and may be partially explained in terms of the theory of cognitive dissonance, which states that individuals tend to have attitudes that are consistent with their behaviors (Festinger, 1957). Furthermore, ethnic involvement and ethnic identity tend to be mutually enhancing.

The finding that the younger generation of Turkish-Armenians tended to show stronger Turkish and global-human identities and a weaker Armenian identity than the older generation may be due to a number of factors: dissatisfaction with in-group members, contact with Turks, the assimilationist policy of the Turkish government, cohort effects, or some combination of these factors. Such differences across generations are indications of assimilation tendencies (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). The Armenian minority in Turkey has been a relatively cohesive community concentrated in Istanbul. Their primary social concern especially that of the older generation, has centered on maintaining their ethnic identity in an environment that was once hostile (and still is) toward them. This orientation has prevented them from having open interaction with Turks.

On the other hand, the younger generation, born in Istanbul, has had many opportunities to interact socially and professionally with Turks and in the process may have become somewhat disenchanted with the traditional and socially restrictive boundaries of their in-group. It appears that, having discovered the distinction between the in-group and the out-group, the younger generation of Turkish-Armenians has developed a weaker in-group identity and a stronger out-group identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and has gone beyond the immediate dominant culture to embrace the global community. More opportunities for higher education, more frequent contact with people of various nationalities, and increased awareness of an interdependent global society may have made moving beyond one's parochial identity easier.

The results also indicate that ethnic involvement is positively related to Armenian identity, negatively related to global-human identity, and unrelated to Turkish identity. This finding suggests that ethnic involvement in Armenian organizations is an important factor in determining the individual's Armenian identity. Whether someone is involved in the community is independent of whether he or she embraces Turkish identity. Venturing outside of one's in-group into the wider world does not necessarily imply disengagement from the in-group. Furthermore, the more a person spends time in Armenian organizations, the more he or she may feel Armenian.

The generalizability of these findings is rather limited by the fact that the subjects were part of a convenience sample. However, the results are quite consistent with the social identity theory.

# EVALUATING ARMENIAN-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS: A LOOK AT TWO SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS<sup>7</sup>

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Since the 1880s, when Armenians first immigrated to the United States of America, they have been raising monies to establish a community in the New World and assist their needy compatriots elsewhere in the diaspora. Armenian Americans have been extremely generous in donating funds. At home, they have built churches, schools, nursing homes, and social centers, as they have created folk dance troupes, theatrical companies, museum exhibits, and university programs for Armenian studies, to name just a few. At present, over a century later, while many institutions and programs continue to serve the needs of the Armenian American community, many others survive out of sheer inertia. In such organizations, much is assumed. Strongly held ideologies tend to preempt sound reasoning and fact-based decision making. Many leaders seem to maintain their tenure as a sinecure. These relics of the past may have outlived their usefulness, if they were ever truly functional. It is high time to assess empirically the impact of this massive financial and human capital investment. An outcome-based evaluation can be used to weed out the programs and institutions that are not cost effective and waste resources. Instead, the community can reward those institutions that are productive, those that are able to serve the needs of an ever-changing population of Armenians in the United States and elsewhere in the diaspora.

The absence of evaluation reports prevents those who manage and lead Armenian institutions and programs from being held accountable for their performance on the job whether they are salaried employees or volunteers. Periodic evaluation reports can also help the general public in making informed decisions when making contributions to varied causes. Armenian institutions and associations as a whole lag behind current organizational practices elsewhere in North America, be it in the for-profit sector or non-profit sector. To improve their efficiency and productivity, Armenian-American institutions and programs must incorporate outcome-based management techniques and evaluation tools in their decision-making and planning processes.

When organizational goals are clearly stated in measurable terms, it is easy to gather data that can be analyzed periodically to assess whether or not

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<sup>7</sup> Reproduced with permission from publisher: Bakalian, A., & Der-Karabetian, A., "A Look at Two Summer Internship Programs for College Students", *Armenian Forum*, 2003:2, 57-96.

each goal has been achieved. For example, if an organization's objective is to run a summer camp for approximately 150 children of Armenian ages eight to fourteen years, a simple calculus at the end of each summer can attest to that fact. Assessing the quality of camp life or a specific objective such as inculcating Armenian spirit and knowledge of history and culture is, of course, more complicated to designate, assess and achieve. This type of evaluation requires a control group and "before" and "after" surveys or data collection. Thus it is more expensive and time consuming. Still technical difficulties should not be an excuse for not engaging in assessment. It is unfortunate that evaluation reports of Armenian-American programs are rarely commissioned and even more rarely made public.

In this article we illustrate our call for evaluation and outcome-based assessment among Armenian American institutions and programs by looking at two popular Armenian-American summer internship programs for college students. One is the Armenian Assembly program in Washington D.C. and the other is the AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union) program in New York City. To the best of our knowledge, these programs have not been systematically assessed by an independent evaluator. We should note that the sponsoring organizations did not give us permission to evaluate their programs though they gave us access to survey interns and alumni.<sup>8</sup> Though far from optimum, we use available data to assess whether some of the program goals are being met. We hope that this article will pave the way toward increased demand for evaluation and assessment of Armenian programs and institutions in a more serious and systematic manner.

We start this article with a brief history of the organizations that sponsor the summer internship programs and discuss in detail their objectives. Following the methodology section, we describe the results of our study. First we examine our sample of interns on (1) their demographic characteristics including their socioeconomic status, generation, and parental marriage; (2) their Armenian background, focusing on measures of Armenian identity, language proficiency, and so on, and (3) their participation in the Armenian community. Next we describe our sample of alumni on (1) their demographic characteristics, (2) their Armenian identity and community involvement, (3) their language maintenance, (4) their commitment to Armenian identity and (5) their visits to Armenia. This paper concludes with a section we have titled, program evaluation.

One of the major goals of the summer internship programs is to prepare Armenian leaders for the future. By focusing on selection criteria for the programs, we examine their role in achieving this goal. We also examine the interns' potential for involvement in the Armenian community and the likelihood that they will assume leadership positions within it. Sociologists

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<sup>8</sup> The authors thank Talin Sesetyan for conducting the alumni survey.

have demonstrated that individuals who are active in a community during their teens and twenties will continue to be socially involved and demonstrate civic responsibility throughout their lives.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, using the psychosocial theory of “continuity” in aging,<sup>10</sup> we argue that individuals who are “joiners” of voluntary associations as teenagers will be “joiners” as adults and senior citizens. In an effort to teach citizenship and civic responsibility, several states across the USA have in the last few years mandated volunteer work as a requirement for graduation from high school. In sum, offering young people the opportunity to practice volunteerism increases their likelihood of becoming active citizens. Here we measure the involvement of young Armenian American interns in voluntary associations to forecast their future behavior and prospects as leaders.

Matters of ethnic identity, proficiency in the Armenian language, and commitment to one’s heritage are important yardsticks in becoming leaders for the Armenian American community. The implicit ideology of the sponsoring agencies suggests that Armenian identity in the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century is not a zero-sum choice between assimilation and ethnic maintenance. Interns are encouraged to be successful in the larger American society by being placed in some of the most prestigious and powerful corporations and institutions. At the same time, interns are reminded consistently of their obligations and allegiance to their Armenian roots through a series of lectures and visits to important places and personalities in the Armenian world as well as through networking. Success for the individual, and by association for the community, is climbing up the socioeconomic ladder in one’s profession while proclaiming one’s pride in one’s Armenian heritage.

There is empirical evidence to support such an ideology. The work of psychologist John W. Berry suggests that functionality and the wellbeing of Armenian Americans coming of age in the early twenty-first century necessitates full immersion in both the Armenian world and the American world.<sup>11</sup> The emergent theoretical constructs focus on transculturation or bicultural identity.<sup>12</sup> In other words, to be a “good” Armenian, one has to

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Janoski, March Musick, and John Wilson, “Being Volunteered? The Impact of Social Participation and Pro-Social Attitudes on Volunteering,” *Sociological Forum*, 1998:13, no. 3, pp. 495-519.

<sup>10</sup> See Robert C. Atchley, “A Continuity Theory of Normal Aging,” *The Gerontologist* 1989:29, no. 2, pp. 183-90.

<sup>11</sup> John W. Berry, “Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation,” in *Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*, ed. A. M. Padilla, Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1980, pp. 10-25.

<sup>12</sup> Jeane Phinney, “Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review and Research,” *Psychological Bulletin* 1990:108, pp. 499-514; see also Terry Huffman, “The Transculturation of Native American College Students,” in *American Mosaic: Selected Readings on America’s Multicultural Heritage*, Young I. Song and Eugene C. Kim (eds.), Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice Hall, 1993.

become a “good” American. The postmodern identity of diaspora peoples like Armenians cannot afford to be insular, parochial, or homogeneous. Berry would argue that Armenian Americans who are fully comfortable with their ancestral identity and equally at home in the larger world, straddling two or more cultural worlds and identities, tend to rate higher on measures of psychological health and well-being.<sup>13</sup> However, the nature of Armenianness in a multicultural, ethnically diverse environment must necessarily become more flexible, adaptable, and symbolic.<sup>14</sup> Thus our task as researchers is to question whether this goal of bicultural identity is being furthered in the internship programs. In summary, we assess the role of the summer internship programs as agents of socialization in preparing leaders not only for the Armenian community in the United States, but also the Armenian diaspora.

### **The Internship Programs and their Objectives**

As noted already, the two prominent organizations in the Armenian-American community that sponsor summer internship programs for college students are the AGBU and the Armenian Assembly of America. Boghos Nubar Pasha, a wealthy and politically prominent Armenian, founded the AGBU in Cairo, Egypt, in 1906 in response to the massacres perpetrated by Sultan Abdülhamid in Ottoman Turkey. The AGBU’s goals were charitable, educational and cultural. In 1990 the AGBU’s membership worldwide was reported to be twenty-two thousand.<sup>15</sup> In 1997, it reported assets of over \$200 million and program expenditures totaling approximately \$24 million, with educational programs accounting for almost \$15 million.<sup>16</sup> At present, the AGBU finances schools, summer camps, traditional dance troupes, and athletic and recreational centers in many communities around the world. Its latest ventures have been in Armenia in response to the needs brought about by the 1988 earthquake, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the war over Karabagh. The ventures include the American University of Armenia in Yerevan, a plastic and reconstructive surgery center, an ultrasound center, and a cold food-storage facility. The AGBU’s headquarters are in one of New York City’s modern skyscrapers. This is where the Summer Intern Program is also housed.

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<sup>13</sup> Tara Yaralian, “Acculturation, Ethnic Identity and Psychological Functioning Among Immigrant and First Generation Armenian Young Adults” (Ph.D. diss., Pepperdine Univ., 1999).

<sup>14</sup> See Anny Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian*, New Brunswick, N. J., Transaction Books, 1993; Aghop Der-Karabetian, “In-group-Out-group Identities and the Genocide Experience among Armenian and Turkish Armenians,” *Armenian Review*, forthcoming.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 245 n. 6.

<sup>16</sup> “Biennial Report 1996-1997,” *AGBU News*, September 1998, p. 51.

Although the AGBU is not a political organization, many of its members have been affiliated with the Armenian Democratic Liberal party (ADL or Ramkavar party) founded in 1921. Both the AGBU and the ADL have traditionally drawn their membership in the diaspora from the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. Historically, the ADL emerged in opposition to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF or Dashnak party), which was founded in 1890 with the goal of bringing about the political emancipation of the Armenian peasantry in the Ottoman Empire, protecting them from deportations and improving their social and economic conditions. Although the ARF appealed initially to peasants, artisans, and radical intellectuals, and later to the working class, in recent years its members have been mostly from the middle and upper-middle classes. Nonetheless, the ARF continues to take pride in its nationalistic and socialist platform.<sup>17</sup>

The Armenian Assembly of America was founded in Washington, D.C., in 1972 by a small group of Armenian-American professionals. Its goal is to represent and promote the interests of the Armenian people in the nation's capital and serve as a conduit between the ethnic community and the United States government. The Armenian Assembly has worked for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the United States Congress. It has been more successful in providing United States aid to Armenia since its independence in 1991.<sup>18</sup> Recently it has established an office in Yerevan<sup>19</sup> and expanded its mission to include stronger linkages between the Republic of Armenia and the West. The Summer Intern Program is one of its oldest projects. The Armenian Assembly continues to be popular with its mostly professional, affluent, and Americanized Armenian constituency.<sup>20</sup>

The Armenian Assembly and AGBU summer internship programs were created to provide college students of Armenian descent with professional opportunities and experience. The programs also offer students the chance to live with their Armenian peers from across the United States and the world. Especially for those who are raised outside the major centers of Armenian life such as New York, Boston, and Los Angeles, the internship summer is a privileged time to embrace their heritage, share fellowship, and generally engage in fun activities with an ethnically and socioeconomically homogenous group. It is not surprising, then, that the interns achieve a high level of solidarity, over the summer with many initiating long-term friendships. The sponsors of the programs also report with much glee that a

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<sup>17</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-42.

<sup>19</sup> "Armenian Assembly Invites Alumni to Work in Armenia," *The Armenian Reporter International*, 28 Nov. 1998.

<sup>20</sup> For further details on the Armenian Assembly see Bakalian, *Armenian Americans*, pp. 140-42.



few romantic ties have been known to develop among the interns leading to a walk down the aisle of matrimony.

Applications for the programs are due between mid-January and February. Candidates must have at least a sophomore standing in college, be of Armenian descent, and between nineteen and thirty years of age. The AGBU application package further requests that candidates have an “inclination towards pursuing a professional career, and an interest in preserving the Armenian heritage.” A note follows the above statement providing further explanation: “Being of Armenian descent means that one or both of your parents are 100 [percent] Armenian.”

It should be noted that the Armenian Assembly does not specifically define Armenian descent. In the past, students with one Armenian grandparent were admitted into the program. In the early 1980s the Armenian Assembly had a coordinator who visited various university campuses across the United States and actively recruited talented students of Armenian descent, no matter how tenuous their Armenian ancestry. Budget cuts eliminated that position. Unfortunately, the need to recruit third and fourth generation Armenian Americans has not been a pressing concern for the Armenian Assembly given the oversupply of candidates. Starting in the 1990s, the children of the post 1965 immigrants had come of age and were applying in large numbers to both summer internship programs.

The application process is rigorous and competitive. A recent AGBU application package listed the following requirements: (1) a completed application form and an essay of 250 to 500 words explaining why the student wants to participate in the program; (2) an up-to-date résumé; (3) a transcript of grades; (4) two letters of recommendation, one written by a university professor or advisor, the other by another professor or an employer; (5) a writing sample such as a research paper or published work; and (6) a \$35 application fee. In addition to the above, all “international students, exchange students currently studying in the United States, and all student applicants residing in the United States for less than one year” have to undergo a five to ten minute English proficiency telephone interview conducted by the program director. The Armenian Assembly’s application requires a transcript, two letters of recommendation, the application form, a résumé, and a writing sample.

The program director screens the candidates and contacts agencies and companies where the applicant wants to be placed. Given the reputation the programs have earned over the years, many government offices and nongovernmental organizations in Washington and many corporations in New York City are eager to offer participants positions every summer. Occasionally, students with specific interests and goals may require the development of new placement sites. In April-May the interns are notified of their prospective placements and encouraged to make travel plans.

The Armenian Assembly application package states that the program consists of four major components. First is the internship “in such locations as the offices of prominent Senators and Representatives, the Democratic National and Republican National Committees, the Department of Commerce, the Federal Reserve Board, the Department of Education, the Brookings Institution, and the Economic Strategy Institute.” Second is the “Capital Ideas” program which “provides interns the opportunity to meet with Senators and Representatives from both political parties. The objective is to give interns a forum to ask questions directly to our elected officials about topics that are of importance to the Armenian-American community and about events taking place in the United States and around the world.” Third is a lecture series on “issues of importance to Armenians as a community.” Scholars who specialize in Armenian history, art and architecture, and social science are invited to talk to the interns. Finally, there are social activities where the interns can have fun, bond with each other, and network with trustee families and others.

During their eight-to-ten-week sojourn from early June to mid-August in Washington D.C. or New York City, interns are housed in a local university dormitory. The Assembly interns make their home for the summer in the dorms of Georgetown University and the AGBU interns reside in the New York University dorms. An active social calendar keeps the interns busy in the evenings and on weekends. Visits to local attractions, such as the Smithsonian Museums, Arlington Cemetery, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and the United Nations lead the list. They also attend plays on Broadway and at the Kennedy Center, concerts, and other cultural events. Armenian traditional dance tends to be very popular; in some years the lessons are formally organized. A director of activities, who is often an age peer, plans and manages the lives and social calendar of the interns during their stay.

Although there are some differences between the two programs, their philosophies, goals, and structure are similar. Both the Armenian Assembly and AGBU program strive to prepare and produce the next generation of Armenian diaspora leaders. These leadership roles are broadly conceived, though many of the expectations remain implicit. The organizers hope that many of the alumni will, in due course, reach prominent positions in their professional life. Moreover, their participation and assumption of positions of responsibility in Armenian-American organizations and communal institutions is highly encouraged.

### **The Armenian Assembly Summer Intern Program**

According to the Armenian Assembly Summer Intern Program 10th Anniversary Celebration booklet (19–21 June 1987), since its inception, the Internship Program has sought to achieve three goals:

- Provide students with real-life work experience in the field they plan to pursue.
- Expose students to the American democratic process and increase their interest in becoming involved in American politics.
- Help students learn more about their Armenian culture and heritage.

The Armenian Assembly Summer Intern Program was established to encourage Armenian Americans to enter public service, and to sensitize them more broadly to the United States political process. During its first year of operation in 1977, there were four interns. Soon thereafter each cohort consisted of approximately twenty-five to thirty interns (see table 1). According to the directors of the Armenian Assembly (interviewed in December 1994), until the 1988 earthquake and the subsequent political and social events, approximately 10 to 15 percent of the Assembly's budget was allocated to the internship program. The cost was around \$120,000 a year at its peak, because almost all the interns' costs were paid.

In the 1990s there were approximately twenty interns each summer. By then the program allocation had decreased to 5 percent of the Assembly's budget. More pressing national/ethnic needs had surfaced, and interest in the diaspora had waned. At present, the cost of the program for the Assembly is approximately \$60,000, or roughly \$2000 per intern. Moreover, today the interns pay a larger proportion of the expenses than earlier cohorts. At the Assembly approximately \$10,000 is set aside for scholarships, usually awarded to ten interns.

Given its location in the nation's capital, the Armenian Assembly Summer Intern Program has an overt political component. As stated above, young men and women of Armenian descent are introduced to the American political arena and encouraged to participate in the political process, directly or indirectly, as they take on adult roles and responsibilities. Their awareness and knowledge of Armenian issues is cultivated and, especially since the establishment of the independent Republic of Armenia in 1991, interns are shown the need for political advocacy. According to the assistant director of the program (interviewed in August 1996), "the Assembly's program has a Congressional orientation. Interns get a taste of the political process and learn what it takes to push Armenian issues in the American government." Not surprisingly, in addition to making placements in Congress and federal agencies, the Assembly's "Capital Ideas" takes advantage of its location in the national capital to introduce interns to prominent national and international leaders. For example, when the President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian, visited Washington in 1995, interns had the opportunity to shake hands with him. It should be noted that although the primary focus of the Armenian Assembly Intern Program is on public service, other types of placements, such as in medicine, the arts, and the humanities, are available.

## **The AGBU Summer Intern Program**

The program objectives of the AGBU Summer Intern Program can be summarized as follows: (a) to promote professional and financial achievement in the competitive global marketplace, (b) to stimulate or maintain interest in the Armenian heritage, and (c) to develop future leaders for the diaspora Armenian community. This program was established in 1987 to give students of Armenian descent internship experience in one of the most competitive, dynamic, fast-paced cities in the world. The AGBU President's Club sponsors this program. Each member of this elite group donates \$1000 annually. When the program was created, the club had 105 members. Their numbers have since dwindled to forty-three. Since the social and political changes in the Armenian homeland, many philanthropists have shifted their attention from funding projects in the diaspora to investing their resources in the Republic of Armenia.

More and more, the cost of participation in the program is borne by the students.<sup>21</sup> An application form for 1999 explains the fee structure as follows. "All students are required to pay \$1,500 to participate in the AGBU New York Summer Intern Program. All students who are compensated for their internships must pay \$2,000 to participate in the Program. (*Please note that each student's participation in this program actually costs the administration nearly \$ 3,500. This fee only helps to defray some of the costs of the placement, housing, and educational program*)" (Italics and emphasis in original). The AGBU program has a full-time director, a part-time placement coordinator, and during the summer months, an activities coordinator. As noted above, office space is shared in the modern, high-rise AGBU headquarters on 59th Street in Manhattan.

The sponsoring organizations and the ethnic community view professional success by an Armenian as a positive reflection on Armenians as a group. For instance, when a brilliant physician, soprano, scholar, or politician achieves fame and fortune, he or she makes all Armenians proud through association. Armenians are quick to note that the singer Cher, former California governor George Deukmejian, MGM owner Kirk Krikorian, and filmmaker Atom Egoyan are Armenian. Thus, it is believed that the greater the number of successful individuals generated by the program, the greater the honor and glory bestowed on the Armenian people. This belief is illustrated in the AGBU internship program's Tenth Anniversary Celebration booklet (1997). The President of AGBU writes that the internships are "custom designed to further each intern's career path." The founders of the President's Club – the group that actually finances the intern program – add that this "unique" experience offers the interns

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<sup>21</sup> In the summer of 2000 an AGBU intern spent approximately \$5000 in program expenses: housing, food, entertainment, clothing, local transportation, other costs (e.g., shampoo, film, birthday gifts), and an international airplane fare.

“confidence, ability and expertise to succeed in today’s intensely competitive marketplace. . . . There can be no reward greater than that of developing our next generation of professional and community leaders.”

Indeed, the sponsoring organizations hope that their investment in human capital will generate significant dividends for the Armenian community in the future. In addition to reflected glory, they are relying on the interns’ sense of indebtedness, their feelings of guilt or shame or reciprocity, to generate paybacks from program alumni. They hope interns will make financial contributions to Armenian causes in the future or will make other contributions, such as providing network connections and promoting Armenian interests in their professions, through political action or through contributions to their city, state, or national institutions. There is also an expectation of active involvement in the community, especially in leadership positions. In justifying the heavy financial burden of the internship programs, the editors of *Armenian International Magazine* vocalize these assumptions most succinctly. They write, “What goes around, comes around.” That is, “an excited, committed, devoted intern turned professional will contribute to and initiate new programs and thereby return the investment in full. A well-connected professional whose internship led to contacts which can be used to bring success to a program or project is an even greater return on the investment.”<sup>22</sup>

## **Methodology**

In 1990 the authors were invited by the director of the internship program at the Armenian Assembly of America to conduct research. This was an opportunity not to be missed. The interns were a readily accessible population, and the study could fill a significant lacuna in the literature. Initially this project was conceived as an examination of the ethnic attitudes and behaviors of young men and women of Armenian descent enrolled in the Armenian Assembly Summer Intern Program in Washington. The goal of the investigation was to measure the level of assimilation and the maintenance of Armenianness among the youth. Since the number of interns in any given year was too small for meaningful statistical analysis, it was decided to develop a longitudinal databank.

In 1991 the AGBU Summer Intern Program was added to the study. As noted above, the AGBU and Armenian Assembly internship programs are similar in their philosophy and structure. Obviously, a larger sample promised to yield a more valid analysis of Armenian-American college students in internship programs. It should be noted that other internship programs are available in the United States for Armenian youth. An attempt to include them in this study was initiated early on. A preliminary interview

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<sup>22</sup> *Armenian International Magazine*, November 1998, p. 10.

was conducted with one of the program directors. However, a lack of funding from sponsoring agencies and alternative sources for hiring research assistants was instrumental in keeping the focus of this research on the two largest programs. Indeed, if New York City and Washington D.C. were not easily accessible to one of the authors of this study, it would have been very difficult to carry out this investigation.

For the record, the other organizations offering internship programs include the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), a public affairs organization in Washington, D.C. dedicated to preserving the Armenian heritage and promoting the human and civil rights of Armenians. Like the Armenian Assembly, the ANC places interns in governmental agencies or organizations concerned with public policy.<sup>23</sup> The Diocese of the Armenian Church in New York City provides internships to those interested in religious affairs. The interns have a choice of various departments within the Church, such as religious education, public relations, social services, the Armenian Language Lab and Resource Center, and the Fund for Armenia Relief.<sup>24</sup> Possibly because of limited funding, these programs tend to be much smaller in size and are less structured. Additionally, the AGBU operated a West Coast program in Los Angeles from 1988 to 1992 for college students interested in film and media studies. Low enrollment and funding constraints especially after the December 1987 earthquake in Armenia precipitated the closure of this endeavor.

More recently, the Armenian Relief Society, headquartered in Watertown, Massachusetts, has developed opportunities “to prepare young Armenian women for a future of active participation in the Armenian community.”<sup>25</sup> And the Armenian Youth Federation, Youth Organization of the ARF, offers internships in Armenia.<sup>26</sup> The Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Washington D.C. likewise offers placements not only in the summer months but also in the spring and fall semesters for college credit. Moreover, in summer 1999 the Armenian Assembly started offering four student placements with the Armenian government and with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Yerevan.<sup>27</sup>

This article brings together two data sets. The first is a longitudinal study of the interns in both the Armenian Assembly and AGBU programs. Between 1990 and 1996, Bakalian visited each of the programs in

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<sup>23</sup> “ANC and ARS Interns Complete Summer Lecture Series,” *The Armenian Reporter International*, 7 Sept. 1996.

<sup>24</sup> See Paul Sarkissian, “A Talented and Enthusiastic Crop of Interns Spends the Summer at the Diocese of the Armenian Church,” *The Armenian Reporter International*, 13 Aug. 1994, p. 5; “Diocese Summer Internship Program Proves Invaluable,” *Ibid.*, 12 Aug. 1995.

<sup>25</sup> *Armenian International Magazine*, December 1998, p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> See Tamar Mishigian, “Into the Hearts and Minds of the Homeland: The 1998 AYF Summer Internship in Armenia,” *The Armenian Weekly*, 7 Nov. 1998.

<sup>27</sup> *The Armenian Reporter International*, 28 Nov. 1998, pp. 8, 10.

Washington and New York City on a weekday evening and distributed a lengthy questionnaire adapted from her original study of Armenian Americans.<sup>28</sup> Most interns present filled out the instrument and returned it while she waited. A few who arrived late to the meeting or were absent completed the questionnaire and returned it by mail. At this point, the package was sent to Der-Karabetian in Los Angeles to be entered into the computer and statistically analyzed. The internship sample yielded a total of 141 responses with a response rate of 50 percent.

The second data set consists of the alumni survey. The availability of an AGBU intern in 1996—a sociology major in college—made it possible to add this component to this research endeavor. The intern's task for the summer was to design the alumni survey, conduct it, and enter the data into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)—all under the supervision of Bakalian. The survey measured the professional achievements of the alumni, their level of involvement in the Armenian world, and the extent of their satisfaction with the overall structure of the programs. Thirty alumni from each program were interviewed over the phone ( $n = 60$ ). Their names were drawn randomly from the alumni roster. For the Armenian Assembly, the years drawn from were 1977 through 1995, and for the AGBU 1987 through 1995. We can say with confidence that the results of the alumni survey are representative of the entire alumni population because every one of the 622 alumni had an equal chance of being included in the study. Interns from outside the United States were excluded because of the cost and vagaries of international correspondence.

The statistical data presented in this article are supplemented with qualitative data from a number of sources. These include six interviews with program officers and sponsors, comments written by the interns on their questionnaires and the comments of the alumni, and information gathered from a focus group conducted by Bakalian on interns' attitudes and beliefs about Armenian identity and homeland-diaspora relations. The focus group convened during a picnic for the AGBU interns hosted by an Armenian family in New Jersey in 1996.

Our samples are not necessarily representative of Armenian American youth in general. As explained above, a college student must fulfill a number of requirements to become an intern in either program. A quote from the AGBU Tenth Anniversary Celebration booklet (1997) reiterates this point succinctly. "Applicants are evaluated based on academic achievement, motivation to pursue a professional career, and a desire to represent the interests of Armenians in their communities and preserve the Armenian heritage." First, the prospective intern must be academically successful and career-driven. Only those receiving a grade-point average of 3.0 or better (on

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<sup>28</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*.

a scale of zero to 4.0) are considered by the AGBU. The Assembly accepts a minimum grade-point average of 2.75. Second, the prospective intern must forego opportunities for earning income during the summer, and must be able to pay all expenses, including the cost of lodging, food, transportation, entertainment, and proper business attire. Even though the programs are subsidized by the sponsoring agencies, very few scholarships for financially disadvantaged students are available. Third, because both programs are set up for youth of Armenian descent, applicants must demonstrate interest in their Armenian heritage. Moreover, in order to have knowledge of the existence of these programs, one needs to have some connection, direct or indirect, with the organized Armenian community. This means that there is an inherent bias against youth of Armenian descent whose parents have intermarried or are not active in the formally organized Armenian community, that is, people who measure high on indicators of assimilation. Thus, our samples may be characterized as more socially conservative, with high levels of ethnic commitment. Ethnicity reinforces ideologies that have an orientation to the past rather than to the future. These young people with strong Armenian sentiments and involvement look to their ancestral heritage for inspiration and modeling.

We can say with some confidence that our results can be generalized to the college-educated population that has gone through an internship sponsored by an Armenian-American organization. Evidently, this population represents but a small segment of Armenian-American youth. The extent to which the interns are similar to their age peers in terms of their social and ethnic characteristics will have to be the subject of another study.

## **Survey Results**

### **The Interns**

#### **Demographic Characteristics**

Between 1977 and 1997 the Armenian Assembly Intern Program had a total of 443 interns, 59 percent of whom were female. Between 1987 and 1997, the AGBU Intern Program had a total of 292 interns, 60 percent of whom were female. The total number of interns for the two programs through 1997 was 735. Table 1 shows the distribution of the interns by year and gender in the Armenian Assembly and AGBU programs, respectively. The interns ranged in age from nineteen to thirty-two years, though they were more likely to be twenty-two or twenty-three years old. Over the years the female-to-male ratio has steadily increased. In the first few years of its operation, the ratio of men to women at the Armenian Assembly was almost equal, but in the past ten years the ratio has been overwhelmingly in favor of women.

The mean age of the interns was twenty-one. The vast majority of the interns (74 percent) were born in the United States, and another 6.4 percent



immigrated before the age of six. Thus, 80 percent of the intern sample is from the second generation and beyond. It should be noted that both internship programs have in recent years been recruiting more and more students from abroad. For example, in the AGBU program in the summer of 1996 there were students from France, Australia, England, Lebanon, Armenia, Switzerland, Cyprus and Austria. For the ninety-eight interns who indicated the ethnic background of their parents (30 percent missing responses), 70 percent of fathers and mothers were of Armenian descent.

**Table 1.** Distribution of interns by year, gender and percent female by program

| Armenian Assembly Interns |      |        |       |          | AGBU Interns |        |       |          |
|---------------------------|------|--------|-------|----------|--------------|--------|-------|----------|
| Years                     | Male | Female | Total | Female % | Male         | Female | Total | Female % |
| 1977                      | 3    | 1      | 4     | 25       |              |        |       |          |
| 1978                      | 9    | 6      | 15    | 40       |              |        |       |          |
| 1979                      | 11   | 10     | 21    | 48       |              |        |       |          |
| 1980                      | 5    | 7      | 12    | 58       |              |        |       |          |
| 1981                      | 16   | 11     | 27    | 41       |              |        |       |          |
| 1982                      | 11   | 12     | 23    | 52       |              |        |       |          |
| 1983                      | 15   | 13     | 28    | 46       |              |        |       |          |
| 1984                      | 8    | 16     | 24    | 67       |              |        |       |          |
| 1985                      | 8    | 17     | 25    | 68       |              |        |       |          |
| 1986                      | 13   | 16     | 29    | 55       |              |        |       |          |
| 1987                      | 7    | 20     | 27    | 74       | 4            | 10     | 14    | 71       |
| 1988                      | 9    | 9      | 18    | 50       | 10           | 14     | 24    | 58       |
| 1989                      | 9    | 15     | 24    | 63       | 15           | 9      | 24    | 38       |
| 1990                      | 10   | 23     | 33    | 70       | 8            | 14     | 22    | 64       |
| 1991                      | 6    | 13     | 19    | 68       | 6            | 19     | 25    | 76       |
| 1992                      | 6    | 8      | 14    | 57       | 9            | 20     | 29    | 69       |
| 1993                      | 8    | 11     | 19    | 58       | 11           | 14     | 25    | 56       |
| 1994                      | 5    | 12     | 17    | 71       | 20           | 15     | 35    | 43       |
| 1995                      | 4    | 15     | 19    | 79       | 11           | 15     | 26    | 58       |
| 1996                      | 8    | 16     | 24    | 67       | 13           | 23     | 36    | 64       |
| 1997                      | 8    | 13     | 21    | 62       | 9            | 23     | 32    | 72       |
| Total                     | 179  | 264    | 443   | 59       | 116          | 176    | 292   | 60       |

Most interns came from affluent families. The parents of 51 percent of the interns had annual pretax incomes of over \$90,000; the parents of another 26.5 percent had incomes ranging from \$50,000 to \$89,999. The fathers of 48.5 percent of the interns in the sample had graduate or professional degrees, and those of another 23 percent had a college degree. Mothers, too, were highly educated, though somewhat less so than fathers, with 24.5 percent of mothers having a master's or other graduate degree and another 29 percent a bachelor's degree. Interestingly, in spite of the relatively high educational level of the mothers, 42 percent were homemakers at the time of their children's internship. These interns also seem to have come from intact families. Ninety percent of the interns' parents were married at the time the interns participated in the study.

## Armenian Background

When asked how they identified themselves, 57 percent of the interns said they were Armenian-American, another 23 percent said they were Armenian, and only 7 percent said they were American. Given the number of students from abroad in the programs, it is not surprising that 12 percent used other hyphenated labels. Overall, the data indicate that most interns were raised in Armenian households. For example, only 17 percent of respondents said that while they were growing up their families did not participate in activities sponsored by Armenian-American organizations. In contrast, 55.5 percent of the interns said they were involved in the Armenian community always or most of the time. An additional 25 percent of the interns were involved in the community some of the time. Armenian ancestry was frequently talked about in the interns' families while they were growing up. Only 5 percent of the interns said this was not the case. Fifty-five percent of respondents said the topic of conversation in their family veered toward Armenian issues always or most of the time and 39 percent said that was the case sometimes.

The parents of the interns made sure to involve their children in some form of Armenian educational institution. Most parents had enrolled their children in Sunday schools sponsored by Armenian churches: 63 percent of the interns had gone to Armenian Sunday school. The length of time students attended Sunday school varied from one to thirteen years. Sixty-six percent attended an Armenian summer camp at least once. Sixty-four percent participated in Armenian Saturday school, where they learned how to read and write Armenian and some history and culture. And 21 percent of the interns attended Armenian day schools. However, some of them were not satisfied with their experience. When asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "I believe sending a child to an Armenian school will hinder his/her chances of getting into a good college," several interns penciled in comments. For example, a second-generation female wrote, "I attended an Armenian school and feel it was a *sacrifice* I had to make" (emphasis in original). Last but not least, 32 percent of the interns took courses on Armenian subjects in college.

The families of the interns in our sample seem to have immersed their children in Armenian social circles. However, there were those who lived in regions of the country where few other Armenians lived. That would explain why 6 percent of the interns said they did not have any Armenian friends. In contrast, 41 percent of the interns said they had some Armenian friends, and 53 percent said half or more of their friends were Armenian. Moreover, 27 percent of interns had one best friend who was Armenian, 23 percent had two best friends, and 19 percent said all three of their best friends were Armenian.

When asked about the extent of their knowledge about things Armenian before their internship, 27 percent of the respondents said they were not well informed, 37 percent said they were somewhat well informed, and 36 percent said they were well or very well informed. A multiple-response question probed the interns' sources of information on things Armenian. The sources cited, starting with the most frequently mentioned, were parents (86 percent of responses); the Armenian print media (70 percent); lectures, panel discussion, or informal conversations in the Armenian community (63 percent); friends (60 percent); and the mainstream American media (56 percent).

**Table 2.** Ability to read and write Armenian in three samples

|                                                     | Intern<br>Sample<br><i>n</i> = 141 | Alumni<br>Sample<br><i>n</i> = 60 | New York<br>Sample<br><i>n</i> = 584 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Speak Armenian Adequately to Very Well (%)          | 55                                 | 45                                | 74                                   |
| Read and Write Armenian Adequately to Very Well (%) | 37                                 | na                                | 40                                   |
| Percent Foreign-Born in the Sample                  | 20                                 | 13.3                              | 37.5                                 |
| Source for New York Sample: Bakalian 1993)          |                                    |                                   |                                      |

It is worth noting that 20 percent of the interns had visited the Armenian homeland, gaining first-hand knowledge and experience about their ancestral origins. Those who had the chance to visit Armenia were eager to share their positive feelings. A 1994 Armenian Assembly intern who was born in Tehran but immigrated to the United States at the age of six wrote: "Last year, I spent six months abroad, studying in Moscow, and I took the opportunity to visit Armenia for ten days. I had one of the most important experiences in my life. Everyone was kind and proud, and I was able to be part of and to see first-hand a lot of the beautiful things Armenia has to offer."

The generational position of the interns explains their greater propensity to speak the Armenian language than to read and write it. Specifically, 38 percent of the interns who responded to the questionnaire reported speaking Armenian well to very well, and 17 percent reported speaking it adequately, while 45 percent spoke very little Armenian or not at all. On the other hand, only 18 percent of interns reported reading and writing Armenian well to very well, another 19 percent reported reading and writing adequately. The remaining 62 percent of interns were unable to read or write Armenian.

These percentages replicate the trends found by Bakalian in her study of Armenian Americans (see table 2). Among the adult sample (mean age of fifty-four years) collected in metropolitan New York and New Jersey in 1986 (*n* = 584), 74 percent spoke Armenian adequately to very well, while only 40 percent were able to read and write Armenian well. It is noteworthy that 37.5 percent of the adult sample was foreign born; of them 97.6 percent

spoke Armenian and 78 percent read/wrote Armenian. The second generation made up 46.6 percent of the sample; of those, 74 percent spoke Armenian and 19 percent read/wrote Armenian. The remaining 15.9 percent were in the third and fourth generations; of those 13 percent spoke Armenian and 8.7 percent read/wrote Armenian.<sup>29</sup> These patterns of Armenian language skills are also similar to a 1981 study of three hundred California Armenians by Der-Karabetian and Proudian-Der-Karabetian.<sup>30</sup> About 13 percent of American-born respondents reported reading, writing, and understanding Armenian, while 85 percent of long-term immigrants (average residency of twenty-five years), and 94 percent of recent immigrants (average residency of five years) reported doing so.

**Table 3.** Armenian Assembly and AGBU interns' responses to twelve attitude

| Statements                                                                                                           | Agree % | Neutral % | Disagree % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------|
| Statement                                                                                                            |         |           |            |
| 1. It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian                                                     | 30.5    | 2.8       | 67         |
| 2. Recent Armenian immigrants to the United States are clannish                                                      | 42.6    | 45.4      | 12         |
| 3. A good Armenian should try to marry another Armenian                                                              | 47.5    | 15.6      | 37         |
| 4. I plan to bring up my children Armenian                                                                           | 87      | 8         | 5          |
| 5. Armenian churches in the United States should conduct their services predominantly in English                     | 18      | 21        | 63         |
| 6. It is every Armenian's duty to support the Armenian Church morally and financially                                | 40      | 21        | 38         |
| 7. You can be for your own people and still be a good American                                                       | 91.5    | 6         | 3          |
| 8. A person should consider the needs of his/her family as a whole more important than her/her own                   | 65      | 21        | 14         |
| 9. A person should always help his/her parents with the support of his/her younger brothers and sisters if necessary | 87      | 10        | 3          |
| 10. My feelings towards my Armenian ancestry were intensified after the earthquake in Soviet Armenia                 | 50.4    | 15.6      | 25         |
| 11. Armenians in the diaspora should help their brothers and sisters in the Republic of Armenia                      | 89      | 6         | 5          |
| 12. The US Media is fair in reporting the events in Armenia and Karabagh                                             | 21      | 34        | 45         |

When asked whether respondents spoke Armenian at home almost always, 78 percent of the immigrant generation in the New York/New Jersey

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>30</sup> Der-Karabetian and Proudian Der-Karabetian, "California Armenians: 1981 Survey."

sample gave affirmative responses compared to 12 percent of their children's generation.<sup>31</sup> Beyond the second generation, Armenian ceases to be the language of everyday communication. Bakalian's results validate the language patterns found among the youth. It is not surprising that 47 percent of the interns reported speaking Armenian with their grandparents always or most of the time, 30 percent reported doing so with their parents, but only 14.5 percent of the interns reported using Armenian to communicate with their brothers and sisters.

Even though the intern sample represents a more recent cohort of second-generation Armenian Americans, second-generation behavioral characteristics are clearly evident. In the twentieth century, the Armenian community in North America had two large cohorts of second-generation members. One came of age around World War II; the other is just about maturing as we enter the twenty-first century. Approximately half a century separates the two cohorts. More importantly, the climate for immigrants and their families has become much more tolerant in recent decades as the Armenian-American community has gained in stature and confidence.<sup>32</sup> Yet, in terms of language characteristics and ethnic involvement, the American-born children of Armenian immigrants exhibit similar patterns. Demanding cultural traits like proficiency in the Armenian language, frequent participation in Armenian Church services, and singular involvement in ethnic politics are unlikely to survive. Concrete representations of Armenianness may become less salient, replaced by more affective and symbolic elements of identity.<sup>33</sup>

### **Participation in the Armenian Community**

In terms of religious affiliation, 76.6 percent of the interns indicated that they belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church, 3.5 percent belonged to the Armenian Protestant Church, and 0.7 percent (one student) was a member of the Armenian Catholic Church. The remaining 19 percent of interns said that they belonged to other religious congregations or were not involved in organized religion. Given that the adult population has low rates of church attendance, it is significant that 25 percent of interns reported attending Armenian Church once a month or more often.<sup>34</sup> About 30 percent of interns indicated that they attended Armenian Church services sometimes, 21 percent said they attended once or twice a year, and another 15 percent attended only weddings and funerals. Only 9 percent of the respondents said that they did not attend an Armenian Church. This is somewhat similar to the

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<sup>31</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, p. 256.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-27.

<sup>33</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*; Aghop Der-Karabetian, "Multiple Social Identity as a Reflection of Modernity," *Armenian Review* 1983:36, pp. 100-105.

<sup>34</sup> On church attendance, see Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, p. 105

California study where about 30 percent of respondents said that they attended church regularly.<sup>35</sup>

Twenty-two percent of the interns attended Armenian voluntary association meetings most of the time or always, another 31 percent attended sometimes, and the rest (47 percent) never or seldom attended. The interns exhibited the same behavior with non-Armenian voluntary associations. When they did attend activities sponsored by Armenian organizations, interns were most likely to attend dinner dances (82 percent of interns had attended at least once in the previous year), lectures (72 percent), and weekend events such as the ones sponsored annually by Armenian Students Association, Inc., and the Armenian Youth Federation (65 percent). Ethnic festivals (53 percent) and sports matches (56 percent) were also mentioned. Least popular were concerts, folk dance performances, and theatrical events (45 percent of interns had attended at least one such event in the previous year).

As in any other community, there are cleavages and tensions within the Armenian American community based on one's date of immigration, generational status, ethnicity of parents, and proficiency in Armenian, to name a few underlying factors. Interns reflected accurately the divisions and conflicts in their parents' generation. Many had experienced feelings of anger and pain in their contacts with the Armenian world while growing up and during their internship. Several interns shared their feelings by making extensive comments in the questionnaire. For example, a female second-generation intern at the Armenian Assembly in 1994 commented, "It's sad to say, but many times I am embarrassed to be Armenian because of the bad reputation of the Soviet Armenian immigrants. I hope that one day I can be proud of every Armenian." An Armenian Assembly male intern who is third-generation Armenian on his father's side and Italian on his mother's shared his resentment as follows: "Despite the fact that I am only half Armenian by birth, I have much more culture and awareness than many 'full-blooded' Armenians in America." One 1991 Armenian Assembly female intern wrote, "I grew up in Indiana where there were no Armenians and I feel this has been a great handicap to me. I am not fluent in Armenian because there was no one around to speak with besides my parents. When I am with other Armenian groups I seldom fit in because I have never met these people before and they all seem to know one another. I do not look very Armenian and perhaps this makes people think that I am only half-Armenian or less. In any case, Armenian people are the most cliquish people on the face of the earth and they make my friends from high school look mature."

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<sup>35</sup> Der-Karabetian and Proudian-Der-Karabetian, "California Armenians: 1981 Survey."

Another female who interned in 1990 said, “I wish I spoke Armenian because I often feel excluded when my friends speak Armenian. Here at the Assembly, some of them speak a word here and there. I never know what they’re talking about. At UCLA, there is a clear division in the ASA [Armenian Student Association] between those who speak and those who don’t.”

A significant date on the Armenian calendar is 24 April, the official remembrance of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. More than half of the interns (52.5 percent) said they had attended requiem services in memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide in the year preceding the survey, and 58 percent of interns had participated in marches, demonstrations or other public ceremonies. The interns’ rates of participation in Genocide commemorations significantly exceed those of the adult sample collected by Bakalian in Metropolitan New York/ New Jersey. About 57 percent of the foreign-born, 33.5 percent of the second generation, and 22 percent of respondents in later generations in the New York sample attended requiem services, and the respective percentages for participation in public gatherings were 40.6 percent, 19.9 percent, and 17.4 percent.<sup>36</sup>

Interns’ strong feelings about the Genocide and their sense of outrage and injustice is reflected in the comments they made. A second-generation female intern at the Armenian Assembly wrote the following: “I believe strongly that the Genocide needs to be recognized by the American government and that the US needs to gradually halt aid to Turkey—their brutalities in the past and present are only setting the path for those in the future.” Another Assembly female intern who emigrated from Istanbul at the age of nine said, “The Genocide should not be forgotten. We should struggle to have it recognized world-wide.”

The interns are not atypical of the Armenian population in their feelings about the Genocide. In a comparative study of Turkish Armenians and American Armenians, Der-Karabetian found that both samples perceived the effect of the Genocide as being significantly related to feeling Armenian as well as to having a strong sense of ethnic orientation.<sup>37</sup>

The intense feelings and passions many interns express vis-à-vis the Genocide should be cause for reflection for two reasons. First, we start with the premise that the ideology and the intergenerational memory of the Genocide have dominated Armenian collective consciousness in the diaspora in the twentieth century. The Genocide has served as a common denominator for the diverse populations scattered around the world.<sup>38</sup> Any alternative, however benign, to the Genocide-related agenda, and any deviation from it, however slight, is interpreted as sacrilege. Future leaders should, in our

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<sup>36</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, p. 355.

<sup>37</sup> Der-Karabetian, “In-group-Out-group Identities and the Genocide Experience.”

<sup>38</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, pp. 347-60.

view, be exposed to unorthodox, even unpopular, perspectives. They should be willing to review and reconsider an inherited agenda.

**Table 4.** Comparison of the intern and alumni sample on selected variables

| Selected Variables                                                                     | Interns % | Alumni% |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. Mean age during internship                                                          | 21        | 21      |
| 2. Born in the United States                                                           | 74        | 75      |
| 3. Knowledge of things Armenian                                                        | 73        | 76.6    |
| 4. Affiliated with the Armenian Apostolic Church                                       | 76.6      | 72      |
| 5. Affiliated with mainstream American churches or not belonging to organized religion | 19        | 15      |
| 6. Attended Armenian schools                                                           | 64        | 65      |
| 7. Took college courses on Armenian topics                                             | 32        | 36      |
| 8. Visited Armenia                                                                     | 20        | 39      |

Another interpretation of the meaning of the Genocide in Armenian collective consciousness is a psychological one. It postulates that Armenians have come to see themselves as victims, perpetually massacred and persecuted.<sup>39</sup> Using the work of psychiatrist Judith Herman on trauma, Flora Keshgegian argues convincingly that the legacy of the Genocide must be resolved if Armenians want to be empowered and take responsibility for their future. The cost of the Genocide and its resultant victim mindset manifests itself in “feelings of insecurity, lack of safety, sadness and shame, a negativity toward life, and feelings of helplessness.”<sup>40</sup> Keshgegian explains that Armenian collective memory has focused on the “heroics of survival” manifested through a “mix of chauvinistic pride that scripted Armenians as better than other people and a recitation of all that Armenians had suffered and do suffer.”<sup>41</sup> There are personal, social, psychological, cultural, and political ramifications to the recovery process. Therefore, coming to terms with this burdensome baggage, the trauma, would be liberating at the micro and macro levels. Armenians would be able to generate a positive culture, one of hope, creativity and empowerment.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 5.** Generational status of the alumni sample

| Generation                                             | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. First generation (Foreign-born)                     | 8         | 13.3    |
| 2. Second generation (US-born of immigrant parents)    | 31        | 51.7    |
| 3. Third generation (US-born parents)                  | 19        | 31.7    |
| 4. Fourth generation (one or more grandparent US-born) | 2         | 3.3     |
| Total                                                  | 60        | 100     |

<sup>39</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, p. 360.

<sup>40</sup> Flora A. Keshgegian, “Struggle for Life: The Legacy of Genocide and Armenian-American Women,” in *Armenian Women in a Changing World: Papers Presented at the First International Conference of the Armenian International Women’s Association*, ed. Barbara J. Merguerian and Doris D. Jafferian, Belmont, Mass., AIWA Press, 1995, p. 168.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>42</sup> See also Anny Bakalian’s review of *Armenian Women in a Changing World*, which appeared in *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 9 (June 1999), pp. 194-96.



When asked if they sympathized with Armenian political parties, 48.8 percent of the interns indicated they were “neutral (*chezok*),” 27.3 percent said they were indifferent to ethnic politics, 15 percent said they sympathized with the Dashnak party, and 7 percent said they sympathized with the Ramkavar party.<sup>43</sup> When asked about their families’ sympathies with Armenian political parties, 36.4 percent of the interns indicated that their parents were neutral, 26.4 percent said they were Ramkavar, 15 percent said they were Dashnak, and 20.7 percent said they were indifferent. In the case of both questions, twenty students (14 percent) did not respond. Only 4.3 percent of the intern sample (six students) were officially members of an Armenian political party. Overall, however, interns in this study find American politics more relevant and meaningful to their lives than Armenian politics. Forty-four interns (31%) were registered Democrats or Republicans. Most would concur with the remarks of a 1991 AGBU intern. “I don’t feel that any Armenian political party shares my political beliefs.”

Comparative data for involvement in Armenian political parties indicates that the youth are not much different from their parents’ generation. In a sample of three hundred California Armenians surveyed in 1981, about 7 percent said that they were members of an Armenian political party.<sup>44</sup> In the sample of 584 Armenians from New York and New Jersey, less than 3 percent were official members of Armenian political parties, but about 5 percent sympathized with the Ramkavar party, 19 percent with the Dashnak party, and 25 percent chose to remain neutral. Another 30 percent of the sample said they were indifferent to ethnic politics, and the remaining 9 percent said they rejected all parties. Because of its ideology and revolutionary fervor, the Dashnak party is able to maintain its adherents across the generations in larger proportion than the Ramkavar party. A drop of 72 percentage points was experienced between the parents’ generation and the children’s generation in Ramkavar party membership. Moreover, the Dashnak party runs various programs for children and youth with the latent purpose of socializing the next generation for party membership; these include boy and girl scouts, athletics, and summer camps.<sup>45</sup>

The comments of a twenty-four-year-old New Jersey-born second-generation male who identified himself as a Dashnak party member exemplify the revolutionary rhetoric: “I feel that as a US-born Armenian I am very negative towards other Armenian-Americans because I feel they are neglecting our *Hai Tahd* [Armenian Cause—political agenda of the ARF] as

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<sup>43</sup> Neutral (*chezok*) implies an acknowledgement of Armenian political parties and divisions. Indifference means rejection of such parties. For full description of the historical roots of Armenian political divisions and their implication see Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, pp. 89-101.

<sup>44</sup> Der-Karabetian and Proudian Der-Karabetian, “California Armenians: 1981 Survey.”

<sup>45</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, pp. 126-33.

dispersed Armenians. I feel the Republic of Armenia asks for the Diaspora Armenians' money but not advice. I feel Middle Eastern Armenians and Karabaghtsis [natives of Karabagh] and Hayastan [Armenia] villagers are very patriotic and nationalistic. I believe members of the ASALA [Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia] are Fedayees [freedom fighters] just like the Karabagh fighters. I know as a Christian it is wrong to say that, but as an Armenian I feel it's justified."

Another 1991 Armenian Assembly male intern wrote, "I am a Tashnag [Dashnak] (AYF-er) [member of the Armenian Youth Federation] and believe in the goal of establishing a free and independent, united Armenia that contains all lands forcibly taken away from us."

The Armenian Assembly and AGBU Summer Interns were given twelve attitude statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each. The results are shown in table 5. Overall, the opinions of the interns confirm their parents' strong emphasis on the Armenian language and culture in their upbringing, their pro-ethnic biases, and their self-selection into the programs. Nonetheless, their views show a realistic rather than an idealistic perspective. Recognizing that 45 percent of the sample of interns did not speak Armenian, it is not surprising that 67 percent of the interns did not agree with the statement that to be a good Armenian one should speak the language. Similarly, considering that 30 percent of them had parents of non-Armenian descent, it is not surprising that 37 percent of the interns did not agree that a good Armenian should try to marry another Armenian.

When asked their plans for the future, an overwhelming majority of interns detailed career goals and then mentioned marriage, many qualifying their matrimonial goals with "hopefully to an Armenian" or making tongue-in-check comments like, "to an Armenian, of course." For example, a 1991 Armenian Assembly intern, third-generation female, wrote, "Right now my biggest challenge is to marry an Armenian. And in the end if I do, it will bring one more generation of a purebred Armenian into the world. This is a MAJOR challenge" (emphasis in original).

On the other hand, there were some interns who specified that the ethnicity of their marriage partner was not predetermined. Needless to say, the issue of marriage partners was a topic of concern for many. A few quotes from the survey illustrate the complexity of the issue. A twenty-year-old male interning at the Armenian Assembly in 1994, whose mother is Italian and father Armenian (making him third generation on his father's side), writing about his future goals said, "Work as engineer. Marry woman of ethnicity of my choosing and raise my children with knowledge of their Armenian heritage/culture/language" (emphasis in original). An Armenian Assembly intern who emigrated from Beirut at the age of eight said, "I am very proud of my Armenian heritage and will continue to forward the Armenian culture and history to my children regardless of whom (which

ethnicity) I marry.... I love my Armenian family because they don't pressure me in just having and attending Armenian functions or just hanging out with Armenians." Another second-generation, twenty-one-year-old female, born in Boston, who interned at the AGBU in 1994 wrote the following, "I don't appreciate the intense pressures placed on Armenian youth to "stay in the community," to marry Armenians, and so on. Most of this pressure is usually hidden and unintentional on behalf of parents and adults... but can drive a person into an anxiety attack. What do you expect when you move to a country where everyone around you is of mixed nationality and religion! Of course everyone wants to marry Armenian, but sometimes overstressing an issue can drive you further away. Trust the youth that they will use their best judgment in all encounters in life [in] marriage, work, choosing friends, raising children. Nationality and religion remain in the heart, not in the blood."

A second-generation woman interning at the Armenian Assembly, whose father is an Armenian from Iraq and whose mother is a Christian Palestinian, wrote, "I'm only half Armenian, but going to an Armenian school all my life made me feel wholly Armenian. I feel I know enough about the culture and am positive I will marry an Armenian and raise my kids Armenian."

The interns reflect an ethnic bias in their answers. Nearly 48 percent of the sample agreed that they should try to marry within the community. Even greater numbers (87 percent) of interns professed an intention to bring up their children Armenian. A surprising result was that 63 percent of students did not want Armenian Church services to be predominantly in English. Moreover, the interns tended to endorse familistic attitudes such as the 87 percent who agreed that a person should support one's siblings if necessary and the 65 percent who agreed that they should consider their family's needs before their own. Likewise the interns were strongly patriotic and seemed to have increased their focus on the ancestral homeland since the earthquake and the collapse of the Soviet Union. One wonders what proportion of twenty-something-year-olds of Armenian descent in the United States espouse such conservative, patriotic opinions. However, given the purpose of the programs in preparing future leaders for the community, such strong commitment and focus is no doubt necessary.

### **The Alumni**

Next we present the responses to the telephone survey conducted with thirty alumni from the Armenian Assembly internship program and thirty alumni from the AGBU internship program. To repeat, this sample was randomly selected, thus is representative of the entire internship alumni population. There were three parts to the instrument. One evaluated the respondents' assessment of the internship programs. Another queried the alumni's identity and participation in Armenian life before and after the

internship experience. The third part measured the alumni's professional achievement. We begin with the results of the Armenian identity component of the survey.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

It is reassuring that there is significant concordance between the nonprobability longitudinal intern sample and the random alumni sample. Table 4 compares the intern sample with the alumni sample on a variety of variables where data is available. With one exception, the percentages of interns and alumni born in the United States, knowledge of things Armenian, religious affiliation, and Armenian education are almost identical. The one exception, travel to the ancestral homeland, will be explained later.

Thirty-two women (53.3 percent) and twenty-eight men (46.7 percent) make up the alumni sample. Although the ratio of female to male respondents in the alumni survey is approximately 1:1, the actual ratio of females to males in both programs is closer to 3:2 (see Tables 1). Approximately 67 percent of respondents were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one years during their internship experience. The mean age was twenty-one years, corresponding to the mean age of the internship sample.

The majority of the respondents to the alumni sample were American-born (75 percent). Again, this proportion mirrors the intern sample described above (80 percent). Of the remaining alumni, ten were born in Lebanon, three in Turkey, and one each in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Armenia. In terms of generations in the United States, 13.3 percent of the alumni sample was from the first or immigrant generation, and 51.7 percent belonged to the second generation, that is, they were United States-born of foreign-born parents. Another 31.7 percent were from the third generation, that is, they and their parents were United States-born, but their grandparents were foreign-born. The remaining 3.3 percent (two alumni) belonged to the fourth generation, that is, they, their parents, and at least one grandparent were American-born (see table 5). Unfortunately, no comparative data is available for the intern sample.

Given that being in college is a precondition for acceptance in the internship programs, it is not surprising that 47 percent of the alumni sample had a bachelor's degree, another 50 percent had completed a master's degree or equivalent, and 3 percent (2 individuals) had completed a Ph.D. It should be noted that many of the respondents were still in their twenties at the time of the survey, and thus highly likely to pursue further academic degrees. Indeed, 26.7 percent of the respondents were pursuing further education, while 70 percent of the alumni were employed in a career path. Most of the alumni were still single; 28.3 percent of respondents were married and another 3.3 percent were engaged. Of the nineteen alumni who had chosen a marriage partner, 57.9 percent had chosen an individual of Armenian

descent. Finally, in terms of their religious affiliation, 72 percent of the alumni sample identified with the Armenian Apostolic Church, 8 percent with the Armenian Protestant Church, and 5 percent with the Armenian Catholic Church. The remaining 15 percent of alumni belonged to mainstream Protestant churches or did not belong to any religious congregation.

### **Armenian Identity and Community Involvement**

Several questions focused on the alumni's self-identification and the extent to which they participated in Armenian communal life before and after their internship experience. They were asked, "How do you identify yourself?" For 23.3 percent of the alumni sample, the answer was Armenian. The majority (66.6 percent) identified as Armenian-American. Only two individuals saw themselves as American. The rest named other diaspora identities. Again, these data show that the internship programs attract young people who already have a strong Armenian identity and a significant community involvement. When asked, "How frequently was your Armenian background talked about in your family while you were growing up?" about 73 percent of the alumni said either always or most of the time, 25 percent said some of the time, and only one individual said rarely. When asked, "Before becoming an intern, how informed were you about Armenian current affairs?" the majority responded that they had entered the internship programs with significant levels of knowledge: 23 percent of the alumni claimed to have been very well informed; 17 percent, well informed; and 37 percent, somewhat well informed (total 76.6 percent). Only 23 percent of the alumni reported having had little to no knowledge about current Armenian affairs prior to their internship.

As noted already, an indicator of immersion in an ethnic community is the effort parents make to teach the ancestral language to their children. With the massive influx of Armenian immigrants to the United States in the last three decades, some of the larger communities such as Los Angeles, New York, Boston, San Francisco and Philadelphia have established several elementary schools and some high schools (in Los Angeles). Even the smallest communities in North America have organized supplementary after-school or weekend programs for teaching the Armenian language and culture to the next generation. It is noteworthy that 65 percent of the alumni sample had attended some sort of an Armenian educational institution such as a full-time Armenian school, a Saturday school, or an afternoon school.

The alumni were asked whether they elected to take any college courses on Armenian topics. Thirty-six percent of the sample said they had taken at least one Armenian subject in college, but 53 percent (thirty-two individuals) pointed out that there were no Armenian courses offered at their university. The data indicate that the internship programs draw a significant proportion

of their candidates from the prestigious universities where there are chairs and programs for Armenian studies. These include Harvard University, Columbia University in New York, Tufts University, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the University of California, Los Angeles. Nonetheless, in spite of a dozen or so such centers in the United States, and other campuses that occasionally offer courses in Armenian language and history—such as the University of Chicago, Rutgers University, and the University of California, Berkeley—the vast majority of students of Armenian descent who attend college do not have such an option on their campus.

### **Language Maintenance**

Almost half (45 percent) of the alumni sample reported speaking Armenian well to very well, and 27 percent, adequately. The remaining 33.3 percent of respondents did not speak Armenian. Included in the alumni survey were four attitude statements aimed at teasing out the strength of the ethnic sentiments of the respondents (table 4). One statement read, “It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian.” The majority (83 percent) of the alumni disagreed with this statement, 50 percent somewhat disagreed, and 23.3 percent strongly disagreed. Interestingly, only four alumni (6.7 percent) strongly agreed with the statement, and twelve (20 percent) somewhat agreed.

Few members of the Armenian-American community are neutral when asked about the importance of speaking the ancestral language. Every one of the sixty alumni respondents had an opinion on the subject. One woman who speaks Armenian very well and agreed somewhat with the statement said, “There’s a significance to speaking Armenian. It’s part of identifying, but it’s not necessary to [being] Armenian.” Another man who also speaks Armenian well, but somewhat disagreed with the statement, argued, “It’s important to learn Armenian, because it heightens bonds; but there are plenty of good Armenians [who do not speak Armenian] who know the culture.” Another man who strongly agreed with the view that one should learn the language to maintain Armenian identity asserted that “language is the strongest cultural identity element, the most authentic element. Religion, music, food, and art are all a fusion of wide influences. The alphabet and vocabulary are very typical statements of identity.”

A female respondent who reported a fair knowledge of the language disagreed strongly with the statement, saying, “There’s more to being Armenian; it’s important but difficult [to say that it’s not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian]. Can’t put it on paper, just have to know.” To this young woman, being Armenian is just how she feels. Indeed, in North America and Western Europe, Armenian identity is achieved; one may claim such a privilege for oneself. It is more or less a matter of

individual choice. This type of identity is in sharp contrast to the one that is prevalent in the Middle East today and was the norm for the past five centuries for Armenians living under the Ottoman sultans. To be Armenian was to be born to Armenian parents; it was an ascribed status. Indeed there were many Armenians at the turn of the twentieth century who did not speak Armenian. This did not prevent them, however, from being the victims of genocide.

It is understandable that those who agreed with the statement were more likely to speak the language very well and were more likely to be from the first and second generations. (Both correlations were statistically significant.) However, there were those who speak the language but disagreed with the statement. These individuals are more realistic about the difficulty of maintaining the ethnic language in the United States especially outside the major metropolitan centers of Los Angeles, New York, and Boston. A young man who reported speaking Armenian adequately also disagreed, arguing that it is “difficult [to say that it’s not possible to stay Armenian without speaking the language], because it helps to enrich [identity], but it is possible without.” Another young man commented, “It’s not good to not speak. I wish I did. But I still keep my identity.” He then added, “It’s hard to pick up.” Still a third man agreed with the statement, saying it is “important in terms of keeping culture, but difficult.”

**Table 6.** Armenian Assembly and AGBU alumni responses to four attitude statements

| Statement                                                        | Strongly Agree % | Agree % | No Opinion % | Disagree % | Strongly Agree % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------|--------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian | 6.7              | 20      | -            | 50         | 23.3             |
| 2. It is important to marry another Armenian                     | 18.3             | 45      | 3.3          | 31.7       | 1.7              |
| 3. I plan on raising my children as Armenian                     |                  | 46.7    | 48.3         | 1.7        | 3.3              |
| 4. You can be Armenian and still be a good American              | 75               | 23.3    | 1.7          | -          | -                |

Two women observed that fluency in speaking Armenian was used as a boundary dividing the interns on their understanding of Armenianness. In other words, it is a barometer of one’s sense of ethnic affiliation. As Bakalian has explained in her previous work, traditional Armenians advocate language proficiency.<sup>46</sup> Symbolic Armenians, on the other hand, are less likely to stress the significance of language maintenance in ethnic preservation. One female alumna who reported speaking very little

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<sup>46</sup> Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*.

Armenian agreed with the statement observing that “most interns spoke Armenian; they spoke to eliminate [those who didn’t]. Socially, yes [it’s important], but I feel just as Armenian.” A woman who reported speaking Armenian fluently had a change of heart during her internship. She confessed, “I used to think definitely, but the internship [made me less definite].” As a result of her exposure to Armenians from various generations and places of origin, this young woman came to believe that not speaking Armenian does not make a person any less Armenian. In fact, she observed that one’s spirit or pride in one’s ancestry were more important.

### **Commitment to Armenian Identity**

Overwhelmingly, the alumni sample (95 percent) agreed with the statement, “I plan to raise my children as Armenian.” Similarly, 98 percent of alumni respondents believed that one can be Armenian and still be a good American. On the other hand, opinions on the importance of marrying a fellow Armenian were more diverse. Even though 45 percent of the alumni agreed that “it is important to marry another Armenian,” and 18 percent strongly agreed (total agreement 63 percent), over a third of the sample disagreed. The norms governing dating and mating in North America are in conflict with traditional Armenian patterns, where the pool of eligible mates is confined to one’s ethnic, religious, and class background, and elders have greater power in mate selection. At present, these norms are in transition in the Armenian-American community, and young people struggle with their parents and cultural ideals to assert their choices or feel obligated to please their parents. Compared to the high rates of intermarriage (between 15 and 90 percent depending on generation, education, and cohort) in the larger Armenian-American community, it is remarkable that 58 percent of the alumni sample chose an Armenian as a spouse.<sup>47</sup> In conclusion, it is clear from the data that the internship programs attract young men and women who have a significant stake in ethnic maintenance, mainly from earlier generations. To what extent such an attitude is engendered or reinforced by the internship experience is hard to establish. It is remarkable that nearly everyone (98 percent) endorsed a bicultural identity in line with Berry’s model and Der-Karabetian’s findings with Armenian Americans.<sup>48</sup>

### **Visit to Armenia**

Visiting Armenia seemed to be an enlightening and identity-enhancing experience for most alumni who had been there. Out of the sixty alumni in

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<sup>47</sup> For intermarriage rates, see Aharon G. Aharonian, *Intermarriage and the Armenian-American Community* (Shrewsbury, Mass., Aharon G. Aharonian, 1983); Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans*, pp. 396-412.

<sup>48</sup> Berry, “Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation”; Der-Karabetian, “Relation of Two Cultural Identities of Armenian Americans.”



the sample, 39 percent had visited Armenia at least once. Several other respondents noted that they had plans to visit Armenia in the near future. Some had gone twice, three times, or more often in a professional capacity, as representatives of Armenian diaspora organizations. Many alumni described their experiences in the ancestral homeland with great excitement. One man said, “[It’s] so fantastic to put skills to use in a place that is very important to me. [I] plan to go back.” One respondent pointed out that before his first trip, while he was in high school, he was not very involved in Armenian things, “but once there, I became more aware and appreciative, [and the second time] I was more aware of political and economic aspects. I helped on the road to recovery and democracy.” Another individual who had been to Armenia twice, explained that her first trip was a personal journey. She had visited churches, attended language classes, and learned more about the culture, especially music. Her second trip, during the economic blockade in the mid-1990s, was an eye-opening experience. It was winter, the population had no fuel, heat, or drinking water. “A lot of depression, hard.” Yet, she felt that her second trip was more productive because she had worked at alleviating some of the suffering. She believed, “all stories of youth could be tied to images of what ancestry was all about.”

Of the twenty-three respondents who had visited Armenia, 48 percent believed that their visit had significantly increased their involvement in Armenian life. Additionally, 13 percent believed the visit had somewhat increased their participation (total 61 percent). For 35 percent, whose level of commitment to the Armenian community was high to begin with, their visit to Armenia did not change their feelings. It should be said that the earthquake in 1988, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of the Republic of Armenia in 1991 increased public attention and mainstream media coverage of the Caucasus region. Not surprisingly, 60 percent of alumni respondents asserted that the independence of Armenia increased their interest in things Armenian.

### **Program Evaluation**

Having described the intern and alumni survey results, we now turn to the analysis of the summer internship programs. Have the programs achieved the goals set by their sponsoring agencies? The goals can be summarized as follows: (a) promote professional and financial achievement; (b) stimulate or maintain the interns’ attachment to their Armenian heritage; and (c) develop future leaders. It should be said that no internship program can single-handedly achieve all those goals during the course of one summer. Those goals are not stated in measurable terms and to effectively tease out the contributions of the programs toward the professional and other successes of the alumni a more complex research design would have been necessary. Most importantly, a control group of college students with similar

background characteristics – academic, socioeconomic and ethnic involvement – should have been sampled and evaluated several times alongside the interns. Nonetheless, we are able to provide a cursory assessment of the achievement of the program’s objectives. Additionally, we asked the alumni to evaluate their experience as interns and assess various components of the program. We will first summarize our findings on program goals then proceed with the alumni’s opinion of the internship programs.

### **Program Goals**

The alumni survey indicates that most respondents are pursuing careers in their profession and have been successful in their achievements so far. The selection process appears to be effective in choosing those students who are most likely to succeed professionally. The students’ high academic achievement and their eagerness to pursue the internship seem to be winning criteria for career mobility. It is unfortunate, however, that the sponsoring agencies do not seem to have a systematic process of following the lives of their alumni. We are aware of a couple of attempts to survey the alumni, but cost considerations have prevented any systematic follow-up studies. Not only would such a monitoring process have been a valuable research tool for assessment and other purposes, but also an excellent advertisement for the sponsoring agencies.

We have seen that the programs recruit, for the most part, college students who are already well enmeshed in their Armenian heritage. About half of the interns speak Armenian adequately to very well and over a third can read and write Armenian. In large numbers, the interns had attended a variety of Armenian educational institutions – Sunday school, Saturday or part-time school, full-time Armenian school, summer camp, and college classes on Armenian history or literature. Only 6 percent of the interns declared that they have no Armenian friends. In contrast more than half of the sample said that more than half of their friends were of Armenian descent. Additionally, half of the sample proclaimed that at least one of their three best friends was Armenian while one-fifth said all three of their best friends were Armenian.

About 80 percent of the interns are affiliated with an Armenian church and 25 percent of the respondents confess to attending an Armenian church once a month or more. The vast majority of the interns are familiar with the traditional Armenian political parties, though like their parents’ generation, they are not at all interested in ethnic politics, let alone joining the parties as members. More than half of the intern sample had been to a requiem service for the Armenian Genocide the year prior to the survey. Overall, the interns/alumni espouse strong feelings toward their ethnic background and as we have seen, they agonize over whether or not they will be able to find an

Armenian mate as a spouse, but have no hesitation in saying that they will raise their children with the Armenian spirit. Last but not least, we have seen that in the last decade the majority of interns have been recruited from the second generation. We have explained that these are the American-born children of the post 1965 immigrants who have come of age. As members of the second generation, the interns/alumni are strongly committed to their ethnic heritage as well as their country of birth. In summary, the second program goal of stimulating and maintaining the interns' attachment to their Armenian heritage is easily achievable given the selection process into the program.

The third program goal is to prepare leaders for the Armenian American community and the diaspora. As noted already, our cross-sectional data can only infer the likelihood of interns being "joiners" of organizations and eventually becoming leaders. Approximately one-third of the interns did not belong to any organization, and about half attended activities sponsored by an Armenian organization or association. On the other hand, about one-quarter of the interns said they were frequent attenders and about a third attended activities sometimes. It should be noted that the interns were most likely to attend events they were passionate about. Therefore, the chances that a few leaders will emerge among those who are organizationally active is very high. Understandably, these individuals will choose to be involved with the particular issues they are passionate about. Anecdotal evidence, on the other hand, suggests that the Armenian Assembly and AGBU Summer Intern Programs have produced several young men and women who have held prominent positions in the Armenian American community at the national level in the last decade or so.

### **Alumni's Evaluation of Programs**

What is the alumni's opinion of the internship programs? The alumni questionnaire included several questions on program assessment. Here we report first the alumni's responses to the mechanics of the programs in terms of size, duration, and recruitment process, effectiveness of the director and so on, then analyze their responses to program goals. Even though it would have made more sense to present the evaluation data for the Armenian Assembly program and the AGBU program separately, the number of respondents in each sub-sample (30) was too small to warrant such individual reporting. Moreover, the differences between the two programs were negligible throughout the survey.

The vast majority of the respondents to the alumni survey (96.7 percent) were satisfied with their overall internship experience (78 percent very satisfied, 18 percent somewhat satisfied). A great majority of the alumni (82 percent) found the length of the program "just right," and the rest believed it was too short. Likewise, 75 percent of the alumni thought the number of

interns in the program was “just right,” while 18 percent said it was too large. Except for the amount of contact with the program director before the start of the program, the level of dissatisfaction with the program is negligible (see Table 7). A third of the respondents would have liked more contact with the program director prior to the event. Fortunately, this seems an easy issue to redress. When asked specifically, “If you were to change or improve one thing what would it be?” the most frequent answer was “nothing” (27 percent). Other suggestions, in order of the number of times mentioned, were to: improve the cultural activities (17 percent), address organizational issues (17 percent), provide a more efficient placement process (13 percent), and have fewer interns (6.7 percent). Overall, the respondents were pleased with their experience. For 95 percent of the alumni surveyed, the internship experience was personally fulfilling (including 58 percent who said it was very fulfilling).

**Table 7.** Armenian Assembly and AGBU alumni responses to program evaluation statements

| Statement                                                                                | Satisfied % | No Opinion % | Unsatisfied % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Overall satisfaction with internship program                                          | 96.7        | 0            | 3.3           |
| 2. Level of satisfaction with the organization                                           | 88.3        | 6.7          | 5             |
| 3. Level of satisfaction with the director                                               | 90          | 6.7          | 3.3           |
| 4. Level of satisfaction with the amount of contact with the director before the program | 66.7        | 6.7          | 29.4          |
| 5. Level of satisfaction with the amount of contact with the director during the program | 91.7        | 3.3          | 5             |

Next, how do the alumni assess the program goals? First, was the internship experience useful in enhancing personal and professional growth? The answer is definitely affirmative. For 82 percent of the alumni the internship program was professionally fulfilling (including 43.3 percent who said it was very fulfilling). Consequently, exactly half of the alumni sample found the internship placement very useful in advancing their career aspirations, and 30 percent found it somewhat useful (total 80 percent). Indeed, 53 percent of the alumni reported having established helpful professional contacts during their placement.

The second objective for the internship programs is to increase the ethnic commitment of younger cohorts and prepare them for leadership roles in the community. The question is, are the internship programs able to increase the interest of their participants in the Armenian world? The alumni survey shows that the answer is affirmative. When asked, “How has the internship program affected your interest in things Armenian?” Almost 22 percent of the alumni said the internship experience had significantly increased their interest and 48 percent said it had somewhat increased their interest (total 70 percent). Again when asked, “Thinking about the Armenian cultural

activities like the history lectures and dances you were exposed to during the internship, how important have they been to you as a result?" Sixty-five percent of the sample found the cultural activities were important, but 22 percent were indifferent, and the remaining 13 percent said they were not important.

While 36.7 percent of the alumni said their level of participation in activities and programs sponsored by Armenian organizations had remained the same since their internship, 18.3 percent said their participation had significantly increased and 31.7 percent said it had somewhat increased (total 50 percent). While only 38.3 percent of the alumni respondents were not members of any Armenian voluntary organizations at the time of the survey, 16.7 percent belonged to more than three organizations, 21.7 percent belonged to two organizations, and 23.3 percent belonged to one. Furthermore, only 16.7 percent of the alumni respondents did not attend any type of activity or event sponsored by an Armenian organization. The rest seemed to enjoy parties, dances, lectures, and artistic events. While 38 percent of the alumni sample found their level of knowledge about current Armenian affairs had remained the same since the internship program, 18.3 percent said it had significantly increased, and another 42 percent said it had somewhat increased (total 60 percent).

Sociologists argue that ethnicity is maintained not only through cultural ideologies, norms and practices but also structural ties. In perpetuating ethnic identity and affiliation, the role of co-ethnic friendship is indisputable. Today children of Armenian descent grow up in regions of North America where there are few Armenians of the same age, gender, education, and interests. The internship programs offer an invaluable service to college-educated young people of Armenian descent with professional aspirations. Spending a summer away from home with age peers and sharing similar concerns over personal, professional, and communal goals is a strong catalyst for establishing long-term friendships. The survey found that only 13 percent of the respondents to the alumni survey had not maintained contact with fellow interns. The majority, 58 percent had maintained contact with four or more interns, the rest 8.3 percent, 10 percent, and 10 percent had kept contact with one, two, and three interns respectively. Furthermore, 53 percent of the alumni declared that since the completion of their internship experience, the number of their Armenian friends and acquaintances had increased (43 percent had remained the same).

Besides the quantitative evidence, there are numerous comments made by the interns in their questionnaires that indicate the programs stimulated participation in the Armenian world. A 1990 intern wrote: "I let my best friend (Armenian) read my answers when I was done. I asked her if she was surprised by any of them—subconsciously knowing something was wrong. She said yes. My answers would have probably been different if I hadn't

done the Armenian Assembly program. The only way I can explain this is by saying the Assembly [program] was such a positive Armenian experience for me that I no longer rebel against everything Armenian. During high school and after we (youth) are forced to do Armenian things by our parents; it is in a way shoved down our throats. But the people I met in this program and the educational lectures, I saw a different side of being Armenian American. And I like it.”

Similarly a male second-generation intern wrote, “Having participated in the AGBU Intern Program, many of my former ideas concerning Armenianism have changed or become confused. I used to think a good Armenian should speak Armenian, yet I have seen tremendous Armenian spirit in one whose father is Italian and in many who don’t speak the language.” A second-generation intern from New Jersey who felt she had questioned her identity in college explained her appreciation of the AGBU internship experience. “It was refreshing to be with a group of Armenians again. It’s here that friends are made and the desire to be part of the Armenian community is nurtured.”

A second-generation female who grew up in upstate New York concurred with the above. “Almost all my Armenian friends are the ones I met in AGBU. ... The AGBU internship was the first opportunity (other than one session at Camp Haiastan) that I got to meet other Armenian-Americans like myself.” A 1993 second-generation male intern noted, “I think since I’ve come to the Assembly [internship] I’ve felt more pride towards Armenia. Some of the issues I think a lot of us face are the questions of marrying an Armenian vs. marrying *odar* [non-Armenian], keeping ties with community, etc.” In conclusion, there is ample evidence that the Armenian component of the internship programs is effective in achieving the goals of the program.

As noted in the Introduction above, a perpetual debate in the Armenian diaspora has been the tension between maintaining and losing Armenian identity. This debate has often been carried on in terms of the extremes: either one is fully Armenian or one is not. Recent theoretical work by Berry and Der-Karabetian,<sup>49</sup> and empirical evidence by Der-Karabetian, Phinney, and Yarialian,<sup>50</sup> to mention a few, strongly suggest that multiple social identities are quite viable in multiethnic societies. Having a strong sense of affiliation and belonging to the mainstream culture as well as to one’s ethnic background may be an indication of strong social flexibility and wellbeing. Acknowledging and celebrating such dual or multiple social identities provides the members of an ethnic group a strong anchoring in their history

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<sup>49</sup> Berry, “Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation”; Aghop Der-Karabetian, “Multiple Social Identity as a Reflection of Modernity.”

<sup>50</sup> Der-Karabetian, “Relation of Two Cultural Identities of Armenian Americans”; Phinney, “Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults”; Yarialian, “Acculturation, Ethnic Identity and Psychological Functioning.”

and tradition, while reinforcing their successful adaptation into the host culture.

It appears that the summer internship programs have been successful in reinforcing ethnicity and at the same time facilitating mainstream adaptation. Nearly every one of the alumni in our sample (98 percent) believed that one can be a good Armenian as well as a good American. The following comments by interns demonstrate the passion with which such beliefs are held. They seem to be aware of the situational and context-bound nature of identity, and quite adept at moving back and forth between their dual identities.<sup>51</sup>

A twenty-year-old United States-born male Assembly intern whose parents are from Iran wrote, "If someone asks me, I'm Armenian first and foremost. But I see myself as an Armenian-American. Outside the US, I say I am an American of Armenian descent since Armenia did not have its own country, now is different." This young man went on to say, "It is possible to be both a good and strong Armenian, as well as a strong American. I intermix with both communities, but Armenian issues are my most favorite thing (i.e., I read the sports page, the business page, and skim through [the] front page looking for Armenian articles). Armenians that believe in isolationism are ignorant and wrong. We need to intermix with the community we live in. We should not be racist to *odars* [non-Armenians]."

A second-generation Armenian Assembly intern wrote, "One thing that has always stood out to me about Armenian-Americans is that they (we) always keep strong ties with their Armenian heritage while, at the same time, not being separatists within the American community. No one ethnic group can say the same of themselves. The history behind Armenia as a nation and Armenians is like none other." A third-generation Armenian Assembly male intern commented, "I am very proud to be an Armenian in America. However, I feel it is my duty to progress as an individual first, and along with my personal accomplishments I will always carry my Armenian name."

A 1990 Armenian Assembly intern noted, "My family has tried to balance my Armenian-ness and my American-ness. I am an American in every respect, but I know, mostly to myself, that I am Armenian too." Another 1990 intern wrote, "I am proud to be an Armenian. That being said, however, there is nothing inherently greater about my heritage than anyone else's. It seems that sometimes Armenians, as many other nationalities do, I suppose get self-righteous about the whole thing. I don't like that. Perhaps it has something to do with overcoming this foreigner/inferiority complex. As Michael Arlen put it we are a people "almost hated to death." Sometimes we overcompensate. At any rate, there are good Armenians and bad Armenians just like any other nationality. Ultimately, we all come from the same human

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<sup>51</sup> Aghop Der-Karabetian, "Armenian Identity: Comparative and Context Bound."

stock and are all encumbered with same attendant shortcomings and frailties.”

Yet another 1990 intern said, “The Armenian community often frustrates me. Yes, we are Armenians and that is a very important part of our identities. I think, however, that we must also face the reality that we live in America. I feel we should use our Armenian experiences within the American context. For example, we as Armenians have been persecuted throughout time because of our ethnicity, religion, and race. I feel that it is very hypocritical for us then to turn around and perpetuate racism, classism, and homophobia.” A twenty-two-year-old AGBU intern who has lived in Beirut and Los Angeles at various times in his life said his goal was to “marry Armenian, live in America. Not to force Armenianism on my children.”

A second-generation woman from Los Angeles, an economics student at the University of California, Berkeley, remarked, “Sometimes the Armenians are categorized into two groups—the fresh off the boats who have a lot of Armenian ethic—but are intolerant. I consider some to be sexist, racist, and they find it hard to adjust. These people often view women like myself as being ‘un-Armenian’ because I don’t agree with their views about women, homosexuality, diversity, and other ideals. The problem is that we are not like that. I am insulted that some people consider me ‘un-Armenian’ because I adjust well to American life, have American friends, and ‘liberal’ ideas—‘liberal’ as defined by an Armenian.”

A second-generation male law student who interned through the Assembly wrote, “I personally am very proud to be an Armenian and enjoy my culture immensely, but at the same time I think it is very important for Armenian-Americans to be involved in the American or non-Armenian society, because they will not be able to be productive in the diaspora if they are fanatic Armenians and separate themselves from the American culture.”

In summary, the internship programs encourage young people to broaden their perspective on Armenianness and embrace a dual identity that makes them equally embedded in their Armenian and American social worlds. The comments above amply testify to the success of one of the implicit assumptions of the sponsoring agencies, the Armenian Assembly and the AGBU. Furthermore, this ideology of bicultural identity is applicable not only to American Armenians but also other Armenians living in the diaspora. For example, a twenty-two-year-old male intern from France concurred, “I didn’t receive an Armenian education, so my feelings about my Armenian roots are often mixed. This internship gave me the opportunity to meet young Armenians of my age. Now I realize, you can be both Armenian and French.”



## **Conclusion and Feedback to the Programs**

The evidence we have gathered from the interns and the alumni of the Armenian Assembly and AGBU Summer Intern Programs indisputably indicates that the program goals of these institutions have been met. The programs promote professional success, increase interest in the Armenian world and groom leaders for the future. Yet we find that this assessment is based on a narrow definition of the program objectives. When we look more closely, we find that there is reproduction in socioeconomic status and in terms of heritage. We find the self-selection process of the interns into the programs problematic. The programs are limited in scope, exclusionary, even elitist. They resemble a private club for second-generation young men and women from affluent families. Even though both the Armenian Assembly and AGBU say they provide scholarships for academically gifted students, they do not seem to be enough. We have seen that the vast majority of the interns come from well-to-do families. Our objection is based on the fact that talent and intelligence are not restricted to the children of the wealthy. We urge both programs to encourage the participation of a wider circle of young people from more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The second criticism targets the generational status of the interns, who have been mostly from the second generation in the last decade. This means that the programs have not created a new market or opened up leadership opportunities to a wider spectrum of candidates. Many of the interns in recent years have been the sons and daughters of the latest wave of immigrants. As members of the second generation, they come in with higher levels of language proficiency, a higher proportion of friends who are also of Armenian descent, and a greater degree of involvement in communal life. Since recruitment to the internship programs is predominantly through word of mouth, assimilated individuals are unlikely to hear about these programs. It might even be the case that Americanized students would be reluctant to join an “ethnic” group they know little about. Thus our second recommendation is to make sure that later generation candidates are given the chance to be selected.

Last but not least, we ask why the programs are limited to about 30 interns per year. If the benefits of the programs are overwhelmingly positive, couldn't the Armenian American community come up with one or two additional sites for housing college interns during the summer months? Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston come to mind both as urban centers with professionally diverse and prominent corporate enterprises as well as homes for vibrant Armenian communities. Our views were echoed in *Armenian International Magazine* in 1998. The magazine article praises the opportunity the internship programs offer to young people of Armenian descent, and congratulates the AGBU and the Assembly for their foresight in initiating the programs. However, the editors of *AIM* go on to write, “The

bad news is that no more than 100 young people have access to these programs.”<sup>52</sup> The excuse is that these programs are costly; each organization spends about \$100,000 per year on these programs.

In conclusion we want to congratulate the Armenian Assembly and the AGBU on their achievements to date with the college internship programs and thank them for the opportunity they gave us to survey the interns and alumni. We hope, however, that our call for increased socioeconomic and generational diversity in the selection process and an increase in the internship opportunities will yield a wider cadre of talented and committed youth to serve not only the Armenian American community but also the diaspora in the future. We also wish for a more systematic evaluation of Armenian American organizations and programs. As we have demonstrated in this article, assessment reports may be a useful tool to validate the financial and manpower investment of the community. They also provide essential feedback for organizational improvement and effectiveness.

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<sup>52</sup> Armenian International Magazine, November 1998, p. 10.



## ARMENIAN ETHNIC ORIENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE-REVISED<sup>53</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian, Suzanne Berberian, and Adrineh Der-Boghossian

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to report the development of a shorter, revised version of the 57-item Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ). Data from two different independently conducted studies are presented. One of the studies used a convenience sample from Pasadena, California ( $n = 155$ ) composed of Armenian adolescents (48% girls, 52% boys) attending public schools with a mean age of 15.6 ( $SD = 1.18$ ). The second study used a convenience sample from Toronto, Ontario ( $n = 108$ ) composed of community members at large (48% women, 52% men) with a mean age of 34.03 ( $SD = 15.26$ ). The AEOQ-R, composed of 15 items rated on a six-point scale, showed good scale score reliability and construct validity. In both studies, the AEOQ-R differentiated the native-born from the immigrant groups and was correlated with a higher degree of ethnic behaviors and involvement.

The United States Surgeon General's declaration that good health care is enhanced by culturally competent care (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) reinforced the increasing interest and research in understanding the ways cultural and ethnic issues interact with delivery of psychological services in different ethnic and cultural groups (Berry & Kim, 1988; Atkinson, Morton, & Sue, 1989; Ponterotto, 1998; Sue, 1998; Dana, 2000; Gamst, Dana, Der-Karabetian, & Kramer, 2004). One important facet of this research has focused on the role of acculturation and ethnic identity in individuals' service utilization and outcomes (Helms, 1985; Phinney, 1990; Cortes, 1994; Gamst, Dana, Der-Karabetian, Aragon, Arellano, & Kramer, 2002). Such research has moved forward with the use of measures to assess acculturation and identification with specific ethnic groups, such as Mexican Americans (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995); Asian Americans (Sunn, Richard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987), African Americans and Euro-Americans (Helms, 1990), Iranians (Ghaffarian, 1987), and Armenians (Der-Karabetian, 1981), to mention a few.

Phinney (1992) developed scales that could be used to measure ethnic and American identity for any ethnic group. Similarly, the scales developed by Zak (1973) and Cuellar, et al. (1995) have been adapted to measure identification with groups other than their originally intended groups (e.g.,

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Der-Karabetian, 1980; Der-Karabetian & Ruiz, 1997; Yacoubian, 2003). The use of measures developed for one group and adapted for others, or measures that are global in form, may provide reliable and meaningful data comparable across groups and studies to foster theory building. However, the use of global and adapted measures may miss elements of ethnic identity that are unique to an ethnic group and address that group's specific issues; therefore, these measures may not be as sensitive in identifying individual differences within the group. While the general global construct of ethnic identity and the more specific construct of identification with a particular cultural group may share common domains and overlapping variability (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, A., & Bamaca-Gomez, 2004), they are also likely to cover somewhat different aspects of ethnicity.

The purpose of this study was to propose a shorter, revised version of the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ) to measure ethnic orientation among Armenians living outside of the Armenian Republic, utilizing samples from Ontario, Canada, and California, USA. A shorter version of the original 57-item scale (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977) would provide a quick and convenient assessment of ethnic orientation in clinical settings as well as for research purposes. The 57 items take 20-30 minutes to complete.

The Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ) was originally developed in Lebanon (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977; Der-Karabetian, 1981) to measure the ethnic identity of Armenians, a minority group showing signs of assimilation (Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977). The 57 items covered issues ethnically unique to diaspora Armenians, such as the 1915 genocide and its denial by Turkey, the role of the church in maintaining identity, and feelings about the Armenian homeland. The scale showed good scale score reliability and discriminative validity that predicted differences between generations as well as between ethnically more or less involved groups. The scale has been used in somewhat modified forms with Armenians in the United States (Alexander, 1997; Yaralian, 1999; Bakalian & Der-Karabetian, 2003) and Turkey (Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992). From a theoretical perspective, the AEOQ targets the measurement of a particular type of ethnic orientation referred to as "separated" by Berry and Kim (1988). The "separated" orientation reflects the preference to remain embedded in one's own culture and avoid involvement with the larger society. The other types of ethnic orientations that Berry and Kim identify include "Integrated", which reflects preference to be immersed in the majority culture, "Bicultural", which reflects preference for both ethnic and majority cultures, and "Marginalized", which reflects preference for avoidance of both ethnic and majority cultures.

The population of ethnic Armenians (unrelated to the religious sect of Armenians) in the United States is estimated to be around one million, with the largest concentrations in southern California on the west coast and in Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey on the east coast (Takooshian, 1986-87; Bakalian, 1993). The earliest Armenian immigrants arrived in America in the 1880s followed by several waves (Yaralian, 1999). A wave of immigration to the United States occurred early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the wake of the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman government (Bakalian, 1993). In the 1970s there was a surge of immigrants when Armenians were attempting to escape political turmoil in Iran and civil war in Lebanon (Bakalian, 1993). Most recently, a wave of immigrants came in the 1990s after Armenia declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 (Bakalian, 1993). While the earliest immigrants were mostly laborers and skilled workers, the later groups tended to be well-educated professionals, businessmen and entrepreneurs (Takooshian, 1986-87). California and Ontario, the two locations involved in this report, have vibrant Armenian communities with many churches, schools, newspapers and cultural organizations (Bakalian, 1993). The Armenian genocide of 1915 and the growth and development of the Armenian Republic are major preoccupations of the political, social and cultural life of these diaspora communities.

The shorter revised version of the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire presented here (AEOQ-R) is based on two independently conducted studies, one in Pasadena, California and the other in Toronto, Ontario. Both studies examined the scale score reliability, and the construct validity of the AEOQ-R using somewhat different measures.

## **Study 1**

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

The 155 participants in this study were students in two Pasadena, California high schools, and were between the ages of 14 and 18 ( $M = 15.60$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ). There were 75 (48%) girls and 80 (52%) boys in the sample. Of the total sample, 80 (52%) were born in the United States and 75 (48%) were born outside of the United States, mostly in Armenia (59%) and in Middle Eastern countries (30%). The median years of residency in the United States of those who were born elsewhere was 12 years ( $M = 9.78$ ,  $SD = 4.90$ ).

#### **Measures**

*The Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire-Revised (AEOQ-R)* - The original pool of 57 items of the scale (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977) was given to six judges of Armenian descent, both immigrant and native-born, who were asked to indicate for each item whether it was or was not

universally appropriate and meaningful for Armenians living in the United States and other countries outside of the Republic of Armenia. The judges were college graduates with backgrounds in the social sciences such as social work, clinical psychology, counseling and sociology, were active in the Armenian community of southern California and/or held academic positions. The first author personally knew all the judges. Items endorsed by 4 or more of the judges were included in the current scale. Fifteen items met this criterion. The 15 items were rated on a six-point Likert scale, with 1 = Disagree Strongly and 6 = Agree Strongly. The six-point rating scale was used because that was the rating scale used in the original questionnaire. Four of the items were reversed, and then the mean of the ratings across all 15 items was used to obtain the total score on the scale. Higher scores indicated stronger Armenian ethnic orientation. The original 57-item scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .89. (See Appendix C in this volume).

*The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)* - This scale was developed by Phinney (1992) to assess ethnic and other-group orientation in any ethnic group. The Ethnic Identity subscale has 14 items and the Other-group Orientation has 6 items rated on a four-point Likert scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree. Two items in each subscale are reversed before obtaining the mean ratings across the 14-items for a total scale score. Higher scores denote stronger ethnic and other-group orientation. In the original sample, the Cronbach's alpha for the Ethnic Identity scale was .81 for the high school students. In the current sample, it was .65, which was marginally acceptable (Pedhazur, Pedhazur Schmelkin, 1991). This scale was used to assess the criterion-related validity of the AEOQ-R. In the original sample, the scale score reliability for the Other-group Orientation was .71. In the current sample, it was .23, which was not acceptable. Thus, the measure was not analyzed further. In fact, Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz (1997) suggest caution concerning the use of this subscale.

*The Acculturative Stress Scale* - This scale was originally developed by Williams-Flournoy and Anderson (1996) to assess the degree of acculturative stress African-American students experience in a school or a college environment because of their racial background. It is composed of 9 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Scores can range from 9 to 45, with higher scores denoting greater levels of acculturative stress. The alpha in the original sample was .84. In the current Pasadena sample, the alpha was .82. Examples of the items are, "I feel pretty uneasy in classes or meetings when there's no one from my racial group nearby," and "I get nervous when several people from a different racial group approach me." Conceptually, the scale was developed to measure the psychological discomfort experienced in the process of assimilation into a new or unfamiliar culture (Williams-Flournoy & Anderson). This scale was used to assess construct validity of the AEOQ-

R with the prediction that those who tend to score higher on the AEOQ-R, will tend to score higher on The Acculturative Stress Scale (e.g., Kadkhoda, 2001; Manning, 2005). Those who express greater preference for being separated from the majority culture may tend to experience more distress as they interact with it.

*Ethnic behaviors* - Several questions were asked about ethnic behaviors which dealt with, involvement in Armenian organizations (1 = not, 2 = somewhat and 3 = very), proportion of friends who are Armenian and non-Armenian (3 = mostly Armenian, 2 = Armenian and non-Armenian in about equal numbers, and 1 = mostly non-Armenian), involvement in activities to secure recognition of the Armenian genocide of 1915 at the hands of the Ottoman Turks (1 = not, 2 = somewhat and 3 = very), and fluency in the Armenian language (1 = cannot speak and cannot write, 2 = can speak but cannot write, and 3 = can speak and can write). Similar single-item behavior measures have been used successfully in other studies of Armenian samples (e.g., Bakalian, 1993; Yaralian, 1999; Shirikian, 2006). These questions were used to establish the construct validity of the AEOQ-R. In all of these questions, more ethnic involvement and behavior were coded with higher numbers and were expected to correlate positively with AEOQ-R.

## **Procedure**

The data were collected in classroom settings, in study groups and in small groups during recess and lunch times by the second author who held the position of Community Liaison in the Pasadena Unified School District. Before questionnaires were administered permission was obtained from the superintendent of the School District. Then, parents were sent letters and consent forms, which they signed and returned. Furthermore, students also signed assent forms before they completed the survey. The letters to the parents and the parent consent forms were sent in both Armenian and English. Students received only English language assent forms and questionnaires. Difficult words in the current version of the questionnaire, such as “assimilation,” “diaspora,” and “genocide,” did not appear to cause particular difficulty of comprehension for the younger adolescents, probably because Armenian youth hear these words quite often at home, in the Armenian media, in schools and in cultural organizations they attend. Language difficulties were not observed during the completion of the questionnaires, since no one asked the meaning of any words, as they were encouraged to do. Participants were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality, and were given the freedom to withdraw at any time without penalty or consequences.



## Results and Discussion

The Cronbach's alpha for the AEOQ-R was .71 (95% confidence interval using the Central Approach = .62 - .77), indicating an acceptable level of scale score reliability. None of the items, when deleted, yielded a noticeable improvement of the alpha. Boys ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) scored significantly higher than girls ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = .65$ ;  $t_{152} = 2.05$ ,  $p = .042$ ,  $ES = .03$ ). This is consistent with findings from other studies showing boys score higher than girls on ethnic identity (e.g., Phinney, 1992).

As expected, participants born outside the United States ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) scored higher on the AEOQ-R than those born in the United States ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .64$ ;  $t_{151} = 2.01$ ,  $p = .046$ ,  $ES = .03$ ), suggesting criterion validity. Moreover, scores on the AEOQ-R were positively correlated with the age the immigrant group came to the United States ( $r = .24$ ,  $p = .043$ ). This is consistent with expectations, since those who come to the United States earlier tend to become more acculturated and less ethnically oriented (Der-Karabetian, 1980; Cuellar et al., 1995).

For further evidence of construct validity, AEOQ-R scores were correlated with various ethnic behaviors. Separate correlations for boys and girls were not conducted since the frequency distributions on the ethnic behavior items were undifferentiated. Participants who tended to score higher on the AEOQ-R also tended to be members in more Armenian Organizations ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), were more involved in efforts to obtain recognition of the 1915 genocide of Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman government ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .001$ ), had more close Armenian friends ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and tended to report better Armenian language skills ( $r = .17$ ,  $p = .037$ ). Also, as expected, participants who scored higher on Acculturative Stress tended to score higher on the AEOQ-R ( $r = .36$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

There was a significant and positive moderate correlation between scores on the AEOQ-R and MEIM's Ethnic Identity subscale ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Such a correlation suggests the presence of convergent validity. It also suggests that while AEOQ-R may be measuring the construct of Ethnic Identity in general, it may also be tapping into an aspect of Ethnic Identity unique to being of Armenian descent.

The data suggest that the AEOQ-R has acceptable scale score reliability, is predictably correlated with ethnic involvement and acculturative stress, and differentiates participants born in the United States, who may be considered more acculturated, from immigrant participants. Thus, these findings point to the reliability of the AEOQ-R scores, and to the criterion-related and construct validity of the scale with Armenian adolescents in Pasadena, California. The second study examined the reliability and validity of the AEOQ-R with a different sample, including adolescents, as well as a much wider age range, in Toronto, Ontario.

## **Study 2**

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Participants included 52 (48%) women and 56 (52%) men with a median age of 29 years, ranging from 14 to 75 years old ( $M = 34.03$ ,  $SD = 15.26$ ). Of all the participants, 33 (31%) were born in Canada and 75 (69%) were born in other countries, predominantly in the Middle East. The median number of years in Canada by all participants was 20 years, ranging from 1 to 40 years ( $M = 21.12$ ,  $SD = 8.49$ ). Forty percent of the respondents reported currently being students, and of the total sample 52% reported having four-year college or graduate degrees, 43% high school degree, and 5% less than high school.

#### **Measures**

*Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire-Revised* - This is the same 15-item scale described in Study 1.

*Ethnic Behaviors*: Questions related to ethnic behaviors were as follows: Involvement in Armenian organizations (1 = not involved, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = very much); Knowledge of the Armenian language (1 = none, 2 = poor-speak a few words or sentences, 3 = fair-can carry on some conversation, 4 = good-have reading knowledge, 5 = very good-can read and write); Reading Armenian literature (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = some of the time, 4 = most of the time, 5 = always); Participation in the commemoration of the Armenian genocide (2 = yes, 1 = no); Armenians in your neighborhood (1 = mostly non-Armenian, 2 = both Armenian and non-Armenian about equally, 3 = mostly Armenian); and Proportion of Armenian friends (1 = mostly non-Armenian, 2 = Armenian and non-Armenian about equally, 3 = mostly Armenian). Higher ethnic behaviors or involvement indicators were coded with higher numbers. Similar single-item behavior measures have been used successfully in other studies (e.g., Bakalian, 1993; Yaralian, 1999; Shirikian, 2006). These questions were used to determine construct validity of the AEOQ-R with the prediction that greater ethnic involvement would be associated with higher AEOQ-R scores.

#### **Procedure**

Questionnaires were distributed in informal community, school and college settings by the third author as part of her senior project. Only English versions of the questionnaire were used since all subjects could read English but not all could read Armenian. On rare occasions, some questions were translated into Armenian orally for individuals who were not very comfortable with English. All participants were asked to sign a consent form before participation. Anonymity of the respondents was assured.

## Results and Discussion

The Cronbach's alpha of the AEOQ-R was .71 (95% confidence interval using the Central Approach = .62 - .77) for the Toronto sample. The alpha was not improved if any of the items were deleted. Men ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = .60$ ), and women ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = .85$ ) did not score differently on the scale ( $t_{106} = .42$ ).

For construct validity, the scores of participants who were and were not born in Canada were compared. Those who were not born in Canada ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = .77$ ) scored significantly higher than those born in Canada ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = .64$ ;  $t_{106} = 2.07$ ,  $p = .049$ ,  $ES = .04$ ). Construct validity was also tested by correlating the AEOQ-R scores with various ethnic behaviors and measures of ethnic involvement. Participants who scored higher on the AEOQ-R also tended to be more involved in Armenian organizations ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), had better Armenian language skills ( $r = .21$ ,  $p = .033$ ), read more Armenian literature regardless of language skills ( $r = .31$ ,  $p = .001$ ), participated in more genocide commemoration activities ( $r = .22$ ,  $p = .025$ ), lived in neighborhoods with more Armenians ( $r = .26$ ,  $p = .008$ ), and had more close Armenian friends ( $r = .21$ ,  $p = .027$ ).

For participants who were born outside of Canada, number of years living in Canada was uncorrelated with AEOQ-R scores ( $r = .02$ ). For the overall sample, older individuals tended to score higher on the AEOQ-R ( $r = .21$ ,  $p = .03$ ), as well as participants with higher educational degrees ( $r = .19$ ,  $p = .044$ ).

Like for the Pasadena, California sample, the AEOQ-R showed acceptable scale score reliability in the Toronto, Ontario sample, and the scores of the foreign-born were higher than those of the native-born Canadian Armenians, as expected. Furthermore, construct validity was reinforced by positive correlations between the AEOQ-R and various ethnic behaviors and involvement. However, longer residency in Canada was unrelated to the AEOQ-R for the foreign-born.

## General Discussion

The findings show that the AEOQ-R had acceptable scale score reliability in two samples that were quite different in terms of geography and age distribution. Also, the AEOQ-R appeared to have good construct validity. It yielded predictable differences between native-born and immigrant participants in both of the samples. Moreover, scores on the scale correlated positively with behavioral criteria of ethnic involvement in terms of membership in ethnic organizations, ethnic friends, and Armenian language skills. These correlations tended to be low but were significant, nevertheless. Construct validity was further reinforced by a significant correlation between the AEOQ-R and acculturative stress in the Pasadena adolescent sample. Similar relationships between ethnic identity measures

and acculturative stress have also been noted by Tahmassian (2003) with Armenians, Kadkhoda (2001) with Iranians, Manning (2005) with Mexican Americans, and Walker (2003) with African Americans and Anglo-Americans. Theoretically, such a correlation would be expected since the AEOQ measures “Separated” ethnic orientation, which is characterized by the desire to avoid the dominant majority culture and a preference for the ethnic culture (Berry & Kim, 1988). The AEOQ-R was moderately correlated with the MEIM’s Ethnic Identity subscale (Phinney, 1992) in the Pasadena sample suggesting the construct validity of the AEOQ-R. Shirikian (2006) showed a similar correlation between AEOQ-R scores and MEIM’s Ethnic Identity scores in another sample of Armenian adolescents. While the AEOQ-R may be measuring a general component of ethnic identity, it also may be capturing an aspect of identity that is unique among Armenian adolescents. The MEIM was not used for the Toronto sample, and future research should establish if such a relationship exists in the general community.

The AEOQ-R may be used in different ways. The assessment of client acculturation and strength of ethnic identity levels play a role in delivering culturally competent care (Dana, 2000; Gamst, *et al.*, 2002). The AEOQ-R, as a short measure of ethnic orientation, may provide a quick and easy way to assess the ethnic orientation and acculturation level of Armenian clients, and thus inform the delivery of culturally more competent care by the counselor. It also may be used to study how willingness to seek psychological help may be related to acculturation and ethnic identity among Armenians. Willingness to seek psychological help and acculturation have been found to be related in other ethnic groups such as Asians (e.g., Zhang & Dixon, 2003; Vo, 2004) and Latinos (e.g., Kouyoumdjian, Zamboanga, & Hansen, 2003) such that higher acculturation has been associated with a more positive attitude towards willingness to seek psychological help. Furthermore, if the AEOQ-R is shown to be correlated with standard measures of mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders, the interpretation of scores on the measures would have to take into consideration the strength of the ethnic orientations of the clients. The AEOQ-R may also be useful in conducting ethnic-specific research (American Psychological Association, 2003) within Armenian communities. For example, the scale may be used to examine the way Armenian ethnic orientation may play a mediating role in promoting eating disorders among adolescents (Miller & Pumariega, 2001), family violence and battering (Riggs, Caulfield, & Street, 2000), and delinquency (Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz, & Miller, 2000) among individuals of Armenian heritage.



# ACCULTURATION, ETHNIC IDENTITY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING AMONG ARMENIAN-AMERICAN YOUNG ADULTS<sup>54</sup>

Tara Yaralian, Aghop Der-Karabetian, and Tom Martinez

## Introduction

When an individual from one cultural group comes into contact with another cultural group, a modification or adjustment in the individual will take place as a result of the contact between the different cultures. The process through which an individual adapts to a culture different from the one in which he or she was born and raised is known as acculturation (Ghaffarian, 1987).

In a culturally diverse society, an important question becomes the manner in which ethnic minorities relate to the dominant culture and to one another (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992). Cultural pluralism is based upon the assumption that a majority is willing to tolerate a new group, and that a minority is willing to learn to adapt to a new environment. This process of learning is called acculturation (Smither, 1982). Acculturation is the process through which an individual adapts to a culture different from the one in which he or she was born (Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977). Acculturation takes place when two independent cultural groups come into continuous contact over an extended period of time, and, as a result, changes take place within one or both groups (Berry et al., 1986).

According to Berry (1980), conflict may be especially pronounced for an immigrant if he or she relocates to a country where there are significant differences between the values of the dominant and native cultures. It has been proposed that the more an immigrant retains his or her native culture, the more he or she will experience problems in adjustment (Griffith, 1983; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). In contrast, Ramirez (1969) has found that adapting to the customs of the dominant culture and rejecting the native culture may also lead to problems in adjustment. Furthermore, some researchers have found that identification with, and adoption of, both the American and the native cultures results in healthier adjustment in immigrants (Buriel, Calzada, & Vasquez, 1982; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980).

Numerous studies have been conducted with immigrants including those from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, East Asia, and Iran, in regards to the

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difficulties they face with acculturating to the mainstream American culture. A paucity of research exists, however, on the acculturation process of Armenian immigrants. Some Armenians are immigrants who were unsatisfied with the situations in their country, whereas others are political refugees whose lives would have been endangered if they had continued living in their country. Some Armenian immigrants have migrated legally and are accepted by the dominant culture, and yet others have arrived illegally and remain alienated from the dominant culture. Some Armenians choose to immigrate, while others are forced to do so due to political and economic instability in their countries. The circumstances that lead many Armenians to immigrate to the United States, coupled with the issues that immigrants face upon arrival in the new culture, necessitate the study of the psychological status of this population.

### **Armenians of the United States**

Historically, Armenian lands were located northeast of the Euphrates River on the Eastern Anatolian Plateau of Asia Minor, known as the Armenian Highland. The Armenians of today are descendants of a very ancient people who have survived a long and tumultuous history. Located in the middle of major caravan routes linking the West with the East and Middle East, Armenia was a battleground throughout most of its history for powerful neighbors attempting to gain control of its strategic location (Dagirmanjian, 1996).

Armenian immigration to the United States can be divided into three periods. The earliest immigrant arrived in Jamestown in approximately 1618. By the late 1880s, the number of Armenian immigrants, composed mostly of artisans and laborers, had risen to 1,500. In the last decade of the 19th century, over 12,000 Armenians fled the massacres of the Ottoman Empire and arrived in America. The number of immigrants increased dramatically between 1900 and 1914, and by the beginning of World War I, there were approximately 60,000 Armenians in the United States (Bakalian, 1993).

The second wave of Armenian immigrants arrived after World War I. Survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 perpetrated by the Young Turk Government poured into the United States. In 1920 alone, 10,212 Armenians entered the United States. Also, between 1920 and 1924 an additional 20,559 came. The quota system, however, which went into effect in 1924, did not favor Armenians and brought their immigration to a halt (Bakalian, 1993). The American National Committee for Homeless Armenians (ANCHA), which was established in 1947, was able to bypass the quota system and helped an additional 25,000 Armenians immigrate to America under its auspices (Takooshian, 1986-87).

The third wave of immigrants arrived in the United States after the quota system was ended in 1965. This time, the Armenians were escaping the

political turmoil of the Middle East. The rate peaked as never before with the start of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975 and the 1978 Islamic revolution in Iran (Takooshian, 1986-87). According to the 1980 US Census, only 8% of Iranian-Armenians immigrated to the United States before 1959, 25% between 1960 and 1974, and 65% between 1975 and 1980 with three-quarters of Armenian immigrants settling in Los Angeles (Bakalian, 1993).

The Armenian population of Lebanon is estimated to have decreased from 250,000 in the early 1970s to less than 100,000 in the late 1980s. Although not all who left Lebanon came to the United States, it is estimated that between 60,000 and 160,000 Lebanese Armenians did immigrate to the United States (Takooshian, 1986-87).

The third wave of Armenian immigrants left their countries out of fear of persecution and civil unrest (Bakalian, 1993). Many were political refugees and, as a consequence, differed from other immigrants.

The single most defining element of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for the Armenian people is the genocide perpetrated by the Turkish government (Dagirmanjian, 1996; Charny, 1999). In 1915, the new government of the Young Turks orchestrated the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians. The impact of this atrocity has been felt by all strata of Armenian society, and has left its imprint on subsequent generations of Armenians, even after more than 80 years. However, responses to the Genocide are varied and complex, reflecting the difficulty inherent in attempting to move beyond such an event. Herein lies the paradox. More than any other single aspect of being Armenian, the Genocide can summon feelings of solidarity and unity among various subgroups of Armenians. At the same time, however, it creates intolerable dissonance for a group of people who are self-reliant and industrious to be identified by a generation-old tragedy (Dagirmanjian, 1996).

Estimates of the number of people of Armenian descent in the United States at the present time range from 600,000 to over 1 million. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Armenian people along with their culture and traditions are perceived to be in jeopardy due to their small numbers being dispersed all around the world (Bakalian, 1993). Moreover, their physical survival seems to be threatened by massacres, political unrest, and earthquakes. It is unlikely that many Armenians will return to Armenia or their countries of origin, and, therefore, they must adjust to life in the new country.

### **Acculturation**

The melting pot theory was the first attempt to analyze what was happening to immigrants in the United States. Early discussions came from American sociologists such as Park and Burgess (1924) and later from Gordon (1964) and Matsumoto, Meredith, and Masuda (1973). Earlier views



of American society assumed that ethnic groups would become assimilated into the melting pot of the mainstream culture. During the 1960s, however, individuals realized that there were a great many ethnic groups that had remained differentiated from the dominant culture, sometimes over many generations. As a result, the melting pot theory was abandoned and conflicting hypotheses concerning cultural pluralism were proposed to explain the existence of these various groups (De Anda, 1984).

A psychosocial model of acculturation, developed by Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtinez, & Arnalde (1978), suggests the presence of intergenerational and acculturation differences in immigrants. There must be a modification of customs, values, language usage, and life style in order for the individual to become acculturated. Behavioral acculturation is the individual's adoption of the language, customs, and other observable aspects of the dominant culture.

Sociologists were the first to investigate the acculturation of immigrants and used the terms acculturation and assimilation synonymously. Vlachos (1968) saw assimilation as a phase of acculturation that may never be completed in some instances. Park and Burgess (1924) define assimilation as a process of fusion. When immigrants were not identified as a member of a minority group, they had become assimilated into the dominant culture. Gordon (1964) saw acculturation as the first stage of assimilation. He believed that acculturation does not necessarily lead to assimilation, but that assimilation inevitably leads to acculturation.

Teske and Nelson (1974) helped clarify the relationship between acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation involves a bidirectional relationship and does not require a change in values or acceptance from the out-group. Assimilation, on the other hand, is unidirectional (towards the dominant group), requires a change in values, an internal change in identification, and an acceptance by the out-group (Teske & Nelson, 1974).

The most widely accepted analysis of assimilation is that of Gordon (1964) who differentiates between seven sub-processes of assimilation. Behavioral assimilation refers to the extent to which the minority culture adopts the cultural traditions of the dominant culture, including the dress, religion, and art. Structural assimilation refers to the process by which the minority group becomes incorporated into the social and occupational organizations of the majority group. Amalgamation refers to intermarriage that takes place between the majority and minority groups. Identification is the process by which the minority group develops a sense of belonging to the majority group. An absence of prejudice and discrimination implies assimilation of attitudes and behaviors, respectively. Finally, civic assimilation is an absence of value and power conflict between the minority and majority groups.

While acculturation involves change in cultural values and behaviors in a minority group as a result of contact with a dominant majority culture over time, ethnic identity is concerned with ethnic or cultural in-group activities, attitudes, and feelings acquired through the ethnic socialization process (Der-Karabetian, 1981). According to Phinney (1990), in the process of acculturation, the main focus is on how individuals relate to the dominant society, whereas in the process of ethnic identity, the focus is on how individuals relate to themselves and their own culture of origin as a subgroup within the dominant group.

In reviewing the literature, Clark et al. (1976) have noticed a gradual shift of interest from the area of acculturation to that of ethnic identity. They have found that recent investigators have not included acculturation in the study of ethnic identity, implying that the two have nothing in common. Clark et al. have found that acculturation forms a major part of ethnic identity, and gives meaning about the relationship between the traditional and dominant culture.

Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki (1989) developed a two-dimensional acculturation attitude model. The researchers suggest that two important factors determine the level of acculturation of an individual: (a) the extent to which minority group members find it important to maintain the cultural characteristics of their own ethnic group, and (b) the importance the members of the minority group place on maintaining positive relations with the dominant society.

By dealing with these two issues simultaneously, there are four distinct ways in which an ethnic group member can participate in a society: (a) assimilation, (b) integration, (c) separation, and (d) marginality. Assimilation occurs when an individual severs all ties with his or her ethnic culture and identifies with the dominant culture. Integration (bicultural) is the outcome when the individual identifies with both the dominant and ethnic cultures. An exclusive focus on one's ethnic culture results in separation. Finally, marginality is the loss of contact with both the dominant and ethnic cultures (Berry et al., 1989).

In conceptualizing the process of acculturation, Berry (1980) proposed a three-stage model consisting of contact, conflict, and adaptation. Contact, a necessary part of acculturation, may occur in the form of trade, immigration, or missionary activity. Conflict may arise when groups become resistant to abandoning their culture and values. However, when conflict decreases or is somehow stabilized, the stage is referred to as adaptation.

### **Acculturation Stress**

In the first few months after immigration, the individual is caught up in trying to meet his or her basic survival needs. Following this period, environmental stress, which may be determined by factors such as the nature

of the individual's support system and type of employment, may present itself as symptoms and difficulties. Conflict may be experienced especially, if the immigrant relocates to a country where there are significant differences between the values of the immigrant and the dominant culture (Berry, 1980).

Some immigrants experience mental health problems upon relocating to a new culture. As they adjust to the new culture, many of their problems seem to subside, only to return again as they fail to meet their expectations and face new difficulties (Cortes, 1994).

Some degree of emotional distress or culture shock may be experienced by immigrants whose previous experiences are insufficient for coping in a new cultural environment (Taft, 1977). Culture shock, or the stress experienced during acculturation, may be seen as a normal psychological adjustment to an abrupt transition from one culture to another. The greater the disparity between the two cultures, the harder it is to bridge the gap, and as a result, the greater the level of acculturation stress.

According to Berry and Kim (1988), an individual encounters various levels of change in the process of acculturation: (a) physical, (b) biological, (c) cultural, and (d) psychological. Physical change includes having a new place to live; exposure to new foods is a biological change; social, religious, and economic changes make up the cultural level; and adaptation is considered a psychological change (Berry & Kim, 1988).

The individual's prior knowledge of the new language may also play a role in the level of acculturative stress that he or she experiences. Furthermore, when the individual is unable to achieve the goals and aspirations that he or she has set, the amount of stress may be increased. Finally, if the individual perceives the changes being experienced as manageable, he or she may have better psychological health. Therefore, the coping abilities and attitudes of the individual play a big role in the adjustment of the individual (Williams & Berry, 1991).

The individuals who would probably be the most willing to seek therapy would be the younger generation of Armenians. For older generations, their values and customs might be too well grounded in traditional Armenian culture, and many of them may refuse to even consider something as American as therapy. The younger generation, both immigrants and American-born, while wanting to hold on to their traditional culture, are struggling with many of the issues of the dominant culture as well. This group faces having to integrate issues of adapting to the dominant culture, dating and finding a life partner, and trying to secure themselves financially, while at the same time maintaining the values and customs of their culture of origin. The increased conflict and distress that they must face may make them more open to seeking help.

Given the scarcity of bicultural and bilingual therapists, Armenian clients will usually be treated by non-Armenian professionals. Consequently,

culturally sensitive mental health professionals can be a tremendous resource for these clients. As a result, therapists need to acquaint themselves with this population.

In summary, acculturation is defined as the process of adapting to a new culture. The literature has shown that adjustment difficulties during the acculturation process may result in mental disorders. Given the paucity of information on the acculturation process of young Armenian adults, further research is needed to investigate the relationship between the acculturation, ethnic identity, and psychological functioning of this population.

## **Method**

The intent of this study was to provide a systematic description of the relationship between certain socio-demographic and psychological characteristics of immigrant and first-generation Armenians residing in Los Angeles County and the surrounding areas. Areas of investigation included: (a) socio-demographic variables, (b) level of acculturation, (c) level of ethnic identity, and (d) psychological functioning.

## **Participants**

The participants for this study were Armenians residing in the greater Los Angeles area. See Table 1 for the demographic profile of the sample. A purposive sampling procedure was used to recruit participants since the members of the population of interest were identifiable based on the investigator's knowledge of this population (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1994).

To qualify as members of the study, participants needed to meet the following criteria: (a) must be either Armenian first-generation born or have immigrated to the United States, and (b) must be between 18 and 39 years of age. First-generation born and immigrants to the United States were chosen for this study because they are the generation that may experience an increased amount of anxiety and distress in regards to adjusting. Armenians who are the first generation to be born in the United States, although technically American, may still have a very strong attachment to their culture of origin. They may struggle with having to balance their desire to fit in to the mainstream culture and yet hold on to many of their cultural traditions. In addition to the issues that first-generation individuals face, immigrants to the United States have also had to deal with stressors related to the immigration process. The age range of 18 to 39 was chosen for this study because it is believed that this group would have a greater likelihood of seeking out and benefiting from psychotherapy.

Furthermore, there were two additional criteria that participants needed to meet to qualify as members of this study: (a) no prior history of any serious medical or emotional conditions that required hospitalization -- as a way to

minimize the effect of physical and mental conditions that might compromise the validity of data collected; and (b) having at least a 12<sup>th</sup> grade level of education or equivalent.

**Table 1.** Demographic information

|                                                                   |                            | Frequen<br>cy | Percent |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------|
| 1. Sex                                                            | Men                        | 68            | 37      |
|                                                                   | Women                      | 112           | 63      |
| 2. Born                                                           | In the US                  | 73            | 41      |
|                                                                   | Outside of US              | 107           | 59      |
| 3. Education                                                      | 4-years or graduate degree | 85            | 47      |
|                                                                   | Less than 4-year degree    | 95            | 53      |
| 4. Religion                                                       | Armenian Apostolic         | 132           | 73      |
|                                                                   | Armenian Protestant        | 15            | 8       |
|                                                                   | Armenian Catholic          | 19            | 11      |
|                                                                   | Other                      | 14            | 8       |
| 5. Preferred Language                                             | English                    | 92            | 51      |
|                                                                   | Armenian                   | 54            | 30      |
|                                                                   | English & Armenian         | 31            | 17      |
|                                                                   | Other                      | 3             | 2       |
| 6. Socioeconomic Status                                           | Upper class                | 63            | 35      |
|                                                                   | Upper middle class         | 75            | 42      |
|                                                                   | Middle class               | 33            | 18      |
|                                                                   | Lower middle class         | 9             | 5       |
| 7. Seek support from<br>professionals for<br>emotional challenges | Yes                        | 77            | 43      |
|                                                                   | No                         | 103           | 57      |
| 8. Marital status                                                 | Never married              | 139           | 77      |
|                                                                   | Married                    | 37            | 21      |
|                                                                   | Divorced                   | 4             | 2       |
| 9. Current living situation                                       | With parents               | 123           | 68      |
|                                                                   | With spouse                | 38            | 21      |
|                                                                   | With roommate              | 3             | 2       |
|                                                                   | With others                | 16            | 9       |

Of the 200 surveys distributed, 180 or 90% were returned, all of which were included in the analysis. The sample consisted of 68 males and 112 females. The ages for all the respondents ranged from 18 to 39 years, with a mean age of 24.54 years ( $SD = 5.54$ ). In describing the immigration-related variables for the 107 participants who were not born in the United States, it was found that the age at which the individual left their country of origin ranged from 2 months old to 30 years, with a mean age of 10.52 years ( $SD = 7.15$ ). Participants were also asked questions regarding their involvement in the Armenian community. Participants attended an average of 12.1 activities ( $SD = 15.21$ ) sponsored by Armenian organizations and belonged to 1.1 Armenian organizations ( $SD = 1.09$ ).

The Four Factor Index of Social Status (Hollingshead, 1975) was used to determine socioeconomic status (SES) and was calculated on either the

participants or their parents, depending on the family circumstances. Nearly 80% were identified as upper or upper-middle class.

Data were obtained on whether participants had ever been diagnosed, been hospitalized, or received medication for serious medical and emotional problems. Furthermore, participants were asked whether they would be willing to seek the support of a professional in talking through emotional challenges. Seventy-seven percent of respondents said they would “seek support from a professional for emotional problems.”

## **Measures**

A survey consisting of four parts was administered to each participant. The survey included: (a) a demographic and personal history questionnaire, (b) the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977), (c) the Armenian-American Identity Scale (Der-Karabetian, 1980), and (d) the Gordon Personal Profile-Inventory (Gordon, 1993). The demographic and personal history questionnaire was always the first instrument administered, but the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire, Armenian-American Identity Scale, and the Gordon Personal Profile-Inventory were administered in a counterbalanced order.

*Ethnic orientation* was measured using the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ) developed by Der-Karabetian and Oshagan (1977) (See Appendix A in this volume). In developing the measure, a list of 80 items written in Armenian were compiled. They referred to preferences of and attitudes towards Armenian things (e.g., food, music), child rearing practices, use of the Armenian language, Armenian institutions and customs. The 80 items were presented to 10 judges who were asked to rate how good each item was in terms of its face validity and the relevance of the content areas. The judges were college educated Armenians living in Lebanon who had a variety of backgrounds in the social sciences and humanities. Of the initial 80 items, 57 were retained. From the 57, 17 make up the current version of the AEOQ.

In the AEOQ, participants were asked to express their agreement with each item on a 6-point scale such that a score of 6 would indicate very strong agreement, and a score of 1 very strong disagreement. To control for response bias, the wording of the items was so devised that on 12 of the items a high score indicated high ethnic orientation, and on 5 items a low score indicated high ethnic orientation. The latter items were reverse scored in obtaining the total ethnic orientation score. The minimum and maximum scores obtainable are 17 and 102 with higher scores indicating more Armenian ethnic orientation in terms of behavioral and attitudinal aspects of being Armenian.

Data indicate that the AEOQ is appropriate for use with this population. Information about the reliability and validity of the AEOQ may be found in a series of studies such as Alexander (1997); Der-Karabetian, 1981; Der-Karabetian & Proudian-Der-Karabetian (1985).

*Acculturation* was measured using the Armenian-American Identity Scale (AAIS). It is a modified version of the Jewish-American Identity Scale (Zak, 1973), which was adapted for Armenians in the United States by Der-Karabetian (1980). A modified version has also been successfully used with Latino-Americans (Der-Karabetian & Rodriguez, 1990) (See Appendix D and C in this volume). The instrument is designed to measure the affective component of ethnic identity and identification with the dominant culture. The instrument is comprised of both an Armenian identity scale and an American identity scale, each of which has eight items. The items in each of the two scales are similarly worded with appropriate identity words. Examples of the items are: (a) If I were to be born all over again, I would wish to be born an Armenian/American; (b) My fate and future are bound up with that of Armenian-Americans everywhere. Ratings were made on a 6-point Likert-type scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement. The minimum and maximum scores attainable on each subscale are 6 and 48. Higher scores on the Armenian identity scale indicate stronger Armenian identity, and higher scores on the American identity scale indicate stronger American identity. Data indicate that the AAIS is appropriate for use with this population (Der-Karabetian, 1980; Der-Karabetian and Balian, 1995). These scales were used to identify Berry et al.'s. (1989) four acculturation groups: (a) Assimilated (Low Armenian and High American); (b) Integrated or bicultural (High Armenian and High American); (c) Separated (High Armenian and Low American); (d) Marginalized (Low Armenian and Low American).

*Psychological functioning* was measured using the Gordon Personal Profile-Inventory (GPP-I). The GPP-I combines two instruments, the Gordon Personal Profile (GPP) and the Gordon Personal Inventory (GPI), which are usually used together. The GPP measures four aspects of personality that are significant in the daily functioning of the normal person. These include: Ascendancy (A), Responsibility (R), Emotional Stability (E), and Sociability (S). Also, the sum of the GPP's four scales (ARES) yields a measure of Self-Esteem (SE). The GPI measures four additional traits: Cautiousness (C), Original Thinking (O), Personal Relations (P), and Vigor (V). These two instruments together provide eight important factors in the personality domain and reflect psychological functioning (Gordon, 1993).

A brief description of the traits measured by high and low scores on the GPP follows:

1. Ascendancy: High scores characterize individuals who have a tendency to be verbally active, take the lead in a group, and be self-assured in relationships.

2. Responsibility: Individuals who score high on this trait have a tendency to be reliable and are able to stick to the job assigned to them.

3. Emotional Stability: Individuals who are well adjusted and relatively free of worries and anxieties score high on this scale.

4. Sociability: High scores characterize individuals who are gregarious and like to be with people.

In summing these four GPP scale scores (A, R, E, S), a measure of Self Esteem is generated.

A brief description of the traits measured by high and low scores on the GPI follows:

1. Cautiousness: Individuals who score high on this scale have a tendency to be cautious, weigh matters carefully before making decisions, and dislike taking chances or risks.

2. Original Thinking: High scores characterize individuals who have a tendency to be intellectually curious and like thought-provoking questions and discussions.

3. Personal Relations: High-scoring individuals have faith and trust in others and are patient and understanding.

4. Vigor: High scores typify individuals who are energetic, active, and get more done than the average person.

Reliability and validity information about the scale can be found in Gillis & Lee (1979); Gordon (1993); Kentle (1994).

## **Procedures**

The participants were recruited from several sources: (a) Armenian student associations; (b) community, social, or professional groups; (c) student directories of universities; (d) advertisements in local Armenian newspapers; (e) word of mouth; and (f) by posting flyers in public settings like grocery stores and community colleges. For the purpose of recruiting participants for the study, the investigator attended meetings of Armenian student associations, professional societies, church groups and social groups.

Also, advertisements were put in local Armenian newspapers and copies of the recruitment flyer were posted in public settings (e.g., grocery stores, community colleges) in key areas within Los Angeles where Armenian residents tend to settle. Study participants were also recruited through university student directories.

Finally, those individuals who heard about the study by word of mouth, contacted the investigator by telephone expressing their interest in participating in the study, and were screened by means of a telephone checklist.



This study may have several limitations. One limitation of the study is that it used a non-random purposive sample between the ages of 18 and 39 years, which does not necessarily make it representative of the overall population of Armenians residing in Los Angeles or other parts of the United States. This age group, however, is the most likely age group to seek out and potentially benefit from psychological services, so it was not the intent of this investigation to study a cross-section of the overall Armenian population in Los Angeles. However, given the fact that the greatest numbers of Armenians outside of Armenia reside in Los Angeles (Bakalian, 1993), the concern raised by this potential limitation appears minimal.

The measures of psychological functioning, the GPP-I and the SRE, have not been used with Armenians before. Therefore, their validity with Armenians is unknown, and the results should be interpreted cautiously.

Because the data were self-reported, there is the potential, as in all such studies, that the respondents may not have been truthful, or may have provided answers that either overestimated or underestimated their current psychological functioning. It is likely that such distortions are minimal given that the survey was anonymous.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Ethnic Orientation and identity**

The results of the multiple regression analysis (Table 2) showed a negative relationship between the scores of American identity and Sociability, and a positive relationship between the scores of ethnic orientation and Armenian identity relative to Ascendancy and Sociability. The stronger the American identity of the participant, the lower he or she scored on the ability to take the lead in a group, be self-assured, and like to be with other people. The stronger the ethnic orientation and/or Armenian identity of the participant, the higher he or she scored on the ability to adopt an active role in a group, make independent decisions, and like to be with other people.

A separate test was conducted to compare participants who scored above and below the mean on the ethnic orientation scale. The results showed differences on Ascendancy, Sociability and Cautiousness (Table 3). Participants who were high on ethnic orientation when compared to low ethnic orientation, regardless of their identification with the dominant American culture, scored significantly higher on Ascendancy and Sociability, but scored significantly lower on Cautiousness. These results further reinforce the earlier finding and indicate that individuals who scored high on ethnic orientation were the ones who like to be with and work with others, take the lead in groups, feel self-assured, are gregarious and sociable, and enjoy taking chances or running risks. Participants who scored low on ethnic orientation in comparison to the high ethnic orientation group were

more restricted in social contacts, had a lack of gregariousness, and considered matters very carefully before making decisions. For these participants a stronger ethnic orientation may be serving as a safety net that allows them to reach out, take risks and function better psychologically. Such an interpretation is consistent with findings of Ramirez (1969), Griffith (1983) and Kassabian (1987).

**Table 2.** Summary of multiple regression analysis for identity variables predicting psychological functioning

| Variables              |                    | B     | SE   | Standardized B | t    | p   |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------|------|----------------|------|-----|
| 1. Ascendancy          | Ethnic orientation | .087  | .044 | .160           | 1.98 | .05 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | .155  | .091 | .152           | 1.70 | .09 |
|                        | American identity  | -.085 | .077 | -.092          | 1.11 | .27 |
| 2. Responsibility      | Ethnic orientation | -.023 | .041 | -.046          | 0.56 | .58 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | -.080 | .086 | -.084          | 0.92 | .36 |
|                        | American identity  | -.006 | .073 | -.007          | 0.08 | .94 |
| 3. Emotional stability | Ethnic orientation | -.046 | .044 | -.086          | 1.05 | .30 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | -.154 | .092 | -.152          | 1.68 | .10 |
|                        | American identity  | .105  | .078 | .114           | 1.34 | .18 |
| 4. Sociability         | Ethnic orientation | .119  | .045 | .211           | 2.66 | .01 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | .159  | .093 | .150           | 1.70 | .09 |
|                        | American identity  | -.142 | .079 | -.148          | 1.80 | .08 |
| 5. Self-esteem         | Ethnic orientation | .136  | .115 | .097           | 1.18 | .24 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | .079  | .241 | .030           | 0.33 | .74 |
|                        | American identity  | -.128 | .204 | -.054          | 0.63 | .53 |
| 6. Cautiousness        | Ethnic orientation | -.022 | .048 | -.039          | 0.74 | .64 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | -.148 | .099 | -.136          | 1.49 | .14 |
|                        | American identity  | -.008 | .084 | .008           | 0.10 | .92 |
| 7.Original thinking    | Ethnic orientation | .024  | .042 | .048           | 0.58 | .56 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | .091  | .087 | .096           | 1.05 | .30 |
|                        | American identity  | -.049 | .074 | -.056          | 0.66 | .51 |
| 8. Personal relations  | Ethnic orientation | .085  | .044 | .156           | 1.92 | .06 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | -.056 | .092 | -.055          | 0.61 | .54 |
|                        | American identity  | .090  | .078 | .098           | 1.16 | .25 |
| 9. Vigor               | Ethnic orientation | .011  | .044 | .021           | 0.25 | .80 |
|                        | Armenian identity  | -.150 | .091 | -.151          | 1.65 | .10 |
|                        | American identity  | .061  | .077 | .067           | 0.78 | .43 |

Individuals who have a stronger Armenian orientation and identity are probably more traditional in their customs and worldview. In a traditional Armenian household, adult children remain in the homes of their parents until they are married. While living with their parents, these adult children do not need to acquire basic living skills since these household tasks are carried out by the parents (generally the mother). It is no surprise that these young adults may appear less responsible since they are not expected to be responsible for such tasks. Furthermore, given that these individuals are more traditional and are accustomed to having tasks carried out for them,

they may have difficulties accessing resources from the larger Armenian culture. Moreover, this is a subgroup of Armenians who have within-group persecutions. Those within the group who are immigrants may not be entirely well received by the older Armenian community, and yet they are repelled by the established community's degree of acculturation. As a result, both subgroups, immigrant and first-generation born individuals, given the context of their social position, in many regards, have been forced to make independent decisions and be more self-assured in their relations with others in order to survive on a day to day basis. However, given the strong cultural emphasis on the family, and the traditional expectation of remaining in the parents' home until married, the individual's decision-making process may not reflect an individual skill, but rather, may be strongly influenced by the family. As Berry and Kim (1988) suggest, rejecting the values of the dominant culture while maintaining one's ethnic identity may result in adjustment problems.

### **Socioeconomic Status and Acculturation**

Interaction effects were found for acculturation and socioeconomic status relative to Responsibility, Sociability, and Original Thinking (Data are not shown here but can be found in Yaralian, 1997). Concerning Responsibility, it appears that individuals in the lower classes of socioeconomic status that identify strongly with the Armenian culture, and individuals who are of higher socioeconomic status and identify with both the Armenian and American cultures, feel similarly reliable and able to stick to the jobs assigned to them. For individuals of lower socioeconomic status, identification with Armenian culture enhances their sense of responsibility. This increased responsibility has survival value for this group of individuals, because in order to survive they must be able to stick to the jobs assigned to them. For individuals who are of higher income, being bicultural enhances their ability to be adaptive, which in turn, gives them more options to successfully negotiate tasks.

**Table 3.** Means, standard deviation and t-test comparing participants with high and low Armenian ethnic orientation scores on adjustment variables

| Armenian Ethnic Orientations | Low <i>n</i> = 90 |           | High <i>n</i> = 90 |           | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
|                              | <i>Mean</i>       | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i>        | <i>SD</i> |          |          |
| Adjustment Variables         |                   |           |                    |           |          |          |
| Ascendancy                   | 22.50             | 5.85      | 24.27              | 4.66      | 2.25     | .01      |
| Responsibility               | 24.90             | 4.99      | 24.09              | 4.92      | 1.10     | N.S.     |
| Emotional Stability          | 22.73             | 5.38      | 21.51              | 5.28      | 1.54     | N.S.     |
| Sociability                  | 21.34             | 5.86      | 23.22              | 5.12      | 2.56     | .01      |
| Self-esteem                  | 91.48             | 14.14     | 93.10              | 13.54     | .79      | N.S.     |
| Cautiousness                 | 22.74             | 5.55      | 21.16              | 5.85      | 1.89     | .06      |
| Original Thinking            | 25.82             | 5.46      | 26.13              | 4.57      | .41      | N.S.     |
| Personal Relations           | 21.16             | 5.29      | 21.98              | 5.38      | 1.04     | N.S.     |
| Vigor                        | 25.79             | 5.32      | 25.27              | 5.20      | .64      | N.S.     |

In regards to Sociability, the results indicate that individuals of higher socioeconomic status who focus on their Armenian culture may benefit from the increased social contact that their culture of origin may provide for them. In other words, the Armenian community provides for them a means of staying linked with the culture, language, and traditions. For individuals who do not have a strong economic base, however, severing all ties to Armenian culture would not be in their best interest. On the contrary, individuals who are at lower socioeconomic levels, but are able to identify with both the Armenian and American cultures, are better able to access resources that may be basic to survival. It has been argued that acquiring the behavior of the host society is beneficial under some conditions, while less important or potentially detrimental under others (Ortiz & Arce, 1984). For example, identifying with the dominant culture in addition to the culture of origin could have a positive impact as long as it is basic to survival and functioning (such as working with and being with others). This given, incorporating American ways, rather than limiting one's behavior to that of the culture of origin, could be of greater value for functioning in American culture among Armenians of lower socioeconomic status than among those of higher socioeconomic status.

Finally, relative to Original Thinking, the results indicated that individuals in both the upper and lower levels of socioeconomic status operate very similarly. Individuals who identify with their culture of origin, and who are either of upper or lower socioeconomic status are able to meet their basic needs through support from family and community, which then allows them to pursue what Maslow (1970) refers to as "metaneeds", such as knowledge and truth.

The middle socioeconomic class tended to be more bicultural. Unlike the upper class, which has the benefit of greater financial security, and the lower class, which can obtain financial support from the community's benefactors, the middle class must be more creative in meeting the financial and other challenges that one faces on a day-to-day basis. The bicultural status of the middle class facilitates the generation of new ideas since individuals can draw from both the Armenian and American cultures, providing them with the skills necessary to benefit from both the Armenian and American cultures for potential solutions.

### **Language use**

There were interaction effects between language spoken in the home and acculturation relative to Cautiousness (Data can be seen in Yeralian, 1997). The results indicate that speaking Armenian, either exclusively or in combination with English (including other languages as well), despite the mode of acculturation (i.e., assimilation, separation, or integration) contributed to an increased ability to consider matters carefully before

making decisions, as well as not taking chances or running risks. The only exception to the finding was if the individual had lost contact with both the Armenian and American cultures (marginality), in which case it would be more advantageous for the individual to speak only English. This is consistent with the findings of Berry and Kim (1988), who argue that individuals who reject both the dominant culture and their culture of origin tend to have the greatest adjustment problems.

### **Country of Origin**

There were significant differences between participants who were and were not born in the US on Ascendancy, Responsibility, Emotional Stability, Self Esteem, and Original Thinking (Data can be seen in Yaralian, 1997). In other words, participants who were not born in the United States, in comparison with participants who were, scored significantly higher on the following traits: (a) adopting an active role in a group and in making independent decisions, (b) sticking to an assigned job and persevering, (c) being emotionally stable and relatively free from worries, (d) being reliable and self-confident, and (d) enjoying thought-provoking questions and discussions. Perhaps the difference between the two groups can be attributed to a difference in the expectations that each group has from the dominant culture. Individuals who were not born in the United States, immigrated to the new country either looking for respite from civil wars (in the case of Lebanon and Iran), or escaping a communist regime (in the case of Armenia), and/or simply hoping for a better life in America. In contrast, US born Armenians have been raised in an environment where many things are taken for granted, and they have not undergone the hardships experienced by the immigrants. As a result, this group may be less persevering, have less tolerance for frustration, and dislike being challenged to solve or overcome difficult situations.

Another potential explanation for these differences may be to view it as a form of cultural conflict. In other immigrant populations, it is not the first generation that has difficulties adjusting to the dominant culture, but, rather, the second, third, or subsequent generations. When an individual is unable to achieve the goals and aspirations that he or she has set, the amount of stress experienced may be increased (Williams & Berry, 1991). Padilla et al. (1986) studied the relationship of generational status to psychological stress. The investigators explain that the reason early immigrants may adjust better to the new culture may be that they arrived in the United States with their families. Third-generation immigrants, similar to the second generation, are torn between adhering to the values of their parents and adapting to the values shared by the dominant culture. As a result, they experience greater acculturative stress. Similarly, Vlachos (1968) studied the assimilation of three generations of Greek-Americans. The author found that the first

generation continued to hold on to Greek culture in the new environment. The second generation, however, faced the challenge of incorporating both Greek and American cultures into their lives and, as a result, encountered difficulties adjusting. The first generation is still optimistic about what they may find in the new country. However, by the second and third generations, unmet needs lead to negativism or perhaps even an attitude of indifference. What may in fact be emerging in the current study, are early precursors to conflict within this generation.

### Seeking Psychological Help

Although Armenians as a whole feel a stigma is associated with seeking psychological treatment, the results of the study indicate that 77 (42.8%) of the 180 participants in the present study reported that they would be willing to seek the support of a professional in talking through emotional challenges that they might face on a day-to-day basis.

The type of identification individuals maintain with the Armenian community and culture may also have an impact on their day-to-day lives, affecting not only their ability to be self-assured in relationships and to make independent decisions, but also their capability of sticking to tasks and jobs assigned to them. This younger generation, both immigrant and American-born, while wanting to hold on to their traditional culture, are struggling with many of the issues of the dominant culture as well. Decisions regarding who to date and choose as a life partner and how to try to secure themselves financially may be especially difficult to resolve for this group given the strong role other factors (e.g., family influence and loyalty to one's community) play in their lives. Such conflicts could result in psychological distress that may prompt members of this population to seek help. In working with this specific group, therapists should keep in mind that more traditional forms of treatment that concentrate on the individual may need to be modified, since the world view of this population is often embedded within the context of the family and community rather than the individual.

**Table 4.** Mean, standard deviation and F-test comparing participants born in and out of the United States

| Birth Status           | In the US ( <i>n</i> = 73) |           | Outside of the US ( <i>n</i> = 107) |           |          |          |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Adjustment Variables   | <i>Mean</i>                | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i>                         | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
| 1. Ascendancy          | 22.27                      | 5.31      | 24.15                               | 5.26      | 4.60     | < .05    |
| 2. Responsibility      | 23.52                      | 5.36      | 25.16                               | 4.57      | 3.84     | < .05    |
| 3. Emotional stability | 21.19                      | 5.71      | 22.76                               | 5.02      | 4.90     | < .05    |
| 4. Sociability         | 21.89                      | 6.12      | 22.55                               | 5.17      | 1.41     | N.S.     |
| 5. Self-esteem         | 94.62                      | 12.74     | 88.88                               | 14.72     | 8.17     | < .01    |
| 6. Cautiousness        | 21.51                      | 5.95      | 22.26                               | 5.60      | .08      | N.S.     |
| 7. Original thinking   | 24.95                      | 5.31      | 26.68                               | 4.70      | 4.89     | < .05    |
| 8. Personal relations  | 21.16                      | 5.51      | 21.85                               | 5.47      | 0.37     | N.S.     |
| 9. Vigor               | 24.67                      | 5.45      | 26.12                               | 5.06      | 1.12     | N.S.     |

Also, the salience of gender should be taken into consideration in working with this population. As the young generation acculturates at a faster rate than their parents, they may come into direct conflict with the expectations placed upon them by their parents. Therapists working with Armenian males should be cognizant of the fact that, despite their outward appearance of emotional stability, Armenian males may not actually be more emotionally stable but, rather, less forthcoming in expressing their emotions.

It is worth noting that participants born outside of the United States reported better psychological functioning than native-born participants. These individuals, by virtue of having weathered the immigration process, may feel that they should be able to handle daily frustrations. On the other hand, given their immigrant status, they may be more prone to symptoms of acculturative stress and more likely to be referred to therapists by physicians who have found no medical causes for their somatic complaints.

In conclusion, young Armenians, both immigrants and American-born, face having to integrate issues of adapting to the dominant culture and trying to secure themselves financially, while at the same time maintaining the values and customs of their culture of origin. Given the scarcity of bicultural and bilingual therapists, Armenian clients seeking therapy will be treated more likely by non-Armenian professionals, and the more these professionals are culturally competent and aware of Armenian cultural and mental health issues the better service they can provide.

## **Part II**

### **Professional Papers**





# IMAGE AND SELF-IMAGE OF ARMENIANS IN LEBANON: A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE<sup>55</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

The portrait of an ethnic group involves the self-image as well as the image of others that live in geographic proximity and temporal contiguity to the group. These images have two aspects: descriptive and connotative. The descriptive aspect comprises the outstanding and differentiating characteristics of the group as seen by its members and by others who share the same social and geographic milieu. The connotative aspect may be construed as the negative and positive evaluations of the outstanding and differentiating characteristics. The descriptive characteristics a group believes it has and the way these are evaluated by its members determine the nature of the self-image. When the self-image is highly differentiated and positive, the group exhibits high ethnic pride, cohesiveness, and a strong sense of destiny. It can provide a sense of security and belongingness, and can command devotion. The differentiating attributes emerge from morphological and historical sources, on the one hand, and from intercultural interactions, on the other. These attributes acquire their connotation from the economic and political interactions of the groups involved (Amir, 1969). The self-image and the image of others include similar as well as different attributes, and their connotations may not correspond. Furthermore, the images of the same group may vary from one socio-cultural context to another, and across time in a particular context. The group may, however, continue to maintain recognizable distinctiveness.

The way the Armenians see themselves and the way others (Arab Christians, in this case) see the Armenians in Lebanon may be explored with the foregoing framework in mind. The early significant encounter of the Armenians with the Lebanese came around the turn of the century in the wake of Turkish deportations and massacres when the Armenians arrived in Lebanon as refugees and settled in to share the resources of the country. They were seen as foreigners at first. But when the Armenians were granted Lebanese citizenship after 1923, along with other minorities in the country, they began to enjoy greater acceptance. The 1932 census gave the Christians a dominant ratio of 6 to 5 over the Muslims, a dominance to which the Armenians contributed as Christians. This helped further change the helpless

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<sup>55</sup> Der-Karabetian, A. (). Image and self-image of Armenians in Lebanon: A psychological perspective. In R. G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Image in History and Literature*, Malibu, CA, Undena Publications, 1981, pp. 241-249. Also, paper presented at the symposium organized by the Armenian Department of UCLA and the Society of Armenian Studies, Los Angeles, California, 1979. Note: Publisher was unresponsive to request for permission to reproduce

refugee image to one of confident self-determination. The participation of Armenians in the Lebanese parliament in 1937 reinforced this image.

The Arab Christian community held the Armenians in increasingly positive regard as long as they contributed to Arab Christian political power and economic prosperity. When the Armenians began to take a bigger share of the profits in the private economic sector, they were seen as competitors and the growing positive image among Arab Christians began to suffer. At the same time, however, the Armenians' self-image continued to improve parallel to their upward economic mobility. By 1975, the Armenians were contributing 15 percent to the national income and operated 25 percent of the Beirut gold market while comprising approximately 8 percent of the Lebanese population. In the professions, they were 10 percent of engineers, 6 percent of physicians, 23 percent of pharmacists, and 25 percent of dentists (Bouldoukian, 1979).

The image of the Armenians among the Arab Christians suffered further due to the events of the 1958 civil war, when the Armenian community failed to side as a whole with the Arab Christians. Some factions supported the opposition.

This extrapolation of attitudes from political and economic conditions is associated with some empirical sociological evidence. The evidence comes from a series of social distance studies conducted in 1935, 1952, 1961 and 1971 with similar university student populations (Elmasian, 1971; Prothro & Melikian, 1952; Starr, 1976). Even though these studies are limited to student populations, they reflect a general trend. Expressions of closeness could vary from "Would like to expel from my country" on one extreme to "Would like to marry one" on the other. A progressive decrease of social distance from the Armenians was observed between 1935 and 1952, which tended to level off in the 1960s and 1970s.

The increasing closeness Armenians felt toward the indigenous Christian Arabs was apparent in their growing acculturation. Inter marriages showed a rising trend. Der-Karabetian and Oshagan (1977) report a rise from 7.3 percent to 10.7 percent between 1961 and 1971 of Armenian Apostolic males marrying outside their community. Also, similarity of manifest needs and personality characteristics increased as reported by Melikian & Der-Karabetian (1977). They compared fifteen personality characteristics of Armenian and Arab Christian university students in 1952 and 1973, and found that in 1952 they were different on ten characteristics, and in 1973 they were different in only two of the characteristics. In their growing similarity to Arab Christians, Armenian youth became more flexible and receptive to change, became more secure in their interpersonal relationships, decreased their need for dependence, and increased their need to help as well as their ability to see the views of others and put themselves in their place.

Thus, the connotative aspect of the Armenian image, as reflected in acceptance from the Arab Christians, has changed according to their perception of the role of the Armenians with respect to politics and economics. In contrast, the Armenians, parallel to their economic prosperity, have shown continuously growing openness to and acceptance of the Arab Christian culture.

Concerning the descriptive aspect of the Armenian image, it is important to consider the views of Armenians as well as those of others with whom they share a milieu. These views may have similarities as well as differences and may emerge from cultural, historical and interactional sources. Some anthropological and psychosocial studies address themselves to this issue.

To provide perspective, a global survey conducted in 1954 is considered first (Keehn & Prothro, 1956). Students from twenty-three nations of North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia were asked to select from a list of thirty national groups, including Armenians, those with whom they would most like and most dislike living. Three groupings were derived: English speaking, Arab-Mediterranean, and Western European. The Armenians did not seem to belong to any of these groups. Moreover, they did not appear on any of the high preference lists. That may indicate general unfamiliarity with Armenians. Or, it may indicate indifference. Thus, at the time the study was conducted Armenians were obscure in a global sense. It would be interesting to know if they have become less so since then, especially in light of efforts to publicize the "Armenian Cause."

An anthropological study conducted in the mid-seventies tried to develop an index of ethnic identification categories in Lebanon (Starr, 1978). The identifying attributes of Armenians as seen by others varied from morphological characteristics to types of jewelry worn. Armenians were identified with aquiline rather than hooked noses, more weight in the hips and less in the torso. Particularly accented Arabic and residence in Bourj-Harmoud and Ainjar were significant identifying factors. Distinctive first names and family names with "ian" suffixes were also seen as characteristics. Certain occupations such as plumber, photographer, jeweler, musician and tentmaker were associated with Armenians. The use of the Armenian tricolor of the pre-Soviet republic was taken as ethnic designation. Jewelry such as the Armenian cross and engravings of folk and historical heroes were mentioned. The open celebration of distinctive holidays and commemorations were also used as distinguishing markers.

In a poly-ethnic society, sensitivity to ethnic differentiations is bound to be strong and to emerge almost by necessity. The variety of attributes used by others to identify Armenians attests to their high degree of differentiation in the Lebanese context. The image that others have of Armenians is determined to a large extent by differentiating attributes that help define boundaries between groups. These differentiating attributes

may or may not be perceptible to the groups themselves.

On a more psychological level, Der-Karabetian, Durr, & Oshagan, (1972) conducted a survey among Lebanese Arab university students involving the stereotyping of different ethnic national groups in Lebanon including Armenians. A checklist composed of 96 adjectives was presented to a large number of students. Each person was asked to select 6 adjectives that most typically described a group. Altogether 108 Muslim and 311 Arab Christians described Armenians. Adjectives most frequently assigned to Armenians by at least 10 percent of all the respondents combined were, in order of decreasing frequency: revengeful (48 percent), hardworking (42 percent), industrious (38 percent), ambitious (37 percent), intelligent (35 percent), nationalistic (35 percent), tradition loving (28 percent), and artistic (16 percent).

When Muslim and Christian responses were analyzed separately the adjectives were identical with a slight shift in order. Interestingly, in both cases revengeful ranked the highest and artistic the lowest. Taken altogether, these adjectives express the image of nationalistic, hardworking people. As all stereotypes have a kernel of truth, this image too is rooted in the behavioral manifestations of Armenians as a group. It is consistent with their growing economic and professional prosperity, as well as with their open and passionate expressions of anti-Turkish sentiments and display of ethnic culture.

The affective connotation of these adjectives was also assessed. Revengeful turned out to be the only one with a negative connotation. When the overall connotation was assessed separately, the adjectives used by Christians were on the whole more positively loaded than the adjectives used by the Muslims. This is understandable, given the religious similarity, traditional political alliance, and sense of common destiny between the Armenians and the Arab Christians. It is also consistent with other studies where Muslims feel more social distance from Armenians than do Arab Christians (Elmasian, 1971). This was true before the civil war of 1975. The growing tensions between the Arab Christians and Armenians since then might have changed the situation.

The difference in rank between revengeful and artistic is striking. The Armenians in Lebanon tend not to hide their belief of possessing high cultural taste and artistic talent (Aghemian, 1978). Yet, despite their artistic self-image, they do not seem to project it. The strong revengeful image may be due to the news-making appeal of well-orchestrated anti-Turkish demonstrations. The projection of a negative revengeful image was probably not intentional. Nevertheless, it has occurred. While artistic creativity may be said to hold a prominent position in the self-image of Armenians, others in Lebanon do not perceive it as prominently. This suggests that self-image and image held by others are not necessarily consistent.

The changeable nature of the self-image is suggested in surveys conducted on ethnic orientation and assimilation (Der-Karabetian & Der-Karabetian-Proudian, 1979; Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). Among other issues they dealt with some aspects of self-definition. The surveys were conducted before the start of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 and then in 1978, while the civil war was continuing to rage. The survey before the war included three age groups: elderly, middle-aged, and young. The survey after the war involved only the young age group. The three-age-group survey may indicate change over time to the extent that opinions of the elderly represent those of earlier times. The pre-post comparison may represent change as a function of changing sociopolitical conditions.

The surveys involved agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements on Armenian customs, institutions, and beliefs. The statements of interest here deal with (a) more hardworking nature of Armenians, (b) deeper devotion of Armenian mothers to their children, (c) stronger attachment of Armenian fathers to their families, (d) superior nature of Armenian upbringing, (e) matching of Armenian literature to international standards, and (f) belief of the greater giftedness of Armenian children. These represent some aspects of group self-image. Before the war, on all of these statements the young age group tended to disagree or to agree less strongly compared to the members of the older age groups. In the 1978 survey, however, the young significantly increased their agreement on these aspects of the self-image, except on the upbringing and giftedness of the children.

The same surveys were conducted in the Los Angeles area among young, native-born Armenian-Americans (Der-Karabetian, 1979). Compared to the 1978 Lebanese sample, the US respondents expressed stronger belief in the devotion of mothers and the comparative value of Armenian literature, and weaker belief in the more hardworking nature of Armenians and the superiority of Armenian upbringing. Taken together, these findings suggest that group self-image may vary across time, sociopolitical situation, and cultural context, if not so much in essence at least in intensity of belief.

Value priorities may comprise an important aspect of group image. Ideals toward which members of a group strive help define the character of the group. I made a preliminary attempt to assess value priorities in 1978 among Armenian university students in Lebanon. In this survey 44 students were asked to order 18 different internationally standardized value orientations taken from Rokeach (1973) in terms of their importance for their personal lives. Judging from the average rank orders, the top 5 priorities in decreasing order of importance were wisdom, freedom, self-respect, true friendship, and inner harmony. The 5 lowest value priorities in decreasing order of importance were salvation, sense of accomplishment, a comfortable life, a world of beauty, and pleasure.

Although limited in scope, these priorities provide some pointers. The high-ranking life goals appear to be dominated by personal rather than *social* values. Such an orientation makes Armenian youth vulnerable to alienation and anomie. It may evoke a sense of desperation and helplessness that tends to submerge the person into further self-indulgence, creating a vicious circle. If this is a pervasive trend among the future leaders of the community, then perhaps the present leaders *should* take note.

In conclusion, two points must be emphasized. First, the nature of the information considered here was primarily empirical and consequently subject to the limitations of the conditions under which it was collected and compiled. The need to limit generalizations and specify conditions is central to the empirical approach and reflects the complexity of the matter under consideration. It is more advantageous to make limited but confident statements than to proceed with sweeping generalizations that are less accurate. Second, although the evidence discussed here was not comprehensive it revealed some of the important aspects involved in defining the parameters of Armenian image and self-image. The Armenian image seems to be dynamically related to intergroup relations, economic conditions, and variations across time and sociopolitical context.

# CALIFORNIA ARMENIANS: 1981 SURVEY<sup>56</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian and Armine Proudian-Der-Karabetian

## Forward

In recent years, the Armenian community of California has experienced an influx of tens of thousands of Armenian immigrants from the Middle East and the Soviet Union. Combined with the existing community, this influx has enlarged the total Armenian American population in California to approximately 200,000 people. Both these increased numbers and the renewed ethnic awareness of American-born Armenians have resulted in an active, vigorous community that is becoming increasingly visible to the general public.

Therefore, on the occasion of the centennial of the establishment of the Armenian community in California, the California Council of the Armenian Assembly sponsored the following statewide survey on California Armenians, conducted and reported by Dr. Aghop Der-Karabetian and Armine Proudian-Der-Karabetian of the University of La Verne.

As a coalition of Armenian organizations and individuals, the Armenian Assembly has as one of its primary objectives the collection and dissemination of information about the Armenian American community. The Assembly operates a Resource Center for the state of California which provides information and referral services and maintains a collection of Armenian resource materials – books, periodicals, display materials, films, and other audio-visual material – available on loan statewide. The Resource Center has also published two previous reports:

1. Armenian Students in Hollywood: A Statistical Survey of Public School Students by Lawrence D. Cretan, Resource Center Director, and Marianne Laouri, Research Assistant.

2. Armenian Language: A Contrastive Analysis by Sylva Manoogian, Principal Librarian, Foreign Language Department, Los Angeles Public Library.<sup>57</sup>

## Authors' Preface

This report is a modified version of a presentation made at the state conference of the California Council of the Armenian Assembly held on September 11-13, 1981, at the University of California, Berkeley, which

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<sup>56</sup> "California Armenians: 1981 Survey", report number 3: The Armenian Assembly California Council and Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA, 1981, Archived in Washington DC office. Also, paper presented at the California Council of the Armenian Assembly, at University of California, Berkley.

<sup>57</sup> For additional information, or to obtain copies of any of these reports, please contact: Armenian Assembly National Headquarters [www.aaainc.org](http://www.aaainc.org) 1334 G Street, NW, Washington DC 20005, (202) 395-3434.



dealt with the topic of “Armenians in the 80’s: Prospects and Challenges.” The authors are pleased to make this survey available to the interested public through the Armenian Assembly Resource Center in Los Angeles.<sup>58</sup> The present report is based on a partial analysis of data focusing on comparisons between native born and immigrant groups, as well as between younger and older adults.

A number of institutions, organizations and individuals helped make the project possible, especially the California Council of Armenian Assembly. The Council provided financial support and allowed the survey to be conducted under its auspices. Additional financial support was also provided by grants from the Armenian Alumni Association and the University of La Verne Faculty Development Fund. A number of individuals also made generous contributions.

We would like to thank Lawrence Diran Cretan, the director of the Armenian Assembly Resource Center, who was instrumental in expediting the project at different stages of its progress. A special thank you goes to Professor Gerard Libaridian of the Armenian American International College for his help in the formulation and translation of the survey questions. Last but not least, we would like to thank all those unseen hands that contributed to the successful completion of the project.

## **Introduction**

The ethnic revival of the last two decades in the United States has largely discounted the melting pot theory. Ethnic boundaries that were expected to disappear did not. But the majority Anglo-Saxon culture, together with technological and urbanizing forces, affected the different cultural manifestations that people brought with them from the old country. The struggle to maintain the old culture is shared by all who chose to come to the new world. The Armenians are no exception. They, too, brought their culture with them, and they, too, have struggled to maintain it. But for the Armenian diaspora the preservation of its culture is crucial. It will most definitely be affected by the American context, and efforts to minimize the impact of the context will not be easy.

The fact that the Armenians come from different countries and bring with them different manifestations of Armenian culture complicates the process of cultural preservation. Moreover, the Armenian community is not only faced with the problem of cultural preservation but also with the survival needs of the new waves of immigrants.

The Armenian community of California is in a state of flux and is experiencing a period of transition unprecedented in its short history of one hundred or so years. The social, cultural and demographic structures of the

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<sup>58</sup> This Center is no longer in operation; please contact the National Headquarters in Washington DC as shown above.

community will continue to change and be transformed during the coming years and decades. Anticipating these changes is the responsibility of the leadership, no matter how difficult the process may be. Identifying trends of change in the community helps guide its development. The present survey was an effort in this direction. It tried to gather basic information about the social structure of the Armenian community and determine the relationship of age and residency status to selected opinions and attitudes on a number of political and social issues.

In so doing it established a database for future reference and provided a means of tracking changes over time. Residency status and age are both time-oriented demographic variables. In time, recent immigrants become earlier immigrants, and eventually native-born generations emerge, and younger adults become older adults. Examination of differences among these groups helps identify trends in the community.

### **The Questionnaire**

The survey covered general concerns of sociological significance for the Armenian Community. These fell into three major categories: a) demographic information, b) ethnically-oriented behavior, and c) ethnically relevant attitudes and opinions. The demographic questions dealt with family make-up, occupation, income, education, country of origin, length of residency in the US, Armenian political party membership, and religious denomination. The behavior-oriented questions dealt with voting, membership in organizations, volunteer work, reading Armenian newspapers and church attendance. Attitudes and opinions covered the Armenian Cause, the possibility of its resolution, minority status of Armenians in the US, priorities of community-related projects, ethnically important problems in the community, factors defining Armenian identity, ethnic intermarriage, and importance of church weddings, family roles and relations, and language of sermons during church services. Altogether the questions were presented in 30 separate items and distributed by mail (See Appendix G in this volume). Stamped, self-addressed envelopes were provided with the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were sent to 2,000 addresses randomly selected from telephone directories and community lists available in southern, central and northern California. Of these, 272 were returned for lack of forwarding addresses. The present analysis is based on the 300 usable questionnaires that were returned by the end of August 1981. An inspection of Table 1 indicates that this sample represents a fairly well balanced cross section of the Armenian community in California. It includes reasonable proportions of men and women, young and old, rich and not-so-rich, skilled and professional, those involved in organizations and those who are not, those who believe in the Armenian Cause and those who do not. Denominations are also appropriately represented, and so are immigrants from different

parts of the world (Due to rounding off of decimal values, and no responses to questions, sometimes percentages do not add up to 100).

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the sample (N = 300)

|                                       |                                       | %  |                                            |                               | %  |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----|
| Gender                                | Men                                   | 61 | Armenian political party                   | Member                        | 7  |
|                                       | Women                                 | 39 |                                            | Sympathizer                   | 39 |
|                                       |                                       |    |                                            | Neither                       | 54 |
| Age                                   | Younger adults (39 years and younger) | 45 | Belonging to at least to one organization  |                               | 53 |
|                                       | Older adults (40 years and older)     | 55 |                                            |                               |    |
|                                       |                                       |    |                                            |                               |    |
| Socioeconomic status (Monthly income) | Lower (< \$1,000)                     | 20 | Resolution of the Armenian Cause is likely | In the near future            | 12 |
|                                       | Middle (\$1,000-3,000)                | 43 |                                            | In the distant future         | 54 |
|                                       | Upper (> \$3,000)                     | 34 |                                            | Impossible to resolve         | 33 |
| Occupation                            | Unspecified                           | 3  | Read Armenian newspapers                   | Regularly                     | 45 |
|                                       | Skilled                               | 23 |                                            | Occasionally                  | 38 |
|                                       | White-collar                          | 24 |                                            | Never                         | 17 |
|                                       | Professional                          | 33 |                                            | Regularly                     | 29 |
|                                       | Small business                        | 19 |                                            | Occasionally                  | 56 |
| Education                             | Student                               | 1  | Attend church                              | Almost never                  | 15 |
|                                       | Elementary                            | 7  |                                            | Apostolic                     | 56 |
|                                       | Secondary                             | 29 |                                            | Protestant                    | 16 |
|                                       | Junior College                        | 20 |                                            | Catholic                      | 4  |
|                                       | 4-year College                        | 21 |                                            | American Protestant           | 3  |
| Prior citizenship                     | Graduate school                       | 23 | Denomination                               | Others/unspecified            | 10 |
|                                       | Lebanon                               | 26 |                                            | No response                   | 11 |
|                                       |                                       |    |                                            |                               |    |
|                                       | Iran                                  | 13 |                                            |                               |    |
|                                       | Other Arab                            | 20 |                                            |                               |    |
|                                       | Soviet Armenia                        | 16 | Residency status                           | Native born                   | 36 |
|                                       | Eastern Europe                        | 5  |                                            | Early immigrants (> 10 years) | 32 |
|                                       | Turkey                                | 8  |                                            | Recent immigrant (< 10 years) | 31 |
|                                       | Others                                | 12 |                                            |                               |    |
|                                       |                                       |    |                                            |                               |    |

## Comparison of Demographics

Table 2 summarizes the demographic information comparing residency status and age groups. The percentages are tabulated separately for the native born, early immigrants, and recent immigrants, as well as for younger and older adults. Altogether there were 109 native born, 97 early immigrants (average of 25.8 years of residency), and 94 recent immigrants (average of 4.6 years of residency). Those who had immigrated 10 or more years earlier were considered early immigrants. There were 136 younger adults and 164 older adults. Those who were 39 years and younger were considered

younger adults, and those who were 40 years and older were considered older adults.

Inspection of Table 2 reveals some definite patterns. Younger and older adults display an essentially similar picture. There is a slight tendency for older adults to own their business or be self-employed. Moreover, slightly more older adults report having an income of \$1,000 or less per month, although the percentage of those with an income over \$4,000 per month is virtually identical. The higher percentage of income under \$1,000 in the older age group may be due to a number of retired individuals on pensions.

The native born and the immigrant groups show different patterns. The recent immigrants do not seem to be as well off as one is expected to believe. In fact, they are the worst off, followed by the early immigrants, while the native born show the highest per capita income. More native born are in the professions and white-collar occupations, and they show a higher percentage of college education. Also, contrary to expectations, fewer recent immigrants are involved in cultural and educational organizations. Moreover, while early immigrants are the most involved in Armenian political parties as members, the native born are the most indifferent toward them.

The relative absence of new immigrants from Armenian organizations may be temporary. As they become economically more secure and adjust to their new lifestyle, they may participate more readily in organizational life. The overwhelming indifference of the native born toward the Armenian political parties is striking. Whether this reflects lack of faith in their existence cannot be ascertained. However, making the Armenian political superstructure relevant to the second generation rests squarely on the shoulders of the parties themselves. The same may be said of other organizations and institutions.

### **Ethnically Oriented Behavior**

Table 3 summarizes ethnically oriented behaviors. The breakdown of ethnically oriented behaviors by residency status and age shows interesting patterns, some rather obvious and some not so obvious. There are important differences between the native born and the immigrant groups. While the native born tend to attend church more regularly, they are less regular readers of Armenian newspapers. In fact, one-third of them never read Armenian newspapers. Immigrants are more regular readers probably because of the need for news from their home countries, and the need to learn about the Armenian-American way of life. It is important that the Armenian print media recognize their role as an agent of acculturation for new immigrants and as a source of cultural awareness for the native born.

Although few of the native born are fluent in Armenian, the great majority has some knowledge. However, there seems to be a tendency to

lose some fluency over time on the part of immigrants. A good portion of the recent immigrants lacks a functional knowledge of English. This is a critical problem in a society that takes literacy for granted. Moreover, awareness of civic and community responsibility is conspicuously lacking among the recent immigrants as expressed in their lesser tendency to vote and do volunteer work. The future vitality of the Armenian community depends on the active involvement of its members. Willingness to be entertained by music and wine is not the only kind of involvement. Learning English may help alleviate the language problem, but there is still the need for greater civic awareness. Perhaps, along with English classes, civics courses should also be offered to recent immigrants.

**Table 2.** Demographic comparison of residency and age groups (Percentage if not otherwise indicated)

| Demographics                            |                                    | Residency Status |         |         | Age     |         |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                         |                                    | Native           | Early   | Recent  | Younger | Older   |
| Average household size                  |                                    | 2.8              | 3.0     | 3.6     | 3.3     | 3.0     |
| Average household income (Monthly)      |                                    | \$2,710          | \$2,290 | \$1,900 | \$2,460 | \$2,490 |
| Per capita income (Monthly)             |                                    | \$960            | \$730   | \$530   | \$750   | \$710   |
| Family                                  | > \$4,000                          | 30               | 25      | 11      | 22      | 23      |
| earning/month                           | < \$1,000                          | 8                | 27      | 27      | 13      | 27      |
| Occupation                              | Skilled                            | 7                | 28      | 38      | 18      | 28      |
|                                         | White-collar                       | 32               | 19      | 18      | 27      | 22      |
|                                         | Professional                       | 42               | 28      | 25      | 34      | 33      |
|                                         | Small business                     | 14               | 24      | 18      | 22      | 16      |
|                                         | Farmer                             | 3                | 0       | 0       | 0       | 3       |
|                                         | Self-employed                      | 34               | 42      | 44      | 34      | 45      |
| Education                               | Elementary                         | 2                | 7       | 13      | 1       | 11      |
|                                         | Secondary                          | 27               | 25      | 34      | 23      | 35      |
|                                         | Junior college                     | 19               | 26      | 17      | 22      | 18      |
|                                         | 4-year college                     | 24               | 20      | 19      | 26      | 19      |
|                                         | Graduate school                    | 29               | 21      | 17      | 26      | 18      |
| Prior Citizenship                       | Lebanon                            | -                | 22      | 28      | -       | -       |
|                                         | Iran                               | -                | 8       | 18      | -       | -       |
|                                         | Other Arab                         | -                | 31      | 11      | -       | -       |
|                                         | Soviet Armenia                     | -                | 9       | 22      | -       | -       |
|                                         | Eastern Europe                     | -                | 10      | 2       | -       | -       |
|                                         | Turkey                             | -                | 17      | 2       | -       | -       |
|                                         | Others                             | -                | 2       | 5       | -       | -       |
| Birthplace and prior Citizenship differ |                                    | -                | 25      | 31      | -       | -       |
| Legal status                            | Citizen                            | -                | 89      | 13      |         |         |
|                                         | Permanent resident (After 5 years) | -                | 10      | 45      |         |         |
| Member at least one                     | Organization                       | 57               | 64      | 41      | 53      | 53      |
| Armenian                                | Member                             | 2                | 15      | 5       | 6       | 9       |
| political party                         | Sympathizer                        | 23               | 45      | 49      | 38      | 39      |
|                                         | Neither                            | 75               | 39      | 46      | 57      | 52      |

**Table 3.** Breakdown of ethnically oriented behaviors by residency status and age (Percentages)

|                           |                          | Residency Status |       |        | Age     |       |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
|                           |                          | Native           | Early | Recent | Younger | Older |
| Armenian language fluency | Read/write/understand    | 13               | 85    | 94     | 59      | 64    |
|                           | Conversation/a few words | 70               | 15    | 5      | 31      | 31    |
|                           | No knowledge             | 16               | 0     | 0      | 9       | 3     |
| English language fluency  | Read/write/understand    | 100              | 89    | 80     | 96      | 85    |
|                           | Conversation/a few words | 0                | 9     | 13     | 4       | 11    |
|                           | No Knowledge             | 0                | 1     | 5      | 0       | 3     |
| Vote (by citizens)        |                          | 84               | 86    | 28     | 77      | 94    |
| Do volunteer work         | Yes                      | 35               | 39    | 17     | -       | -     |
|                           | Wish to but cannot       | 30               | 31    | 60     | -       | -     |
| Read                      | Not wish to              | 35               | 30    | 14     | -       | -     |
|                           | Regularly                | 30               | 55    | 52     | 37      | 52    |
| Armenian newspapers       | Occasionally             | 34               | 36    | 45     | 43      | 33    |
|                           | Never                    | 37               | 9     | 3      | 20      | 15    |
| Attend church             | Regularly and often      | 32               | 26    | 28     | 25      | 32    |
|                           | Only occasionally        | 42               | 64    | 66     | 57      | 56    |
|                           | Almost never             | 26               | 10    | 6      | 18      | 12    |

### **Ethnically Relevant Attitudes**

Ethnically relevant attitudes and opinions are summarized in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7. The pattern of attitudes seen in Table 4 among older and younger adults is quite similar as they relate to the Armenian Question. There is a strong consensus that peaceful means should be used to pursue the Armenian Cause. Surprisingly though, about one-third in both groups believe that the Armenian Cause is impossible to resolve. This belief is even stronger among the native born, one-half of whom believe the Armenian Cause is impossible to resolve. However, it is not so prominent among the immigrant groups, who more strongly endorse joint use of armed struggle and peaceful means in the pursuit of the Armenian Cause.

Differences of opinion on such fundamental issues are a potential source of polarization between the native born and immigrant groups, which strongly suggests the need for public debate. With as many as one-third disillusioned about the Armenian Cause as a hopeless cause, Armenian political organizations in pursuit of the Armenian Cause have their work cut out for them on the home front.

Concerning familial issues, the native born, similar to the younger adults, are more accepting of mixed marriages, and more strongly believe divorce to be a matter of personal choice. However, a church wedding as an agent of family cohesiveness is strongly supported by all the subgroups. The perceptions of family responsibility are also very similar among the groups. Interestingly, one-half of those surveyed believe that earning a living is as much a woman's responsibility as it is a man's responsibility. Similarly, one-

half believe that housekeeping is as much a man's responsibility as it is a woman's. The fact that these beliefs are true irrespective of age and residency status signals a change in traditional Armenian family norms in the decades ahead.

**Table 4.** Breakdown of ethnically relevant attitudes by residency status and age (Percentages)

|                                               |                                    | Residency Status               |       |        |                                | Age   | Total |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|--------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
|                                               |                                    | Native                         | Early | Recent | Younger                        | Older |       |
| Pursue Armenian Cause                         | Peaceful means only                | 85                             | 66    | 51     | 65                             | 70    | 68    |
|                                               | Armed struggle only                | 0                              | 2     | 3      | 2                              | 3     | 2     |
|                                               | Both                               | 15                             | 31    | 45     | 33                             | 28    | 30    |
| Armenian Cause can be resolved                | Near future                        | 13                             | 12    | 12     | 11                             | 13    | 12    |
|                                               | Distant future                     | 37                             | 59    | 68     | 53                             | 55    | 54    |
|                                               | Impossible to resolve              | 50                             | 28    | 20     | 36                             | 31    | 33    |
| Armenians in the US are                       | A minority                         | 61                             | 75    | 68     | 67                             | 69    | 68    |
|                                               | Part of majority                   | 38                             | 24    | 31     | 33                             | 31    | 32    |
| When your children marry a Non-Armenian       | Be angry/not accept                | 6                              | 18    | 25     | 16                             | 16    | 16    |
|                                               | Unhappy/live with it               | 39                             | 71    | 57     | 50                             | 59    | 55    |
|                                               | Be happy and proud                 | 55                             | 10    | 17     | 35                             | 24    | 29    |
| Divorce among Armenians should be             | Discouraged strongly               | 21                             | 42    | 51     | 30                             | 43    | 37    |
|                                               | Discouraged when children involved | 7                              | 8     | 17     | 8                              | 13    | 11    |
|                                               | A personal choice                  | 73                             | 49    | 32     | 62                             | 45    | 53    |
| Church weddings                               | Help family cohesion               | 76                             | 83    | 77     | 71                             | 80    | 76    |
|                                               | Not help family cohesion           | 23                             | 28    | 23     | 29                             | 20    | 24    |
| Family responsibilities of both men and women | Keep kin relations                 |                                |       |        |                                |       | 90    |
|                                               | Earn a living                      | Similar to the overall pattern |       |        | Similar to the overall pattern |       | 50    |
|                                               | Housekeeping                       |                                |       |        |                                |       | 46    |
|                                               | Decision making                    |                                |       |        |                                |       | 88    |
|                                               | Childcare                          |                                |       |        |                                |       | 76    |
|                                               | Discipline                         |                                |       |        |                                |       | 91    |
| Sermons should be given                       | Only in Armenian                   | 3                              | 47    | 53     | 37                             | 29    | 33    |
|                                               | Only in English                    | 7                              | 6     | 0      | 7                              | 3     | 5     |
|                                               | In both languages                  | 90                             | 47    | 47     | 56                             | 69    | 62    |

The ramifications of a possible increase in working mothers and domestic fathers must be explored. Anticipating changes in the Armenian family is crucial because the family is an important part of the social system that

defines the Armenian diaspora. A change in an important aspect of this system would affect the way the role of the family is perceived.

The Armenian Church, like other social institutions, is also under pressure to change with respect to the language of sermons. While the great majority of the native born like to see sermons delivered in both English and Armenian, only about half of the immigrants do so. It seems that both the native born and immigrant groups have the need to participate more closely in Armenian religious practices. However, the immigrant groups want to maintain the practices in the traditional manner. These are complementary needs that affirm the cohesive role of the church in the community.

### **Priorities of Financial Allocations**

The priorities of financial allocations are summarized in Table 5. It indicates schools to be the first priority, followed by social services, cultural activities and research institutes. While older and younger adults endorse allocation targets along similar lines, there is a variation between the native born and immigrant groups. The native born tend to distribute their financial allocations, while the recent immigrants tend to concentrate on schools. Fewer recent immigrants allocate money to churches than the native born and early immigrants. However, the allocation of money to the schools is more prevalent among recent immigrants than the native born or early immigrants.

Allocation of resources is a crucial matter for any community and must be preceded by assessment of needs. In California, the observed differences in priorities indicate that different sectors of the Armenian community perceive different needs. The fact that priorities are different underlines the complexity and the diversity of the community.

**Table 5.** Highest priority "if a large sum of money is available to be spend for a single purpose" (Percentages)

| Targets            | Residency Status |       |        |         | Age   |       |
|--------------------|------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
|                    | Native           | Early | Recent | Younger | Older | Total |
| Social services    | 18               | 15    | 18     | 16      | 12    | 14    |
| Political activity | 6                | 11    | 12     | 8       | 10    | 9     |
| Research institute | 16               | 6     | 8      | 10      | 11    | 10    |
| Cultural activity  | 11               | 18    | 11     | 12      | 14    | 13    |
| Schools            | 23               | 37    | 53     | 50      | 52    | 36    |
| Churches           | 13               | 9     | 3      | 8       | 9     | 9     |
| Youth camps        | 9                | 2     | 0      | 1       | 7     | 4     |
| Athletics          | 1                | 0     | 0      | 1       | 0     | .3    |
| Clubs              | 1                | 0     | 0      | 1       | 0     | .3    |
| Publications       | 2                | 3     | 2      | 2       | 2     | 2     |

### **Perception of Community Problems**

As Table 6 indicates, perceptions of community problems predominantly revolve around the threat of assimilation. Irrespective of age and residency



status, the three most important problems are perceived to be lack of unity, loss of the Armenian language, and loss of traditional Armenian values. However, the native born and younger adults consider intermarriage much less important than do their counterparts.

The perception of lack of unity as the most important problem should raise some questions. To what extent is it grounded in the present reality? Is it a spillover from past decades? Can this perception of diversity spearhead a constructive dialectical process?

**Table 6.** Rank order of community problems broken down by residency status and age based on the average rank order of each item for each group (1 is most important and 8 is least important)

|                            | Residency Status |       |        |         | Age   |       |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| Problems                   | Native           | Early | Recent | Younger | Older | Total |
| Intermarriage              | 8                | 4     | 4      | 7       | 4     | 4     |
| Loss of Armenian language  | 3                | 1     | 1      | 2       | 1     | 2     |
| Use of illegal drugs       | 4                | 5     | 6      | 4       | 8     | 5     |
| Loss of traditional values | 1                | 3     | 3      | 1       | 3     | 3     |
| Lack of unity              | 2                | 2     | 2      | 3       | 2     | 1     |
| Shoplifting                | 7                | 8     | 7      | 8       | 7     | 8     |
| Gangs                      | 5                | 7     | 8      | 5       | 6     | 7     |
| Discrimination             | 6                | 6     | 5      | 6       | 5     | 6     |

**Table 7.** Rank order of attributes that define Armenian identity by age and residency status based on the average rank order of each attribute for each group (1 is most important and 6 is least important)

| Attributes                    | Residency Status |       |        |         | Age   | Total |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
|                               | Native           | Early | Recent | Younger | Older |       |
| Speak Armenian                | 4                | 1     | 1      | 1       | 1     | 1     |
| Know history                  | 3                | 2     | 3      | 3       | 3     | 3     |
| Active in organizations       | 5                | 5     | 6      | 5       | 5     | 5     |
| Have Armenian parents         | 2                | 4     | 5      | 4       | 4     | 4     |
| Identify with Armenian people | 1                | 3     | 2      | 2       | 2     | 2     |
| Believe in the Armenian Cause | 6                | 6     | 4      | 6       | 6     | 6     |

### Definition of Armenian Identity

As shown in Table 7, the older and younger age groups accord identical ranking to different attributes that define Armenian identity, speaking Armenian being the most important. However, the native-born and immigrant groups emphasize different aspects of Armenian identity. While the native born consider identifying with the Armenian people as the most important aspect of Armenian identity, immigrant groups consider speaking Armenian as most important. Being born of Armenian parents is second most important for the native born while the immigrant groups consider it relatively unimportant. The emphasis on different aspects of Armenian identity implies that ethnic identity is achieved through different means by the immigrant and native-born groups. One does not necessarily reflect a

better identity than the other. Both provide a sense of belonging: one in symbolic terms and the other in concrete terms. If this process is not correctly understood it can be a source of polarization between the two sectors of the community.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This survey may be regarded as a first step towards a sociological understanding of the Armenian community in the United States. An effort was made to determine the relationship of age and residency status to various demographic, behavioral and attitudinal variables. On the whole, older and younger adults were more similar than different. However, residency status was an important source of differentiation. Recent and early immigrants were more similar to each other than they were to the native born. Striking differences were apparent in a number of areas:

1. Financially, the native born were better off than the immigrants, and recent immigrants were the worst off.
2. The native born tended to have higher education and professional occupations.
3. The native born were more indifferent toward the Armenian political parties, while the early immigrants were most involved in them.
4. About one-third of the native born never read Armenian newspapers, but they attend church most regularly.
5. Recent immigrants had a lesser tendency to vote and do volunteer work than the native born and early immigrants.
6. A good portion (20%) of the recent immigrants did not have a functional knowledge of English.
7. One-half of the native born and one-third of the immigrant groups indicated that the Armenian Cause was impossible to resolve.
8. There was general consensus that church weddings help family cohesiveness.
9. The native born and the younger adults were more accepting of mixed marriages.
10. About one-half of those surveyed believed that earning a living was also a woman's responsibility and housekeeping was also a man's duty.
11. The great majority of the native born (90%) wanted to see sermons delivered in both languages, while only one-half of the immigrant groups did so.
12. While the native born distributed their financial allocations, recent immigrants concentrated on schools.
13. There was general consensus that lack of unity was the most important problem of the community today, followed by loss of the Armenian language and traditional values.

14. In defining Armenian identity, the native born emphasized having Armenian parents and identifying with the Armenian people while the immigrant groups emphasized speaking Armenian.

Recognition of change and diversity as inherent components of the Armenian community is necessary for shaping a better future for Armenians in the United States. The burden on the leaders of existing social, political and cultural organizations is enormous indeed. Problems created by change and diversity should be anticipated if efforts to deal with them are not productive and proactive. This implies foresight, imagination, and systematic planning for action.

## MULTIPLE SOCIAL IDENTITY AS A REFLECTION OF MODERNITY<sup>59</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

Since the approach to the issue of multiple social identity as a reflection of modernity will be from the perspective of social psychology, it may be best to start by sketching the conceptual framework of that discipline. Social psychology is concerned with understanding the conditions of the individual and the group in terms of their interaction. The individual is seen as the center of nested circles representing larger and more inclusive groups in which the individual participates. The condition of the individual is also seen in the context of the interaction of a number of groups in at least some of which the individual participates (Lewin, 1951). The complexity of possible conditions that reflect individual-group interactions is apparent. Therefore, many generalizations are made at the risk of simplifying an intricately complex network of factors.

The problem of multiple social identities is not unique to Armenians (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Zak, 1973). Their situation represents one of a number of possibilities. Although comments here are made more with the general case in mind, the implications for the Armenian situation should be clear. In certain instances the Armenian condition will be used to illustrate the general case.

From a global perspective of human society, two powerful and opposing forces that are propelling the evolution of culture characterize modernity. On the one hand, homogenizing forces are pulling human society and culture toward uniformity; on the other hand, there are forces pulling society and culture toward increasing differentiation (Brown, 1972; Moore, 1966). Such forces have been at work since the dawn of history. Earlier manifestations of homogenizing forces may be seen in the trampling armies of conquest. Persians, Romans, Arabs, and Mongols were in earlier epochs the coercive agents of subordination in the name of the might of the East or the West. The manifestations of differentiating forces may be seen in the way groups of people with some sense of cultural distinction and autonomy persistently struggle against domination. This is not an explanation, but a statement of what is obvious from a global perspective.

In more recent history the tension between homogenizing and differentiating forces may be seen in the struggle between the colonizers with missionary fervor and voracious appetite, and the peoples they tried to

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<sup>59</sup> Reproduced with permission from the publisher: Der-Karabetian, A., "Multiple Social Identity as a Reflection of Modernity", *The Armenian Review*, 1983:36, 100-105. Also, paper presented at the Second Annual Symposium of the Armenian Studies Department of the Armenian American International College, Pasadena, California, 1981.

subdue and mold after their own kind (Walenstein, 1966). This struggle has led to the proliferation of pseudo-autonomous and arbitrarily carved out nation-states, 170 of them, that bask in the illusion of sovereignty.

Parallel to the continuous economic and political domination of the small by the large, and of the many by the few, modernization has unleashed an overriding social force that threatens to obliterate all unevenness in human culture. This might be called the culture of technology (Toffler 1970, 1980). Presently we are witnessing a cultural gap between the material manifestation of culture and the value systems that are commonly held. Nuclear fission, lasers, microcomputers, supersonic travel, communication satellites, population concentrations, the indefinite prolongation of "life," and the omnipresence of the television screen, just to mention a few, have drastically altered the ecology of human existence in a few short decades. If the human race is to survive, it must learn to adapt to the conditions it has created. Adaptation to the new culture of technology is inevitable, and the necessary outcome is culture that accommodates technology. The overriding influence of technology will determine the uniformity of the emerging non-material culture, values, norms, and lifestyles.

It is no surprise that today the world community is in many ways acting as a global village. It comes together in global concern not only about the adequacy and distribution of resources, but also about the dreadful possibility of instantaneous self-annihilation. Upheaval or social unrest in one part of the globe is seen as a threat to all. From the artificial heart to space exploration, technological achievements by one society are shared by all. All must adapt to technological change.

This process of adaptation has two components: the uniform nature of the spreading technology, and the availability of instantaneous communication and contact. It is established that societies in geographic proximity tend to develop many similar features of material and nonmaterial culture by virtue of being in contact and communication. Progressively growing homogenization of human culture will depend largely on global contact and sharing of technology. The existing differentiation of peoples that has developed because of relative isolation will gradually disappear as self-sufficiency becomes more and more difficult to achieve. Boundaries between people will become less and less demarcated, and nation-states will gradually be transformed into administrative units for resource management (Zimmern, 1973).

This may sound futuristic and fictional; yet the seeds of such cultural uniformity are readily noticeable at the present time. An example that illustrates the effect of modern technology on uniformity is the electronic medium of exchange, in other words, electronic money. Computers and instantaneous world communication have made it possible to transfer any amount or make an exchange of any monetary value between any two points

in the world at any time. This is a long way from the barter system. The ramifications of such a system of exchange can only be left to the imagination. The culture of technology and greater global homogeneity are already in sight.

What about the forces of differentiation? Can the rich unevenness of human culture survive? In the overall scheme of cultural evolution the post-colonial and post-industrial upsurge in nationalism is transitional. However, it is reasonable to assume that cultural differentiation may counter the homogenizing impact of the culture of technology. The exact nature of the mitigation cannot be predicted, but the implications of nationalism will not be the same. It may be transformed, for instance, into a type of regionalism. The evolution of technological culture should not preclude culturally differentiated adaptation to various geopolitical and social circumstances.

If one takes the impact of the culture of technology seriously, then one should seriously question the nature of cultural identity. One cannot fail to notice that Armenians consider their cultural identity sacrosanct and immutable. They assume its permanence and universality over time and space. But the nature of Armenian cultural identity, particularly in the Diaspora, is neither permanent nor universal. The meaning and implications of Armenian ethnic identity vary from one host culture to another (Der-Karabetian, 1981). The Armenianness of an Armenian does not have the same implications in Lebanon as it does in the United States, Argentina or Israel. Similarly, the meaning that a person's Armenianness has for him or her today is different from the meaning that it had for his or her parents in 1920. Thus, if one accepts the changing nature of Armenian identity over time and space, then one should seriously examine what its preservation means and whether that is a matter of choice for the collective. It is certainly not possible to do justice to that topic here. Yet a forward step can be taken toward answering these questions by considering the nature of ethnic identity in general.

One way to understand the nature of ethnic identity is by evaluating the functions it serves. Ethnicity may be seen to serve two primary functions: existential and instrumental. These functions are relevant to the group as well as to the individual. They also are not mutually exclusive. One reinforces the other. On the one hand, Armenian ethnicity helps define one's place in the universe by providing a sense of temporal continuity and belonging. On the other hand, Armenian ethnicity leads one to seek ethnically related employment or meet affiliation and interpersonal needs. However, by meeting instrumental needs through greater involvement in the ethnic group, the existential function of self-definition is reaffirmed and reinforced. It is also possible that one might seek to associate with or be gainfully employed in one's ethnic group because of a strong sense of belonging. There may be occasions when a strong sense of ethnic belonging

may plunge one into adverse and threatening conditions such as civil wars or discrimination. Thus, the function of ethnicity is not always associated with rewarding consequences.

On the collective level an ethnically defined minority status can become a vehicle for obtaining social and economic gains from an increasingly conscious political majority. The instrumental value of ethnic assertiveness leads members of ethnic groups to search for their roots in the depths of Africa, or the soaring heights of Mount Ararat, or in the castles of medieval European kingdoms.

The upsurges of ethnic-national self-assertion in the post-industrial era may be seen as the political consequence of a world community sensitized to historical and cultural differentiation. It may also be seen as a reaction to the threat of cultural obliteration by the encroaching technological culture. Ethnic assertion may also be a reflection of the clash between pre-modern social values and the sudden imposition of the strange mechanical and electronic artifacts of the modern urbanized cultures of the West, that is, a clash between the material and nonmaterial aspects of culture. Whatever its cause, many contemporary advanced societies are beset by ethnic assertiveness regardless of the economic or political system prominent in a given society. Current social reality runs counter to the notion that ethnic identity cannot survive the melting pot of modernization. It also contradicts the Marxist view that ethnic identity is a "vestige of the pre-socialist phase of societal development." With regard to ethnicity, social reality seems to contradict social theory.

This contradiction is rooted in the misconception that cultural identity is dichotomous. Either an individual is a "modern person" or a "pre-modern" ethnic. However, it is conceivable that individuals may be simultaneously "modern" and "ethnic," the two representing independent dimensions of personal identity. There is ample evidence to suggest the independence of majority and minority identity. Feeling strongly American, for instance, does not necessarily preclude feeling strongly Armenian, although it might. Generally, full participation in the majority culture does not exclude full participation in the ethnic culture (Berry, 1980; Cuellar et al., 1980; Der-Karabetian, 1980; Zak, 1973).

The independent variation of majority-minority identities may be partially understood with reference to the existential and instrumental functions of social identity. While participation in the majority culture may be meeting instrumental needs, participation in the ethnic culture may be meeting existential needs. Technological and organizational mechanisms in the larger society are generally necessary tools for survival in highly urbanized cities. These mechanisms serve the basic needs of communication, commutation, and comfort. If these needs are provided for a majority mainstream culture, it is to the individual's detriment not to partake fully of

that culture. Thus, for a minority group or an individual, it will be maladaptive to reject the mainstream culture. To do so would mean the denial of enormous benefits to oneself.

However, another, less beneficial consequence of the development of technological culture has been the growing sense of alienation and anomie in modern society (Dean, 1961). This is a deeply personal state of detachment, and a sense of meaninglessness, in the context of the larger collective. This has been attributed largely to the urbanization, mechanization, and social isolation inherent in the industrialized societies of the West. It is entirely conceivable that ethnicity is a reaction to that sense of alienation and meaninglessness. Ethnicity helps define one's place in the universe. It provides a sense of temporal continuity and group belonging; in so doing it counteracts the debilitating impact of alienation. Ethnicity serves the very basic existential need of self-definition in an expanding, materially homogeneous culture (Erikson, 1968; Glazer & Moynihan, 1975).

While modernization can lead to diffusion of cultural identity, it simultaneously creates pressures that reinforce ethnic identity. As a political asset, ethnicity may be used to acquire certain social and economic benefits, or it may simply be an inherent reaction to the homogenizing and alienating pressures of modernity. Depending on the context, ethnicity can serve both existential and instrumental functions. It presupposes simultaneous participation in "modern" and "pre-modern" cultures. Thus, majority and minority groups may be compatible, and multiple social identities may be complementary rather than contradictory (Bell & Freeman, 1974).

Simultaneous participation in two coextensive cultures is characteristic of Armenian life in the diaspora. This is not a choice. Armenians have consistently dreaded the possible consequences of participation in the majority culture, which is increasingly defined by the culture of technology. It is imperative that Armenians break out of their collective shell and define themselves in the context of the wider society. The context cannot be denied. As a collective that claims distinctiveness, Armenians should chart their course in relation to whatever it is that they claim to be distinct from. They cannot ignore the culture that is evolving around them. They are as much a part of the larger society, as they are a part of Armenian ethnic culture. The homogenizing forces of modernity envelop ethnic cultures. There is no escaping it. Armenians are participants in both worlds; they belong to both.

Diaspora conditions, coupled with the forces of modernity, necessitate multiple identities that reflect the independent and interactive dimensions of collective and individual identities. This is adaptive behavior, not a destructive one. If one affirmed ethnicity and denied modernity, then one would be condemning one's culture to stagnation. Cultures that do not evolve are bound to become museum pieces enclosed in glass, to be admired from time to time. A dynamic culture is an enduring culture, a culture that is



bold, flexible, and accommodating. Simultaneous participation in multiple cultures reflects Armenian reality in the diaspora as well as in the Soviet Union. In both cases the culture of the majority, superimposed on the culture of technology, represents the other culture. In order to survive Armenians need to accommodate these other “cultures;” they can do it by embracing multiple social identities.

To understand the dynamics of multiple social identity, it is important to see how it is reflected in the individual and in the group, and how the group and the individual influence each other. Individuals who have similar experiences, heritage, and goals form a definite collective that acquires a life of its own, motivated primarily by the survival instinct. To survive, the group condones conformity and condemns deviation. The social identity of the group is determined largely by the distinctively similar lifestyles of the majority of its members. The social identity of the individual emanates from participation in and contribution to this distinctive lifestyle. Ethnicity as a collective social identity incorporates a lifestyle and a sense of common descent that reinforces the distinct lifestyle. Ethnicity as an individual identity reflects one aspect of an individual’s total identity. The total identity of an individual is of wider scope and extends beyond the particular lifestyle of the ethnic group. Thus, it is by the participation of the individual in multiple lifestyles that the multiple identity of a collective is determined.

The multiple social identities of the individual shape the individual’s ability to adapt and survive. If the group condemns multiplicity in the individual, the individual may drop out, fight back or conform. The consequence of each action would differ for the group. Dropping out might weaken the group, fighting back might change the group, and conforming might lead the group to stagnation.

## VARIATIONS OF ARMENIAN IDENTITY IN LEBANON AND CALIFORNIA<sup>60</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

According to the situational principle (Shil, 1957) the salience of ethnicity is determined by a given situation that involves an interaction between ethnic groups on either a temporary or a long-term basis. The nature and manifestation of ethnicity varies with the variation of situations and their interactions. In the case of diaspora Armenian communities, the interactions that impact the nature and salience of Armenian ethnic orientation (Ethnic orientation and ethnic identity are used interchangeably) involve time, generation and majority cultures with very different characteristics, histories, and geopolitical realities.

At the time of the dispersion around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century genocide, Armenians found their way to various countries, taking with them a high degree of homogeneity in their national and ethnic consciousness. Over time the basis of homogeneity tends to erode and ethnic orientation is colored by the context in which a particular community finds itself. Time and context change the salience as well as the manifestations of Armenian belongingness. However, it is entirely possible that in spite of modified manifestations of ethnic orientation, the overall salience may be maintained.

In order to demonstrate the impact of time and context on the variations of salience and content of Armenian ethnic orientation, previously published as well as unpublished data collected in Lebanon and California are presented. The Armenian communities of Lebanon and California are especially good cases because of the ways they are similar and different. The two communities are similar in terms of the superstructure of Armenian political parties and the concurrent distribution of educational, religious and cultural institutions in the communities. Moreover, they are part of multiethnic societies. The two communities are different in terms of the level of development of the host countries and the nature of the forces of assimilation.

### **Age Group Comparisons**

In Lebanon variations of Armenian orientation in different age groups were studied prior to the start of the civil war by comparing elderly, middle-aged and young people using a 57-item survey questionnaire (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). On the overall strength of Armenian

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<sup>60</sup> Der-Karabetian, A., "Variations of Armenian Identity in Lebanon and California", Invited paper presented at the International Conference on the Status of Armenian Communities in the Third World and Developing Countries, organized by the Academy of Sciences of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia SSR, October 1987.

orientation, the elderly scored higher than the middle-aged, who in turn scored higher than the young. The overall salience was also stronger among those who were Armenian political party members compared to those who were sympathizers or neither-members-nor-sympathizers.

Examination of individual questions revealed interesting differences and similarities in the content of Armenian orientation. While the older groups indicated greater attachment to the Armenian homeland, the young showed a tendency to break away from old traditional customs and institutions. All three age groups felt equally strongly about the use of the Armenian language and attachment to symbols of pride in ethnic identity, and they also valued a sense of Armenian belongingness over Lebanese identity. This comparison of age groups reflects cohort (generational) differences as well as enduring values that define Armenian Identity.

In California, in 1981, a state-wide mail survey of Armenians was conducted (Der-Karabetian & Proudian-Der-Karabetian, 1981); it was supported, published and distributed as a report by the Armenian Assembly, California Branch. This survey covered demographic information as well as ethnically oriented behaviors and attitudes, comparing older and younger adults as well as other groups. The two age groups were more similar than different in their ethnic behaviors and attitudes. The older adults reported more fluency in the Armenian language and more diligence in reading Armenian newspapers and church attendance. They were alike in believing that only peaceful means should be used to pursue the Armenian cause, and that the resolution of the Armenian question is more likely in the distant future, with one-third in each group believing that the issue is impossible to resolve. They were in agreement in overwhelmingly prioritizing schools in their financial allocations and in ranking two community concerns, lack of unity and loss of the Armenian language, as being highest on the list of community problems. They also agreed on factors that define Armenian identity in terms of speaking Armenian, feeling one with the Armenian people, and knowing Armenian history as the most important factors; these may be considered among the enduring values that define Armenian identity. These enduring values across age groups are quite comparable in the Lebanese and California samples.

### **Comparison over Time**

The 1981 state-wide California survey included questions that were similar to an earlier unpublished survey conducted with over 260 southern California Armenian adults by Gerard Libaridian and his students (1973). This survey was conducted by a group of Armenian high school students through door-to-door questioning of community members and acquaintances. Although the methodologies of the two surveys were not the same, consistent patterns emerge in the responses. In the 1973 sample there

were somewhat more immigrants from the Middle East and somewhat more recent immigrants. The content of Table 1 shows comparisons of the opinions and preferences of the two samples of California Armenians questioned 8 years apart. There appears to be a remarkable degree of agreement in the two samples. About one-third considers Armenians to be part of the majority in the United States. Schools are regarded as the most popular target for financial allocation, and the most important community problems are seen as lack of unity and loss of language and traditions.

**Table 1.** Comparison of demographic information, ethnic concerns, and financial priorities among Californians in 1973 and 1981

|                                                      |                               | 1973    | 1981    |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                                      |                               | N       | N       |
|                                                      |                               | =       | =       |
|                                                      |                               | 265     | 300     |
|                                                      |                               | Percent | Percent |
| Gender                                               | Men                           | 52      | 61      |
|                                                      | Women                         | 48      | 39      |
| Belong to Armenian Organizations                     |                               | 74      | 53      |
| Geographic Region of Origin                          | Middle East                   | 62      | 38      |
|                                                      | Eastern Europe                | 15      | 13      |
|                                                      | Born in the US                | 23      | 36      |
|                                                      | Other                         | -       | 13      |
| Length of Residence in the US by Immigrants          | 10 and fewer years            | 62      | 49      |
|                                                      | Over 10 years                 | 38      | 51      |
| Armenians in the US are                              |                               | 67      | 68      |
| Single Most Important Cause for Financial Allocation | Part of the majority          | 33      | 32      |
|                                                      | Schools                       | 57      | 36      |
|                                                      | Community centers             | 12      | -       |
|                                                      | Political activity            | 7       | 9       |
|                                                      | Cultural activity             | 6       | 13      |
|                                                      | Churches                      | 5       | 9       |
|                                                      | Social service                | 5       | 14      |
|                                                      | Athletics                     | 3       | -       |
|                                                      | Others                        | -       | 6       |
| Defining Armenian Identity                           |                               | Rank    | Rank    |
|                                                      | Armenian parents              | 1       | 4       |
|                                                      | Speak Armenian                | 2       | 1       |
|                                                      | Know history                  | 3       | 3       |
|                                                      | Believe in the Armenian Cause | 4       | 6       |
|                                                      | Being active in organizations | 5       | 5       |
|                                                      | Identify with Armenian People | 6       | 2       |
| Most Important Community Problem                     |                               | Rank    | Rank    |
|                                                      | Lack of unity                 | 1       | 1       |
|                                                      | Loss of traditional values    | 2       | 3       |
|                                                      | Loss of the Armenian language | -       | 2       |
|                                                      | Intermarriage                 | 4       | 4       |
|                                                      | Use of Illegal drugs          | -       | 5       |
|                                                      | Discrimination                | -       | 6       |

In the life of a minority group passage of time implies changes in outlook and personality traits influenced by the dynamics of the host culture, reflecting tendencies towards assimilation. Melikian and Der-Karabetian (1977) studied the personality change of Armenians in Lebanon over time. They analyzed responses to the Edwards Personality Preference Schedule to comparable groups of Armenian Lebanese and Arab Christian Lebanese university students in 1956 and 1973. This personality measure assesses 15 different personality traits such as needs for achievement, autonomy, affiliation, and nurturance. The results showed that while in 1956 there were statistically significant differences between the groups on ten of the 15 traits, in 1973, 17 years later, there were differences on only two of the 15 traits. When the scores were compared for each group to assess which group had changed more over time, the results showed that while Lebanese Arab Christian scores were virtually unchanged, the Lebanese Armenian scores had changed and come closer to the Lebanese Christian scores, thus eliminating a statistically significant difference. Such findings might indicate subtle tendencies of assimilation into the dominant host culture. However, whether such changes also imply weakening of ethnic orientation is an open question. It is entirely possible that the dual sentiments of accommodation to the host culture and maintenance of strong ethnic ties can co-exist, and can provide flexibility in successfully navigating the complex multiethnic environment.

Another comparison over time was made in Lebanon using similar samples of high school and university students in 1974 before the civil war broke out and in 1978 while the civil war was going on (See Appendix A in this volume). This comparison may also be a reflection of situational factors. The comparison included 50 of the attitude questions of the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire from the 1974 study (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977). The 1978 sample included 246 men and women, and the 1974 sample had 107 men and women. Each of the 50 items was rated on a 6-point agreement-disagreement scale. Higher values reflected stronger ethnic orientation.<sup>61</sup>

This comparison over time looked at the possible effect of the passage of time but may have been affected by the armed conflict among ethnic groups. According to the situational principle (Shil, 1957) civil upheavals and social turmoil raise group consciousness and in-group solidarity. In situations of active confrontation a stronger group identification emerges, a sense of we-ness, which serves a supportive function and reflects strong in-group orientation and ethnocentrism, potentially leading to some degree of group narcissism (Levine & Campbell, 1972; Volkan, 1979).

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<sup>61</sup> The means, standard deviations and statistical test of comparison (t-test) are provided in Table 2 in this volume under the article titled, "Ethnicity and Civil War: The Lebanese Armenian Case."

As expected the analysis of the data showed that the average ethnic orientation was slightly but significantly ( $t = 3.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) higher in the 1978 sample ( $Mean = 4.00$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) compared to the pre-war sample ( $Mean = 3.75$ ,  $SD = .55$ ). This difference must be interpreted cautiously because of the smallness of the difference and the absence of a control group that did not experience the war. To explore shifts between 1974 and 1978 in specific aspects of ethnic orientation the scores on each of the items were compared and examined. Twenty-four of the items changed significantly. A close inspection of the changed items reflects a certain pattern. There appears to be increased glorification of ethnic descent and an increased endorsement of upholding traditions. This is expressed in the greater desire to maintain old customs (Item 5) and compatriotic organizations (Item 40), increased support for the church (Items 15 and 39), higher evaluation of ethnic literature (Item 45) and the Armenian language (Item 38), and greater emphasis of ethnic identity in the definition of the whole person (Items 13 and 22).

In addition to the greater emphasis on heritage there also appears to be a higher sense of differentiation from the majority non-Armenian culture. This is reflected in the stronger rejections of non-Armenian education (Items 6 and 48) and business transactions (Item 20) and an increased tendency to see Armenians as more hardworking (Item 28), more nurturing (Item 29), and more family oriented (Item 30). Overall, the comparison of ethnic orientation scores before the civil war and in 1978 suggests the presence of the closure effect of the war on ethnicity. The 1978 sample seems to display stronger in-group allegiance centered on the culturally distinctive aspects of Armenians as well as a higher sense of differentiation and hardening of ethnic boundaries. This is clearly good for the preservation of Armenian identity and counteracts growing acculturation trends among young Armenian people in Lebanon (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977; Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977). The passage of time in the life of ethnic groups does not happen in a vacuum, and events invariably come to impact the ethnic boundaries, sense of identity, and perceived cultural distinctiveness of the group. However, in this comparison strong and enduring aspects of ethnic orientation include the importance of speaking Armenian (Items 10 and 37), attending Armenian Church services (Item 23), reading Armenian newspapers (Item 25), and visiting or settling in Armenia (Items 34 and 46).

### **Comparison across Situational Contexts**

The content of Armenian ethnic orientation is also variable across situational contexts. The context in which a particular community, segment of a community, or cultural group finds itself differentially influences the salience of various aspects of ethnic orientation. To illustrate this point and to identify enduring aspects of ethnic orientation various comparisons are

presented. Armenian orientation of US citizens and non-citizens from California and citizens from Lebanon are compared using identical survey questions.

Somewhat different versions of the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire were administered to the California sample in 1976 and to the Lebanese sample in 1974; there were 32 common items. The ratings were made on a 6-point agreement-disagreement scale. Each of the three samples was composed of 41 individuals who were matched proportionally by sex, age, level of schooling and membership in Armenian political organizations. Such matching minimizes or controls for the impact of these factors. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the responses by the three samples on the 32 common ethnic orientation items including statistically significant differences between the groups (using Analysis of Variance tests).

These three samples represent different situations and contexts. The US citizens and Lebanese samples come from communities that have established roots in their host countries, while the non-citizens in the US represent a segment of the diaspora community in uprooted transition. Also, Armenians in Lebanon and the US find themselves in ethnically diverse societies. However, while ethnic differentiation is institutionalized in Lebanon by virtue of its constitution, in the US laws on social justice disallow institutional discrimination on the basis of ethnic and racial background. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect different aspects of Armenian ethnic orientation to be prominent in each context.

Comparison of the total ethnic orientation scores shows the non-citizens to be similar to the Lebanese and to have higher scores than their citizen counterparts; the citizens are no different from the Lebanese in ethnic orientation. It is not surprising to find that the recently uprooted and immigrant segment of the community reflects stronger ethnic identity. The contrast created by the novelty of the new host culture, combined with the communal desire to maintain continuity and a sense of social identity may partially explain the heightened ethnic awareness of this new immigrant group.

Examination of the differences on each of the 32 items of ethnic orientation reveals interesting patterns of similarities and differences between the three samples. On half the items in Table 2 there are no differences, indicating areas of ethnic orientation similar in intensity across the three different samples. On the other half of the items, which show significant differences, 13 items show differences between the California citizens and the Lebanese, 6 show differences between California citizens and non-citizens, and 5 show differences between California non-citizens and Lebanese.

**Table 2.** Comparison of the mean ratings of 32 ethnic orientation items by matched samples of US citizen (C) and US resident (R) California Armenians, and Lebanese (L) Armenians on a 6-point scale with higher scores indicating stronger agreement with the statement (statistically significant different means are note by the letters representing the samples)

| Ethnic Orientation                                       | US Citizens              |     | US Resid.                |     | Lebanese             |     | Differences       |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------|
| Items (Abridged)                                         | (C)<br>N =<br>41<br>Mean | SD  | (R)<br>N =<br>41<br>Mean | SD  | (L)<br>N =41<br>Mean | SD  |                   |
| 1. Armenian Literature matches international standards   | 5.05                     | 1.2 | 4.47                     | 1.2 | 4.37                 | 1.4 | C vs R,<br>C vs L |
| 2. Armenian businesses should close on Armenian holidays | 4.82                     | 1.3 | 4.81                     | 1.3 | 5.15                 | 1.2 |                   |
| 3. Armenian children more gifted                         | 3.47                     | 1.6 | 3.72                     | 1.6 | 3.39                 | 1.6 |                   |
| 4. Compatriotic organizations not needed anymore         | 2.73                     | 1.4 | 2.07                     | 1.4 | 2.95                 | 1.7 | R vs L            |
| 5. Not involved in “Armenian Cause” are as good          | 3.98                     | 1.6 | 4.02                     | 1.7 | 4.34                 | 1.6 |                   |
| 6. Settle in Armenia not to assimilate                   | 3.28                     | 1.6 | 3.88                     | 1.6 | 4.29                 | 1.5 | C vs L            |
| 7. Support church morally and financially                | 2.75                     | 1.5 | 3.88                     | 1.6 | 4.19                 | 1.5 | C vs R,<br>C vs L |
| 8. Should degrade Turks when possible                    | 3.44                     | 1.8 | 4.19                     | 1.6 | 3.68                 | 1.8 |                   |
| 9. First a person then an Armenian                       | 4.66                     | 1.6 | 4.39                     | 1.6 | 4.66                 | 1.8 |                   |
| 10. Always cheer Armenian team                           | 3.79                     | 1.7 | 4.88                     | 1.1 | 4.98                 | 1.3 | C vs R,<br>C vs L |
| 11. Armenian upbringing prevents delinquency             | 3.41                     | 1.4 | 3.55                     | 1.4 | 3.93                 | 1.4 |                   |
| 12. Bothersome to have Armenian neighbors                | 2.93                     | 1.6 | 2.86                     | 1.5 | 3.05                 | 1.6 |                   |
| 13. Armenian mothers more devoted to family              | 4.83                     | 1.3 | 4.39                     | 1.8 | 3.61                 | 1.7 | C vs L            |
| 14. Armenian schools should accept non-Armenians         | 2.85                     | 1.7 | 2.62                     | 1.8 | 2.49                 | 1.6 |                   |
| 15. Not blame young for preferring non-Armenian music    | 4.55                     | 1.4 | 4.17                     | 1.4 | 4.05                 | 1.5 |                   |



|                                                                 |      |     |      |     |      |     |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|----------------|
| 16. Wrong to have negative attitude toward Armenian culture     | 4.66 | 1.4 | 5.14 | .9  | 4.73 | 1.6 |                |
| 17. Church not as important in preserving identity              | 3.05 | 1.6 | 3.64 | 1.5 | 4.10 | 1.3 | C vs L         |
| 18. Shame when famous Armenians not acknowledge Armenian origin | 5.34 | 1.0 | 4.88 | 1.4 | 4.59 | 1.2 | C vs L         |
| 19. Armenians and Turks cannot be friends                       | 3.40 | 1.8 | 4.28 | 1.8 | 3.59 | 1.9 |                |
| 20. Taking on foreign names not good                            | 3.56 | 1.6 | 3.67 | 1.6 | 4.24 | 1.8 |                |
| 21. Not celebrate Christmas on 6 <sup>th</sup> of January       | 2.61 | 1.3 | 2.65 | 1.7 | 3.48 | 2.0 | C vs L, R vs L |
| 22. Cannot stay Armenian without speaking Armenian              | 2.73 | 1.7 | 3.70 | 1.7 | 4.49 | 1.4 | C vs R, C vs L |
| 23. Armenians should marry Armenians                            | 3.38 | 1.8 | 4.70 | 1.6 | 4.66 | 1.4 | C vs R, C vs L |
| 24. Armenians more hardworking                                  | 3.95 | 1.5 | 4.28 | 1.5 | 4.39 | 1.3 |                |
| 25. Be fanatic to preserve identity                             | 2.70 | 1.6 | 3.41 | 1.6 | 3.85 | 1.5 | C vs L         |
| 26. Non-Armenian education more beneficial                      | 3.17 | 1.4 | 2.77 | 1.5 | 3.78 | 1.6 | R vs L         |
| 27. Speak Armenian if know language                             | 3.93 | 1.5 | 4.81 | 1.3 | 5.19 | 1.1 | C vs R, C vs L |
| 28. Old customs should be dropped                               | 3.51 | 1.5 | 3.00 | 1.7 | 3.98 | 1.5 | R vs L         |
| 29. "Armenian is beautiful"                                     | 5.34 | .9  | 5.30 | 1.2 | 3.81 | 1.9 | C vs L, R vs L |
| 30. Essential to visit Armenia to stay Armenian                 | 3.78 | 1.4 | 4.19 | 1.6 | 3.81 | 1.6 |                |
| 31. Breaking law disgraces Armenians                            | 4.23 | 1.7 | 4.86 | 1.2 | 4.12 | 1.6 |                |
| 32. Prefer employment by non-Armenian                           | 3.41 | 1.5 | 3.48 | 1.7 | 3.19 | 1.6 |                |
| OVERALL ETHNIC ORIENTATION SCORE                                | 3.80 | .67 | 4.14 | .66 | 3.96 | .56 | C vs R         |

Although the overall ethnic orientation scores of the California citizens and the Lebanese are not different, the domains that contribute to ethnic orientation in each group are somewhat different. Inspection of statistical

differences shows that there is a tendency among the Lebanese to be more ethnocentric, and they emphasize the importance of the Armenian language, the church and the homeland to a greater extent. The California sample seems to display a tendency to feel more pride in ethnic uniqueness, downplay the significance of the Armenian language, and reject fanaticism to a greater degree.

Compared to US citizens, non-citizen residents show a stronger attachment to the church and the Armenian language and emphasize the need for in-group marriages. Compared to the Lebanese, however, the non-citizens seem to value more Armenian things for their own sake, emphasize to a greater degree the need to maintain traditional customs and organizations, and perceive Armenian education as more beneficial in the long run.

Items with no differences among the three groups reveal areas of consensus that point to more enduring and universal aspects of Armenian identity. Concerning distinctive national character, Armenians are seen as hardworking, gifted and banding together. There is an endorsement of the importance of displaying good civic behavior, as well as pride in cultural traditions and identity. There is definite recognition that to be a good Armenian it is not necessary to participate in the "Armenian Cause," prefer only Armenian music and culture, seek Armenian business affiliations and consider oneself "first Armenian then a person." However, anti-Turkish sentiment is seen as a factor in heightened ethnic orientation. Moreover, while visiting the Armenian homeland is clearly seen as a factor in strengthening the Armenian spirit, all three groups uniformly do not endorse settlement in Armenia to avoid assimilation.

Another situational comparison is made in the 1981 statewide survey of California Armenians involving citizens, early immigrants and recent immigrants (Der-Karabetian & Proudian-Der-Karabetian, 1981). The demographics of these three samples show a good balance in income, education, and occupation and Armenian party membership. They also represent segments of the diaspora in different situations, where the native-born are settled and socialized in the ways of the host country, and the immigrant groups are in transition and at different stages of adapting to a new country.

The results show that early immigrants are more similar to each other than they are to the native-born in a number of areas. More specifically, the native-born are more indifferent toward the Armenian political parties, while the early immigrants are mostly involved in them. The native-born read fewer Armenian newspapers but attend church most frequently, and more of them (about half) feel that the "Armenian Cause" of recovering land lost to Turkey is impossible to resolve. In defining Armenian identity, the native-

born emphasize having Armenian parents while the immigrant groups emphasize speaking Armenian.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Taken together, comparisons of ethnic orientation over time, across generations, and between samples from different segments of the diaspora communities show variations as well as enduring universal elements that make up Armenian ethnic orientation and identity. The universal elements of Armenian orientation reinforce the notion that the makeup of Armenian ethnic identity in the diaspora is far from being uniform and stable. While the mobile and unsettled segments of the global Armenian community tend to be attached to the concrete aspects of Armenian culture, more established communities tend to emphasize the less tangible and more symbolic characteristics of ethnic culture (Der-Karabetian, 1980). However, the Armenian language, the educational and religious institutions, the national symbols of pride and distinctiveness, as well as attachment to the homeland emerge as the core aspects of Armenian ethnic identity in the diaspora communities of Lebanon and California.

To identify the complex parameters of Armenian consciousness and identity in the diaspora a wider and integrated global effort is required, perhaps through the establishment of a network of scholars and social scientists interested in the systematic study of this matter. I have no doubt that symposia like this one help create such a worldwide network by gathering interested scholars together, especially when that gathering place happens to be the homeland.

# INTRA-ETHNIC AND DOMAIN-SPECIFIC STEREOTYPING: THE CASE OF THE CALIFORNIA ARMENIANS<sup>62</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian and Maral Mavlian

## **Abstract**

Intra-ethnic domain-specific stereotyping and social distance among California Armenians was examined. The participant groups were first generation immigrants from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran currently residing in Southern California with an average of 6.8 years of residency in the United States. A pilot study was done to generate stereotypic descriptors in the domains of neighbor, colleague and marital partner. Each group rated itself and the other two groups on all three domains. There were three samples of 35 individuals from each group, and each sample rated only one target group. Thus, there were altogether 9 samples of 35 individuals each with a near even balance of men and women in each sample. Overall, 152 men and 163 women participated in the study with an average age of 35.6 years and education of 12.3 years. The samples were obtained using the snowball approach. The results showed that stereotypes differentiated the groups, and intra-group social distance was very much in evidence in the various domains. More social distance was apparent in the domains of marital partner and neighbor, and the groups were similar in the domain of neighbor but well differentiated in the domains of colleague and marital partner. Furthermore, the correlations between self-characterizations and perceptions by out-groups varied by target group and the domain.

The early study of ethnic stereotyping has traditionally focused on across-the-board, in-group versus out-group perceptions in the context of social identity development (e.g. Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1969). However, more recent studies have examined intergroup stereotyping as determined by various situational factors and subcategories of out-group members (e.g. Canter, Mischel & Schwartz, 1982). The relationship of ethnic stereotyping to social distance between various groups has also been examined fairly extensively (e.g. Smith & Dempsey, 1983; Hagendoorn & Kleinpenning, 1991).

The purpose of the present study is to extend the process of domain-specific stereotyping and social distance to intra-ethnic subgroups. What is perceived as a homogeneous ethnic group from an out-group perspective may itself be characterized by a high degree of subgroup differentiation in

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<sup>62</sup> Der-Karabetian, A., & Mavlian, M. "Intra-ethnic and Domain-specific Stereotyping: The Case of the California Armenians", poster presented at the annual convention of the Western Psychological Association, Los Angeles, CA., April 1995.

comparative social identity. It is hypothesized that the dynamics of in-group versus out-group stereotyping is also present within the more narrow boundaries of an ethnic group, and may be understood in terms of Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social comparison model. By extension, ethnic subgroups can also provide comparative contexts for each other that help reinforce ethnic subgroup belonging and identity. For the purposes of this study we define stereotyping as the degree of mismatch between in-group self-characterizations and the characterizations of other in-groups. This comparative definition of stereotypes is somewhat different from the traditional conceptualization of stereotypes based on unilateral beliefs about out-groups (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1969).

The Southern California area has the largest Armenian population outside of Armenia. The Armenians from Armenia immigrated to the United States as refugees from the communist regime of the Soviet Union. Armenia became one of the four original republics of the USSR in 1922, and formally declared its independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Armenia claims 2500 years of history and vibrant culture in the region. Armenians from Iran immigrated mostly in the wake of the downfall of the Shah and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Armenians in Iran came under the control of Persia in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and have established deep roots there. The Armenians from Lebanon immigrated during the 15 years of civil war in Lebanon. They had settled in Lebanon largely around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, escaping the Ottoman massacres in what is now Eastern Turkey (Hovannisian, 1986).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participant groups were first generation immigrants from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran currently residing in Southern California, with an average of 6.8 years of residency in the United States. There were three samples of 35 individuals from each of the subgroups. Each sample rated its own in-group and the other two out-groups. Overall, 152 men and 163 women participated in the study, with an average age of 35.6 years, and 12.3 years of education.

### **Instrument**

A questionnaire specifically designed for this study was developed in a pilot study. Individuals from the three sub-groups (Armenians from Armenia = 17, Lebanon = 13, and Iran = 15) were asked to list the characteristics which they believed to be true about their own group and the other two groups as neighbors, colleagues, and marital partners based on their personal experiences. The most common characteristics across the three sub-groups were used in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included 14 characteristics for the domain of neighbors, 14 for colleague, and 12 for marital partners, which reflected perceived beliefs, habits, and traits of the group. In addition, there were three general social distance questions: (a) "I would be annoyed if my neighbors were members of group x," (b) "I would be annoyed if my colleagues were members of group x," and (c) "I would like to marry or have a personal relationship with a member of group x." Ratings in the last domain were reversed for high scores to reflect more social distance.

Each characteristic, including the social distance items, were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, and 5 = *Strongly Agree*. The questionnaire was first developed in English, and then translated using the back translation method into western Armenian for the Lebanese sample, and into eastern Armenian for the Armenians from Armenia and Iran.

### **Procedure**

Samples were obtained using the snowball approach. The questionnaires were completed by participants in their homes or at their workplace while the researcher waited. They were ensured of confidentiality and were given the option not to answer questions they felt uncomfortable about and to discontinue at any time. The data was collected during the months of February and March of 1992.

### **Results**

Table 1 summarizes the data on domain-specific social distance among Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran. In the domain of Colleague Armenians from Lebanon and Iran show no differential social distance between in-group and out-group members. But Armenians from Armenia show significantly higher social distance from members of the two out-groups in this domain. In the domain areas of Neighbor and Marital Partner social distance is consistently present, with more social distance shown towards out-group members. It appears that Armenians from different parts of the world do not mind having other Armenians as colleagues, but when it comes to having them as neighbors or marital partners, in-group members are preferred. Such a preference appears to be especially strong in the domain of Marital Partner, which may reflect salient intragroup ethnic boundaries.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show self-characterizations of the three groups of Armenians in the three domain areas. In the domain of Neighbor, although there appear to be differences in the mean scores of in-group self-characterizations, there are remarkable similarities in rank ordering of these self-characterizations. High in rank are positive characteristics such as "Respect tradition," "Religious," and "Generous," and low in rank are characteristics such as "Interact with Armenians from same country," "Don't

like to work,” and “Sell drugs.” This similarity is supported by significant rank order correlations of the self-characterizations by the three groups of Armenians (Table 5).

Although in-group bias and social desirability may partially explain the similarities in self-characterizations, there may also be a kernel of truth in these characterizations that are shared by Armenians as an ethnic group.

In the domains of Colleague and Marital Partner, no such similarities of in-group characterizations are in evidence (Table 5). Rank orders of the self-characterizations show that in the domain of Colleague Armenians from Armenia think of their in-group more as “Opportunistic,” “Creative,” and “Talkative,” and less as “Making intelligent judgments,” “Wanting to work in peaceful environment,” and “Formal in relationships.” Armenians from Lebanon think of their in-group more as “Diligent workers,” “Creative,” and “Formal in relationships,” and less as “Liking to succeed without hard work,” “Like to complain,” and “Talkative.”

Armenians from Iran think of their in-group more as “Opportunistic,” “Diligent workers,” and “Friendly with colleagues,” and less as “Ignore coworkers,” “Formal in relationships,” and “Like to succeed without hard work.”

**Table 1.** Social distance toward in-group and out-group members in the domains of neighbor, colleague and marital partners by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran; higher scores imply more social distance

| Raters and<br>Domains         | a            |      | b        |      | c        |      | F      | P     | HSD*        |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------|----------|------|----------|------|--------|-------|-------------|
|                               | Armenians    |      | Lebanese |      | Iranian  |      |        |       |             |
|                               | From Armenia |      | Armenian |      | Armenian |      |        |       |             |
|                               | n=35         |      | n=35     |      | n=35     |      |        |       |             |
|                               | Mean         | SD   | Mean     | SD   | Mean     | SD   |        |       |             |
| <b>Armenians from Armenia</b> |              |      |          |      |          |      |        |       |             |
| Neighbor                      | 1.63         | .88  | 3.89     | 1.32 | 3.37     | 1.24 | 36.29  | <.001 | ab ac       |
| Colleague                     | 2.37         | 1.44 | 3.57     | 1.52 | 3.37     | 1.31 | 6.89   | <.01  | ab ac       |
| Marital<br>Partner            | 3.06         | 1.64 | 4.74     | .65  | 4.46     | .98  | 20.85  | <.001 | ab ac       |
| <b>Armenians from Lebanon</b> |              |      |          |      |          |      |        |       |             |
| Neighbor                      | 1.03         | .17  | 1.05     | .24  | 1.46     | .82  | 8.24   | .01   | ab bc       |
| Colleague                     | 1.04         | .74  | 1.20     | .58  | 1.46     | .74  | 1.35   |       |             |
| Marital<br>Partner            | 4.00         | 1.03 | 1.40     | .81  | 2.20     | 1.45 | 78.11  | <.001 | ab ac<br>bc |
| <b>Armenians from Iran</b>    |              |      |          |      |          |      |        |       |             |
| Neighbor                      | 1.46         | .56  | 2.00     | 1.16 | 1.80     | .83  | 3.38   | <.05  | ab          |
| Colleague                     | 1.86         | .77  | 2.23     | 1.11 | 2.20     | 1.30 | 1.26   |       |             |
| Marital<br>Partner            | 4.29         | .75  | 4.14     | 1.35 | 1.23     | .77  | 105.19 | <.001 | ac bc       |

\* Column represents significantly different pairs of groups

**Table 2.** In-group self-characterizations in the domain of neighbor by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran

| Armenians From Neighbor                      | Armenia n=35 |      | Lebanon n=35 |      | Iran n=35 |      |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|------|--------------|------|-----------|------|
|                                              | Mean         | SD   | Mean         | SD   | Mean      | SD   |
| 1. Interact with Armenians from same country | 2.14         | .69  | 2.57         | 1.12 | 4.00      | .49  |
| 2. Have unusual eating habits                | 2.66         | 1.08 | 2.34         | 1.14 | 1.77      | .84  |
| 3. Don't like to work                        | 2.26         | .98  | 1.57         | .61  | 2.11      | .72  |
| 4. Have good level of general education      | 3.34         | 1.03 | 3.86         | .97  | 2.34      | .97  |
| 5. Are ungrateful                            | 3.09         | .98  | 2.00         | .87  | 2.34      | .97  |
| 6. Identify by smell of their houses         | 3.03         | .95  | 2.06         | 1.14 | 2.49      | .70  |
| 7. Appearance indicates group membership     | 3.60         | .85  | 3.46         | 1.22 | 2.69      | .90  |
| 8. Sell drugs                                | 2.23         | .69  | 1.94         | .84  | 2.17      | .86  |
| 9. Respect tradition                         | 3.77         | .77  | 3.29         | 1.10 | 4.46      | .66  |
| 10. Are religious                            | 3.60         | .55  | 3.74         | .98  | 4.17      | .57  |
| 11. Are generous                             | 3.86         | .77  | 3.80         | .99  | 4.00      | .60  |
| 12. Are cultured                             | 3.31         | .90  | 4.20         | .83  | 3.57      | 1.09 |
| 13. Are simple-minded                        | 3.34         | .76  | 2.94         | 1.21 | 3.69      | .59  |

**Table 3.** In-group self-characterizations in the domain of colleagues by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran

| Armenians From Colleague              | Armenia n=35 |      | Lebanon n=35 |      | Iran n=35 |      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------|--------------|------|-----------|------|
|                                       | Mean         | SD   | Mean         | SD   | Mean      | SD   |
| 1. Critical towards colleagues        | 3.63         | .77  | 3.49         | .98  | 3.63      | .81  |
| 2. Friendly with colleagues           | 3.66         | .90  | 3.74         | .98  | 4.03      | .38  |
| 3. Make intelligent judgments         | 2.91         | 1.01 | 3.77         | .69  | 2.83      | .75  |
| 4. Are creative                       | 3.74         | .78  | 4.34         | .64  | 4.00      | 0.00 |
| 5. Are talkative                      | 3.68         | .80  | 2.80         | 1.02 | 2.66      | 1.11 |
| 6. Political in relationships         | 3.31         | .90  | 3.69         | 1.02 | 3.11      | .97  |
| 7. Formal in relationships            | 2.66         | 1.00 | 4.00         | .94  | 2.49      | 1.09 |
| 8. Are very doubting                  | 3.06         | .91  | 3.46         | 1.15 | 3.54      | .51  |
| 9. Are diligent workers               | 3.26         | .85  | 4.46         | .61  | 4.14      | .85  |
| 10. Like to complain                  | 3.66         | .92  | 2.71         | 1.13 | 4.00      | .60  |
| 11. Like to work in peaceful place    | 2.60         | 1.13 | 3.83         | .86  | 3.97      | .82  |
| 12. Are opportunistic                 | 4.03         | .65  | 3.51         | 1.09 | 4.14      | .69  |
| 13. Ignore coworkers                  | 3.09         | .87  | 2.86         | 1.19 | 1.86      | .36  |
| 14. Like to succeed without hard work | 3.55         | .99  | 1.92         | 1.12 | 2.60      | 1.06 |

The rank order of the self-characterizations in the domain of Marital Partners shows that Armenians from Armenia think of their in-group more as "Impatient," "Stubborn," and "Defends own right," and less as "Clever in handling arguments," "Giving in to partners," and "Selfish." Armenians from Lebanon think of their in-group as "Defends own right," "Adventurous," and "Respect partner," and less as "Materialistic," "Selfish," and "Give in to partner." Armenians from Iran think of their in-group more as "Defends own right," "Express emotions," and "Respect partner," and less



as “Adventurous,” “Give in to partner,” and “Materialistic.” While there are significant similarities in in-group self-characterizations in the domain of Neighbor, in the domain of Colleague and Marital Partner self-characterizations appear to be well differentiated. Such differentiation may partially reflect the cultural context of their country of emigration/origin in shaping in-group image and cultural self.

Separate samples from the three groups of Armenians were also asked to rate their perceptions of the other groups in all three domain areas of Neighbor, Colleague and Marital Partner using the same set of characterizations as in in-group characterizations.

**Table 4.** *In-group self-characterizations in the domain of marital partner by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon and Iran*

| Armenians From                  | Armenia n=35 |      | Lebanon n=35 |      | Iran n=35 |      |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------|--------------|------|-----------|------|
|                                 | Mean         | SD   | Mean         | SD   | Mean      | SD   |
| Marital Partner                 |              |      |              |      |           |      |
| 1. Clever in handling arguments | 2.43         | .90  | 3.60         | 1.06 | 3.14      | 1.38 |
| 2. Are impatient                | 3.94         | .63  | 3.37         | 1.16 | 3.54      | 1.12 |
| 3. Respect partner              | 3.23         | .96  | 3.97         | .63  | 3.43      | .92  |
| 4. Defend own rights            | 3.54         | .84  | 4.17         | .62  | 4.29      | .46  |
| 5. Are selfish                  | 2.89         | 1.14 | 2.60         | 1.14 | 3.40      | 1.14 |
| 6. Impose their ideas           | 3.49         | .99  | 3.31         | 1.18 | 3.23      | 1.14 |
| 7. Are strong-willed            | 3.40         | .80  | 3.92         | .95  | 3.23      | .84  |
| 8. Are materialistic            | 3.14         | 1.19 | 2.60         | 1.21 | 2.77      | .84  |
| 9. Express emotions             | 3.20         | .79  | 3.68         | .90  | 3.71      | .46  |
| 10. Are adventurous             | 3.14         | .93  | 4.05         | .98  | 1.77      | .84  |
| 11. Are stubborn                | 3.54         | 1.02 | 3.34         | 1.23 | 3.17      | 1.15 |
| 12. Give in to partners         | 2.80         | .98  | 2.68         | 1.23 | 2.46      | 1.12 |

**Table 5.** Inter-correlation of self-characterizations (in-group) in the domains of neighbor, colleague and marital status by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon, and Iran

| Raters  | Neighbor |         |      | Colleague |         |      | Marital Status |         |      |
|---------|----------|---------|------|-----------|---------|------|----------------|---------|------|
|         | Armenia  | Lebanon | Iran | Armenia   | Lebanon | Iran | Armenia        | Lebanon | Iran |
| Armenia | -        |         |      | -         |         |      | -              |         |      |
| Lebanon | .68**    | -       |      | .27       | -       |      | .31            | -       |      |
| Iran    | .57**    | .54**   | -    | .45       | .37     | -    | .32            | .33     | -    |

\*\*P < .01

**Table 6.** Correlation between in-group self-characterization and characterizations by out-groups in the domain of neighbor by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon, and Iran

| Raters  | Target Groups |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |
|---------|---------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|         | Armenia       |        |        | Lebanon |        |        | Iran   |        |        |
|         | Raters        | Raters | Raters | Raters  | Raters | Raters | Raters | Raters | Raters |
| Armenia | -             |        |        | -       |        |        | -      |        |        |
| Lebanon | .35           | -      |        | .75**   | -      |        | .60*   | -      |        |
| Iran    | .18           | .84*** | -      | .68**   | .85*** | -      | .01    | .51    | -      |

\*P < .05 \*\*P < .01 \*\*\*P < .001

**Table 7.** Correlation between in-group self-characterization and characterizations by out-groups in the domain of colleague by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon, and Iran

| Raters  | Target Groups |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |
|---------|---------------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|
|         | Armenia       |         |      | Lebanon |         |      | Iran    |         |      |
|         | Armenia       | Lebanon | Iran | Armenia | Lebanon | Iran | Armenia | Lebanon | Iran |
| Armenia | -             |         |      | -       |         |      | -       |         |      |
| Lebanon | .73**         | -       |      | -.28    | -       |      | .53*    | -       |      |
| Iran    | .64*          | .78***  |      | -.18    | .59*    |      | .21     | -.15    |      |

\*P < .05 \*\*P < .01 \*\*\*P < .001

**Table 8.** Correlation between in-group self-characterization and characterizations by out-groups in the domain of marital status by Armenians from Armenia, Lebanon, and Iran

| Raters  | Target Groups |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |
|---------|---------------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|
|         | Armenia       |         |      | Lebanon |         |      | Iran    |         |      |
|         | Armenia       | Lebanon | Iran | Armenia | Lebanon | Iran | Armenia | Lebanon | Iran |
| Armenia | -             |         |      | -       |         |      | -       |         |      |
| Lebanon | .21           | -       |      | .35     | -       |      | .35     | -       |      |
| Iran    | .37           | .84***  | -    | -.17    | .66*    | -    | .22     | .44     | -    |

\*P < .05 \*\*\*P < .001

Rank order correlations were run between in-group and out-group characterizations of each group (Tables 6, 7, and 8). These correlations indicate, on the one hand, the degree to which in-group characterizations match the perceptions of the out-groups, and on the other hand, reflect a consensus of perceptions among the out-groups about the target in-groups. A greater mismatch between in-group and out-group characterizations would reflect a greater degree of stereotyping, as defined in this study.

In the domain area of Neighbor (Table 6) the target group of Armenians from Lebanon generated highly significant similarities between in-group and out-group characterizations. Out-groups perceive the in-group in ways similar to how in-group members perceive themselves as Neighbor, suggesting lack of stereotyping of this target group in this domain. For the target groups of Armenians from Armenia and Iran there are no significant correlations (matches) between the out-group and the in-group characterizations, indicating the presence of stereotyping. However, there are significant agreements between the out-groups of how they characterize the target groups, suggesting a consensus about the stereotypes of the target groups.

In the domain area of Colleague (Table 7) the target group of Armenians from Armenia generated significant similarities between in-group and out-group characterizations, suggesting lack of stereotyping of this target group in this domain. The target group of Armenians from Lebanon appears to be stereotyped by one of the out-groups but not the other, with no consensus apparent in the characterization of the target group by the out-groups. For the target group of Armenians from Iran there are no significant matches

between the characterizations by the out-groups and the in-group characterizations, indicating the presence of stereotyping. Furthermore, there is significant agreement between the out-groups of how they characterize the target group, indicating consensus in the stereotype of the target group.

In the domain area of Marital Partner (Table 8) the target groups of Armenians from Armenia and Iran generate no significant matches between in-group and out-group characterizations, indicating the presence of stereotyping. In the case of Armenians from Armenia there is a consensus in the characterizations of the target group, but not in the case of the Armenians from Iran. For the target group of Armenians from Lebanon there is stereotyping by one of the out-groups but not the other, with no consensus apparent in the characterization of the target groups.

Taken together, the data on the stereotyping of target groups indicate that the pattern of stereotyping and the presence of a consensus on the stereotype tend to vary by domain and by target group.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study support the domain specific nature of stereotyping and social distance (e.g. Hagendoorn & Kleinpenning, 1991; Hraba, Hagendoorn & Hagendoorn, 1989) and extend the phenomenon to intra-ethnic subgroups, where a greater degree of homogeneity in self-characterization and a cohesive group identity is expected to be prominent (Tajfel, 1978, 1982). Also, the results are consistent with the concept of in-group bias and favoritism (e.g. Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). However, such favoritism appears to vary by domain and degree of intimacy, or proximal relationship, implied by the domain. For Armenian Americans from different parts of the world, in-group favoritism appears to be greater for the domain of Marital Partner and less so for Neighbor and Colleague.

Intra-ethnic subgroup stereotyping was also demonstrated in this study. This suggests the notion that social identity as a comparative process is not only present at the general mainstream-minority level, but also within minority groups themselves (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel, Billing, Bundy & Flament, 1971). Differentiation within an ethnic group may be contributing to a more refined sense of social identity, where the reference groups' contexts are culturally more immediate than the mainstream culture. A study by Oknayan (1988) demonstrated that even when ethnic out-groups are present as reference points, native-born and immigrant Armenians in the US show social distance from each other as well as from other ethnic groups. Whether such refinement of social identity contributes to the acculturation process or general psychosocial adjustment remains to be shown. Intra-ethnic stereotyping and social distance should also be examined in other ethnic communities such as those of Latino and Asian Americans.

The operationalization of ethnic stereotyping as the mismatch between in-group and out-group characterizations of a target in-group needs further examination. Such stereotyping anchored in in-group self-characterization does not imply the presence of only negative attributes. Furthermore, such a measure could provide an assessment of change in intergroup relations by demonstrating growing similarity between in-group self-characterizations and out-group characterizations of the target in-group.



# ETHNIC AND MAJORITY IDENTITY AND THE GENOCIDE IMPACT AMONG AMERICAN AND TURKISH ARMENIANS

Aghop Der-Karabetian and Natalie Balian

## **Abstract**

This study examines the interrelationships of ethnic and majority identities and perceived impact of the genocide and of other collective trauma among American and Turkish Armenians. In the Turkish sample there were 70 participants, of whom 34 were 40 years old and younger, and 36 were 41 years old and older. In the American sample there were 83 participants, of whom 35 were native born and 48 were first-generation immigrants. The questionnaires administered to the Turkish and the American samples had somewhat different content, but dealt with the same issues. Armenian identity was measured in affective and attitudinal dimensions. Majority identity also has two dimensions, Turkish or American, and global-human identities. Findings suggest that while collective traumatic experiences have a bearing on affective and attitudinal aspects of ethnicity and out-group majority identity, their relationship is influenced by the phenomenological cultural contexts of Turkey and the United States. Concerning the genocide impact, the Turkish sample prefers to look more into the future than dwell on the past. For the American sample, perception of the greater impact of the genocide is associated with a stronger sense of belonging to the global-human community.

## **Background Literature**

According to the symbolic interactionist point of view the shared understanding of what it means to be a member of a group determines a significant portion of ethnic identity (Mead, 1934; White & Burke, 1987). The nature of group experiences provides the constructs that form the foundation of shared understanding that lead to social identity, in general, and ethnic identity, in particular (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, as the phenomenological perspective suggests (Lewin, 1948), perceived interdependence of fate also plays an important role in the formation of group identity. The Jewish experience provides a good example. The holocaust during the Second World War, and the subsequent creation of the state of Israel are shared collective experiences that have profoundly affected the nature and manifestation of Jewish identity among Jews everywhere (Herman, 1977). Moreover, the psychological damage of the inhuman experiences of the holocaust have extended beyond those who experienced it first hand, to the second and third generations, thus extending the impact of the collective experiences over time (Bergman & Jacovy, 1982; Hass, 1990; Musaph, 1981).

The Armenian people experienced the collective trauma of genocide around the turn of the 20th century. Nearly the entire Armenian population of what is now eastern Turkey was uprooted and an estimated one-and-a-half million perished in the Syrian Desert during the deportation and death marches. Those who survived dispersed to the four corners of the world with the largest concentration currently located in California (Daderian, 1989; Hovannisian, 1986). In the diaspora communities, preserving the memory of the genocide and its victims has been a major part of the efforts to maintain a sense of historical continuity and national identity. Resistance groups, formed during the massacres to defend against the atrocities of the Ottoman government, continue to play a major role in the preservation of Armenian identity (Libaridian, 1979) by keeping memories of the genocide fresh in the minds of the newer generation to reinforce a sense of historical continuity and national identity. While Armenian identity is well maintained in larger Armenian communities, over time the nature of Armenian identity has changed and taken on an increasingly more symbolic meaning among the younger generations (Bakalian, 1993; Der-Karabetian, 1981). Besides the genocide, two recent events have also captured the attention of Armenians everywhere and galvanized much collective action and passion: the 1988 earthquake and the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

If social identity is determined by the nature of collective experiences, and their shared meaning, then it is conceivable that the way individuals feel about these events would have a bearing on their ethnic or in-group identity. Since from the phenomenological point of view (Lewin, 1948) in-group identity implies the context of a larger social group, the simultaneous examination of out-group or majority identity in relation to the perceptions of these collective experiences would provide an added dimension to the understanding of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990).

Identification with the global-human community presents another dimension of social identity for a diaspora community such as the Armenians. The global-human community presents an even wider phenomenological context than the immediate out-group of the host country. Awareness of and identification with an increasingly interdependent global community may mitigate ethnic-national consciousness, but may not necessarily be in opposition to it (Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992; Der-Karabetian and Rodriguez, 1991). With Armenians being a global diaspora community it would not be too much of a stretch to see global-human identity as a relevant out-group target of affiliation.

In the present study we examine ethnic identity among American and Turkish Armenians as it is related to (a) identification with host countries, (b) identification with the larger global-human community, (c) perceptions of the impact of the Armenian genocide, (d) personal reactions to the 1988 earthquake, and (e) concern about the armed conflict over Karabagh between

Armenia and Azerbaijan. Age group differences in the Turkish sample, and differences between immigrant and native-born members of the community in the American sample are also examined.

The Armenian community in Istanbul, Turkey has deep roots going back to the early days of the Ottoman Empire. During Ottoman rule Armenians generally enjoyed a relatively comfortable life until the appearance of the Young Turks in the late nineteenth and twentieth century; they promoted Turkish supremacy and Pan-Turkism and resorted to ethnic cleansing in the wake of World War I. Today, the Armenian community maintains a number of churches and parochial schools in Istanbul where Armenian is spoken, albeit under dire, restrictive conditions. Many Armenians have adopted Turkish names and do not speak Armenian in public, perhaps in adaptation to an environment hostile to ethnic diversity.

The history of the Armenian settlements in the United States goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century (Avakian, 1977). Armenians first settled in the eastern industrial states and then moved to California to engage in farming (Christopher, 1975). A wave of new immigrants settled in California during the 1970s in the wake of instability in various Middle Eastern countries, such as Lebanon and Iran. The estimates of Armenians in the United States vary from one-half to one million with high concentrations in southern California and on the east coast. Several dozen Armenian schools and churches are found in the Armenian communities, and an impressive number of Armenian-American publications circulate regularly in both languages.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

There were 70 participants, who came from Kinali Island in Istanbul, Turkey in the Turkish Armenian sample. Kinali Island is a resort island in the Marmara Sea, where the population reaches about forty thousand during the summer and about half are Armenians. The participants in the study were of upper middle class and were obtained through the convenience sampling method. The Turkish Armenian data were collected in the summer of 1990.

There were 83 participants in the American Armenian sample; they came from the Detroit and Los Angeles areas, where there are large Armenian communities. The participants were mostly young and under 40 years of age with 35 being born in the United States. The remaining 48 had been in the United States from one to 26 years. They were obtained using the convenience sampling method from high schools, college campuses, and community organizations. The American Armenian data were collected in the fall of 1989.

Because of the non-random nature of the sample and the limited sample sizes, the participants cannot necessarily be considered representative of



their populations, and findings may not be generalizable to their respective communities. However, the samples are statistically sufficient to demonstrate reliable relationships among the psychosocial variables examined in the study.

### Questionnaires

The questionnaires administered to the Turkish and the American samples had somewhat different content, but dealt with the same issues. The differences were due to the fact that not all the items were equally meaningful and relevant for the Turkish and the American samples. The Turkish questionnaire was compiled in English then translated into Turkish using the back-translation method (Berry, 1980). The American questionnaire was administered in both English and Armenian, and over ninety percent completed the English version. The questionnaires included measures of in-group Armenian identity, out-group majority identity (American or Turkish), global-human identity, a measure of the perceived impact of the genocide, and a measure assessing interest in the Karabagh conflict involving Azerbaijan. In-group Armenian identity was measured using modified versions of two previously used measures of Armenian identity: one involving attitudinal aspect of ethnic identity and the other addressing emotional aspects of ethnic identity.

(a) The *Armenian Affective Identity* measure used in this study was originally developed by Zak (1973) for Jewish Americans, and later adapted for American Armenians by Der-Karabetian (1980). A modified version was also successfully used with Latino/a Americans (Der-Karabetian & Rodriguez, 1991) (See Appendix D in this volume). This scale measured the affective component of ethnic identity by asking questions about willingness to be reborn as an Armenian, willingness to tell others about one's ethnic origin, and concern about other Armenians. Examples: "When an important newspaper insults Armenians, I feel that it is insulting me." This measure had 11 items for the Turkish sample with an internal consistency *alpha* of .83 (*Alpha* values at or above .70 indicate good reliability in measuring an underlying construct). The measure had seven items for the American sample with an *alpha* of .72.

(b) *Ethnic Orientation* (attitudinal) was measured using a modified version of the Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (Der-Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977), which is an attitudinal measure. It has been used successfully with American Armenians and Lebanese Armenians (Der-Karabetian, 1981) (See appendix A in this volume). The questions dealt with attitudes and dispositions towards ethnic attributes and issues such as language, church, homeland, Armenian political parties, and intermarriage. Example: "It is not possible to remain Armenian without speaking Armenian." This measure had 16 items for the Turkish sample with an *alpha*

coefficient of .80, and 12 items for the American sample with an *alpha* of .74.

Out-group identity was conceptualized in two ways: One involved identification with the Turkish or American majority culture, and the other involved identification with the global-human community:

(c) The *Turkish and American identity* measures were adapted from a measure originally developed by Zak (1973) to measure the majority (American) identity of Jewish Americans, and was successfully used with “non-ethnic” Americans (Der-Karabetian & Rosen, 1990), Latino/a Americans (Der-Karabetian & Rodriguez, 1991), and Armenian Americans (Der-Karabetian, 1980)(See Appendix E in this volume). Items in the measure dealt with such issues as whether respondents liked being Turkish or American and were proud of being Turkish or American. Example: “As a Turkish (or American) citizen, my most important duty is loyalty to Turkey (or the United States).” The Turkish measure had six items with a reliability *alpha* of .60, and the American measure had seven items with a reliability *alpha* of .68.

(d) *Global-Human Identity* was measured by a modified version of the measure developed by Der-Karabetian and Rosen (1990), and successfully used with “non-ethnic” and Latino/Americans (Der-Karabetian & Rodriguez, 1991) (See Appendix F in this volume). The measure reflects a sense of identification that goes beyond one’s immediate national or ethnic-cultural group and embraces the whole of humankind. Examples: “I see my future closely tied to the future of humankind as a whole,” and “I consider the entire human race as my family.” The Turkish measure had seven items with a reliability *alpha* of .81, and the American measure had 6 items with a reliability *alpha* of .69.

(e) *Perceived impact of the genocide* was measured by a scale specially developed for this study. It was designed to assess the degree to which the experience of the genocide around the turn of the twentieth century was perceived to have impacted the life, culture, and sense of identity of Armenians around the world (See Appendix H in this volume). For the Turkish sample eleven items were generated, eight of which composed the scale with an *alpha* coefficient of .57, showing somewhat low but acceptable internal reliability. For the American sample 13 items were generated, of which 11 composed the scale with an *alpha* coefficient of .66. Altogether fifteen items were generated, nine of which were given to both samples. Table 5 presents all fifteen items and their mean ratings, and t-tests for the common items, comparing the two samples.

In both samples items for the in-group, out-group and genocide impact scales were rated on a 6-point Likert scale going from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” with higher scores indicating stronger endorsement of the items. For the computation of scale scores a number of items were

reversed before adding the item ratings to consistently show that higher scale scores mean stronger identity or stronger perceived impact of the genocide. For items 2, 10 and 15 in the list of 15 items in Table 5 ratings need to be reversed before adding the scores.

(f) *Interest in the Karabagh Conflict* was assessed by a single question, with three options: “Concerning events in Karabagh: 3 = I follow them closely (High interest); 2 = I occasionally like to know what is happening in Karabagh (Medium interest); and 1 = I don’t make a special effort to find out what is going on in Karabagh (Low interest).

(g) *Participation in Karabagh demonstrations* was assessed only among the American sample since no such activity is conceivable in Turkey. It was a single item measure: “Concerning participation in demonstrations for Karabagh: I have participated (Considered as ‘Yes’ and coded ‘2’); wanted to participate, but have not had the chance (Considered as ‘No’ and coded ‘1’); and I have not participated, and have not been interested” (Considered as ‘No’ and coded ‘1’). The last two categories were collapsed into one “no participation” category, since too few cases were found in the last category.

(h) *Personal Impact of the Earthquake of 1988* was also measured by a single item: “What has been the effect of the 1988 Armenian earthquake on you: 3 = I think about it often, and I have difficulty concentrating on my daily routine (High impact); 2 = I think about it often, but it does not affect my daily routine (Medium impact); and 1 = I rarely think about it (Low impact).

## **Results**

Because the measurement scales did not include identical items for the Turkish and the American samples, direct comparisons of cumulative identity and attitude scores are not made. However, ratings of individual items common to the two samples are compared for exploratory purposes. The results from the Turkish and American samples are presented separately at first, followed by a comparison of the nature of the relationship between the variables. The data reported here on the cumulative scores of Armenian identity, Turkish identity, and Global-Human identity of the Turkish samples are borrowed from a previous publication by the authors (Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992).

### **Turkish Armenian Findings**

The younger (40 years old and younger) and older (41 years and older) groups in the Turkish sample are compared on the identity and genocide measures (Table 1). The older group is significantly higher on Armenian identity and ethnic orientation, and significantly lower on Turkish identity and global-human identity. The two groups are not different in their perceptions of the effect of the genocide on Armenian life and culture.

However, both appear to acknowledge that there has been an impact. The means of both groups are above the scale average of 22.5 by about 10 points, with the highest possible score being 54.

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of various social identity and attitude measures for younger and older Turkish Armenians

| Measures              | Younger (40 yrs. and younger) <i>n</i> = 34 |           |             | Older (Over 40 yrs.) <i>n</i> = 36 |          |          |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|                       | <i>Mean</i>                                 | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i>                          | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Ethnic Orientation    | 58.18                                       | 6.39      | 66.97       | 5.56                               | 6.06     | < .001   |
| Armenian Identity     | 45.58                                       | 5.61      | 53.91       | 4.37                               | 6.83     | < .001   |
| Turkish Identity      | 18.97                                       | 1.81      | 17.06       | 3.52                               | 2.78     | < .01    |
| Global-Human Identity | 35.26                                       | 3.33      | 29.22       | 3.10                               | 7.81     | < .001   |
| Genocide Impact       | 32.37                                       | 3.51      | 33.09       | 3.59                               | .85      | NS*      |

\* NS = Not significantly different

Table 2 presents the inter-correlations of the different variables for the Turkish Armenian sample. The moderate negative correlation between age and education indicates that in this sample older individuals tend to have less education.

Those who are older tend to score higher on Armenian identity and ethnic orientation, perceive greater impact of the genocide, show more interest in the Karabagh conflict, report stronger personal impact of the earthquake, show weaker Turkish identity, and have weaker identification with the global-human community. Those who are less educated show identical tendencies.

Ethnic orientation and Armenian identity are very strongly related, as expected ( $r = .83$ ). Those who show stronger emotional attachment to being Armenian (Armenian Identity) also have more positive attitudes towards ethnic issues (Ethnic Orientation). Since age and education are strong correlates of Ethnic Orientation and Armenian Identity, their effect is statistically partialled out. This would show the strength of the relationship between the emotional and attitudinal aspects of ethnicity when the effect of age and education are removed. When age is partialled out, the correlation between Armenian Identity and Ethnic Orientation is somewhat reduced, from  $r = .83$  to  $r = .66$ , but is still quite strong. When education is partialled out, the correlation is reduced from  $r = .83$  to  $r = .75$ , but is also strong. It appears that for the Turkish sample affective and attitudinal aspects of ethnic identity are significant parts of the same underlying construct of Armenian ethnicity, irrespective of age or education.

The data show positive correlations among perceived genocide impact, interest in Karabagh and personal impact of the earthquake. Furthermore, each of these variables has a strong correlation with Armenian identity and ethnic orientation. Such correlations suggest that the construct of Armenian ethnicity includes the impact of the three historically important events of the

genocide, the Karabagh conflict and the devastating earthquake of 1988 for the Turkish sample.

**Table 2.** Intercorrelations of age, education, identity measures, impact of the genocide, earthquake, and Karabagh conflict for the Turkish Armenian Sample (n = 70)

|                          | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9 |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| 1. Armenian Identity     | -     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |   |
| 2. Ethnic Orientation    | .83*  | -     |       |       |       |       |       |       |   |
| 3. Turkish Identity      | -.30# | -.41* | -     |       |       |       |       |       |   |
| 4. Global-human identity | -.48+ | -.58* | .58*  | -     |       |       |       |       |   |
| 5. Genocide Impact       | .46*  | .55*  | -.27# | .04   | -     |       |       |       |   |
| 6. Interest in Karabagh  | .65*  | .70*  | -.26# | -.50* | .38*  | -     |       |       |   |
| 7. Impact of Earthquake  | .61*  | .60*  | .25#  | -.52* | .32+  | .62*  | -     |       |   |
| 8. Education             | -.53* | -.62* | .50*  | .56*  | -.39* | -.27# | -.43* | -     |   |
| 9. Age                   | .73*  | .69*  | -.25# | -.57* | .31+  | .65*  | .54*  | -.54* | - |

\* = Significant at  $p < .001$  level; + = Significant at  $p < .01$  level; # = Significant at  $p < .05$  level

Both Armenian ethnic orientation and Armenian identity are correlated negatively with Turkish identity ( $r = -.41$ , and  $r = -.30$ , respectively). Those who show stronger ethnicity (affective and attitudinal) tend to also show weaker affective identification with the culture of the majority (Turkish identity). The two identities appear to be somewhat polarized. Since age and education are also correlated with Turkish identity, in addition to being correlated with Armenian identity and ethnic orientation, their effect is partialled out. When the effect of age is partialled out, Armenian and Turkish identities do not show polarization (partial  $r = -.18$ , not significant statistically). Feeling strongly Armenian is not necessarily associated with weak or negative feelings of Turkish identification when age is not a factor. Similar results are obtained when the effect of education is removed (partial  $r = -.05$ , not significant statistically). When age is partialled out from the relationship between Turkish identity and ethnic orientation, the correlation is somewhat reduced from  $r = -.41$  to  $r = -.35$ , indicating that the polarization is weakened but still significant. However, when the effect of education is partialled out, the polarization disappears (partial  $r = -.15$ , not significant statistically). Affective identification with the Turkish majority culture and Armenian ethnicity tend to be polarized by virtue of the factors of age and education. One implication of such a finding is that Turkish and

Armenian identities tend to coexist among those who are younger or more educated.

Global-Human identity as a broader out-group identity is correlated positively with Turkish identity ( $r = .58$ ). Those who identify more strongly with the global community tend also to have stronger Turkish identity. Conversely, Global-Human identity is negatively correlated with Armenian Identity and Ethnic Orientation, as well as with interest in Karabagh and felt impact of the earthquake. Identification with the global-human community and Armenian ethnicity appear to be polarized. The two identities, human and ethnic, do not seem to coexist. It appears that for the Turkish Armenian sample endorsing one's humanity is associated with a tendency to minimize one's ethnicity. On the other hand, Global-Human identity is uncorrelated with the perceived effect of the genocide. While the perceived impact of the genocide is an important aspect of Armenian ethnicity, it appears to be unrelated to sentiments of belonging to the global community. Perhaps for Turkish Armenians the genocide is seen as an intensely ethnic experience that obscures the character of the genocide as a crime against humanity. Since age and education are strong correlates of both Global-Human and Armenian Identities, their effects are partialled out. When age is partialled out, the correlation moves from  $r = -.48$  to the non-existent level of  $r = -.11$  (not significant statistically). When education is partialled out it moves down to  $r = .25$ , but is still significant statistically. It appears that age is a more important contributor to the polarization between ethnic and human identity than is education.

Overall, in the Turkish Armenian sample age and education appear to be significant factors in determining social identity. The apparent polarization between ethnic and Turkish identities is mostly accounted for by age and education. Also, the perceived impact of the genocide is an important aspect of Armenian ethnicity, and so are concerns about other ethnically important events such as the earthquake and the Karabagh conflict. The younger and the more educated tend to have weaker ethnic identity and orientation, as well as stronger out-group identities with the majority culture and global community. They also tend to perceive a weaker impact of the genocide on Armenian culture and life.

### **American Armenian Findings**

Immigrant generational status has been shown to be an important factor in determining ethnic identity in the United States (Bakalian, 1993). Consequently, immigrant and native-born groups in the American sample are compared.

Table 3 presents the comparison between immigrant and native-born Armenian Americans on the same variables as used when age groups were compared in the Turkish Armenian sample. The immigrant group is

significantly higher on Ethnic Orientation, and lower on American Identity compared to the native born. There are no differences between the groups on Armenian Identity, Global-Human Identity, and the perceived impact of the genocide. Although the native born tend to value ethnic features less than the immigrant groups, they feel Armenian as strongly as do the immigrant groups, and evaluate similarly the extent of the impact of the genocide on Armenian life and culture. Similar to the Turkish Armenian sample, both groups score 10 points above the average of 33 from the possible highest score of 66. The immigrants and native born identify with the global community to the same degree.

**Table 3.** Means, standard deviation and t-tests of various social identity and attitude measures for immigrant and native-born American Armenians

| Immigrant <i>n</i> = 48, Native-Born <i>n</i> = 35 |             |           |             |           |          |          |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Measures                                           | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Ethnic Orientation                                 | 44.62       | 8.09      | 40.73       | 6.37      | 1.98     | < .05    |
| Armenian Identity                                  | 33.82       | 5.70      | 32.19       | 6.19      | 1.09     | N.S.*    |
| American Identity                                  | 15.11       | 5.28      | 17.56       | 4.97      | 1.96     | < .05    |
| Global-Human Identity                              | 21.15       | 4.89      | 21.82       | 4.34      | .54      | N.S.*    |
| Genocide Impact                                    | 43.36       | 7.49      | 45.38       | 4.21      | 1.21     | N.S.*    |

\* = Not significantly different

Table 4 presents the inter-correlations of ethnicity variables for the American Armenian sample. The variables are identical to the ones used for the Turkish Armenian sample with one addition, namely, reported participation in demonstrations to bring public attention to the Karabagh conflict.

**Table 4.** Intercorrelations of age, education, identity measures, impact of the genocide, earthquake, and Karabagh conflict for the American Armenian Sample (*n* = 83)

|                            | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7     | 8   | 9    |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-----|------|
| 1. Armenian Identity       | -    |      |      |      |      |      |       |     |      |
| 2. Ethnic Orientation      | .27# | -    |      |      |      |      |       |     |      |
| 3. Turkish Identity        | -.28 | -.14 | -    |      |      |      |       |     |      |
| 4. Global-Human Identity   | .19  | -.01 | .34+ | -    |      |      |       |     |      |
| 5. Genocide Impact         | .44* | .45* | .13  | .37* | -    |      |       |     |      |
| 6. Interest in Karabagh    | .14  | .17  | -.14 | .08  | .02  | -    |       |     |      |
| 7. Karabagh Demonstrations | .03  | .31+ | -.19 | -.08 | .23# | .01  | -     |     |      |
| 8. Impact of Earthquake    | .39+ | .03  | -.05 | .02  | .13  | -.15 | .28   | -   |      |
| 9. Education               | -.04 | .01  | .07  | .11  | -.19 | -.07 | .24#  | .14 | -    |
| 10. Age                    | .09  | -.16 | .03  | .11  | -.16 | -.08 | -.34* | .08 | .30+ |

\* = Significant at *p* < .001 level

The positive moderate correlation between age and education indicates that the older individuals are more educated. This is the reverse of the Turkish Armenian sample. The only variable age and education are correlated with is participation in the Karabagh demonstrations, with more of the younger group and the more educated reporting participation. Similar to

the Turkish Armenian sample, Ethnic Orientation and Armenian Identity are correlated but at a much lesser degree. It seems that the affective and attitudinal aspects of ethnicity tend to exist more independently in the American than in the Turkish sample. The attitudinal and emotional aspects of ethnicity may be more separable for the American than for the Turkish Armenian sample.

The weak negative correlation between Armenian identity and American identity indicates a small degree of polarization between in-group and out-group identities, similar to the Turkish Armenian sample. Feeling more American is not necessarily associated with feeling less Armenian although there is a slight tendency for it. This is consistent with earlier findings with Armenian (Der-Karabetian, 1980) and Jewish American (Zak, 1973) samples.

Both Armenian identity and ethnic orientation are correlated moderately with the perceived impact of the genocide on Armenian life and culture, similar to the Turkish Armenian sample. A stronger belief in the impact of the genocide tends to be an important aspect of Armenian ethnicity at the cognitive/attitudinal and emotional level. Furthermore, the personal impact of the earthquake also tends to be an aspect of Armenian ethnicity but only at the emotional level. Unlike the Turkish sample, the perceived impact of the genocide is unrelated to identification with the majority culture. Also unlike the Turkish sample, there is a moderately strong correlation between the perceived impact of the genocide and identification with the global community. The coexistence of these two constructs suggests that for the American Armenian sample the issue of the genocide tends to go beyond being just an ethnic experience; it is one that has global-human dimensions. The perceived impact of the genocide is also slightly related to the tendency to participate in Karabagh demonstrations, suggesting that the genocide and Karabagh conflict are connected for the American Armenian sample.

Overall, in the American Armenian sample, although the immigrant group scores higher on Ethnic Orientation and lower on American Identity compared to the native born, their Armenian Identity scores are not different, indicating that the native born feel as strongly Armenian as do the immigrants. Unlike the Turkish Armenian sample, age and education are not significant variables in determining social identities. Furthermore, those who feel Armenian more strongly tend to feel American less strongly, but this tendency is only a weak one. Those who believe in the greater impact of the genocide on Armenian life and culture tend to have a stronger ethnic orientation as well as identifying more strongly with the global-human community. Also, similar to the Turkish Armenian sample, the Karabagh conflict and the genocide impact tend to be connected for the American Armenian sample.



**Table 5.** Mean, standard deviation and t-tests on common and unique genocide-related items for the Turkish Armenian and the American Armenian samples\*

| Items                                                                                                                         | Turkish<br>Armenian <i>n</i> =<br>38** |           | American<br>Armenian <i>n</i> = 83 |           | <i>t</i>  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                                                                                               | <i>Mean</i>                            | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i>                        | <i>SD</i> |           |
| 1. The effect of the genocide is as strong on the present generation as it was on the generation that experienced it          | 2.47                                   | 1.08      | 3.05                               | 1.73      | 1.89      |
| 2. We should concentrate on the future and not the massacres around the turn of the century if we want to survive as a people | 5.06                                   | .63       | 3.90                               | 1.51      | 8.18<br>@ |
| 3. The genocide contributed to the formation of the Armenian identity                                                         | 4.86                                   | .68       | 3.90                               | 1.50      | 3.75<br>@ |
| 4. Modern diaspora Armenian literature is deeply affected by the genocide                                                     | 4.56                                   | .97       | 4.23                               | 1.31      | 1.39      |
| 5. No matter how long we exist as a nation the impact of the genocide will not diminish                                       | 3.67                                   | .72       | 4.28                               | 1.37      | 2.57+     |
| 6. The psychology of diaspora Armenians is deeply affected by the genocide                                                    | 4.89                                   | .75       | 4.63                               | 1.26      | 1.17      |
| 7. The diaspora Armenians feel more Armenian because their families lived through the genocide                                | 5.00                                   | 1.01      | 3.55                               | 1.58      | 5.15<br>@ |
| 8. The new Armenian generation in the diaspora is affected by the genocide                                                    | 4.81                                   | .75       | ***                                |           |           |
| 9. The genocide attempt will eventually lead to the disappearance of the Armenian diaspora                                    | ***                                    | 2.91      | 1.53                               |           |           |
| 10. Diaspora art should reflect modern diaspora life more than the genocide                                                   | 4.12                                   | .41       | 3.21                               | 1.53      | 3.58<br>@ |
| 11. The Armenian genocide is first a human tragedy, then an Armenian one                                                      | 4.89                                   | 1.19      | 4.27                               | 1.76      | 2.27#     |
| 12. The character of the new Armenian generation in the diaspora is deeply affected by the genocide                           | ***                                    | 3.55      | 1.45                               |           |           |
| 13. All aspects of Armenian life in the diaspora are affected by the genocide                                                 | ***                                    | 3.73      | 1.33                               |           |           |
| 14. Turkish Armenians who say we should forget the events of the genocide are correct                                         | 4.31                                   | .75       | ***                                |           |           |
| 15. The media in the Armenian diaspora should be concerned more with immediate issues rather than the genocide                | ***                                    | 3.90      | 1.32                               |           |           |

\* Based on their statistical properties for internal consistency, some of these items were not included in the overall total score of the genocide impact.

Items in the Turkish version of the overall impact of the genocide were: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Items in the American version were: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15.

\*\* Only participants 40 years old and younger were included to make the two samples comparable

\*\*\* Items not included in the survey

@ Significant at  $p < .001$ ; + Significant at  $p < .01$ ; # Significant at  $p < .05$

### **Comparison of Common Items on the Genocide and Ethnic Orientation Measures**

In order to make the comparison between the Turkish and American samples meaningful, age was controlled. Only the responses of those who were 40 years old and younger in the Turkish sample were compared to the American sample, all of whom were 40 years old and younger. Table 5 presents responses to the genocide items common as well as unique to both samples. On a six-point scale mean ratings around 3.50 represent a neutral disposition, higher ratings represent a tendency to agree with the statement, and lower ratings represent a tendency to disagree with the statement. The t-tests indicate if the differences are statistically significant.

Examination of the common genocide items indicates that the Turkish sample believes more strongly than the American sample that one should concentrate on the future rather than the genocide, which took place a long time ago (Item 2), that the impact of the genocide will diminish over time (Item 5), that the genocide contributed to the formation of Armenian identity (Item 3), and that stronger ethnic feelings of Armenians in the diaspora come from the fact that their families lived through the genocide (Item 7).

While both samples endorse the notion that the genocide was first a human tragedy then an Armenian one, the Turkish sample tends to believe it more strongly (item 11). This is not surprising since the younger generation that is being compared here have demonstrated very strong Global-Human Identity as well. The Turkish and American samples tend to equally believe that the impact of the genocide is not as strong on the present generation as it was on the generation that experienced it (Item 1), that modern diaspora Armenian literature is deeply affected by the genocide (Item 4), and so is the general “psychology” of Armenians in the diaspora (Item 6). While the Turkish sample tends to believe that the new generation is affected by the genocide (Item 8), they also tend to believe that the time has come to forget the events of the genocide (Item 14).

The American sample does not believe that the Armenian diaspora will disappear one day (Item 9); they believe that the character of the new Armenian generation is affected by the genocide (Item 12) as well as other aspects of diaspora life (Item 13). They tend to endorse only moderately, however, the idea that the diaspora Armenian media should be concerned more with immediate issues rather than the genocide.

On the whole, it appears that both samples tend to acknowledge the horror and impact of the genocide, but the Turkish sample is more eager to look ahead.

### **Comparison on Ethnic Orientation, Earthquake and Karabagh Issues**

Table 6 presents the responses of the Turkish and American samples to individual items related to ethnic orientation, the earthquake and the

Karabagh conflict. The Turkish Armenian sample agrees more strongly that speaking Armenian is important to stay Armenian (Item 1), the Armenian national church is still an important ethnic institution (Items 2 and 7), a good Armenian should marry an Armenian (Item 6), and one should be a person first, then an Armenian (Item 4).

On the other hand, the American sample agrees more strongly that visiting Armenia strengthens the Armenian spirit (Item 8), settling in Armenia is important to avoid assimilation (Item 5); being anti-Turkish (Item 10) and being a fanatical Armenian (Item 9) are important to maintaining Armenian identity. Both samples agree equally strongly that the earthquake made them feel closer to Armenia (Items 11 and 12). However, the American Armenian sample appears to be more willing to go and help with reconstruction. They also are more willing to go and fight for Armenian rights in Karabagh (Item 17) and that because of the Karabagh conflict they feel Armenian more strongly (Item 16). For the American sample the conflict in Karabagh is connected to the genocide issue (Item 14) more strongly than for the Turkish sample, and that the conflict should be made part of the overall Armenian cause (Item 15) of seeking retribution for the Armenian losses suffered during the genocide around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Overall, the tendency of the Turkish sample appears to be more embedded in ethnic institutions of church, language and family. For the American sample Armenian ethnicity is connected to the homeland of Armenia, and tends to be manifested in political activism.

### **Summary of Major findings**

There are similarities and differences between the samples from Turkey and the United States in the way ethnicity and out-group identities are related to collective experiences and demographic factors. For the Turkish Armenian sample Armenian ethnic identity has affective and attitudinal components independent of age and education, and is impacted by the collective experiences of the genocide around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the current Karabagh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. Armenian identity and Turkish identity tend to be polarized for the older and the less educated. The younger and the more educated perceive a weaker impact of the genocide on Armenian culture and life. They also tend to embrace Global-Human and Turkish identity more strongly and Armenian identity less strongly.

In the American Armenian sample, while the native-born group is higher than the immigrant group on American identity, the two groups are equally high on Armenian identity. Age and education are unrelated to ethnic or global-human identity.

**Table 6.** Mean, standard deviation and t-tests on common items of ethnic orientation, earthquake, and Karabagh issues for the Turkish Armenian and the American Armenian samples

| <i>Items</i>                                                                                                            | Turkish<br>Armenian <i>n</i> = 38 |           | American<br>Armenian <i>n</i> = 83 |           | <i>t</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
|                                                                                                                         | <i>Mean</i>                       | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i>                        | <i>SD</i> |          |
| 1. It is not possible to remain Armenian without speaking Armenian                                                      | 5.39                              | .60       | 3.52                               | 1.65      | 6.23*    |
| 2. It is every Armenian's duty to support the Armenian national (Apostolic) church both morally and financially         | 4.81                              | .67       | 3.59                               | 1.63      | 4.06*    |
| 3. Armenians who do not pursue the "Armenian Cause" are as good Armenians as those who do                               | 5.19                              | .58       | 3.49                               | 1.65      | 5.52*    |
| 4. I am a person first, then an Armenian                                                                                | 5.25                              | .55       | 3.73                               | 1.75      | 4.75*    |
| 5. The Armenians of the diaspora should finally settle in Armenia to avoid assimilation                                 | 2.61                              | .93       | 3.23                               | 1.61      | 1.94     |
| 6. A good Armenian should marry another Armenian                                                                        | 4.97                              | .61       | 4.24                               | 1.68      | 2.35#    |
| 7. The role of the Armenian Apostolic church in preserving Armenian identity is not as important today as it used to be | 2.81                              | .79       | 3.08                               | 1.51      | 3.70*    |
| 8. To strengthen the Armenian spirit it is essential to visit Armenia                                                   | 3.47                              | 1.03      | 4.16                               | 1.44      | 2.30#    |
| 9. To preserve Armenian identity it is essential to be a fanatical Armenian                                             | 2.06                              | .83       | 2.98                               | 1.74      | 2.71+    |
| 10. The stronger anti- Turkish an Armenian is, the better Armenian he or she is                                         | 2.14                              | .99       | 2.89                               | 1.45      | 2.49#    |
| 11. My feelings towards the victims of the Armenian earthquake were very much the same as if I had lost a family member | 4.14                              | .93       | 4.32                               | 1.48      | .90      |
| 12. Because of the earthquake I feel closer to Armenia                                                                  | 4.06                              | .72       | 3.93                               | 1.54      | .65      |
| 13. I am prepared to give two years of my life to go to Armenia and help with the reconstruction                        | 2.05                              | 1.00      | 3.43                               | 1.81      | 3.72*    |
| 14. The events in Karabagh represent as much injustice as events of the genocide                                        | 3.53                              | .77       | 4.04                               | 1.45      | 2.55#    |
| 15. The Karabagh question should be made part of an overall Armenian question                                           | 3.44                              | .70       | 4.71                               | 1.08      | 7.93*    |
| 16. The recent events in Karbagh have strengthened my Armenian feelings                                                 | 3.68                              | .68       | 4.21                               | .16       | 4.90*    |
| 17. If I could, I would go to Karabagh to protect Armenian rights                                                       | 2.39                              | .69       | 3.62                               | 1.73      | 6.15*    |

\*Significant at  $p < .001$ ; + Significant at  $p < .01$ ; # Significant at  $p < .05$

Both the Turkish and the American age-comparable samples believe that the genocide has had an impact on the diaspora, but the Turkish sample appears to be more inclined to look to the future rather than dwell on the past. The two samples also appear to be different in the nature of their ethnic

orientation. For the Turkish sample ethnicity is connected more strongly to church, language and family. For the American sample the homeland and political activism are more important features of Armenian ethnicity.

In both overall samples, Armenian Identity and Ethnic Orientation appear to be affected by the perceived impact of the genocide on the Armenian diaspora, interest and involvement in the Karabagh conflict, and the earthquake of 1988 in Armenia. Also in both samples, Armenian identity and majority identity are slightly polarized, which is partially explained in the Turkish sample by age and education, and in the American sample by the status of belonging to the immigrant generation.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study lend partial support to Gordon's (1964) theory of assimilation, especially in the area of identificational assimilation. The younger generation in Turkey and the native born in the United States tend to share a stronger sense of identity with the majority out-group culture than the older generation or immigrants, respectively. While feelings about Armenian ethnicity appear to have been eroded among the younger and more educated Turkish Armenian group, such erosion is not apparent among the native born American Armenian group in the present sample.

The findings of slight but significant polarization between feeling Armenian and identifying with the dominant host society points to the continued maintenance of the psychological boundary that helps define an ethnic group in addition to structural or institutional boundaries (Barth, 1969). The fact that the polarization is only marginally significant (explaining about nine percent of the variability between the two identities) argues in favor of the bicultural identity hypothesis (Berry, 1997; Domino & Acosta, 1987; Phinney, 1990). According to the bicultural identity hypothesis, members of minorities display varying degrees of both ethnic and majority identities depending on various contextual and psychological factors. Der-Karabetian (1980) and Kassabian (1987) have shown similar bicultural identity among American Armenians.

The nature and manifestation of ethnicity is context bound (Der-Karabetian, 1981; Hicks, 1977; Lewin, 1948; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This phenomenon is partially demonstrated in the present study where, for the Turkish sample, ethnicity is more strongly connected to church, language and family, and in the American sample it is connected more strongly to the homeland and political activism. Turkish Armenian ethnicity appears to be manifested more in concrete terms while American Armenian identity is manifested in more symbolic terms. Concrete versus symbolic ethnicity has been found to differentiate new and earlier generations of Armenian immigrants in the United States (Bakalian, 1993), in Lebanon (Der-

Karabetian & Oshagan, 1977), and in other ethnic groups (Nahirny & Fishman, 1965; Phinney, 1992).

The manifestation of Armenian ethnicity in more concrete terms in the Turkish sample may be understood in the context of the restrictive sociopolitical environment that exists for minorities in Turkey. When ethnic feelings are not allowed free expression, concrete elements of culture may become more readily embraced as anchors of identity and boundary definition, probably because of greater availability to the individuals, as suggested by the notion of availability heuristics (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). According to the heuristics model, people tend to make judgments about themselves and others with the information that is most readily available. The heuristics explanation reinforces the phenomenological perspective (Lewin, 1948), which argues the importance of the collective life space available in the sociopolitical context.

The genocide and its extended collective memory, more than any other event in the collective experience of the Armenian diaspora, highlight the interdependence of fate that Lewin (1948) talks about as a key ingredient in group belonging. The findings of this study show that both the Turkish and American samples acknowledge the negative consequences of the genocide on diaspora life and culture. It is reasonable to infer that the collective memory of the genocide experience plays a central role in reinforcing a sense of national belonging among members of the widely dispersed Armenian diaspora.

The sociopolitical context may determine to some extent the way the genocide is viewed as a shared experience with collective consequences (Mead, 1934). The Turkish sample, more so than the American sample, prefer to look into the future rather than dwell on the terrible memories of the genocide. This does not necessarily mean that the Turkish Armenian sample would like to forget the genocide. Rather, it may be a reflection of the restrictive policies of the current Turkish government concerning self-assertion of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the persistent demand by diaspora Armenians that the Turkish government take responsibility for the genocide may play a role in the way the Turkish Armenian sample views the genocide. The desire not to dwell much on the genocide is also beginning to appear in the American Armenian community, but for a different reason. Bakalian (1993) reports that there is a small but growing group of American Armenians who are becoming increasingly aware of the need to look to the future in order not to alienate the younger generation, who may tend to associate their Armenianness with sadness and negative emotions.

In both samples the perceived effect of the genocide is related significantly to feeling Armenian as well as to having a strong ethnic orientation. Such a relationship implies that those who do not feel as strongly about being Armenian tend to feel that the effect of the genocide is not as

strong on diaspora life and culture. This points to the possibility that the genocide is a significant construct that helps define the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of Armenian ethnicity in the American and Turkish Armenian communities. The symbolic interactionist view (White & Bruke, 1987) would support such a contention. However, it is not the group experience as such, but the perceived impact of the experience on the collective entity that seems to be the critical factor in determining group belonging for the two samples in this study. It would not be unreasonable to expect that a similar relationship exists in other Armenian communities around the world. Also, this hypothesis may be interesting to test in other diaspora nationalities such as the Palestinians or the Assyrians.

For the Turkish sample, in addition to the genocide, interest in the Karabagh conflict and the personal impact of the earthquake also appear to be related to ethnic feelings and ethnic orientation. Also, the greater the perceived impact of the genocide, the stronger Armenian identity and orientation tend to be. For the American sample, however, interest in Karabagh as such is unrelated to ethnicity, but involvement in Karabagh demonstrations is related to the cognitive, but not to the affective, aspect of ethnic belonging. On the other hand, the personal and emotional impact of the earthquake is related to feeling Armenian, but not to ethnic orientation. Those who report being more affected by the earthquake tend to feel Armenian more strongly. It is also conceivable that those who feel Armenian more strongly tend to be more affected by the tragedy caused by the earthquake. It is how individuals are involved or interested in the shared experiences of the group that seems to be related to ethnic identity.

Taken as a whole the evidence here supports the symbolic interactionist view that common perceptions of shared collective experiences form the basis of social and ethnic identity (Mead, 1934). This study has focused on traumatic collective experiences. The re-establishment of the Republic of Armenia after the breakup of the Soviet Union represents a positive shared experience for Armenians all over the world. How this event is perceived and how Armenians in the diaspora participate in the nation-building process should be examined in relation to ethnic identity.

In this study global-human identity was examined as another dimension of social identity that might provide insight about ethnicity. Although there is increasing recognition for the need to assess ethnic and national-majority identity simultaneously (Phinney, 1990), the global-human dimension has been totally ignored. Global-human identity (Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992) is an expression of a sense of awareness and belonging to the human race as a whole. It represents an extension of out-group social identity, which may or may not be in opposition to ethnic identity, and may indicate a degree of connectedness to the larger phenomenological context of humankind.

The relationship of global-human identity to other ethnic and social identities is somewhat different for the two samples studied here. For both samples it is moderately related to the majority identity, confirming the notion that it may be conceived of as an extension of out-group identity. In the American sample it is independent of ethnic identity, but it is polarized for the Turkish sample, where the younger and more educated tended to score higher. Having a global perspective does not seem to be associated with diminished Armenianness in the American sample, but it seems to be so in the Turkish sample. Such a discrepancy may be partially explained by the sociopolitical context of the two samples. In the United States, where diversity is increasingly accepted and celebrated in multiethnic urban settings (where Armenians tend to live), it may be easier to accept and value one's belonging to the larger community of human beings without threatening one's sense of ethnic belonging. In Turkey, however, where the social environment is hostile to ethnic expression, embracing out-group belonging is conceived of as threatening to one's core social identity and is consequently denied, especially among the older and less educated.

Another aspect of global-human identity that differentiates the two groups is the way it is related to the perceived impact of the genocide. While the two variables are unrelated for the Turkish sample, they are positively related for the American sample. It appears that for the Turkish sample the genocide is largely seen as an ethnic concern and an element of one's Armenianness. On the other hand, for the American sample the tendency to accentuate the impact of the genocide on the diaspora community around the world tends to be associated with a greater awareness of one's belonging to the global community. Possibly, those who have a strong global-human identity may see the genocide in a light that goes beyond the ethnic group to become a concern of all humanity. This is consistent with the notion that genocide is a crime against humanity (Chalk & Jonassohn, 1990).

In summary, several points need to be highlighted. Although the numbers of individuals surveyed for this study were limited, several meaningful relationships between social identity variables are demonstrated. Perceptions of and interest in traumatic collective experiences have a bearing on affective and attitudinal aspects of Armenianness. But the phenomenological contexts of the Turkish and the American communities partly determine their interaction. In-group and out-group identities may not necessarily be polarized for all segments of the Armenian communities in the diaspora. Global-human identity presents an additional dimension of out-group identity that may be meaningful to incorporate in studies of diaspora communities.





## **Part III**

### **Public Lectures and Presentations**



## RELIGION AND ARMENIAN ETHNICITY<sup>63</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

### **Historical Overview**

Armenians claim a recorded history of about 2500 years in a land comprising roughly eastern Anatolia in Asia Minor between the Mediterranean, Black and the Caspian seas. Three conditions that are important for the maintenance of national or ethnic identity have been present throughout the history of the Armenian people, albeit to different degrees at different times. These conditions are a) historical continuity, b) socio-cultural context of a dominating culture that is tolerant of communal distinctiveness, and c) formal and informal means of cultural transmission.

In the case of Armenians, religion has been a formal means of cultural transmission, and at the same time it has been an integral part of sustained historical continuity. The approach taken here is socio-historical. In order to understand the significance of the Armenian Church and its faith traditions in the overall structure of Armenian national identity, relevant historical landmarks will be considered. This may be useful in emphasizing contextual factors as well as in pointing out fluctuations in the role religion has played in the life of the Armenians. In the modern era, the late nineteenth and the twentieth century, the role of religion and the church will be discussed in relation to major Armenian communities around the world. Such a comparative perspective will enhance understanding of the effect of contextual factors in determining the role of religion in the ethnic and national identity of the Armenian people.

The terms “church” and “religion” in this report are used in reference to the Armenian national Apostolic Church, which has by far the largest number of members, although among Armenians there have been a number of Uniate Catholics and Protestants. Some Catholic Uniates date back to the time of the Crusades, and others from later Dominican missionary activities (Lang & Walker, 1977). They first had a Patriarchate in Aleppo, Syria. After some disturbances between them and the adherents of the Apostolic Church, they moved to the town of Bzommar (built in 1749) in Mount Lebanon.

Two events in the early history of the Armenians helped create and reinforce ethnic and national boundaries that became the hallmark of Armenian identity. The first one was the declaration by King Dehertad II that made Christianity the official religion of his realm in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century ACE. This was very likely a politically motivated move intended to unify the feuding princes in his kingdom. It also may have helped provide his subjects with a communal identity distinguishing them from surrounding

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<sup>63</sup> Der-Karabetian, A., “Religion and Armenian Ethnicity”, public speech, University of La Verne, California, 1981.

peoples with other faith traditions such as the Zoroastrianism of the Persians. The second boundary-defining event was the invention of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrob Mashtots, who was a priest and scholar of languages. It led immediately to the translation of the Bible into Armenian. Besides its immediate religious impact, the alphabet helped solidify the distinctiveness of the Armenian people. The written Armenian language quickly went beyond its religious domain and was adopted by secular writers, historians and poets. Perhaps another significant consequence of the invention was the strengthening of the organization of the church by providing a more homogeneous and, therefore, more efficient medium of communication. When indigenous civil institutions were absent, the church and clergy formed the focal points of national activity. The improved organizational structure, as a consequence of the invention, became an asset under these circumstances.

One of the factors in the maintenance of Armenian ethnic and national identity has been the existence of a socio-cultural context conducive to and tolerant of ethnic distinctiveness. Under foreign domination of Armenian lands the existence of such an environment has generally been the rule rather than the exception. Such tolerance was not shown as a gesture of good will but for highly pragmatic reasons. The organizational structure of the church was used to administer local affairs and to advance the aims of the non-indigenous rulers, an example being taxation. Rulers often promised and provided certain advantages to the clergy, especially with regard to maintenance of the feudal structure from which the church derived a substantial part of its power.

Thus, the church may be said to have played the role of a “double agent” through a significant part of the history of the Armenian people. On the one hand, it has served as an agent of the oppressor in draining the resources of the indigenous people. On the other hand, it has served as a formal agent of cultural preservation and transmission. The “double agent” role was also present to some extent during indigenous civilian rule with the “agent of the oppressor” having a more subdued role. Local princes and kings frequently took advantage of the organization of the church to influence and govern their subjects. On another level, the relationship of the church and indigenous rulers was also characterized by conflict, especially conflicts pertaining to power and control. These conflicts have even taken the form of violent acts and assassinations. A prominent source of the conflict has been the desire on the part of the church to maintain its sphere of influence and expand its ownership of land (Libaridian, 1979).

The role of the church as an agent of cultural preservation must be further delineated. During the long periods of foreign domination it was inevitable that cultural borrowing would occur, simply as a function of contact. The Armenian Church, as a formal agent of the non-indigenous rulers,

interpreted the foreign culture to the local people. Through this process they minimized the impact by Christianizing and Armenianizing out-group cultural values and traditions. In so doing the church contributed to cultural preservation as well as to cultural enrichment.

The function of the church as a “double agent” continued until the middle of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when viable alternative institutions in the form of political parties, which primarily refused to play the role of the “enemy agent” began to emerge. In order to evaluate the substantive value of the church up to the present, it is important to look at the symbols it has provided for people to identify with. Symbols become important in this regard since they represent something beyond themselves; they embody a past and a meaning that form the substance of ethnic distinctiveness.

One of the significant symbols that religion has contributed is the architecture of its sanctuaries in their distinctive form (Cone, 1974). Pictures and images of the Armenian Church are found quite commonly in Armenian homes around the world today, and Armenian churches built around the world today are built in the traditional form. The concrete form of the church seems to provide the temporal continuity and time perspective basic to ethnic identity and belonging (Bell & Freeman, 1974; De Vos, 1975). In Parson’s (1975) terms the church is one of the “symbolic outputs of the past” that is central to the understanding of the nature of ethnicity. The church as a concrete form symbolizes the perseverance of Armenian culture against great odds and historical tides. It also symbolizes the distinctiveness of Armenian culture. It gives form to otherwise nebulous sense of ethnicity. It provides a sense of historical viability.

Another important symbol which religion has provided is depicted in the person of Saint Mashdots, the inventor of the alphabet. His image printed on paper or a tapestry against a background of the alphabet and the hand of revelation is not uncommon in Armenian homes. This symbol seems to embody the totality of Armenian culture and its “sanctity.” Thus, as God’s gift, language takes on an absolute value as a criterion of identity (De Vos, 1975; Isajiw, 1974).

### **Role of the Church in Different Communities**

Communities in Soviet Armenia, Turkey, Lebanon and the United States are considered in this regard for two reasons. The first reason is that these communities have large concentrations of Armenians: Soviet Armenia has 3 million, Turkey has about 250 thousand, Lebanon has about 180 thousand, and the United States (mostly in the north Atlantic states and southern California) has about 450 thousand (Lang & Walker, 1977). The second reason is that these are communities living under different conditions and their consideration underlines the importance of contextual factors.

### **The Armenian Community in Turkey**

Articles 38 and 44 of the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923) guaranteed the life and liberty of minorities within Turkey, without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race, or religion. The signatories to this treaty, which ended the war in the Middle East, were the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene States and Turkey. These Articles, in effect, laid down the principles for the protection of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey.

This aspect of the treaty did not go beyond being ink on paper. All kinds of pressures have been put on minorities in general, and Armenians in particular. They have been politically incapacitated and their cultural and educational activities have been hindered (Lang & Walker, 1977).

The head and spokesman of the Armenian community in Turkey today is the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Istanbul. The Church has worked relentlessly to protect the Armenians in Turkey from victimization by Turkish civil and military authorities, and against systematic efforts of Islamization; it has also been outspoken in publicizing the denial of basic human rights to the Armenians (Land & Walker, 1977).

The Patriarchate has been instrumental in bringing to Istanbul Armenian children from the provinces, and providing them with adequate health care, education and upbringing. Otherwise these children would have lost their identity in no time. Furthermore, the Patriarchate has resisted, often without success, the pressure on Armenians to change their family names. Changing one's name has been associated with easier access to social and economic advantages.

The role of the church in the maintenance of Armenian identity in Turkey is indispensable, although less than completely effective. It may be important to note that the Patriarchate in Istanbul constitutes an independent administration, all the while regarding Etchmiadzin as the historical source of ultimate spiritual authority in the church.

### **The Armenian Community in Soviet Armenia**

The situation in Soviet Armenia is somewhat different from that in Turkey. In fact, the church as a religious and cultural institution plays a less significant role, by virtue of existing within a larger Armenian national framework.

After the Sovietization of eastern Armenia in the early 1930s, the Catholicosate at Etchmiadzin was left vacant between 1930 and 1932. Consistent with Communist ideology, religion has been systematically neglected and downgraded throughout the Soviet Union. This has resulted in the undermining of the political role the church has played historically. As a national home, Soviet Armenia has had all the historical and cultural facilities to maintain ethnic and national identity, in spite of the ideological constraints placed on all manifestations of nationalism. Armenian is the first

official language of the Republic. There is a first-rate public education system with Armenian as its language of instruction. Education in national arts, theater, literature and history is abundantly provided but not without the inescapable Soviet interpretation. As a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* pointed out, Armenians have been able to maintain their national heritage, but at the price of having to bend it a little (*Los Angeles Times*, 1978).

During the late 1950s and 1960s the regime began to adopt a less dogmatic attitude toward various expressions of nationalism. Armenians took advantage of this to erect many monuments of historical and national significance. However, ultimately, the resolution of the problem of cultural survival is sought through the realization of the larger goal, the unification of historical Armenian territories within and outside Soviet boundaries (Libaridian, 1979).

Thus, the church in Armenia is only one of many resources of national identity. However, in spite of its position in the back seat, the church has occasionally been able to regain its prominence by expressing national aspirations. For instance, in 1945 the Catholicos sent a memorandum to the leaders attending the Moscow conference expressing hopes of the liberation of Turkish Armenia and its annexation to Soviet Armenia.

The church as an institution in Soviet Armenia has been subdued in evoking ethnic allegiance and national aspirations. However, as an objective reality in form and in substance, it has been recognized as a monument of historical significance. The subdued role of the church in Soviet Armenia with regard to national identity may be attributed on the one hand to the abundance of alternative cultural criteria, and on the other hand, to the ideological framework of the Soviet regime.

### **The Armenian Community in Lebanon**

Lebanon is a multi-ethnic society based on a confessional system of representation. Historically, it has provided a refuge to persecuted minorities of the area. Each of the groups that it has hosted has maintained its religious identity, but over the years these groups have come to share part of the indigenous culture (Hovannisian, 1974; Melikian & Der-Karabetian, 1977). Different Christian sects form half of the total population. The other half of the population is made up of Shia and Sunni Moslems and Druzes. Except for the Armenians, who form about seven percent of the total population, and possibly a small group of Assyrians, the rest of the Lebanese, irrespective of religion, are ethnically Arab.

In comparison to the Arab Christians, Armenians are relatively recent arrivals in Lebanon. The first major wave of Armenian refugees to Lebanon came in the early 1920s, in the wake of the First World War. The last came in 1939 when the Sanjak of Alexandretta was ceded to Turkey. Even though



recent arrivals, the Armenians have established themselves in the country and play an important part in the private economic sector.

The Armenians have had ample opportunity to maintain their ethnicity in Lebanon. The Church may be said to have played an important role in this process. It has, in effect, played a dual role in the life of the Lebanese-Armenians. In the first place, it has contributed to the maintenance of ethnic allegiances as a historically viable symbol of identification. In the second place, within the context of the Lebanese political structure, the church has legitimized the participation of the community as a distinctive social unit in the political process of the country. The latter role has “immunized” the Armenians against assimilation by the indigenous Arab population. In this way it has become a prime source of cultural self and ethnic identity.

Lebanon is the site of the Cilician Catholicosate, which is a rival to the one in Etchmiadzin in the Republic of Armenia. This rivalry has been reflected in intra-community religious factionalism. There are churches that have rival allegiances and separate followings and congregations. The majority of Lebanese Armenians are followers of the Cilician See, which is in a symbiotic relationship with the Tashnak political party. In fact, the public policies of the Cilician See cannot be divorced from the policies of the party. A minority of Lebanese Armenians are followers of the See of Etchmiadzin, which is in a symbiotic relationship with a rival political party. These rival Armenian political parties are headquartered in Lebanon. The politicization of this church rivalry exacerbated factionalism in the community, and often resulted in a less than unified representation of Armenian interests.

These political parties were established for resistance against Ottoman oppression. Being neutralized inside the occupied territories, the political parties now find themselves preoccupied with the administration of the different Diaspora communities and the creation of ethnicity-maintaining structures and activities. They have also been significantly active in pursuit of the “Armenian Cause”, that is, official recognition of the genocide by the Turkish government, and eventual recovery of land in Turkish Armenia. The church, as an adjunct institution, has also been involved in the promotion of such activities, as well as in their initiation.

Concerning participation in the Lebanese political process, it must be clear that although the church has legitimized participation, the executive aspect of this participation has been at the disposal of the Armenian political parties. The religious leadership, undoubtedly, has taken its share of responsibility in the process of participation.

Thus, the role of the church in Lebanon may be said to be basically supportive. The rival superstructures of the political parties today supersede the religious superstructure of the church. However, it may not be totally fair to disregard the importance of the church in the day-to-day lives of the

community. Many important social events, such as birth, death, marriage, and divorce, lie strictly within the jurisdiction of the church by the laws of the land. There are no civil marriages in Lebanon, and the church issues birth certificates. Furthermore, the age-old traditions and customs that the church has maintained throughout the centuries have a significant bearing on the way people conduct their lives.

Thus, the church has a significant function as an ethnicity-maintaining institution. However, this must be qualified by saying that religiosity on the part of the people does not necessarily imply high ethnic orientation. Frequency of church attendance is not necessarily related to Armenian ethnic identity, as shown in a study by Der-Karabetian and Oshagan (1977). The same study also showed that the church was not perceived as having as important a role in preserving the Armenian culture today as it had in the past. On the other hand, the need to support the church morally and financially was strongly acknowledged. This seems to suggest a greater emphasis on the symbolic rather than the substantive role of the church in the maintenance of ethnic identity in Lebanon today.

The role of the church during the armed civil conflict in Lebanon did not seem to change essentially from its symbiotic relationship with the political parties. However, it did become more outgoing in its moral support of the suffering population. It also took initiatives in providing social services and organized relief programs.

The role of the Armenian Church as an ethnicity-maintaining institution is quite salient in Lebanon. However, this should be understood only in the overall context of the local political structures and processes.

### **The Armenian Community in the United States**

Although there were Armenians in America as early as 1618, the real pioneers of immigration were students from Cilicia who came during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence of the Russo-Turkish Wars and the persecutions of Sultan Abdülhamid, large groups of Armenians came to the United States. Waves of Armenian immigrants continued to flow after the 1915 atrocities. They settled mostly in the north Atlantic States and southern California (Kulhanjian, 1975; Westerman, 1978).

The first church was established in 1889 in Worcester, New York (Minassian, 1974). From the very beginning division was apparent. In the early community there were those who advocated non-involvement of the church and the clergy in politics. Then, there were those who emphasized the national character of the church and espoused involvement in political causes by religious authority.

The Authorization for the church in the United States was obtained from the See of Etchmiadzin (Dorian, 1977). A number of Primates and Bishops were sent over by the Catholicosate to try and solve the problems and patch

up differences within the community, but the results were disappointing. The political parties, exiled from their battlefields in Turkey, were actively involved in the church. Their respective presses did not spare words of mutual criticism. In 1931 Archbishop Tourian was sent from Etchmiadzin to the Eastern Diocese (there was a Diocese in California too). He was unsuccessful in gaining the support of the community as a whole. He was often criticized for being under the influence of the communists, probably because of his ties to the See of Etchmiadzin in Soviet Armenia. Eventually, disputes resulted in a split for and against the Primate, which led to unfortunate clashes and culminated in the assassination of the Archbishop in 1933. This event raised passions very high and further polarized the community along party lines. Soon after, a minority separated from the Diocese, organized its own Prelacy, severed all relations with the See of Etchmiadzin, and in 1965 received the jurisdiction of the Cilician Catholicosate. Thus, the division of the church in the United States was formalized and institutionalized.

The fact that the church has raised passions may be taken to reflect the centrality of the church in the American Armenian community. Similar to the Lebanese situation, attending a particular church has implied a corresponding political sympathy. Unlike Lebanon, church attendance in the United States tends to have more ethnic significance. A survey of young adults by Der-Karabetian (1981) showed that more frequent church attendance was associated with higher levels of ethnic orientation and identity. The same survey also showed that, unlike Lebanese Armenians, American Armenians tend to perceive that the church today plays as important a role in preserving Armenian culture as it did in the past. Also, unlike Lebanese Armenians, American Armenians do not feel that supporting the church morally and financially is every Armenian's duty. This may be taken to reflect an emphasis on the substantive value of the church as an ethnic institution. The use of the English language during Sunday services has also been a hotly debated issue (Kapikian, 1976). There appears to be a good number of American Armenian parishioners who would like to see English introduced during Sunday service. These individuals tend also to indicate that doing so would not make the church less Armenian. This could reflect the desire to feel closer to the religious aspect of Armenian culture, and thus underlines the centrality of the church in the United States community.

Taken together, it seems fair to say that religion and the church have a greater ethnicity-supporting function in the United States than in Lebanon. This also implies that as a boundary-defining attribute it is more salient for American Armenians than for Lebanese Armenians.

In summary, it may be said that the church has served multiple purposes in the history of the Armenian nation. As a distinctive institution it has

contributed to defining the “boundary within” and the “boundary without.” In the former sense, it has contributed to the historical development of the nation, thus becoming one of the criteria of ethnic identity. In the latter sense, it has provided a criterion of distinctiveness in a larger socio political context. The role of the church in defining Armenian ethnicity today is not a simple one, primarily because of the dispersion of Armenians. It seems to have a somewhat different place in the life of the communities in different cultural and social contexts. However, it may be fair to conclude that it is still an important factor in characterizing Armenian ethnic identity.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES: SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION AND LEGACY<sup>64</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

This discussion is a response to and a reflection about two papers: One presented by Diana Vartan on “Making home in California: Psychological integration of Armenian immigrants,” and another one presented by Margaret Manoogian on “Exploring the family ties and legacies of older Armenian American women.”

These two papers are as divergent as they are complementary in terms of subject matter, population and methodology. While Diana dealt with issues of acculturation, identity and mental health in a cross-section of Armenians using quantitative methodology, Margaret presented the views of a select group of older Armenian women concerning rich family legacies using qualitative ethnographic methodology. In their own unique ways both of these approaches and topics possess strong merit for their contribution to our understanding of Armenian issues. More interestingly to me, they complete each other, deepening our insight about significant issues of interest to the Armenian community.

Diana presented the importance of maintaining ethnic identity while adapting to the mainstream culture for promoting mental health and wellness. Her sample was primarily composed of Iranian Armenians, which limits the generalizability of the findings without diminishing their value. Her finding of relatively lower anxiety and depression along with higher self-esteem among those with bicultural identity is a significant contribution. Her translation of the psychological measures is also of value for clinicians and future researchers.

Margaret described how Armenian mothers reinforce and maintain a sense of ethnic belonging and historical connectedness in succeeding generations by passing on material and symbolic legacies within their families. It is interesting to note her finding that more symbolic rather than concrete or tangible legacies were passed on from mothers to daughters, probably because the genocide deprived them of significant concrete possessions. Although she used a small sample, her methodology of ethnographic in-depth interviews provides a good example of qualitative research. Her research suggests the value of studying the legacies that fathers pass on to their children to maintain connectedness with Armenian history and culture.

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<sup>64</sup> Discussant notes presented at the conference on “A Century of Armenians in America: Voices from New Scholarship” organized by the Armenian Center at Colombia University, New York, NY, October, 2004.

A growing body of empirical research in the last few years has begun to document the positive consequences and adaptive value of developing a bicultural identity among Armenians in the United States, consistent with Berry's acculturation theory, as well as research with other ethnic groups. Examples of other works that address this issue among Armenians are dissertations and publications by Anny Bakalian (our gracious hostess), Alice Kassabian at the Catholic University of America, Tara Yarialian at Pepperdine University, Viken Yacoubian at the University of Southern California, Luci Kassabian at Colombia, Lena Alexander at California Graduate Institute, Matthew Jendian also at the University of Southern California, and our work at the University of La Verne in Southern California.

I would like to broaden the context for empirical behavioral research dealing with ethnic identity in general, and Armenian identity in particular. Research dealing with ethnic identity and the ramifications of the acculturation process for psychological adjustment has implications in three different domains: 1) Theory, 2) Application, and 3) Community.

In the domain of theory, such research contributes to the refinement of theories of acculturation, social identity development, and psychopathology as well as inter-group relations by testing their assumptions and the predictions that emerge from them. Research that examine behavioral and mental health correlates of Armenian identity is bound to contribute to the development of more robust and parsimonious theories of social identity and wellness in general. Moreover, such research efforts contribute to the growing literature, reinforcing the value of group-specific, as opposed to comparative, group analysis of social and psychological issues. Group-specific research has serious implications for culturally competent service delivery to clients in social work and mental health. Such research efforts involving many different ethnic groups have begun to mushroom. Research with Armenian populations will also enhance and inform the broader field of multicultural psychology.

This brings us to the second domain, the domain of application.

Several years ago the Surgeon General of the United States decried service disparities and the lack of access to quality mental health services for minorities and disenfranchised groups. This was followed by efforts by the American Psychological Association, American Counseling Association, and other professional associations to develop guidelines for culturally responsive service delivery and research. At the same time, researchers such as Sue, Ponterotto, Pope-Davis, Dana, and others began to formulate criteria for culturally competent service delivery, leading to the development of training programs and measurement tools. I am happy to say that my colleagues and I in the psychology department at the University of La Verne have recently developed and published a self-assessment scale to measure

such multicultural competence. Clinicians and social workers are given special training during and after their schooling to provide culturally appropriate treatments and interventions. Such training involves deeper and more sensitive understanding of social and mental health issues unique to different ethnic and cultural groups.

Armenians represent an ethnic group that mental health service providers know very little about, if anything. Armenian children, adults and families who seek, or are ordered to receive, mental health services are often referred to non-Armenian professionals. Although increasing in numbers in recent years, the number of Armenian mental health professionals who serve Armenian communities are few. More often than not non-Armenian professionals have inadequate knowledge of unique cultural, social and historical conditions that color the Armenian experience. They often, if not always, rely on stereotypic notions.

As Armenian social scientists and mental health professionals, we owe it to our non-Armenian colleagues to provide them with research-based scientific information about issues that contribute to the mental health and psychological functioning of the Armenian community. Diana's and Margaret's work, as well as the others mentioned above, are examples of such research. It is important to find ways of sharing these findings with mental health providers that are called upon to serve the Armenian communities around the country. The publication of the works presented at this conference would be one way to share such knowledge; other ways and venues should also be explored.

Behavioral and social science research also has implications for the Armenian community at large, which is the third domain. The concern in diaspora communities about assimilation is well founded and widespread. Efforts to engage the emerging generations in Armenian cultural, educational and political organizations, family rituals, and traditional customs are important. Such engagements create the historical connectedness necessary to maintain vibrant communities and a healthy sense of identity. By virtue of the fact that Armenians in the diaspora live in the context of other dominant cultures, they internalize values, behavioral patterns and world-views that reflect those cultures. Consequently, Armenians in and from different countries are different kinds of Armenians. However, they possess an almost mystical connection that results in a collective consciousness that transcends boundaries. The majestic land of Ararat from mythological times, and today's independent republic with all its faults and glory, have something to do with Armenian collective consciousness and identity.

Being able to live and navigate in one's own culture as well as in a dominant culture leads to bicultural identity. Such dual identity has been shown to be advantageous both at the psychological and the functional-



socioeconomic level by a growing body of research among Armenians as well as in other ethnic and racial groups.

Berry's theoretical model suggests that in multiethnic societies, while individuals develop successful bicultural identities, there is also the potential that people may isolate themselves in their ethnic groups, completely embrace the dominant culture, or be marginalized by alienating themselves from both cultures. We should recognize that such variations in identity are inevitable. Furthermore, our efforts to reinforce strong Armenian identity should be complemented by promoting a healthy embrace and adoption of local dominant social norms, customs and world-views. Being comfortable in both cultures will allow individuals to draw upon the resources and opportunities present in the dominant as well as the ethnic environment. Bicultural engagement will also enrich the dominant host culture.

While the threat of assimilation is real, it is heartening to know that being Armenian comes in different shapes and forms.

I would like to finish with a number of needed areas of psychological and behavioral research. Research should examine (a) intra-ethnic issues to understand the way Armenians from one country perceive and relate to Armenians from another country, (b) differential patterns of social and psychological adjustment by Armenian immigrants from different countries, (c) family violence and abuse in Armenian homes, (d) intergenerational care and conflict between children, parents and grandparents, and (e) creation of Armenian versions and norms for standardized measures of intelligence, adjustment, personality and psychopathology.

Another series of research efforts could take the sociological perspective and examine (f) the social and personal factors that support and promote stronger Armenian identity, (g) the impact of Armenian schooling on identity, as well as on success in educational, business and professional endeavors, (h) the effectiveness of Armenian organizations in realizing their missions and objectives, and (i) the relationship between US-born and immigrant Armenians.

## THE STATUS OF ARMENIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>65</sup>

Aghop Der-Karabetian

The topic of this conference is broad and deep at the same time. I am sure this is one of many to come that will be needed to continuously address the issues and needs of the Armenian community. This conference is also somewhat unusual in terms of its focus. First, it takes a psychosocial perspective rather than a politico-historical one, which tends to be the thrust of most conferences on Armenian issues. Second, it is grounded in empirical-scientific work.

It is really heartening to see that in recent years scholarly work has been expanding to deal with psychological and behavioral issues concerning the Armenian communities. Also, the number of Armenian professionals in the field of psychology and social work has been increasing, adding to the ranks of other professionals who are persuasive in the fields of medicine, law, engineering, and business.

What I would like to do in the next few minutes is briefly, and in broad strokes, contextualize the understanding of the status of Armenian communities in three domains: First, recognize the impact of acculturation and acculturation stress; second, acknowledge intra- and inter-ethnic tensions; and third, identify informational and structural needs to assess, prevent and intervene. I am really pleased to see that the papers, posters and panels in today's program address many of these issues.

Before I jump into these domains, I would like to make some general observations about the Armenian communities. I like the fact that the title of this conference speaks of "communities" rather than "a community". Yes, there are many Armenian communities in the United States, and it is not just in geographical terms. Although the identifying label "Armenian" represents a designated group identity with common social structures and worldviews, the community is quite diversified; within the larger community there are many communities that have noticeable boundaries, which of course are porous, but have differentiated structural and functional characteristics. Some examples of such differentiation may be seen in term of countries of origin, such as native born, immigrants from Armenia, Lebanon, Iran, etc. We have shown in our research that there is clear evidence of social distance and preferred modes of association among Armenians of different origins. (I will not mention the hierarchy of preferred association at this time, to avoid a riot). The point that needs to be made here is that these communities may

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<sup>65</sup> Keynote address given at the conference on "The Status of Armenian Communities" organized by AGBU Hye Geen Forum, and the California State University, Los Angeles, April 6, 2006.

have different needs and ways of coping. Differentiation also exists in terms of traditional Armenian political and cultural organizations that have created their specific infra- and supra-structures, supporting political, cultural, educational and human service activities. I do see strength and richness in such diversity, but nevertheless, it does represent boundary differentiations in the community. Differentiation also exists in the form of different religious denominations with their own unique traditions, organizational structures and support systems that encourage separate group allegiances. Another differentiation can be seen in terms of socioeconomic status. Evidence in the Armenian community shows that individuals and families with different financial and social status show different modes of coping and adaptation, as well as experiencing disparities in access to health and mental health services. Efforts in understanding the status of Armenian communities should take such and other diversities into consideration.

Besides differentiation, another major overarching issues that colors the status of Armenian communities is the genocide. The memory of the genocide, the pursuit of the Armenian Cause, and the fight against persistent denial by Turkey is a pervasive presence in the daily consciousness of every Armenian. It also has serious implications that cross generations.

The **first** set of issues that needs to be addressed in understanding the status of Armenian communities relates to acculturation. Change is stressful and anxiety provoking. Adapting to a new culture with different set of rules, expectations and worldview requires flexibility and resilience. In an individualistic culture such as the United States, collectivistic and authoritarian Armenian values do not always work well, leading to distress. Such distress spills over into family and work relationships, and causes both psychological and physical health problems. A critical issue related to acculturation is a sense of belonging and identity. This is particularly true for youth who are in their formative years. The construction of dual Armenian and American identities, compounded by the pressures of growing up, can create significant distress and inter-generational frictions within families, and instigate conflicts in schools. Such distress often manifests itself in acting-out behaviors, rebelliousness and even gang activity. Among adults the acculturation stress often manifests itself through somatization and depressive symptoms, disrupting family and work life. Social service agencies and extended families, combined with holistic and compassionate mental and medical care can help soften the impact of acculturation stress. *Thus, I shall declare that the status of Armenian communities in the United States is significantly characterized by acculturation stress.*

The **second** contextual domain refers to sources of potential friction within differentiated groups in the Armenian community and in relationship to outside groups, primarily other ethnic groups and the dominant mainstream culture. While differentiation within the Armenian community

provides a measure of richness, it also has the tendency to create allegiances that may dilute the resources of the community in terms of both financial and social capital, and it creates unnecessary tension. On the positive side, different social, religious and political/cultural groups generate a healthy multiplicity of cultural institutions, schools and social service agencies that address many different aspects of community needs. Part of this second contextual domain is the relationship of the Armenian community with the non-Armenian communities that it has to live with in close proximity. The United States is a multi-ethnic society that is not a melting pot but a “salad bowl” of different ethnic and cultural groups that have to learn to live with each other. Extending the metaphor, by rubbing against each other they tend to enhance and enrich each other’s “flavor and nutritional value.” Efforts to preserve and maintain Armenian identity may lead to drawing boundaries that could promote an “I-am-better-than-you-are” mentality and reinforce isolationist tendencies.

Of course, inter-group conflicts are often engendered because of the need to access limited common resources. This kind of conflict may lead to the experiences of discrimination, stereotyping and, sometimes, violence, as in gang activity. The desire to be different and unique from other groups does not have to lead to conflict and competition for resources. The needs of immigrant communities are very similar, and there is much room for collaboration and resource sharing. I am glad to see some wonderful examples of such efforts; one is the creation of a joint women’s shelter serving the Armenian and the Mexican American communities. *Thus, I shall declare that the status of the Armenian communities in the United States is characterized by healthy tensions between groups within and outside the Armenian community.*

The **third** domain deals with informational and structural needs to assess, prevent and intervene. Empirical research dealing with mental health issues in the Armenian community has been increasing. The papers and posters presented today provide a nice cross section of such work. I must say that most of such work is in the form of theses and dissertations, which do not find their way into the mainstream professional literature. This is true for dissertations and theses in general, partially because of the extra effort needed to transform such work into article formats, and partly because of the brutal nature of the professional publishing process. However, I must also say that given the easy ways literature databases can be searched these days, such research can be accessed quite readily by those who are eager to get to them. I would like to emphasize two points here: one, the need to generate more empirically based research – both qualitative and quantitative in nature; two, to make research more broadly available to practitioners and community leaders.

There is much need for good information based on group-specific research. Although work done with other ethnic groups or mainstream populations may have some bearing on Armenian issues, and provide theoretical perspectives, it is essential to test the validity of such findings in the Armenian context, where issues of ethnic identity, the genocide, and multiple uprooting play a significant role. The Surgeon General's call to address mental health disparities and to provide culturally competent care in different groups underscores the need for such research with Armenians. Armenian professionals owe it to themselves and to their non-Armenian colleagues to generate useful information to enhance the quality of intervention and care in the community. One important aspect of such work is the utilization of psychological assessment and research tools that are normed on Armenian populations. Armenian translations of some such assessment tools do exist, but normative and psychometric information is often lacking.

One other point that needs to be made about this third domain, is the need for dissemination of research findings useful to practitioners and community leaders. Today's conference is a good example of such an effort. However, we should admit such events are few and far between and reach a limited audience. The Internet provides some great opportunities for dissemination of information, but you cannot always trust the quality of the information. Perhaps it is time to start a referred electronic journal that is dedicated to ethnic-specific research with Armenian populations, and call it something like, "Armenian Behavioral Science eJournal." I believe expertise and resources do exist in the community to start such a journal. Blogging really doesn't do the job, we all agree, I am sure. *Thus, I shall declare that the status of the Armenian communities is characterized by a strong need to generate and disseminate quality ethnic-specific behavioral and psychological research.*

In summary, the status of Armenian communities in the United States is contextualized (a) by issues of in-group differentiation and out-group relations, (b) by issues surrounding acculturation, acculturation stress and bicultural identity, and (c) by issues related to the generation and dissemination of valid and reliable information about the health and mental health of the community.

## DIASPORA ARMENIANS: A PSYCHOSOCIAL EPILOGUE

Aghop Der-Karabetian

There have always been Armenians living outside the borders of Armenia proper and the Armenian lands of the Anatolia region of the Ottoman Empire. Until the turn of the 20th century the numbers were not substantial, and emigration was voluntary as well as due to occasional forced uprooting as in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century by Shah Abbas' forces. The diaspora that emerged after the Hamidian harassments and massacres toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the genocide of 1915 had no precedence in the long history of the Armenian people.

At this time the diaspora is estimated at about 1.5 million, not considering the Soviet Union, predominantly dispersed in Europe, North America, and the Middle East. In fact, the Armenian diaspora extends to the four corners of the world. To understand the nature of this dispersion it must be examined from a variety of perspectives including historical, political, economic, social and psychological. Its organizational, social and intra-communal structures must be carefully analyzed and understood to provide a realistic assessment of its potentials, and predict the pitfalls in its path. Here a psychosocial perspective has been attempted.

The word "diaspora" is ambiguous and somewhat problematic. The word is often used as if it refers to a homogenous and clearly definable entity. Although one may be partially convinced that it may refer to a politically meaningful unit in the context of an ethnically and socially sensitized world political community, its nature is elusive. A diaspora is hard to conceive as a sociologically acceptable entity. A sociologically acceptable collective must present a cohesive network of formal and informal institutions as opposed to fragmented and haphazardly put together organizations that are intended to meet limited short-term goals and temporary needs. Also, for a social group to exist there must be a fairly well defined set of norms and values that regulate relationships among individuals and organizational entities. In face of a wide dispersion of individuals and organizations in diverse cultural contexts achieving a cohesive uniformity of norms is at best very difficult. Thus, when we talk about the Armenian diaspora, it is important to keep in mind the diversity of cultural contexts and host countries people live in, and to be cautious about making assumptions about a singular cohesive way of existing. Armenian churches, schools, political parties and cultural and professional organizations around the world may seem to espouse and promote, on the surface, common set of beliefs, perspectives and ways of viewing the world. However, the diversity in the different types of religious denominations and churches, political parties, and cultural organizations allows room for ambiguity, even though such diversity may speak to the richness of the Armenian diaspora.

In order to gain insight into the nature of the modern Armenian dispersion it is necessary to understand the psychological and social impact of the genocide on the community as a whole. Armenian communities around the world have predominantly focused their energies, resources and mind-power on the political and legal aspects of the genocide in an effort to gain recognition of the genocide and pursue justice for the victims and succeeding generations. This effort is necessary and must continue. It provides an overarching preoccupation that defines the Armenian diaspora in fundamental ways. The genocidal act, so devastating and so nearly successful, has been a tremendous blow to the millennia-old existence of the Armenian people, deserving closer attention and deeper analysis regarding its impact on the Armenian psychological makeup.

Throughout their history, the Armenian people have survived numerous threats to their very existence by waves of conquering armies that have often tried to impose their cultures. As a people, Armenians have accommodated superior and oppressive powers and survived; they have also borrowed from neighboring cultures and persevered.

The Armenian collective memory, or collective unconscious as Carl Jung would call it, that defines Armenians as a people is characterized by adaptability and flexibility. The genocide created a basic dissonance in the Armenian collective memory; as skilled survivors, Armenians failed to predict or prevent a catastrophic blow to their existence. Of course, some resistance was displayed, but it was futile against overwhelming odds. Foreign assistance, military and humanitarian, fell short and failed to stop the destruction of an ancient people. Historical circumstances, such as the First World War, were seen as playing a role in this failure, and conspiratorial intentions by friendly European powers were blamed for facilitating the massacres, or at least looking “the other way.”

The dissonance has also led to collective self-blame. Disunity, lack of foresight, the bourgeois mentality of the Armenian leaders in the Ottoman government, and a submissive disposition nurtured over centuries of oppression have all been blamed for the genocide. These efforts to explain and understand the Armenian genocide may represent a basic collective attempt to cope with the unprecedented blow to national survival. It has to be integrated into the collective unconscious, regardless of how unbearable a memory it is. The Millennia-old homeland was lost; art, architecture, and culture were decimated by the perpetrators; generations of family histories were truncated; entire communities were slaughtered; and an entire nation was dehumanized as worthless, disposable trash. Armenians as a people lost their dignity, self-respect and sense of control of their destiny.

Now, three generations later, we have begun to overcome the shock and the humiliation of the Genocide and have partially regrouped our sense of collective dignity, thanks to the continuing legacy of the revolutionary

movements, the courage of resistance fighters, the generosity of host countries, and the economic rejuvenation of the survivors. It is this recovery of dignity that will energize the future course of the dispersed communities of Armenians. The nature of the future course is still an open question, of course.

I cannot claim to be able to spell out the future course of the diaspora. I will try and point out some of the potential challenges in our collective existence and behavior from a psychosocial perspective. These challenges broadly include (a) intra-community relations, (b) individual-group interdependence, (c) the dangers of ethnocentrism, and (d) the nature of relations with majority/dominant cultures. In addition to these challenges, the most outstanding psychological issue that we have to cope with is the fact that we have to live with multiple ethnic and cultural identities, sometimes double or triple identities. Some of us are American-Armenian, Lebanese-Armenian, French-Armenian, and some of us are Lebanese-American-Armenian, Lebanese-Soviet-American Armenian, etc. These multiple identities should somehow be integrated.

Different identities create different psychological situations that may sometimes be in conflict and cause the individual to reject one or the other, thus rejecting part of one's self, and potentially precipitating an identity crisis. During my visit to some European countries in 1970 and 1971 (to volunteer in United Nations work camps), as a carrier of a Lebanese passport, I was strip searched at every border and airport (these were the years when the Palestinians were in the mode of active resistance worldwide). I resented the treatment I received. I often felt like shouting, "Stop! I am not an Arab!" Yet for all practical purposes, I was in those situations, as my passport testified.

How often have we felt somewhat hurt because we introduced ourselves as Armenian and had to give an hour-long "lecture" about who the Armenians were? While doing so educated the other party, it also soothed our bruised ego. After giving the "lecture" we feel better and sometimes even bragged about it to our friends for having advanced the Armenian Cause another small step. Such affective and emotional states are signs of insecure identity.

Another problem that arises from multiple identities is the conflict between the majority/dominant cultural identity and Armenian ethnic identity. In day-to-day living conditions there are forces that pull the individual toward the majority (legal) identity and other forces that lead to the minority or ethnic Armenian identity. If the majority identity is something we look up to, then the pull is strong; if we look down on it and devalue it, the pull is less strong and sometimes it is even rejected. We have often looked up to European Christian culture and down on Middle Eastern Muslim cultures. Thus, those of us who live in majority Muslim cultures tend to be pulled less strongly toward the dominant cultural identity than



those of us who live in Western Christian cultures. This is probably one basic aspect of the dynamics of the assimilation and acculturation process.

A misconception about dual identity that has created an unnecessary discomfort is the notion that if one is high on dominant majority identity, one must be low on ethnic or Armenian identity, or vice versa. There is empirical evidence to suggest that, although there may be some truth to this notion, it is not the only possible way the two identities may be related. It is entirely possible that high levels of both identities may coexist. There is a greater tendency for this to occur among native-born and second or third generation immigrants than first generation immigrants.

Highly relevant to the potentially polarized or harmonious relationship of the dual identities is the issue of ethnocentrism, or Armenian-centrism. It may be roughly characterized as an overzealous positive evaluation of our ethnic attributes and culture, associated with a tendency to devalue other ethnic cultures, or the dominant majority culture. Such a view tends to crystalize the cultural group boundaries. And, at higher levels of ethnocentrism there may be a tendency to exclude oneself from the mainstream dominant society and miss the potential opportunities available there. In the end ethnocentrism may lead to degenerative stagnation for the group, which is not a highly adaptive response on the part of the individual or the group where such a view is pervasive.

What about assimilation? Are we not preserving our identity by crystalizing our ethnic and cultural boundaries? Such a question leads me to differentiate functional integration and primary acculturation. Functional integration generally refers to the adoption of formal institutions, organizations, and forms of operation available in the mainstream majority cultural context for instrumental purposes and for the attainment of group or individual goals and gains. This would involve taking advantage of economic and cultural resources through the utilization of legal, political and organizational infrastructures of the mainstream majority culture. Primary acculturation would involve the adoption of the goals, values and ideals of the majority mainstream culture to meet instrumental needs and operations by individuals or by the group. This has the potential to lead to assimilation. While ethnocentrism may prevent or delay primary acculturation, it also denies the benefit of functional integration. Instrumental openness to the majority culture makes more resources available through functional integration. This does not necessarily lead to primary acculturation (assimilation) because it has the potential to strengthen the functional values of the group and its cohesiveness.

In the case of the Armenian community in the United States, there seems to be a debate whether most of the native-born are functionally integrated or assimilated into American mainstream society. This debate may also be the root of the friction that seems to exist between immigrant Armenians and

American-born Armenians, leading to distrust of each other's intentions and capabilities. This friction has existed in every immigrant community since the discovery of America. It has to some extent shaped intra-community relations, which in one sense may be thought of as a power struggle for control of the communities' resources, organizations, and even their future course. Such friction cannot be useful and defeats the purpose of leadership. It is clearly on the side of reason to accept the necessity of functional integration as instrumental for the self-determination and the successful functioning of the community. It implies knowledge of the workings of the larger social system, which may be acquired over time through intentional and deliberate effort. The American-born individual has had greater opportunity and time to acquire such instrumental knowledge through engagement in the indigenous mainstream American culture. The new immigrant brings with him or her instrumental skills from the country and culture of origination that may not be adequate in the American context. However, this does not mean that power cannot be shared, since power implies leadership, and the main function of leadership is to mobilize resources, Armenian or otherwise, to achieve the collective wellbeing of the community.

One of the ingredients in collective goal-directed behavior is the relationship of the individual to the group. One common complaint we hear deals with the relative indifference of the individual toward collective efforts. Although individuals are not separate from the group, their goals and needs do not necessarily coincide. What is good for the individual is not necessarily good for the community at large, or the reverse. A classic example of this is the colloquial expression "Hayereneh hats chi gertsener." (Armenian language does not feed you). This is a very loaded expression. On one level, it reflects the conflict of interests between the individual and the collective goals. On another level, it reflects the potential discordance between individual and collective goals. For the individual, goals must be imminently achievable and relevant to provide economic security for one's self and one's family. For the group, goals tend to be more long-term and more diffused (Armenian Cause), where the immediate relevance for the individual is sometimes remote and hard to see.

The nature of the relationship between the individual and the group is also pertinent to the strength of the attachment of the individual to the group. Those whose economic, social or personal livelihood is somehow dependent on the Armenian community tend to have a stronger attachment and sense of belonging to the community; the less the dependence, the weaker the attachment. It follows that to strengthen a sense of belonging and attachment to the Armenian community, the community should provide resources and opportunities that meet the more basic functional, economic and social needs. Otherwise, to meet individual needs, opportunities will be sought

outside the community in the mainstream culture, and thus potentially weaken the connection and attachment to the community. Being able to meet individual instrumental needs within the context and boundaries of the community tends to strengthen Armenian identity and belonging.

The problem of assimilation and loss of Armenian identity is a pervasive concern to the entire Armenian diaspora. The other pervasive preoccupation is, of course, the Armenian Cause of genocide recognition, reparations, and social justice for victims and survivor generations. These two concerns appear to be somewhat connected in a cause-effect relationship, such that commitment to the Armenian Cause is seen as a deterrent to assimilation and as a way of strengthening Armenian identity. This might be partially true, and there is empirical evidence that shows stronger Armenian orientation and identity among members of Armenian political parties compared to those who are party sympathizers or are not members. This argument is defensible to the extent that through the Armenian Cause opportunities are provided to meet and satisfy social, psychological and instrumental needs. But, is the patriotism generated by the Armenian Cause sufficient to deter assimilation? It is certainly a contributing factor, and its contribution may be seen primarily in giving a sense of belonging, which is an existential and fundamental psychological need.

The possibility of assimilation is too terrible to contemplate in the diaspora. It would be the collective loss of something central and existential. Communities assimilate as individuals do in the community by completely disconnecting from the cultural and historical foundation of their identity, and by taking on identities anchored in the cultural and historical heritage of the host culture, which tends to occur across generations. This would be easier in host cultures that are homogeneous where celebration of cultural diversity is not inherent in the fabric of the culture. Ethnic identity will be easier to maintain in cultural and social contexts where there is opportunity to interact with diverse groups of individuals from different cultural backgrounds such as in the United States or Lebanon. Such interactions would create comparative basis for affirming one's distinctiveness and would reinforce the sense of ethnic belonging and identity.

In summary, the challenges of the Armenian diaspora are deep, diverse, and many. The burden of the involuntary dispersion caused by the genocide weighs heavy on the hearts, minds and identities of Armenians as members of a transnational community. The connectedness of transnational Armenian communities with each other, and the thousands of years of historical memory with strong cultural, linguistic and religious institutions and traditions, and the pursuit of justice for the victims of the genocide might sustain for a long time the strong sense of identity and belonging as Armenians.

## **Appendices**



## Appendix A

### Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ-Lebanon) (Administered in Lebanon, 1974)

(Der-Karabetian, A. & Oshagan, E. [1977]. Ethnic Orientation of Armenians in Lebanon. *The Armenian Review*, 30, 164-175).

This survey is composed of statements that cover attitudes, opinions and personal feelings about a variety of Armenian topics. There are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinion and feeling that matters. Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following system:

- 1 for Strongly Disagree
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Slightly Disagree
- 4 for Slightly Agree
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Strongly Agree

For example, if you strongly agree with a statement, put the number 6 in the blank space left of the statement. Or, if you slightly disagree with the statement, put the number 3, and so on.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Armenians and Turks can never be friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Armenians in Lebanon must accept that they are first Lebanese then Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It is shameful for Armenians to speak in other languages with one another when they can speak in Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Armenian private businesses should close down on Armenian national holidays.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Many old Armenian customs should be dropped because they don't make sense anymore. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Armenians in Lebanon should consider Lebanon their homeland. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Armenian schools should accept non-Armenian students without requiring them to learn Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. "Armenian is Beautiful" (*Haygagan eh Badvagan eh*).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Armenians should always speak Armenian with one another when they know the language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. To preserve Armenian identity it is essential to be a fanatic Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Armenians who are not involved in the "Armenian Cause" can be as good Armenians as those who are. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. It is a shame when Armenians in the diaspora who have achieved international recognition do not acknowledge being Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Armenians should not be blamed for preferring western music to Armenian music. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. It is every Armenian's duty to support the Armenian national (Apostolic) church, both morally and financially.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Sending Armenian children to non-Armenian schools has long-term benefits. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. An Armenian should support another Armenian in a fight even if he is the guilty party.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Armenians who attend Turkish movies are as good Armenians as those who do not attend. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Armenians who are members of an Armenian political party and those who are not may be equally good Armenians. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. It is preferable to buy from an Armenian grocer two blocks away than from a non-Armenian who is one block away.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Armenians who openly disobey the law disgrace the Armenian people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I consider myself to be a person before I consider myself to be an Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. A good Armenian should not belong to a non-Armenian church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. It is wrong for Lebanese-Armenians to have a negative attitude toward Armenian culture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. A good Armenian prefers to read Armenian newspapers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Armenian political parties are better organized than other political parties in Lebanon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. It is bothersome to have many Armenian neighbors. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. In general, Armenians are more hardworking than other minorities in Lebanon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. In general, Armenian mothers are more attached and devoted to their children than other mothers in Lebanon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. In general, Armenian fathers are more attached to their families than other fathers in Lebanon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. Armenian schools in Lebanon should not overload students with Armenian language and history requirements. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. It is rare to find an Armenian prostitute in Lebanon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I prefer to be employed by a non-Armenian rather than an Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. The Armenians of the diaspora should finally settle in Armenia to avoid assimilation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. In general, Armenian upbringing prevents delinquency.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. It is pointless to celebrate Christmas on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January while most of the Christians of the world celebrate it on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. A good Armenian always cheers the Armenian team in a match.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. The new Armenian generation should not be blamed for not learning the Armenian language well. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. The role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in preserving Armenian identity is not as important today as it used to be. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. Armenian compatriotic organizations are not needed any more. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. The Aintabtzi and Marashtzi in Lebanon are really different in character.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. A good Armenian should marry another Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. Armenians taking up non-Armenian names for political or economic reasons are not good Armenians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. Armenian children should be encouraged to play with non-Armenian children. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. An Armenian should degrade the Turks whenever the occasion arises.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. Armenian literature matches international standards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. To strengthen the Armenian spirit it is essential to visit Armenia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. In general, Armenian-Lebanese children are more gifted than other Lebanese children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. For an Armenian child, non-Armenian education may be more beneficial in the long run than Armenian education. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. Lebanese cooking is as delicious as Armenian cooking. (R)

Note: To obtain a total score first reverse the ratings of the items indicated with (R) at the end of the item, and then add the ratings. Higher scores indicate stronger ethnic orientation.

## Appendix B

### Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (AEOQ-US) (Administered in the US, 1978)

This survey is composed of statements that cover attitudes, opinions and personal feelings about a variety of Armenian topics. There are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinion and feeling that matters. Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following system:

- 1 for Strongly Disagree
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Slightly Disagree
- 4 for Slightly Agree
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Strongly Agree

For example, if you strongly agree with a statement, put the number 6 in the blank space left of the statement. Or, if you slightly disagree with the statement, put the number 3, and so on.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Armenians and Turks can never be friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Armenians in the US must accept that they are first American then Armenian (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It is shameful for Armenians to speak in other languages with one another when they can speak in Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Armenian private businesses should close down on Armenian national holidays.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Many Armenian customs should be dropped because they do not make sense anymore. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Armenians in the US should consider the US their homeland. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. It is not possible to stay Armenian without speaking Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Armenian schools should accept non-Armenian students without requiring them to learn Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. "Armenian is Beautiful" (*Haygagan eh Badvagan eh*).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Armenians should always speak Armenian with one another when they know the language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. To preserve Armenian identity it is essential to be a fanatic Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Armenians who are not involved in the "Armenian Cause" can be as good Armenians as those who are. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. It is a shame when Armenians in the diaspora who have achieved international fame do not acknowledge being Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Armenians should not be blamed for preferring western music to Armenian music. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. It is every Armenian's duty to support the Armenian national (Apostolic) Church both morally and financially.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Sending Armenian children to non-Armenian schools has long-term benefits. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. An Armenian should support another Armenian in a fight even if he is the guilty party.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Armenians who do not attend Armenian movies are as good Armenians as those who do. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Armenians who are members of an Armenian political party and those who are not may be equally good Armenians. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. It is preferable to buy from an Armenian grocer two blocks away than from a non-Armenian who is one block away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Armenians who openly disobey the law disgrace the Armenian people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I consider myself to be a person before I consider myself to be an Armenian. (R)



- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. A good Armenian should not belong to a non-Armenian church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. It is wrong for Armenian-Americans to have a negative attitude toward Armenian culture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. A good Armenian prefers to read Armenian newspapers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Armenian political parties are better organized than other political parties in the US.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. It is bothersome to have many Armenian neighbors. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. In general, Armenians are more hardworking than other minorities in the US.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. In general, Armenian mothers are more attached and devoted to their children than other mothers in the US.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. In general, Armenian fathers are more attached to their families than other fathers in the US.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. Armenian schools in the US should not overload students with Armenian language and history requirements. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. It is rare to find an Armenian prostitute in the US.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I prefer to be employed by a non-Armenian rather than an Armenian. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. The Armenians of the diaspora should finally settle in Armenia to avoid assimilation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. In general, Armenian upbringing prevents delinquency.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. It is pointless to celebrate Christmas on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January while most of the Christians of the world celebrate it on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. A good Armenian always cheers the Armenian team in a match.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. The new Armenian generation should not be blamed for not learning the Armenian language well. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. The role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in preserving Armenian identity is not as important today as it used to be. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. Armenian compatriotic organizations are not needed any more. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. The Aintabtzi and Marashtzi in the US are really different in character.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. A good Armenian should marry another Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. Armenians taking up non-Armenian names for political or economic reasons are not good Armenians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. Armenian children should be encouraged to play with non-Armenian children. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. An Armenian should degrade the Turks whenever the occasion arises.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. Armenian literature matches international standards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. To strengthen the Armenian spirit it is essential to visit Armenia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. In general, Armenian-American children are more gifted than other American children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. For an Armenian child, non-Armenian education may be more beneficial in the long run than Armenian education. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. American cooking is as delicious as Armenian cooking. (R)

Note: To obtain a total score first reverse the ratings of the items indicated with (R) at the end of the item and then add the ratings. Higher scores indicate stronger ethnic orientation.

## Appendix C

### Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire-Revised (AEOQ-R)

(Published in 2007)

(Der-Karabetian, A., Berberian, S., & Der-Boghossian, A. [2007]. Armenian Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire--Revised. *Psychological Reports*, 2007, 101, 485-496.)

This survey deals with the personal opinions and feelings of Armenians concerning various issues. The survey is composed of statements. There are no right or wrong answers; what matters is your personal opinion and feeling. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement by putting one of the following numbers on the line next to each statement:

- 1 for Disagree Strongly
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Disagree Slightly
- 4 for Agree Slightly
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Agree Strongly

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I believe it is not possible to remain Armenian without speaking Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I believe it is every Armenian's duty to support Armenian institutions and organizations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I believe it is essential to visit Armenia to strengthen the feeling of being Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I feel a personal connection to Armenians who live in Armenia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I am a person first, then an Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I believe Armenians in the diaspora should finally settle in Armenia to avoid assimilation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I believe Armenian children in the diaspora who attend Armenian schools could be at a disadvantage in their careers in the long run.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I believe a good Armenian should marry another Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The conflict between Armenia and its neighbors strengthens my Armenian feelings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I believe the role of the Armenian Apostolic church in preserving Armenian identity is not as important today as it used to be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I have the desire to go to Armenia as a volunteer to help in any way I can.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Keeping Armenian traditions and customs is important to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I believe being involved in the "Armenian Cause" and "Genocide Recognition" efforts is important to maintain Armenian identity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I feel more comfortable doing business with non-Armenians than with Armenians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I feel good whenever I hear or read about the successes and accomplishments of Armenians around the world.

**Scoring:** First reverse the ratings on items 5, 7, 10, and 14, then add the ratings across the 15 items and divide by 15 for the total mean score.

## Appendix D

### Armenian Identity

(Published in 1980 and administered in the US and Turkey)

(Der-Karabetian, A. [1980]. Relation of two cultural identities of Armenian Americans. *Psychological Reports*, 47, 1123-128.)

This survey is composed of statements that cover attitudes and feeling about being Armenian. There are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinion and feeling that matters. Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following system:

- 1 for Strongly Disagree
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Slightly Disagree
- 4 for Slightly Agree
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Strongly Agree

For example, if you strongly agree with a statement, put the number 6 in the blank space left of the statement. Or, if you slightly disagree with the statement, put the number 3, and so on.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. If a stranger were to meet me and mistake me for a non-Armenian, I would correct the mistake and say that I am an Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Armenians all over the world are my kin (like "one family").
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When an important newspaper insults the Armenians, I feel that is it insulting me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Being an Armenian plays an important part in my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. It is necessary to take an active interest in the fate of Armenians everywhere in order to be a good Armenian in America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. If I were to be born all over again, I would wish to be born an Armenian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When an important TV station praises the Armenian people, I feel that it is praising me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. My fate and future are bound up with Armenians everywhere.

Note: The score is obtained by adding the responses to the eight items. Higher scores indicate stronger Armenian identity. This measure may be used in other countries by changing the name of the country in item 5.

## Appendix E

### American Identity

(Published in 1980, and administered in the US and Turkey)

(Der-Karabetian, A. [1980]. Relation of the two cultural identities of Armenian Americans. *Psychological Reports*, 47, 123-128.)

This survey is composed of statements that cover attitudes and feeling about being American. There are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinion and feeling that matters. Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following system:

- 1 for Strongly Disagree
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Slightly Disagree
- 4 for Slightly Agree
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Strongly Agree

For example, if you strongly agree with a statement, put the number 6 in the blank space left of the statement. Or, if you slightly disagree with the statement, put the number 3, and so on.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Being a citizen or resident of this country plays a big role in my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. As a citizen or resident my most important duty is loyalty to the United States.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When an important newspaper praises the American people, I feel that it is praising me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. If I were to be born all over again, I would wish to be born an American.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. If a stranger were to meet me and mistake me for a non-American, I would correct the mistake and say that I am an American citizen or resident.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I consider all Americans as my kin (like "my family").
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. My fate and future are bound up with that of the American people.

Note: The score is obtained by adding the responses to the seven items. This measure may be administered in other countries by changing the name of the country from "American" or "United States". Higher scores indicate stronger identification with one's own country.

## Appendix F

### Global-Human Identity

(Administered in the US and Turkey, published in 1992)

(Der-Karabetian, A., & Balian, N. [1992]. In-group, out-group, and global-human identities of Turkish-Armenians. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 132, 497-504.)

This survey is composed of statements that cover attitudes and feeling about a sense of belonging to the global-human community. There are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinion and feeling that matters. Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following system:

- 1 for Strongly Disagree
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Slightly Disagree
- 4 for Slightly Agree
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Strongly Agree

For example, if you strongly agree with a statement, put the number 6 in the blank space left of the statement. Or, if you slightly disagree with the statement, put the number 3, and so on.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I'd rather be a citizen of the world than of any one country.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I see my future as closely tied to the future of humankind as a whole.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I often feel that I am living in a "global village."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Anything that threatens the welfare of the human race as a whole makes me feel personally threatened.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I feel that people around the world are more similar than different.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Regardless of race, religion or nationality people should be allowed to live wherever they want to in the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I consider the entire human race as "my family."

Note: The score is obtained by adding the responses to the seven items.

## Appendix G

### (A Statewide Survey of California Armenians Developed and Used in 1981. See Chapter 11 in this volume)

The following is a survey of Armenians living in California about their attitudes and opinions regarding various issues of concern to the Armenian community.

In questions that provide choices, put a check mark on the lines that best describe you or express your opinions

1. ☐ Male  
☐ Female
2. Age:
3. Country of birth:
4. Number of years lived in California or the US:
5. Current marital status:  
☐ Married  
☐ Single, never married  
☐ Divorced
6. Number of persons living in your household:
7. Personal or family financial status:  
☐ Very well off—no financial concerns  
☐ Comfortable—meet all financial obligations/needs and save some  
☐ Meet financial obligations—live paycheck-to-paycheck  
☐ Struggle to meet financial obligations/needs  
☐ Depend on others to meet financial obligations/needs—use public assistance
8. What is your occupation?
9. Do you own a business?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
10. Level of education completed:  
☐ None  
☐ Elementary  
☐ Secondary/High School  
☐ Junior/Community College/2-year diploma  
☐ Four-year college/Bachelor's degree  
☐ Master's degree  
☐ Doctoral/Professional degree
11. Fluency in Armenian language:  
☐ Read and write  
☐ Read and understand  
☐ Basic conversation  
☐ Speak a few words  
☐ Neither speak nor understand
12. Fluency in English:  
☐ Read and write  
☐ Read and understand  
☐ Basic conversation  
☐ Speak a few words  
☐ Neither speak nor understand
13. Status in the US:  
☐ Citizen

- ☐ Permanent residence (Have Green Card)  
☐ Temporary resident (Tourist, waiting for status change, etc.)
14. As a citizen have you voted in elections during the last four years?
- ☐ Yes  
☐ Wanted to but could not  
☐ Wanted to but did not know how  
☐ No, did not think it would make a difference
15. How many Armenian cultural, educational, or charitable organizations do you belong to?
- \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you presently do volunteer work in any Armenian organizations (non-political)?
- ☐ Yes. Please specify name of organization \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Want to but do not have time  
☐ Do not wish to
17. Armenian Political party membership:
- ☐ I am a member of one (No name needed)  
☐ I sympathize with one but do not belong to it  
☐ Neither a member nor a sympathizer of any
18. The Armenian Cause should be pursued by:
- ☐ Peaceful and diplomatic means only  
☐ Armed struggle only  
☐ Both peaceful means and armed struggle
19. The Armenian Cause may be:
- ☐ Resolved in the near future  
☐ Resolved in the distant future  
☐ Impossible to resolve
20. Armenian Americans should be regarded as:
- ☐ A minority  
☐ Part of the majority
21. How often do you read Armenian newspapers?
- ☐ Regularly  
☐ Occasionally  
☐ Never
22. Please rank order the following problems in terms of their importance or urgency for the community by putting a number next to each (1 = most important, 2 = next most important...8 = least important):
- ☐ Ethnic intermarriage  
☐ Loss of the use of the Armenian language  
☐ Use of illegal drugs  
☐ Loss of traditional Armenian values  
☐ Lack of unity  
☐ Shoplifting  
☐ Gang activity  
☐ Discrimination against Armenians
23. If a large sum of money is available to be spent for a single purpose which of the following should it be? (Check one)
- ☐ Social services  
☐ Political activity  
☐ Research institute  
☐ Cultural activities  
☐ Schools  
☐ Churches  
☐ Youth camps  
☐ Athletics

- ☐ Clubs  
☐ Publications
24. The following are factors that define Armenian identity; order them in terms of their importance by putting a number next to each (1 = Most important, 2 = Next most important...5 = least important)
- ☐ Speak the Armenian language  
☐ Know Armenian history  
☐ Be active in Armenian organizations  
☐ Identify with the Armenian people  
☐ Believe in the Armenian Cause
25. How would you feel if your son or daughter married a non-Armenian?
- ☐ Angry and not accept it at all  
☐ Unhappy but try to live with it  
☐ Happy and proud
26. Divorce in the Armenian families should be:
- ☐ Discouraged under all circumstances  
☐ Discouraged only if there are children  
☐ A matter of personal choice
27. In the present Armenian family, whose responsibility should each of the following be? (Check one alternative for each):
- |                              | <u>Men</u>               | <u>Women</u>             | <u>Both</u>              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Maintain kin relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| b. Earn a living             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Housekeeping              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| d. Decision making           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| e. Child care                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Discipline                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
28. A church wedding:
- ☐ Helps family cohesion  
☐ Has no impact on family cohesion
29. Sermons during church services should be:
- ☐ Only in Armenian  
☐ Only in English  
☐ In both Armenian and English
30. How frequently do you attend church?
- ☐ Regularly and often  
☐ Only occasionally  
☐ Almost never
31. What denomination/church do you belong to?
- ☐ Apostolic  
☐ Protestant/Evangelical  
☐ Protestant/Brethren  
☐ Catholic  
☐ Other  
☐ None



## Appendix H

### Impact of Armenian Genocide

#### (Administered in the US and Turkey, developed and used in 1990)

(Der-Karabetian, A., & Balian, N. [1992]. Ingroup, outgroup, and global-human identities of Turkish-Armenians. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 132, 497-504.)

The following are statements regarding the possible impact of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 on Armenians everywhere. There are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinion and feeling that matters. Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following system:

- 1 for Strongly Disagree
- 2 for Disagree
- 3 for Slightly Disagree
- 4 for Slightly Agree
- 5 for Agree
- 6 for Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The effect of the genocide is as strong on the present generation as it was on the generation that experienced it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. We should concentrate on the future and not the massacres around the turn of the century if we want to survive as a people. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The genocide contributed to the formation of Armenian identity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Modern diaspora Armenian literature is deeply affected by the genocide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. No matter how long we exist as a nation the impact of the genocide will not diminish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The psychology of diaspora Armenians is deeply affected by the genocide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Diaspora Armenians feel more Armenian because their families lived through the genocide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The new Armenian generation in the diaspora is affected by the genocide. (Included only in the Turkey survey)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The genocidal attempt will eventually lead to the disappearance of the Armenian diaspora. (R) (Included only in the United States survey)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Diaspora art should reflect modern diaspora life more than the genocide.(R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The Armenian genocide is first a human tragedy, then an Armenian one. (R)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The character of the new Armenian generation in the diaspora is deeply affected by the genocide. (Included only in the United States survey)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. All aspects of Armenian life in the diaspora are affected by the genocide. (Included only in the United States survey)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Turkish Armenians who say we should forget the events of the genocide are correct. (R) (Included only in Turkey survey)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. The media in the Armenian diaspora should be concerned more with immediate issues rather than the genocide. (R) (Included only in the United States survey)

**Note:** Several of the items were administered only in the United States or only in Turkey as indicated at the end of the items. To obtain the score reverse the ratings of the items indicated with (R) at the end, then add the responses across the items. Higher scores indicates stronger perceived impact of the genocide.

# Appendix I

## Demographic Questions (Used in multiple studies)

Below are demographic and background questions that have been used in conjunction with surveys and questions in different contexts. Several of these questions are general and can be used in any context, and others are context specific. These questions may be selectively used, as appropriate, given the nature, context and purpose of a study.

### Directions

The following questions ask for background and personal information related to the study to help interpret the findings. It is not possible to identify you personally from the information you provide. However, feel free to skip questions you don't wish to answer. In questions that provide choices, place a checkmark next to the information that describes you or your situation

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex: Man \_\_\_\_\_ Woman: \_\_\_\_\_ (or Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Country of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of years lived in the US (or name of any country): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Current marital status:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Married
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Single, never married
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced
6. Number of persons living in your household: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Personal or family financial status:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Very well off –no financial concerns
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Comfortable—meet all financial obligations/needs and save some
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Meet financial obligations—live paycheck-to-paycheck
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Struggle to meet financial obligations/needs
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Depend on others to meet financial obligation/needs, use public assistance
8. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you own a business?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ No
10. Level of education completed:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ None
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary/High School
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Junior/Community College/2-year diploma
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Four-year college/Bachelor's degree
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Master's degree
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Doctoral/Professional degree
11. Fluency in Armenian language:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Read and write
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Read and understand
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Basic conversation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Speak a few words
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Neither speak nor understand
12. Fluency in English:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Read and write
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Read and understand
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Basic conversation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Speak a few words

- \_\_\_\_\_ Neither speak nor understand
13. Status in the US:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Citizen
- \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent residence (Have Green Card)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary resident (Tourist, waiting for status change, etc)
14. As a citizen have you voted in elections during the last four years?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wanted to but could not
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wanted to but did not know how
- \_\_\_\_\_ No, did not think it would make a difference
15. How many Armenian cultural, educational, or charitable organizations do you belong to?
- \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you presently do volunteer work in any Armenian organizations (non-political)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes. Please specify name of organization \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Want to but do not have time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do not wish to
17. How often do you read Armenian newspapers?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Regularly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally
- \_\_\_\_\_ Never
18. Armenian political party membership:
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am a member of one (No name needed)
- \_\_\_\_\_ I sympathize with one but do not belong to it
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neither a member nor a sympathizer of any
19. How often do you attend church?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Never
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes, on special occasions (Weddings, baptisms, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quite regularly
20. Did your parents or grandparents experience the genocide?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know
21. Were your family or extended family members killed during the genocide?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know
22. How would you describe your involvement in the "Armenian Cause?"
- \_\_\_\_\_ I do not participate in such activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ I occasionally participate in such activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ I participate in such activities as often as possible
- \_\_\_\_\_ I get actively involved in the organization of such activities
23. In the neighborhood where you presently live, there are:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly non-Armenians
- \_\_\_\_\_ Armenians and non-Armenians in about equal numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly Armenians
24. Your close friends (or friends of your family) are:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly non-Armenian
- \_\_\_\_\_ Armenian and non-Armenian in about equal numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly Armenian
25. Have you at any point in your life attended an Armenian school (regular day school or Saturday school)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

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