

The Istanbul Armenians

Negotiating Coexistence

SOSSIE KASBARIAN

Dismantling Nationalist Narratives, Critiquing the Nation

With the prospect of membership into the European Union (EU) in sight, Turkey has been undergoing a tortuous democratization since the early 2000s. A question at the heart of this process is whether it can deal with its internal diversity, reconcile historical tensions, and heal deep wounds.¹ This involves the rethinking of fundamental concepts like nationhood and belonging, citizenship and rights, and relations between state, authority and religion. This chapter looks at everyday personal and social negotiations in being Armenian in Istanbul and the struggle to claim a coexistent Armenian space within the Turkish nation.²

One founding myth of the Turkish Republic established in 1923 is the ethnic purity of the nation, rendering the very existence of Others and Other narratives problematic from the outset. Unlike the Ottoman identity, the new republic privileged ethnicity over religion, a particularly difficult condition for the non-Muslim, non-Turkish communities. From the turn of the century onward Ottoman leaders and Young Turks pursued an agenda that relentlessly aimed to decrease the number of non-Muslims living within the new borders of the emerging nation. Mustafa Kemal and his followers introduced policies and programs designed to aggressively homogenize Turkish society and to create a new national identity that excluded Others. A nationalist historiography rooted in the famous three-day speech given by Kemal in 1927 at the Second Congress of the Republican People's Party "articulated and narrated the excluded minorities as the vanquished, and then proceeded to attribute to them the exactly opposite characteristics: the excluded were stripped of most of their agency, and the very little they were permitted to exercise was

of course depicted within parameters defined by the triumphant group, thereby appearing totally subversive and immoral” (Göçek 2006, 2013: 89). The emerging nation and new state were “constructed through a narrative that denied, forgot and silenced minorities” (Mills 2008: 386). Göçek’s analysis links the “hegemony of Turkish nationalism” and “the hegemony of 1915” in constructing a prevailing master-narrative whereby Armenians (and other non-Muslim minorities) were depicted as untrustworthy and inferior, and ultimately ungrateful and treacherous to Ottoman/Turkish benevolence and tolerance.

Although there was considerable continuity between Ottoman and Turkish institutions, there was a concerted policy of “engineering oblivion” that cut off the Republic from its past and in particular from its non-Muslim and non-Turkish peoples and their histories (Kadioğlu 2007: 289). Kadioğlu singles out education as the “vehicle for the reproduction of oblivion in Turkey” making contemporary Turks “ignorant about the multi-religious and multi-ethnic history of the lands that they inhabit ... paving the way to an official rhetoric of denial” (Ibid). Hence, the very concept of the coexistence of Others and their respective experiences, their non-Turkish, non-Muslim identities, were wiped out in the foundation of the Turkish state and their continuing existence problematic.

In 1913 one in every five people in (what became) Turkish lands was a non-Muslim. At the end of 1923 that number was one in forty (Keyder 1989: 67). Despite the constitution of 1924 stating that being a Turk is self-ascriptive, in practice non-Muslim minority groups have always been considered Others. The Turkification policies in operation reinforced the dominance of Sunni Islam and Turkishness in every aspect of life. Today the non-Muslim minority groups constitute less than 1 percent of the population of Turkey. Of these, the Armenian Orthodox are estimated to comprise around 65,000³ (US State Department 2010).⁴ The Turkish state distinguishes between two types of minorities. The first are the three officially recognized non-Muslim minorities (the Armenian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, and the Jews) as protected by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). The second category covers religious communities that are not linked to a particular ethnic group (e.g., the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Baha’is.) All Muslim minorities (Kurds, Alevis, Circasians, etc.) were deemed to belong to the Turkish nation at the time of the foundation of the Republic. Despite the fact that minorities were legal citizens, in practice citizenship became an instrument of forced assimilation to a Turkish national identity rather than a guaranteed set of rights. In discussing the concept of minority in the Turkish context, Akgönül (2013: 77) says, “[N]on-Muslims were meant to be exterminated, not assimilated, during the efforts to build a homogeneous nation. As

in all nation-building processes, the utopia of a homogenous nation in Turkey based itself on three principal mechanisms: extermination, assimilation and folklorization.” The remnant non-Muslims, were either made invisible, forced to flee, or “ornamentalized.”

Kemalist secularist principles that founded the state, meant that religion, in particular non-Muslim religions, have not been practiced freely. Religious identity and the practice of religion remains an area fraught with constant negotiation in modern Turkey, caught between the forces of conservative Islamism (as represented by the ruling AKP) and a strict Kemalist secularism (represented by the Republican People’s Party, CHP). The Treaty of Lausanne stipulated equal treatment under the law, and rights and privileges to be given to religious minorities, including the right to maintain their own schools, churches, foundations and other institutions, which enabled them to maintain their ethnic, religious, and cultural identity, at least in theory.⁵ In practice all of these institutions face fundamental problems due to this relationship with the state. Since the foundation of the Republic in 1923, there have been strict restrictions on religious minorities owning, maintaining, or transferring their property (individual and communal), as well as restrictions in the training of teachers and clergy of the minority. In fact successive Turkish governments have systematically confiscated properties from religious minorities since the foundation of the republic, most notably in 1936 with the Foundations Law, in 1971 with the Private University Law, and in 1974 when a law recognized only the ownership of religious community properties registered in 1936.

According to the national census of 1927, Turkish was not the native language of around 28 percent of the city’s population. Out of 794,000 people in the city, 92,000 spoke Greek, 45,000 spoke Armenian, 39,000 spoke Ladino, 6,000 spoke French, and 6,000 spoke Albanian. The remaining 31,300 spoke a mix of other languages, including Arabic, Kurdish, Persian, Circassian, and Bulgarian (Aslan 2007). After the Republican period, there continued an assault by assimilationist and exclusionary policies and practices, designed to eradicate these differences. The “Citizen Speak Turkish” campaign initiated in 1928 (but with lasting impact) made the speaking of minority languages in public an offence,⁶ enforcing Turkification in the public sphere. Many of my interviewees spoke of childhoods fearful of inadvertently speaking to their parents in Armenian when out in public, creating another layer of personal trauma and insecurity in the shared urban space. The Law of Settlement in 1934, which aimed to assimilate Balkan Muslims and Kurds by settling them in areas populated with Turkish speakers, also banned those whose mother tongue was not Turkish from establishing towns and villages. The state

changed the names of cities, towns, and villages into Turkish. The Law of Surnames of 1934 forced all citizens to take Turkish surnames (Aslan 2007). There continued state policies designed to make life for the minorities uncomfortable and in some cases to threaten their existence, including the Wealth Tax in 1942 (which disproportionately affected non-Muslim minorities), and the Istanbul pogrom of 6–7 September 1955, when gangs organized by state institutions attacked minority businesses, homes and churches. During the Cyprus crisis in 1963–64, minorities were forced to flee Turkey, and limited to taking only \$100 with them. These policies together reveal a state intent on eradicating or subjugating its non-Muslim minorities. Göçek (2006, 2013: 102) stresses the historical continuities of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish republic in “state-sponsored prejudice and violence against minorities in the name of nationalism.”⁷

Furthermore, the conceptualization of non-Muslim minorities in modern Turkey is directly linked to how the Ottoman Empire and its legacies are approached in popular and political discourse. There are two broad, seemingly contradictory, myths at play when one looks at the discourse surrounding the change from an Ottoman to a Turkish state. The first is the reigning nationalist discourse that presents Turkey as a homogenous state of ethnic Turks and Muslims. In this exclusionary discourse, all Others are deemed foreigners, and should they not prove docile and compliant, they are seen as threats to the integrity and coherence of the Turkish state.

The second is a nostalgia for a cosmopolitan empire, with Istanbul the city of cities at its center, viewed with a romantic and sentimental wistfulness for a mythical period when people of different ethnicities, religions, languages, classes, and backgrounds lived side by side, in what the late Tony Judt (2010: 206) has called “lost cosmopolitan cities.” In recent years this celebratory nostalgia for an apparently peaceful and idealistic past has been expounded by both Turkish and non-Turkish writers and scholars, with little critical reflection, nor adequate engagement with historical data. In Turkey, this extended to musings about the multicultural past inhabitants of Istanbul, of which there are tiny communities left over. In some cases this “boutique multiculturalism”⁸ led to “white Turks” (middle class, secular, Kemalist, Sunni, urban, liberal) attending Christmas services in churches in Istanbul, as part of a self-consciously constructed Europeaness. This nostalgia tends to gloss over the structural and everyday discrimination minorities experienced under the Ottoman regime, and it infantilizes and fossilizes the remaining communities as a historical relic. As Bryant argues in the introduction to this volume (p. 6) “current popular nostalgia for a multicultural past may

mask denial of the ways in which that multiculturalism was destroyed,” and it certainly ignores the intrinsic violence of imperialism and the power asymmetries contained within. Mills, Reilly, and Philliou (2011: 135) talk about the paradoxical way that the Ottoman past is viewed in scholarship, through “the lens of nostalgia,” but also as a “time of backwardness and decline leaving a dolorous legacy that must be undone and overcome.” This paradox can be extended to the Christian minorities, the “physical and social remnants of the past” in modern Turkey as being “both ubiquitous and unacknowledged, both remembered nostalgically and rejected ideologically” (Ibid.).

Cosmopolitan nostalgia has been very limited in terms of political potential to open up Turkish notions of citizenship, identity, and belonging. This trend among Turks who are unsympathetic to the ruling AKP is partly a response to their perceptions that the party has an Islamist agenda that seeks to dismantle the laicist foundations of the Kemalist state. “White Turks,” according to Akgönül (2013: 90) find themselves confronting “a new type of otherness, the ‘Islamist’ movement—with the headscarf as an icon—on one side and the Kurdish presence associated with violence, on the other,” resulting in nostalgia for the “former others” along with “a firm belief that Istanbul was more cosmopolitan, ‘civilized’ and ‘habitable’ before the non-Muslims were deported or forced to flee.”

Central to the Ottoman nostalgia is “tolerance as a political discourse” and the vision of a pluralist empire with Istanbul as its cosmopolitan center. This tolerance is often presented as a critique of an intolerant present (reflected in the intolerance each Turkish faction has for the others). Implicit in the tolerance discourse is the existence of the dominant majority that is doing the “tolerating” and therefore an intrinsic disapproval at the core for the “tolerated” (Mills 2011). As Bryant discusses in the introduction to this volume (p. 12) “toleration implies living with or tolerating beliefs of practices that one finds wrong or disagreeable for social, economic, or political reasons” and “tolerance assumes that difference is perceived negatively.” She contrasts the ideological position of “tolerance” to quotidian realities and negotiations encapsulated in “coexistence,” the day to day living together that “attempts to interrogate understandings of difference and boundaries including indifference to difference,” where there are “rituals of accommodation that simultaneously define(d) and cross(ed) boundaries.”

All nation-states are built on forgetting and remembering selectively. In the Turkish case the persistent denial of the harsh realities of the Ottoman past in relation to the minorities still within constitutes the very foundation of the nationalist state and is constantly reproduced in the

hegemonic narrative. Central to this hegemony is the complete silencing of the voice of these minorities, where counter-narratives are regarded as threats to the nation. Historically the coexistence of different narratives has not been tolerated, and regardless of the apparent democratization and liberalization policies since 2000 they are interpreted as developments that need to be suppressed, and opposed. Despite this, recent oral history projects have unearthed a hesitant emerging space for counter-memories and counter-narratives (Mills 2008; Üngör 2014). Mills (2010: 211) remarks, “The price of belonging in Turkey comes at a cost—the forgetting of particular histories at the expense of the frequent retelling of others and the silencing of particular memories that cannot entirely be repressed.” In the Armenian case, the specter of the genocide of 1915 and being considered fifth columns in the state of the perpetrators led to a particularly alienated position. As one recent analysis has poetically put it, it has led to “one hundred years of abandonment,” alongside “a clear—albeit forced—disengagement from their relatives in the diaspora. ... The never-spoken cost for Istanbul Armenians was the complete negation of their political identity and history” (Erbal and Suciyan 2011). Suciyan (2012), drawing on Hannah Arendt’s study of being a Jew in Europe in the nineteenth century, talks of the pressure on Armenians in Turkey “to assimilate into anti-Armenian campaigns, which also entails hatred against and dehumanization of the Armenian diaspora. ... In this way, you are expected to become an enemy of your own past, of your own biography, and reject your own present.” One recent example of this, in April 2014, was the apparent wish of Turkey’s Armenians to nominate PM Erdoğan for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁹ This demonstrates the utter subjugation of this community, who (outwardly at least) were grateful and impressed by Erdoğan’s acknowledgment of the deaths of Armenians during the end days of the Ottoman Empire,¹⁰ in a statement¹¹ that Öktem has called a “perfect example of denialist-lite,”¹² much to the dismay and shock of the Armenian diaspora. Suciyan posits that a rejection or surrendering of the Armenian past and indeed the present in Turkey is the “only way offered to survive in a state of denial.” The charge is that “coexistence” in the Turkish state for Armenians has necessitated the usurping of one’s identity and an alienation of the self, leading to a chastened and insecure existence. The Istanbul Armenians are in the unique position of being the physical embodiment of a highly politicized wound in the nationalist narrative—physical reminders of the genocidal past but also the remnants of centuries of Ottoman Armenian lives and contributions to the nation, both of which the Turkish state denies, erases, or belittles.

Signs of Change: Post-2005

While there have been ground-breaking works in scholarship on the tragic fate of the Ottoman Armenians in recent years,¹³ it is the emergence of pioneering Turkish academics engaging with these issues in a critical manner that has had the most impact in Turkey itself.¹⁴ In late 2008 a controversial “apology campaign” initiated by four Turkish intellectuals was circulated, gathering over 30,000 signatures of Turks and Kurds “apologizing” for the events of 1915.¹⁵ The works of novelists like Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak have also had widespread international impact, although both, along with other public intellectuals and journalists, have been chastened by the threats from the state, under Article 301 of the Turkish penal code that makes it a crime to “insult the Turkish nation.”

If one were to pinpoint a date for the “opening” of a public debate on Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, it would be 2005, when the ninetyeth anniversary of the genocide sparked a new effort by a few Turkish intellectuals to confront the official denialist line by focusing on the human story. The ground-breaking conference, “Ottoman Armenians during the Demise of the Empire: Responsible Scholarship and Issues of Democracy,” in September of that year marked a turning point in public discourse in terms of what was possible to discuss and the terms of that debate. The conference was referred to as the Genocide Conference in the mainstream media, and there was pressure to cancel it from politicians and officials, leading the venue to be changed several times and some ugly scenes at Bilgi University, where it was eventually held. Those present, upon returning to their home institutions, continued working in this field, creating, claiming, and shaping a new space and discourse that transgressed the hegemonic operative of genocide recognition and denial (Kasbarian and Öktem 2014).

Arguably the most influential vehicle for a change in social attitudes in Turkey was *My Grandmother* (Çetin 2004, 2008), a biographical story written by the human rights lawyer Fethiye Çetin about her grandmother, who revealed near her death that she had in fact been born Armenian and had survived the genocide by being taken in by a Turkish family. The incredible impact of this modest book lies in its poignant human story. Columnist Tuba Akyol in her review of the book stated, “stories can do what large numbers or concepts cannot do. ... Concepts are cold, stories can touch you inside” (Akyol 2005). Ayşe Gül Altınay has written of the success of *My Grandmother* in employing “Arendtian storytelling to open up a creative space for historical critique and reconciliation” (2006: 127), by evoking curiosity about one’s ancestry, de-

constructing the nationalist homogenous nation, thereby allowing for a construction of a hybrid Self. She describes the momentum the book has created as a completely unexpected “phenomenon,” with Çetin touring throughout Turkey and internationally, being treated as a “celebrity” by both Turks and Armenians¹⁶ (and others) who are touched by this powerful personal story in surprising ways. Çetin herself talks about the shocking discovery of her Armenian roots as suddenly seeing “the world through different eyes” (quoted in Bilefsky 2012).

This development in particular, tapping into the critical studies and gender studies space, introduces a radical new space for empathy, the exploration of personal and historical memories and sharing of personal stories. It is both subtle and powerful, as it is not taken seriously in the realm of high politics and yet has a real impact on people’s attitudes. This approach is a serious challenge as it is an entirely different kind of discourse to which nationalists cannot respond—thereby acting as a transgressive undermining of the state discourse.

These tentative surfacings of hidden or silenced histories and identities have led to a wave of Turkish citizens discovering and uncovering their Armenian (and other non-Turkish) roots and working through their family histories. Some Armenian orphans of the genocide and later massacres were taken in by local Muslim families, who changed their names and converted the children to Islam. The Dersim Armenians are one such case of a group reclaiming their Armenian identity and some now choosing to get baptized. They have even formed a union to teach Armenian and restore graves and churches in the Tunceli province.¹⁷ There has emerged a distinct phenomenon of the “Islamized (or Muslim) Armenians,” a subject explored in a trail-blazing conference at Boğaziçi University in November 2013.¹⁸ Islamized Armenians as a concept are a huge challenge for the Turkish (almost exclusively Muslim) state, which has to confront the previously silenced, growing numbers of citizens rediscovering and claiming Armenian roots. There has simultaneously also been a new awareness of the mongrel roots of most Turkish citizens, something that contradicts and challenges Kemalist principles and the state’s official nationalist discourse. This process of discovery for some has led to a personal crisis; for others it has been a chance to question the exclusionary racist tenets of Turkish nationalism from a personal position. Nükhet Kardam, writing in *Today’s Zaman*, expressed this lyrically:

Once I dug into my family history, I found forgotten, hidden and suppressed identities. My grandmother’s father is a “Rum,” the descendent of a Byzantine “Tekfur” who fought alongside the Ottomans and later converted to Islam. My grandmother’s mother is the grandchild of the

revered Kurdish leader Mir Bedirhan who ruled a large semi-autonomous Kurdish territory in the Ottoman Empire. My great uncle's wife is Greek but had to change her name and religion in order to marry the love of her life. My family adopted a girl and included her in our family registry. She was born in 1910, in Erzincan in Eastern Turkey. She could very well be Armenian, as many Armenian children were saved and adopted by Turkish families during that time. I now look at Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds with a very different eye, now that I know I belong to each one in some way. I then began to ask myself many questions about who really is a Turk. (Kardam 2011)

This intertwining of the historical, the political, and the intimate offers a radical new space for exploration, expression, and political action. Whereas high politics has a distancing quality and can be ignored by (the increasing number of) disenfranchised and disinterested populations, politics as embodied in the personal speaks to our common humanity and revives interest from a human position.

These developments have led to the inevitable nationalist backlash. The most significant event was the gunning down of the prominent Istanbul Armenian and newspaper editor, Hrant Dink, outside the offices of *Agos*¹⁹ in central Istanbul on 19 January 2007. His murder and his funeral march when hundreds of thousands took to the streets bearing the signs "We are all Armenians; we are all Hrant Dink" marked a turning point for Istanbul Armenians, and arguably for Turkish society as a whole. This great show of solidarity with the Armenians of Turkey was highly symbolic and perhaps the most public display of the possibility of an emerging shared post-nationalist common identity in Turkey (despite immediate nationalist backlashes). This unprecedented development also exposed the polarized attitudes around "the Armenian issue," and forced the idea of "Turkishness" forward for public debate and reflection (Türkmen-Derviřođlu 2013: 675).

The loss of the most noted Armenian public intellectual in Turkey was an unmitigated calamity for the community. One Turkish activist said to me, "the Armenian community has lost its voice," and yet his death has given an impetus to many others. Dink's murder brought the plight of the Istanbul Armenians to the forefront, and opened up the parameters of what it was possible to discuss. The same activist explained, "What has changed is that people can now talk freely about the genocide, it seeped into people's discourse and conversation more. People also started talking about their own families and the past."²⁰

Within the Armenian community Hrant Dink's murder resulted in two apparently contradictory trends: on the one hand there is greater

fear and retreat by some elements of the Armenian community; and on the other, especially among the younger generation, an increased boldness in remembering and claiming their identity and making demands. With regard to the former tendency, I heard several stories of Armenian families buying property in Armenia or getting visas for the West in case they had to make a quick escape. For the latter group, the assassination was a wake-up call to fight for the rights and freedoms that Dink had dedicated his life to, to retrieve their lost and silenced voices and identities.²¹ The murder has also made the local and transnational network of Turkish, Armenian, and other activists working in this new, emerging shared space, closer, more coherent, and more confident (Kasbarian and Öktem 2014).

The perpetrators of Dink's murder have not been brought to justice, and the protracted legal process has been farcical. Murders of religious minorities have continued steadily with few repercussions, giving the impression that the infamous deep state tolerates this.²² Turkey is considered a "country of particular concern" by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.²³ Most recently, an Armenian soldier was shot dead under suspicious circumstances while performing his national service, on 24 April (the day the genocide is commemorated) 2011. His murder was whitewashed by a military court in Diyarbakır in March 2013.²⁴

And yet there does seem to be a creeping sense of realization that despite the nationalist backlashes, and denialist strongholds in state institutions, developments in the liberal public sphere have radical long-term potential. Nonetheless, there is no real change at the official level, nor is there a mellowing in the militancy of nationalists, and arguably among wider Turkish society, where negative portrayals of, and attitudes toward, Armenians are the norm.²⁵

Istanbul as Hub and Synergy

Istanbul acts as a hub for the launch of new Armenian-Turkish initiatives and the creation of a new space and discourse. While not the focus of this chapter, it is important to recognize that Istanbul also acts as a site for reconciliation initiatives, often financed or led by non-Turkish or Armenian groups, mediators, and international organizations.²⁶ In this process the Istanbul Armenians have a potentially unique pivotal role to play, and yet they rarely seem to be at the forefront of such projects, lacking the agency to take on a leadership or public role.

Osman Kavala, Chairman of the Board of Anadolu Kültür,²⁷ a prominent NGO working in art and culture, talked about a three-pronged approach—local community, diaspora, and the Republic of Armenia. He stressed the importance of the city as the site where all these factions can meet: “Istanbul is really a cosmopolitan place and the infrastructure allows us to work well with others here—NGOs, academics, artists. ... Istanbul is a natural place for such meetings, making for a kind of synergy.”²⁸ Kavala prefers to limit his remit to the civil society sector, though getting involved with the state is sometimes unavoidable, as in the case of Anadolu Kültür’s project in Ani to restore churches. Being located in Istanbul has meant that these initiatives are able to attract external funding from a wide range of sources invested in these fields. Kavala is realistic about the impact of exhibitions and programs in Istanbul, saying that the audience is usually limited to a progressive elite who are already receptive to these ideas, but at least these projects document and publicize the historic and contemporary presence of minorities.

There is also a recent trend to explore or rediscover the multi-ethnic past (inhabitants) of Turkey through artistic projects. Many of these projects also travel to other countries, facilitated and supported by diaspora groups and institutions, an intrinsic part of the burgeoning transnational network of Turks, Armenians, Kurds, Greeks, Cypriots, and others committed to constructing an emerging shared space. One prominent exhibition was *My Dear Brother: Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago*, a collection of eight hundred postcards depicting Armenian life in Anatolia at the turn of the century. The exhibition opened at the Karşı Gallery in Istanbul in January 2005 and travelled to several cities, including London, where it attracted great attention at the Brunei Gallery of the School of Oriental and African Studies for nearly three months.²⁹ The exhibition of both enlarged images and original postcards was conceived and put together by Osman Köker. A few initiatives showcasing the minorities came through the Istanbul 2010 European City of Culture program, including the book *Classical Ottoman Music and Armenians* by Istanbul-born French Armenian Aram Kerovpyan (2010). Most important in articulating the position of Armenians in Turkey (amid a wider remit of democracy-building and human rights issues in Turkey and beyond) is the Hrant Dink Foundation,³⁰ established after the assassination of the most prominent Istanbul Armenian.

While Istanbul is the natural hub for meetings, negotiations, and plans, many of the actual projects also concern the historic Armenian lands in the east. The retrieving and piecing together of past Armenian life might emanate from Istanbul where the residual community survives, but it

also connects to their historical spaces in Anatolia in particular. One notable recent development concerned the tenth-century Cathedral Church of the Holy Cross, on Aktamar Island on Lake Van. Between May 2005 and October 2006, the church underwent a controversial restoration program financed by the Turkish Ministry of Culture. It officially re-opened as a museum on 29 March 2007 in a ceremony attended by the Turkish Minister of Culture, government officials, ambassadors of several countries, the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul Mesrob II, a delegation from Armenia, and international journalists. The Governor of Van described the refurbishing of the church as “a show of Turkey’s respect for history and culture,” and yet the fact that it was turned into a museum rather than re-opened as a place of worship, that permission to remount the cross on top of the church was not given, that the official name of the museum was changed to Turkish, and very sparse reference was made to anything Armenian, led many others to criticize the move as a public relations stunt.³¹

In September 2011, for the first time in a century or so, a church service was permitted to take place in Aktamar, with worshippers coming from Armenia, Istanbul, and a smattering from the diaspora. The now annual service was controversial, with many in the diaspora interpreting it as a shallow gesture. Yet for others, like the British Armenian historian Ara Sarafian, it is a meaningful and unprecedented first step upon which to build.³² Sarafian was at the helm of the publication of *Aghtamar: A Jewel of Medieval Armenian Architecture*, a bilingual Turkish and English book launched in Van and Istanbul in September 2010,³³ where it attracted much discussion. These developments require a radical shift in mindset on the part of diasporans to comprehend the changing political landscape of Turkey, and also to capitalize on it, something that only small sections of the diaspora have thus far been able to do whole-heartedly. In general there is a cautious attitude to “wait and see” how things will actually pan out.

The current big project concerns the sixteenth-century Armenian Apostolic Cathedral Sourp (Saint) Giragos in Diyarbakır, the biggest Armenian church in the Middle East with a capacity of three thousand, which has lain in ruin for decades. Abdullah Demirtaş, Diyarbakır Sur’s district mayor, seems sincerely committed to the principle of multiculturalism, through the resurrection of the different languages, places of worship and cultures of the city.³⁴ This renovation has been mostly financed by the Armenian diaspora, through the initiatives of Vartkes Ergün Ayık, a businessman of Armenian origin from Diyarbakır, and Raffi Bedrosyan, an Istanbul Armenian now living in Canada. Bedrosyan explains, “The church, when reconstruction is completed, will become

a historic destination of pilgrimage for all Armenians—a memorial and reminder of the past Armenian presence in Anatolia, and a hope for the future.”³⁵ At the heart of this project (and others like it) seems to be the need to validate (and consecrate) the past coexistence of Armenians alongside Turks, Kurds, Greeks, and others in Anatolian lands, rather than a realistic possibility of future such coexistence. It is important to recognize that in the wider Armenian-Turkish terrain, the struggle for negotiating coexistence is premised upon the perceived need to “prove” and document past coexistence, and the past lives of Armenians in these, their historic homelands. The fact that these past inhabitants were forcefully expelled or annihilated makes this an extremely charged and complex mission. It is understandable then that this project is best undertaken by Western diasporans who are relatively exempt from the powers and tentacles of the Turkish state, as opposed to Turkish Armenians who live with the possibility of being charged with “insulting Turkishness” or Islam.³⁶

By using private funds, the church can be used as a consecrated house of worship, rather than a state-controlled museum like the Aktamar Church in Van, where only one annual religious ceremony is permitted. Although there is no Armenian community in Diyarbakır, a priest has been named by the Patriarchate to conduct occasional services for visitors. At the conclusion of the inaugural mass, Diyarbakır Mayor Osman Baydemir movingly addressed the congregation, in Armenian, and then Kurdish, Turkish, English, and Arabic: “Welcome to your home. You are not guests here; this is your home. . . . We all know about past events,” he said, referring to the genocide, “and our wish is that our children will celebrate together the coming achievements.” The Sourp Giragos project has also been controversial among some diasporans and locals, with the charge that it is supporting Turkish and Kurdish interests and is unnecessary as there are no Armenians left in the region.

In Istanbul I spent some time with a visiting group of diasporan Armenians who visited the Sourp Giragos Cathedral along with some Istanbul Armenians who helped facilitate the trip. Despite it being deemed a good thing, the renovation was criticized by several of them in that it (paraphrased) “is essentially like being given permission by the people who stole your house to renovate it and pay to visit it now and again while it continues to be in their possession.”³⁷ Beyond the sentimentalism of visiting “the old country” that was very much embraced by this group, this renovation was criticized, especially by the younger members of the group as a “PR exercise by the Kurdish community as a model of managing minorities.” Rather than having significant impact for potential diasporan tourism the project was considered by one

interviewee as “a propaganda device by the Kurds and very clever of them.”

The Kurdish role in the Armenian-Turkish terrain has yet to be fully critically engaged with. The Kurdish leadership’s acknowledgement of the role played by the Kurds in the genocide has affected the public discourse of some Kurdish activists, as well as leading to the uncovering of Armenian grandparents and unearthing of hidden identities. Some Kurds, as more recent victims of aggressive Turkish nationalism, have claimed solidarity with Armenians in a pan-minority movement in the democratization process (Neyzi and Kharatyan-Araqelyan 2010: 19–20). Yet from the perspective of many Istanbul Armenians, and especially diasporan Armenians, there is much that still needs to be addressed and reflected upon with greater critical honesty. There is also the sense that in the current political context Armenians lack agency and are reacting to initiatives and the unfolding agenda of others with uncertainty.

In recent years a tiny tourism industry run by Istanbul Armenians has started and is aimed at Western diasporans seeking to explore the lands from which their families originated pre-genocide. This phenomenon defies its small numbers in terms of impact in the diaspora communities from which the tourists come and the wider diaspora, as well as contributing to a change of attitudes towards the Turkish people (though not the state) of Western, mostly North American diasporans. Bakalian and Turan (2015) have written eloquently of the “subversive” quality of this tourism and its potential impact within the transnational space of Armenians, Turks, Kurds, and others, dedicated to uncovering, rediscovering, and remembering the Armenians of the Ottoman, particularly Anatolian, lands and centuries of coexistence.

Negotiating Identity and Coexistence in Private and Public Spaces

On the personal level interviewees shared many moving memories and encounters that they were in the process of reflecting upon from a more informed position. Thus the “everyday diplomacy” (Bryant this volume, p. 21) intrinsic to coexistence was constructed, narrated, and reflected upon in their own oral histories as the interviews unfolded.

Rana, a middle-aged Turkish woman, told the story of how as a young girl she had been invited to her friend’s house where they had eaten pastries unfamiliar to her and colored, hard-boiled eggs. Only years later did she realize that this had been an Easter celebration and that the family had wanted to share the occasion with her but had been unable to

tell her what it was, which would have meant revealing that they were Christians and Armenians. Rana remembers that “there was fear in the mother’s eyes” and is able to reflect upon this with empathy and sadness.

As a filmmaker, Rana is now working on a film project of the “genocide trail” through Anatolia to the Levant. She recounted how, even before she gets the chance to ask, the elderly village and townspeople spontaneously share the fact that they once had Armenian neighbors and share stories of this past. It is an interesting realization that just as genocide survivors and their descendants are haunted by memories (personal and received), so too are the perpetrators and bystanders, and their descendants: “There was a desperate need to unburden themselves,” Rana observed.

Pelin is a 62-year-old professional working in the media, having lived a typical Armenian life—born in Istanbul, living for long spells in London, the U.S., travelling regularly to her extended diaspora family and friends scattered in the Middle East, Paris, and North America, and finally resettled in Istanbul. She wryly observed, “Wherever you go you are a foreigner, even here where I am born.” Her personal reflections, while representative of others of her age group, were also poignantly unique. When asked about what part her Armenian identity has played in her everyday life in her childhood, she shared:

My grandparents never told us their stories; we grew up without knowing these things. Now there are books and you can find out and learn. But in those days we knew nothing. We started questioning as we got older, but they always covered up and closed the subject. It was only after we moved to the U.K. that my grandfather told us the stories—he explained, so as not to make us turn against the country where we lived.

Many others spoke of this lack of information, that they were aware that there were secrets and hidden areas, and that they felt powerless to probe their elders, as there were subjects that were clearly off-limits and couched in fear and insecurity. This “subliminal knowledge” and the struggle to “piece together” a true version of the past was also something Turkish interviewees talked about, through their childhoods in the 1970s and 1980s where information within Turkey was limited. Silences and gaps featured in stories of the past of their elders and society more widely (Kasbarian and Öktem 2014).

Pelin and many other interviewees recalled having Turkish friends who were “like siblings,” who protected her through trials like the reactions to the ASALA campaign³⁸ in the 1970s and 1980s. A Turkish family

friend loaned her father the money for her brother to study in the U.S. after he was expelled from a Turkish university following a politically motivated quarrel with a professor. Indeed, she and others recounted many acts of extreme kindness and experiences bordering on familial closeness and intimacy.³⁹ Implicit in these stories lies also a postcolonial dynamic—"the Armenian" as needing protection (from "bad Turks?") and as infantilized in this encounter with "the Turk." By lacking agency and reduced to appealing to the good will of "good Turks," the Armenians continued the subjugated relationship from Ottoman times, and power structures were replicated in diluted forms, extending to Armenians' self-perception.⁴⁰

Most interviewees, when asked if they had suffered discrimination, insisted that they had not, and yet within minutes remembered incidents from their childhood or even quite recently. Yet officially the answer seems to be "no," perhaps putting a brave face on, perhaps because these memories have been buried, maybe because they are commonplace occurrences to which one is immunized through time, or because there is no safe space to adequately express and articulate these experiences. The silencing of Armenian voices extends well beyond the genocide to contemporary experiences, where individuals lack the tools, the language, or the agency to own and express their experiences openly. The perceived impossibility of the coexistence of different narratives leads to the complete negation of the Armenian experience in the public sphere. The hegemonic narrative invalidates the Armenian experience to the extent that individuals have internalized this obliteration and are only able to extract and read their memories upon conscious, focused reflection, almost as if the stories that surface happened to someone else.

When contemplating coexistence, therefore, the coexistence of different narratives is at least as essential as physical coexistence. This marks a need for the radical reconceptualization of the master (nationalist) narrative, which can make space for the experience of others. Thus, stories like Çetin's or the subsequent *Grandchildren* (Altınay and Çetin 2011) are pioneering trajectories that are carving out a space in the public sphere for the possibility of counter-narratives from below and from the margins. The deconstruction and critique of the state master-narrative and the proliferation of other voices is an essential part of coexistence beyond "everyday diplomacy," underpinned by narratives that articulate and validate the subaltern experience. Spivak (1994) when asking "Can the Subaltern speak?" argues that a narrative of identity is an essential condition for agency and subjectivity. Arendt (1958) too stresses the need to hear one's story from others as key to constructions of identity and also to social relations.

The lack of coexisting multiple narratives of identity led to deeply buried and ambivalent identities. Helin recounts that in 1960, when she was ten years old,

We had very good Turkish neighbours and we little girls used to play together every day. One day I went over as usual to her house, the little girl stood at the door and said “My grandmother does not want us to be friends anymore because you are Armenian.” I didn’t understand what this meant and went home crying, “what does being Armenian mean?”

Hagop, a 38-year-old man, recounted how as the only Armenian in high school he encountered some problems especially in the “ASALA days,” was referred to as The Armenian, and was involved in a few fights. This resulted in him becoming withdrawn, something that seems to have become a permanent part of his character. He has two clear sets of friends that do not overlap—Turks and Armenians. He said “with some Turks when they find out you’re Armenian they make banal and patronizing statements like ‘they are good people,’ and other Turks don’t want to be friends once they find out.”

This in-betweenness also applies to many individuals who are professionally active in mainstream society, where they have to negotiate (or hide) their Armenianness, and are also involved with the factious Armenian community, where they also have to manage their identities. Journalist Anahid, who has experienced extensive criticism from the various Armenian factions and their competing agendas, finds this is a tiring and demanding position: “I feel very lonely deep inside” and “sometimes I am more afraid of Armenians than Turks.” This example also demonstrates the complexities of a layered identity, which can be stifling and restrictive when the state (and your community) deems you different and polices boundaries of identity and belonging. In the words of an interviewee in Beirut “it’s impossible to escape my Armenian identity even if I wanted to.”⁴¹

It became apparent through my interviews that individuals thought in terms of clearly defined spheres and the need to transgress and move from one to the other. There are a few ways in which these demarcations were blurred. For example all the Istanbul Armenians I met had Turkified surnames, and many had first names that were not obviously Armenian (like Helin). Schools reported a decrease each year of obviously Armenian-sounding first names. I was also told that some Catholic Armenians are using Turkish first names, the expressed aim being “to be totally invisible.” Some Istanbul Armenians have two business cards—one with their Armenian name and another with the Turkish version.

Many individuals recalled taking on a Turkish name when in the workplace—for example as boys working in the Grand Bazaar. Famous places like Ara Café owned by the noted Istanbul Armenian photographer Ara Güler also play on the fact that Ara means gap or interval in Turkish (the café is in a pedestrian side street), and most of the clientele are unaware that this is an Armenian establishment. These subtle forms of negotiation have the desired effect of being able to blend in and not attract unwanted attention.⁴²

This sometimes extends to a kind of duality in that Armenian, if spoken at all, is confined to the house. Public life to all appearances must be Turkish, including names. Community identity therefore is limited to the private sphere, and often not even that. This divided self can result in feelings of exclusion from every side, being neither a Turk nor an Armenian, especially if one does not speak Armenian (an increasing trend) or practice the religion. Identities are complex and multi-layered but when politicized can result in profound disempowerment for those that fall outside the boundaries. This process affects individuals from a young age when they are grappling with their identity and sense of belonging. This often results in a compartmentalizing of identity, based on context. Neyzi and Kharatyan-Araqelyan (2010: 57) quote one such person from Sason in southeastern Turkey: “We are three things. We are Kurds at home, we speak Kurdish. Second, we are Turks at school, we speak Turkish. Third we are Armenians at the camp, we speak Armenian. We are Armenians in summer, Turks in school in winter, and Kurds at home.”

Negotiating Coexistence, Rights, and Belonging

The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul (past and present) has traditionally kept a low profile, a policy considered to be the wisest in order to protect the community from nationalist backlashes.⁴³ This extends to taking positions contrary to those of the diaspora, leading at times to a fraught relationship of mutual disappointment and misunderstanding. For example, genocide recognition is viewed fearfully by many Istanbul Armenians, including Patriarch Mesrob II, who conveyed this to the ambassador of the United States following the nationalist backlash after the murder of Hrant Dink (as leaked by Wikileaks in 2011).⁴⁴ The diaspora in general is perceived as not being appropriately sensitive to the vulnerable nature of the Istanbul Armenians, who will ultimately bear the brunt of any repercussions, as they have previously.

Minority religious leaders at first seemed cautiously optimistic about the AKP government. There were initially a number of positive signs

and gestures from the government, though these were on an “ad hoc basis, leaving open the possibility that they could be revoked or discontinued.”⁴⁵ Historically, the Armenian religious foundations and the Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate have faced great difficulty in preserving or protecting the church buildings and schools under their jurisdiction. There would be no permission from the government to carry out repairs or renovations. But this seems to have changed somewhat with the present government. The Deacon at the Patriarchate was cautiously optimistic about the future, saying that the current government has taken unprecedented steps, due to pressure from the EU as part of the conditions in the accession package.⁴⁶ The Armenian Patriarchate has also lost its strength in the last few years as the Patriarch has been seriously ill and the institution has been left in a kind of limbo with squabbles among the community as to the way forward. Since 2008 Archbishop Aram Atesyan has been the acting patriarch, his appointment a point of great contention in the community.

The government has recently announced its plans to return the properties confiscated after 1974—a move deemed “necessary but insufficient” but hailed as a magnanimous gesture by the state itself. In fact it is also a shrewd and strategic act to avoid having to pay compensation through the European Court of Human Rights, and one undertaken with pressure from both the EU and the U.S. The present government has pledged to return 162 of the 1,410 assets of minorities confiscated in 1974. The state closed down minorities’ seminaries so clergy cannot be trained in Turkey, and there are currently only twenty-six Armenian Orthodox priests in the whole of Turkey (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2012 Annual Report). These restrictive measures seriously threaten the long-term viability of the Armenian community as a religious community.

There are also thought to be up to 25,000 Armenians from Armenia living illegally in Istanbul, forced to migrate temporarily for economic reasons.⁴⁷ A 2009 study carried out for the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (Ozinian 2009) reported that most illegal Armenian migrants in an interview pool of 150 originated from the northwestern Armenian region of Shirak, the site of the devastating 1988 earthquake. Of the respondents 94 percent were women employed in domestic work. Prime Minister Erdoğan has made threats to expel illegal Armenian migrants several times, claiming that there are close to 100,000. These comments are seen as retaliation for Armenia’s push for recognition of the genocide. Alongside this regressive talk, there are some promising signs, too. For example, the children of the thousands of illegal Armenian workers have until recently not been allowed to attend (Armenian) community

schools. However in 2011 the government announced that this ban would be lifted so long as the children did not receive any official documents that might facilitate their long-term stay in Turkey (Ozinian 2011).

Although this is hailed as a step forward by the Armenian community, there are also fears about the already-limited resources of the fourteen primary schools and five high schools in Istanbul being further stretched. This concerns not just material resources but also teachers. The general trend is acknowledged to be one of decline, both in terms of enrollment numbers and in terms of the quality of Armenian education. The schools must follow the Turkish curriculum in full, while allowing for classes in Armenian language and literature. However, they are not permitted to recruit teachers from outside Turkey and hence the standard of teaching of Armenian is limited. They are only permitted to teach official Turkish history. Furthermore, all minority schools have a Turkish vice-principal appointed by the state to act as the “eyes and ears” of the state and make sure they stay in line. This role is apparently being taken less seriously in schools in recent years, but it is still a reminder of the watchful state, along with the images of Atatürk adorning every classroom. The fact that there is no Armenian Studies at university level in Turkey means that the schools are forced to employ teachers of Armenian language who are merely high school graduates, thereby also compromising the standard of instruction. The general decline of the Armenian language in Turkey is also evident in the reduced number of pages published in Armenian of *Agos*.⁴⁸ This has led to much soul-searching among many in community leadership roles, about “what makes us and keeps us Armenian, just language ... or religion or something else?” Armenian schools are full of pupils who “are already very Turkified, speak Armenian with Turkish accents, sometimes struggling to speak it at all.”⁴⁹

Whether change should come from above or below is a subject of much discussion. Traditionally the community organizations have kept a low profile and have only very cautiously made the slightest responses to adverse state policy. This docile position was taken in order to protect and preserve an already threatened and fearful community, thereby leading to a culture of meekness. Some groups and individuals are now arguing that the community needs to take on an active role in making changes rather than just accepting things. One primary school principal talked too of a “self-censorship” by the community that is entrenched in its ways, exuding inertia and acceptance of the situation. This bind also results in contradictory positions. For instance, wealthier patrons of the schools gift money but do not send their children there, preferring to send them to private, more prestigious schools, where the standard

of education is higher. So although they are committed to (financially) supporting community institutions, they are not so invested personally. The same principal and others talked about the need to be “clever and creative” in their teaching—to bring in Armenian history in an oblique or roundabout way, as it is not permitted to be taught.⁵⁰ In the case of the Church, Armenian history is brought in where possible under the guise of religious lessons, another example of the subversive “weapons of the weak” (Scott 1990) that subaltern groups use to resist the power of, in this case, the authoritative state.

Contemplating Coexistence, Beyond “Tolerance”

One major area of contention with regard to the coexistence of the minorities in Turkey is the properties of their foundations, religious and secular. These valuable and impressive properties and their extent hark back to a period where there were significant minority populations in Turkey, and in Istanbul in particular. Akgönül (2013: 91), considers the foundations as “the most important element that guarantees the existence of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey” and the foundation system as “a tether for minority institutions—religiously and symbolically as well as financially.” Historically there have been severe restrictions on the minorities with regard to these properties, their ownership, use and maintenance. In 2008 the Foundations Law was amended in several ways, including the possibility of applying for the return of minorities’ property confiscated by the Turkish state, though the scope and mechanisms of the law are limited and a small number of properties have been returned to the religious foundations thus far.

Lakis Vingas is the minority representative on the General Directorate Council for Foundations, representing the 162 minority foundations in Turkey. He is the first ever such representative, serving alongside fourteen others representing the non-minorities, since December 2008. For the first time in the history of the republic a representative has been appointed especially for minorities, and his position has been a difficult one, balancing the suspicions and criticisms of the directorate on the one hand and the minority foundations on the other. He believes that the time is right for minorities to be at the forefront of the demand for change:

I know there is progress because I know both Turkeys. I know from where to where (we have come)... The progress is huge, but we have no time, we are tired. We cannot have more suffering. The new gen-

erations will not work as we used to. We need to be demanding, to be claiming—look at how far the Kurds have progressed in this compared to ten years ago and they say still it is not sufficient. Things need to happen quickly!

The Ottoman principles of “tolerance” and “protection” with which the religious minorities are still approached sound anachronistic and potentially offensive. As discussed by Bryant in the introduction to this volume, etymological meanings of tolerance carry a sense of burden and forbearance (Kaya and Harmanyeri 2012: 398). In the Ottoman Empire tolerance simply meant a lack of persecution, so long as the subjects obeyed the laws and obligations set out through the *dhimmi* system of governing. Kaya and Harmanyeri (2012: 414) talk about the myth of tolerance that functions to “conceal the mistreatment of ethno-cultural and religious minorities.” “Tolerance” as a political principle has been criticized by minorities for its grudging acceptance of difference as opposed to the possibility of incorporating and celebrating diversity (Kasbarian 2009; see also Duru this volume). In the words of one middle-aged interviewee, “I don’t want to be tolerated, private, and special, I want to be equal. I don’t need to be treated as a piece of antique that needs to be protected. ... If we don’t feel equal or if they don’t see us as equal we cannot progress!”

Formally, minorities in Turkey have the status of “equal citizens,” yet they cannot use the same rights granted by this citizenship, with discriminatory practices commonplace in the institutional, political and social realms. Citizenship is increasingly viewed beyond its legal definition, as “a set of discourses and practices that are translated unevenly across unequal social groups and local contexts” and as a “hegemonic strategy” that “works to define these groups or localities, to fix the power differentials between them, and then to naturalize these operations” (Secor 2004: 354). The prospect of EU membership has acted as a reforming project in Turkey, as it has in other candidate countries (Kasbarian 2009), gradually addressing restrictions upon minorities. Since 2002 Turkey has undergone a serious program of reform, but this has fallen short of addressing non-Muslim minorities’ demands and rights (Goltz 2006, 2013). While meeting EU standards is a promising means of promoting freedom, democracy, and human rights, legislation alone cannot change deep-seated attitudes and historic grievances. What we are witnessing in Turkey is the potential for redefining Turkish identity, to reconsider the question of “who is a Turk”—and the creation of a Turkey not for ethnic Turks but for all citizens of Turkey, regardless

of ethnicity or religion. Though there have been a few overtures by the state,⁵¹ window-dressing gestures fall short of the fundamental changes that are necessary. What is needed is for the state to redefine and create meaningful and sufficiently open categories of identity and belonging, and for policy to reinforce the gradual advances in civil society.

Clearly, genuine coexistence that fully acknowledges Others needs to go beyond “tolerance.” For genuine coexistence there needs to be a structural framework that underpins equality and respect for diverse groups (and allows for their internal differences). For this the work of civil society is essential in changing attitudes, opening up spaces for discussion and expression, and challenging the nationalist and exclusionary foundations of the Turkish state. Acknowledging different narratives may liberate people from being forced to inhabit fixed categories of identities ascribed by competing nationalizing projects, and allow for a reconceptualization of identity (on all levels). Where nationalizing projects and practices seek to enclose and confine identities, the reality of lived experience, of coexistence despite real and perceived difference, is testimony to a different narrative and with it the possibility of a redemptive post-nationalist future. The legacy of the genocide and its continuing denial make the Armenian existence in Turkey highly politicized. Yet despite state denialism and a wider climate of political regression and polarization, there continue to be significant developments at the level of civil society (Kasbarian and Öktem 2014). Intrinsic to this process is the recognition of different narratives and of being able to articulate and own one’s own story. That this is a mutually reinforcing project, and needs to be underpinned by a transformation in the state narrative (and structures) is a given. Only then can Istanbul Armenians speak and act with confidence and dignity as Armenians and Turkish citizens.

Sossie Kasbarian is Lecturer in Middle East Politics at Lancaster University. She is co-editor of the book *Diasporas of the Middle East – Contextualising Community* (with Anthony Gorman, Edinburgh University Press, 2015) and author of several articles relating to the Middle East and Diaspora Studies. She is co-editor (with Kerem Öktem) of the special issue of the journal *Patterns of Prejudice* entitled *Armenians, Turks and Kurds Beyond Denial* (Vol. 48, May 2014), as well as co-editor (with Kerem Öktem) of the forthcoming special issue of the journal *Nationalities Papers*, entitled, *Possibilities of a shared memory: Reflecting on “Travaux de memoire”, civil society activism, nation-building and contestation in Armenia, Turkey and the Diaspora in 2015.*

Notes

My thanks to the editor and two anonymous reviewers for insightful and helpful feedback on this chapter.

1. This chapter was written before the dramatic downward spiral in Turkey and the polarization of Turkish society, exemplified by the Gezi Park protests of 2013; the witchhunt against the AKP's former Islamist allies, the Hizmet movement of US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen; the clear re-emergence of ultra-nationalists and the 'deep state' in violent attacks against opponents of the AKP, and the complete collapse of the uneasy peace with the PKK in 2015. There has been an escalating crackdown on basic freedoms and rights, to the extent that a recent report by the senior Turkey researcher at Human Rights Watch stated, "Human rights and the rule of law in Turkey are at the worst level I've seen in the 12 years I've worked on Turkey's human rights." (Emma Sinclair-Webb, "No EU, Turkey is not safe for everyone" 23 October 2015, Open Democracy, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/emma-sinclair-webb/no-eu-turkey-is-not-safe-for-everyone>)
2. This chapter draws upon one month of fieldwork and over thirty formal and informal interviews in Istanbul in June–July 2011. This included (Armenian) community leaders and activists, as well as a representative cross-section of the Armenian community, spanning different ages, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and degrees of affiliation and involvement with the Armenian community. All names (unless speaking in an official capacity) have been changed to protect anonymity.
3. This figure refers to Turkish citizens. It does not count the significant numbers of Armenians from Armenia working in Turkey as seasonal or more long-term economic migrants, usually illegally. This has been a subject of media and political concern, as well as being used as a political tool on more than one occasion. See section below.
4. The 2010 estimates from the U.S. State Department include 23,000 Jews; 15,000 Syriac Christians; 10,000 Baha'is, 5,000 Yezidis; 3,300 Jehovah's Witnesses; 3,000 Protestants; and 1,700 Greek Orthodox.
5. For an analysis of the Treaty of Lausanne and "Protection of Minorities" see Akgönül (2013: 65–101).
6. For a comprehensive analysis of the campaign and its legacies, see Aslan (2007).
7. Göçek's latest book focusses on this. (Fatma Müge Göçek [2015], *Denial of Violence – Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and the Collective Violence against the Armenians 1789-2009*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.)
8. Stanley Fish (1997: 1) says, "Boutique multiculturalism is characterized by its superficial or cosmetic relationship to the objects of its affection. Boutique multiculturalists admire or appreciate or enjoy or sympathize with or (at the very least) 'recognize the legitimacy of' the traditions of cultures other than their own; but boutique multiculturalists will always stop short

- of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their center generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency as they have been either declared or assumed.”
9. <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/134778/turkeys-armenians-suggest-erdogan-for-nobel-prize>
 10. Erdoğan went on the Charlie Rose show that same week and claimed that if there had been a genocide there would not be any Armenians still living in Turkey, thereby exposing the way that this community are held hostage and employed instrumentally by the state, and the extremely precarious position they find themselves in. See <http://www.charlierose.com/watch/60382027>
 11. http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Article/pg_Article.aspx?Id=e11bde56-a0b7-4ea6-8a9a-954c68157df9.
 12. Personal communication, June 2014.
 13. See, for example, Bloxham (2005).
 14. The most significant include Taner Akçam, Fatma Müge Göçek, Baskın Oran, Uğur Ümit Üngör, Kerem Öktem, Ayşe Kadioğlu, Cengiz Aktar, Ayşe Gül Altınay, among others. There is also a growing new generation of scholars whose work follows these pioneers and promises to be very exciting.
 15. The instigators were scholars Ahmet İnel, Baskın Oran, Cengiz Aktar, and journalist Ali Bayramoğlu. The campaign was denounced by the Turkish state and nationalists, and criticized for not going far enough by others. For a critical reading of the campaign see Erbal (2012).
 16. Interview with Ayşe Gül Altınay, Istanbul, June 2011.
 17. The founder of the union, Mihran Gültekin, says that he knew that he was Armenian since he was seven but only managed to reclaim his identity formally at the age of fifty. His 21-year-old son has also been converted, and is baptized Hrant. Over 200 families in the region have reclaimed their Armenian identity in recent years. Gültekin claims that 75 percent of the Dersim population is composed of converted Armenians. (Dersim is a region of eastern Turkey that includes Tunceli Province, Elazığ Province, and Bingöl Province.) See for example, <http://massispost.com/archives/1752>.
 18. The conference on Islamized Armenians was organized by the History Department of Boğaziçi University, the Hrant Dink Foundation and the Charitable Association of Armenians from Malatya (HAYDer), and held in Istanbul on 2–4 November 2013. For links to the conference and related pieces, see “Conference on Islamized Armenians,” 14 November 2013, available on the Hrant Dink Foundation website (www.hrantdink.org/?Detail=753&Lang=en) (accessed 2 April 2014).
 19. *Agos* (meaning “furrow” in Armenian) is an Armenian weekly newspaper published in Istanbul since 1996. It has both Armenian and Turkish pages (see <http://www.agos.com.tr>). Hrant Dink was one of its founders and chief editor until his murder in January 2007.
 20. Interview, Istanbul, June 2011.
 21. This theme is eloquently explored in Anahit (2014).

22. For a discussion of the deep state in contemporary Turkey, see Karabekir Akkoyunlu (2015) "Old Demons in New Faces – The 'Deep State' meets Erdogan's 'New Turkey'" (October 25, 2015, The Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karabekir-akkoyunlu/old-demons-in-new-faces-t_1_b_8383086.html)
23. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012 Annual Report.
24. See for example, "Sevag Balıkcı was Shot By Mistake, Court Rules" by Ekin Karaca, <http://www.bianet.org/english/minorities/145402-sevag-bal-ikci-was-shot-by-mistake-court-rules>.
25. This was apparent in the run-up to the commemoration of the centenary of the Armenian Genocide in April 2015. See Kasbarian and Öktem, 2016 (forthcoming).
26. There are currently a number of successful Armenian–Turkish initiatives at the level of civil society aimed at encouraging relations between the two countries. For instance, the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform (ATCP) organizes meetings between film-makers of both countries and explores themes of identity and common roots. ATCP was founded through the cooperation of Anadolu Kültür and Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival in 2008 to encourage a common network and projects, and has been supported by organizations including USAID, the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, the International Center for Human Development, the Yerevan Press Club, and the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia.
27. <http://www.anadolukultur.org/>
28. Interview with Osman Kavala, Istanbul, June 2011.
29. The Armenian Institute organized the exhibition and cultural program, sponsored by the St. Sarkis Charity Trust and Diana and Panos Katsouris. <http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/mydearbrother/>
30. For the vision and activities of the Foundation see <http://www.hrantdink.org/index.php?About=18&Lang=en>
31. The controversial cross was finally erected on the top of the church on 2 October 2010.
32. Book Launch in Hai Doon (Armenia House), London, October 2010.
33. Coproduction between Gomidas Institute in London and Birzamanlar Yayıncılık in Istanbul.
34. For which he has had charges brought against him numerous times. Located in the city's Gavur (infidel) district, St. Giragos is close to St. Peter's Chaldean Catholic church (also undergoing restoration), a mosque, the Diyarbakır Protestant Church, and a synagogue, with construction plans for places of worship along the same street for Alawites and Yezidis. Mayor Demirtaş's vision is to make Diyarbakır "Anatolia's Jerusalem."
35. "Evolving Armenian Realities and the Surp Giragos Dikranagerd Church" by Raffi Bedrosyan. Posted on July 1, 2011, <http://www.armenianweekly.com/2011/07/01/evolving-armenian-realities-and-surp-giragos-dikranagerd-church>.

36. The latest victim of this is the writer and linguist Sevan Nişanyan (May 2013), sentenced to prison for alleged blasphemy, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/europe/turkey/130523/sevan-nisanyan-turkish-armenian-blogger-jailed-blasphemy>.
37. Informal conversations, Istanbul, July 2011.
38. The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) launched a violent campaign against Turkish diplomats from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. For an overview see Dugana, Huang, LaFree, and McCauley (2008). For a reading of these groups as part of a third world liberation movement and their mission to awaken the Armenian diaspora, see Tölölyan (1988).
39. See also Anahit 2014.
40. In Ottoman times, the Armenians were known as “the Loyal Millet” (*Millet-i Sadika*).
41. Interview, Beirut, March/April 2003. In Lebanon, the “country of minorities,” the Armenian Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants are among the eighteen state-recognized religious minorities, with the “private domain” being conducted by religious leaders and within the arena of the community.
42. Not one of my interviewees (apart from the few that spoke in an official capacity) was willing to be recorded, revealing an insecurity and fear of repercussions.
43. In contrast, the Greek Patriarch Bartholomew is viewed as strong and outspoken in a way that Armenian equivalents feel they cannot be. This is explained not just by personality but also by the relative strength and importance of Greece compared to Armenia, as well as the much more cordial links.
44. For full text from Wikileaks (based on a meeting between Patriarch Mesrob II and then-Deputy U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Matthew Bryza in February 2007) and analysis see Barsoumian (2011).
45. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2012 Annual Report.
46. Interview at the Patriarchate, Istanbul, June 2011.
47. See for example, Grigoriyan and Hayrapetyan (2011).
48. Interview with *Agos* journalists, Istanbul, June 2011
49. Interview, Armenian high school principal, Istanbul, June 2011.
50. Interview, Armenian primary school principal, Istanbul, June 2011.
51. Examples include the appointment of Armenians in minor official posts.

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