

“LIKE I ALWAYS KNEW IT”: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF  
INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF TRAUMA IN THREE  
GENERATIONS OF ARMENIAN WOMEN IN TURKEY

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“Like I Always Knew It”: The Phenomenology of Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma  
in Three Generations of Armenian Women in Turkey

“Hep Biliyormuşum Gibi”: Türkiye’deki Üç Kuşak Ermeni Kadınlarında Travmanın  
Kuşaklararası Aktarım Fenomenolojisi

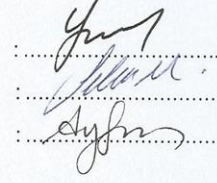
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- 1) Intergenerational transmission of trauma
- 2) Armenian women
- 3) Parenting
- 4) Communication
- 5) In-group, Out-group

## **Abstract**

In literature, transmission of trauma is often studied but studies on intergenerational transmission of the trauma of 1915 among Armenian community are limited, and there are scarcely any qualitative studies on experiences of Armenians of Turkey. This study explored the intergenerational transmission of trauma, the impact of trauma on parenting and relationships, and being an Armenian on five Armenian families living in Istanbul, Turkey. Each family consisted of three generations of women: grandmothers who are the children of 1915 survivors, their daughters and granddaughters. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five middle class families. Then, data was analyzed by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The data analysis of the interviews revealed four themes: Being an Armenian in Turkey, Protecting the next generation, Relations with Turks, Feelings regarding 1915.

Findings were discussed in terms of similarities and differences to existing literature. Clinical implications of being an Armenian in Turkey, the intergenerational impact of the trauma and its effects on parenting were proposed. Finally, limitations of this study and recommendations for future research were discussed.

## Özet

Travmanın aktarımı literatürde sıklıkla araştırılan bir konu ancak Ermeni toplumunda 1915'te yaşanan travmanın kuşaklararası aktarımını inceleyen çalışmalar literatürde oldukça sınırlı, Türkiye'deki Ermenilerin deneyimlerini anlamaya yönelik niteliksel araştırmalar ise yok denecek kadar az. Bu çalışmada İstanbul'da yaşamakta olan beş Ermeni aile üzerinde, 1915'te yaşanmış olan travmanın kuşaklararası bir etkisi olup olmadığı araştırıldı. Her bir aile 1915'i yaşamış bir ebeveyni olan anneanne, onun kızı ve torunundan oluşmaktadır. Orta düzey ekonomik seviyesi olan beş aileyle yarı yapılandırılmış röportajlar gerçekleştirildi. Ardından veriler, Yorumla Dayalı Fenomenolojik Analiz kullanılarak analiz edildi. Röportajlardan elde edilen veri analizleri Türkiye'de Ermeni olmak, Gelecek nesli korumak, Türklerle ilişkiler ve 1915 ile ilgili duygular olmak üzere dört ana tema ortaya çıkardı.

Sonuçlar, literatürdeki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar ele alınarak tartışıldı. Türkiye'de Ermeni olmak, travmanın kuşaklararası etkisi ve travmanın ebeveynlik üzerine etkileri ile ilgili klinik çıkarımlar önerildi. Son olarak, çalışmanın sınırlamaları ve gelecek araştırmalar için öneriler tartışıldı.

## **Dedication**

To children, women and elders being in the first place, to all the people in the world who were exposed to a collective trauma and to the soul of those who passed away...

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## 1. Introduction

*“She lay on the living room couch under a shawl and stared at the ceiling,  
and she babbled and cried in English, Armenian, Arabic, and Turkish. I  
remember this:*

*There is a cloud in the air— Is it smoke?  
Over there is Moush  
And the road is lumpy  
Whoever goes is not coming back— What’s going on?”*

Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate*

Approximately two years ago, I participated to an impressive seminar about the intergenerational transmission of the femininity and motherhood. At the end of the seminar, I started to think about how much our own femininity and motherhood perception was related to those of our mothers and even our grandmothers. Three weeks after, I participated this time to a seminar about the intergenerational transmission of trauma. During this seminar, among others, they presented a few studies about Armenians’ trauma of 1915 and its intergenerational transmission. At that very moment, I realized that although I was Armenian, I had little if any knowledge about 1915. Although I had so little knowledge about it, I couldn’t repress the intensive desire to cry. Afterwards, I became curious to this sensitivity and wanted to learn more about how 1915 incidents affected Armenian families living in Turkey. Therefore, I decided to study the intergenerational transmission of trauma in the Armenian society for my dissertation. Some of the questions that I wanted to answer were: How people transferred the information of what happened in 1915 to their children, to their grand children and to their great grand children? After one century, does the

trauma of 1915 still an interesting subject for the younger generations?  
During the intergenerational transmission process, what changed and what remained the same? And how 1915 affected the parenthood skills of the Armenians? How the trauma of 1915 affected their relations with Turks? Did the trauma of 1915 affect the womanhood role of the Armenian women?

The studies show that even though a person didn't experience a trauma himself, it can affect his life through the intergenerational transmission (Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997). There have been some studies showing that the trauma of 1915 affected also the generations after the generation of survivors within the Armenian community (Kalayjian, Moore, Aberson & Kim, 2010). As some researchers mentioned it (Esmaeili, 2011; Gosdanian, 1999; Papazyan, 2012), the intergenerational transmission studies conducted among the Armenians abroad are quite limited but those conducted among the Armenians of Turkey are little if any. Due to the lack of research, the principal aim of this study is to contribute to the literature on the Armenian community living in Turkey. A secondary objective of this study could be defined as to explore the intergenerational transmission of trauma, the impact of the trauma on parenting and relationships and to question how to carry the Armenian identity in Turkey. This exploratory study will be conducted using semi-structured interview with three generations of Armenian women living in Istanbul.

This study is also aimed to give a deeper understanding to the clinicians about the psychological impacts of 1915 on Armenians' identity and relationships so that they build a better alliance with them in therapy and work more effectively. Once the clinician knows more about the Armenian community's culture and history and becomes culturally sensitive, the establishment of the therapeutic trust relation with the clients would be facilitated and it will contribute to the decrease of the dropouts (Dagirmanjian, 1996).

I would like to mention that this study doesn't aim to represent a political statement; it aims to study the intergenerational transmission from a psychological point of view. As 1915 is still a highly controversial topic, except on the literature section where the sources are mentioned as they are, neither the word "Genocide" used by the Republic of Armenia and by the governments of some countries, nor the "Armenian Deportation" used by the Republic of Turkey in its official discourse would be used. In the sections where there is the personal transmission, "the events of 1915", "1915", "1915 trauma" or "the trauma of 1915" will be used.

Another important point that should be considered during the reading of this study is that some of the participants experienced the trauma directly in 1915 while others experienced it later. To avoid the ambiguity, traumas experienced in different years will be gathered under the name of "1915".

In the literature part of this study, under the chapter called Armenian History, we will explain first the general terms how the Armenian identity was constructed until today. Afterwards, a general introduction under the

name of “the intergenerational transmission of trauma” will be followed by two different parts where the effects of the trauma’s intergenerational transmission on the Armenians of the Diaspora and the Armenians of Turkey will be discussed.

After the part called “Silence of Trauma” that shows the trauma is not only transferred verbally but also non-verbally, we will present the effects of the trauma’s intergenerational transmission on parenting. As the number of studies conducted on Armenians is limited, I would like to underline that the results of the present study can’t represent all the Armenians.

## **2.Literature Review**

### **2.1. Armenian History**

As it is true for many ancient people, the origin of Armenians' includes both mythical elements and proven academic theses. When Greek sources are explored, it can be seen that the most explicit information about Armenians is provided by Heredotos. He stated that Armenians are from Phrygia and their dressing style was still like Phrygians' during Median Wars. Eudoxus's (370 BC) claims support the testimony of Heredotos'. He proposed that in terms of language, Armenians are very close to Phrygians (Grousset, 2005).Strabo (64/63 BC) argued that Armenians came from both sides. Some of the Armenian immigrants who migrated from Anatolia to Armenia were from Yerznka, in today's terms Erzincan. Yerznka is founded somewhat in northwest and from Sasoon and Adiabana. Both of these places are located somewhat in southwest or from Arbela region, in today's terms

Erbil. Arbela is an ancient Assyrian city of North (Grousset, 2005). The earliest Armenian resources claim that Armenian people are descendants of Japheth who was Noah's son. Noah's family have located on Armenian lands after Noah's Ark have landed on the Mount Ararat. After some time of period, they have moved to the lands of Babylonia. Since Babylon was known by its malignancy and tyranny, Hayg, descendant of Japheth, had rebelled and decided to go back to Armenia where Noah landed on. There he established Armenia and started to rule the Armenian people (Bournoutian, 2006).

Thus, Mount Ararat is one of the most important sacred symbols of Christianity and Armenian freedom. In the Holy Bible it says that Mount Ararat is the spot where Noah's Ark has landed on and so the life on earth was born again (Ayvazian, 2008). Religion plays a very important role in the Armenian culture. The first nation who has adopted Christianity is Ancient Armenia (301 A.D.) (Bakalian, 1993; Garavanian, 2000; Takooshian, 1995). Today Armenians are still proud of this, which basically makes Christianity a characterizing feature of being an Armenian (Garavanian, 2000). Today, majority of Armenians belong to Armenian Apostolic Church, which is their own church (Bakalian, 1993). According to a legend, a monk named St. MesropMashtots, who was contacted by God (Esmaeili, 2011) has invented the Armenian alphabet in 404 so as to translate the Bible to Armenian (Chailand & Rageau, 1995).

Due to its crucial geopolitical position, lands of Armenia, that was connecting east to west, were attacked by many rulers and emperors. As

Roman Empire was losing power, different Armenian families, dynasties and kingdoms have emerged until the hegemony of Ottoman Empire in Anatolia (For example: Yervandians (585-189 B.C.), Artashesian( 189 B.C. – 10 A.D.) The Arcasids (66-428 A.D) Bagratunis (884-1045 A.D.), Cilician Armenian Kingdom (1075-1375 A.D.) (Zekiyan, 2001).

Between 1512 and 1908 Armenians were Christian subjects of Ottoman Empire. For ages Armenians lived side by side with Turks while the empire was rising. Armenians were well-known as hardworking, skilled and literate people who have gained power and trust within the empire (Garavanian, 2000).

As Christian subjects Armenians were part of the *millet* system, in which minorities, meaning non-Muslim communities could have a separate religious and administrative management. Thus, Armenians could confine to their own national church. By means of *millet* system non-Muslim communities could preserve their communal lives; in the cultural sphere and also concerning their religious beliefs thoroughly (Migliorino, 2008, as cited in Varjabedian, 2009). Intermarriage with other religious or ethnic groups was very rare. On the other hand, *millet* system was discriminatory and hierarchal. An excessive form of nationalism and liberalism was emerged as the *millet* system was getting weaker and weaker.

Armenians took the places of Greeks in many important positions within the Ottoman Empire because after the Greek Revolution in 1830 Greek subjects in the Ottoman Empire were under suspicion. During the mid-19th century, Armenians who were located at Istanbul and Izmir were

wealthy and rich; the portrait was different for Armenians living in eastern provinces. Their houses were crammed and drudging. Due to the poor health conditions; mortality and death rates were high (Bournoutian, 2006). The Armenian liberals who demanded change in Tanzimat, which protected individual rights and provided equality, took the opposition side to the Patriarchate and Amiras. At first, Armenians did not request a total independence, instead they urged only reforms. In this way they paved the way for democracy and social justice (Zekiyan, 2001).

Even though modernization and reorganization movement of *Tanzimat* (1839) caused surge of nationalism and dissolution of the *millet* system it also had unfavorable effects in many ways. One could say that these reforms turned out to be a double-edged sword for Armenians and other non-Muslim communities. On one hand, by protecting Armenians, those especially in the eastern provinces (*vilayets*) against the abuses of the local Kurdish chiefstains (*aghas*) it was to stop discrimination. But also, the privileges and the autonomy –which were granted by the old system–, were endangered because of these reforms (Migliorino, 2008, as cited in Varjabedian, 2009). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the nationalistic ideas in Europe were on the radar. Within this frame Armenians started to build powerful Armenian communities (Mirak, 1980).

Throughout the years of exile spent in Europe by the Young Armenians, who were very impressed with European liberalism, provided anti-government policies which evolved into political parties. These parties had nationalistic agendas (Bournoutian, 2006). Although all of these parties

had different backgrounds, they all had interest in autonomy of the Armenian provinces rather than full independence –at least for the beginning– and demand for reforms shaped by national aspirations (Migliorino, 2008, as cited in Varjabedian, 2009).

As the empire began to relapse very quickly in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians became the target of severe massacres and more (e.g. 1894-1896, 1909) (Bakalian, 1993; Derderian, 2005). The reason of the massacres in-between 1894-1896 was solely to keep Armenians compliant with no purpose of total extermination (Miller & Miller, 1993).

Afterwards, although the Young Turks seemed to be willing to establish a new, liberal, and a modern government, who treated all of its citizens equal, leaders were actually completely in favor of Pan-Turkism and Turkish nationalism (Varjabedian, 2009).

In 1913, the triumvirate of Enver Pasha, Talat Pasha and Cemal Pasha came to power. They were extremely nationalist and they were ready to carry out their policy of national homogeneity (Varjabedian, 2009). The advancing Russian army defeated the Ottoman army in the winter of 1914, on the eastern front of Sarikamış. Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman army were disarmed in February of 1915 and put in labor battalions under the watch of armed guards (Migliorino, 2008, as cited in Varjabedian, 2009). Deportations began in March and in April 24, over two hundred Armenian community leaders and intellectuals in İstanbul were first arrested and then killed. 24<sup>th</sup> of April is considered to be the beginning of the mass deportations and massacres (Derderian, 2005; Kalayjian & Shahinian,

1998). While Armenians call these massacres and events of 1915 as genocide, for Turks these very same events can be regarded as intercommunal welfare (Lewy, 2005). Till this very day, there is an ongoing argument between Armenians and Turks, whether the 1915 massacres should be considered as genocide or not.

With an intention of extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and as a result of deportations and unprovoked, direct massacres; according to many international sources (e.g., Melson, 1992; Nazer, 1968) and some scholars of Armenian origin (e.g., Dadrian, 2003) more than a million Armenians perished (as cited in Bilali, Tropp, & Dasgupta, 2012). According to Taner Akçam, Vahakn Dadrian and Peter Balakian this was a planned genocide by the Ottoman Empire. The Islamic institution of the state made it intolerant to the non-Muslim citizens, therefore the genocide was inevitable (as cited in Mazinani, 2013). The main reason why Armenians were one of the targets was because of their religion. Armenians were forced to convert to Islam and they were put to death because they refused to do so (Van Gorder, 2006). Because of their Christian beliefs Armenians were labeled as traitors and enemies by the government of Ottoman Empire, who nearly successfully completed their goal through the Armenian Genocide (Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998). According to another opinion, the real cause of these massacres was the fear that Armenians will work together with Russians against Turkish government and their German allies (Derderian, 2005).

By 1914, Armenians had connections with Russia, they had firmly Christian belief and identity and also in the bourgeoisie they had an overall strong presence. Turks were prompted by all these and therefore they wanted to wipe out the perceived Armenian threat. According to Talat Pasha Armenians were blocking Turkish expansion. His orders of deportation indicate openly that he puts the blame on Armenians for hindering Empire's advancement in civilization (Dadrian, 1994). According to Dadrian, the reason of deportation and massacres was to rid eastern Turkey of a prosperous and old community; a community who was taken as enemy during the war.

Turkish official narrative is quite different than this: Young Turks had to deport Armenians to protect people of Anatolia and Ottoman territories because it was the Armenians who killed Turks in the first place (Jorgensen, 2003, as cited in Bilali, Tropp, & Dasgupta, 2012) According to this narrative again, Armenians were encouraged to rebel against Ottoman Empire by Britain and Russia, and also were encouraged to side with the enemy Russia who gave them a promise of an independent state (Ulgen, 2010, as cited in Bilali, Tropp, & Dasgupta, 2012). According to some of the leading scholars in Turkey, Armenians were considered internal and treacherous enemies from the Islamist and nationalist perspective and therefore this incident shouldn't be regarded in the language of genocide but rather one should see this as protecting the country. Because deportations have ended up being such a catastrophe, they also dispute that deportations

must have gone wrong way, rather than it was a planned genocide (as cited in Mazinani, 2013).

Armenian survivors who could make it to Syria were scattered all over the world afterwards. Some of them fled to east, to the land which was to become the Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) but eventually became the Armenian Soviet Social Republic (Dostourian, 1982). As Soviet Union was collapsing, Armenians voted for an independent Armenia in 1991 and since then there is the independent Republic of Armenia.

In present-day Turkey, there are approximately 55-70.000 Armenians living in Istanbul, who are represented by a handful of people. There are thirty eight Armenian Churches and chapels, two orphanages, two hospitals, three newspapers and 16 private schools in Istanbul. Armenian Apostolic Church is funding all of those 16 schools exclusively and the members of the Armenian community are providing the funding of the schools. In a nutshell we can say that Istanbul is obviously the sole center of Armenian culture's continuation in Turkey (as cited in Yayloyan, 2015).

## **2.2. Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma**

In 1980, the third edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychological Association defined trauma for the first time as “Existence of a recognizable stressor that would evoke significant symptoms of distress in almost everyone” (APA, 1980, p.238) and called it Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Nevertheless, the evolving trauma definitions in subsequent revisions to the disorder DSM-

III-R (1987), DSM-IV (1994), and DSM-IV-TR (2000) are reflecting the adversities in defining the components of a traumatic event.

There has been a new criteria added to the latest revision of the DSM (2013) which is “Indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma. If the event involved actual or threatened death, it must have been violent or accidental” (DSM V, 2013, as cited in Wise, 2014, p.6). This new criteria underlines the importance of both direct and indirect exposure. This means that intergenerational transmission becomes more and more important.

In 1966, intergenerational transmission of trauma was noted for the first time in Canada. High numbers of children of Holocaust survivors, who were born after World War II, were observed by clinicians (Bezo, 2011). Because of separation-individuation problems which led to behavioral disturbances in their children (Barocas & Barocas, 1980), they were looking for treatment (Trossman, 1968).

Intergeneration transmission of trauma is defined as the historical trauma of an older generation that is passed down to a younger generation as a family legacy. And this legacy is the indicator of the values and behavior patterns within family. Therefore, the individual’s general functioning may be affected by their parents’ experiences. Even though that individual has not experienced that very traumatic event him or herself, their parents might have transmitted this experience verbally or non-verbally to their kids which is called secondary trauma (Schuengel, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Van IJzendoorn, 1999).

There are two theories on the derivation of the secondary trauma by Figley. First, Figley suggests that there is a secondary traumatization which is analogous to a powerful empathy feeling experienced by the loved one of a traumatized person. The main elements of a trauma such as disruption and powerlessness are also faced by loved ones accompanied with an effort to comprehend the situation of the victimized loved one. There is identification with the victim and victim's suffering (Figley, 1983, as cited in Figley, 1995). We see that loved ones, the ones who are very close to the traumatized person try to answer some questions on behalf of the victim, hoping that they might have an influence on changing victim's behavior. As a result, symptoms including depression, flashbacks and insomnia are also experienced equally by loved ones, because in order to answer these questions they have to go through a process of considering these questions. These symptoms might emerge from imagining the things that the victim put up with or only because they are around the victim's symptoms. In some cases, Figley's second theory suggests that people who are close to the victim become in time physically and emotionally exhausted because they are exposed to the victim repeatedly. And this theory is called the energy depletion perspective.

Research indicates that traumatized survivors' children and grandchildren might show symptoms, which repeat their parents' PTSD. Some of these symptoms are; reversals of parental roles; high levels of depression and anxiety; difficulties with separation-individuation; exhibiting uncertain feelings toward the victim; feelings of self-blame, shame or guilt;

negative attitudes concerning self-ethnic identity; behaviors of self-destruction with temper tantrums; huge sense of loss; behavioral problems during childhood; an aversion for speaking about the traumatic experiences and being over reactive about daily-stressors and seeking social support from other people in extreme and unhealthy ways. (Jordan et al., 1992; Kalayjian et al., 1996; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Rosenthal, Sadler & Edwards, 1987; Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997).

Research on intergenerational transmission of trauma across three generations indicates that subsequent generations might encounter lasting effects of a major life trauma (Bar-On, 1995; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Rosenthal & Völter, 1998). The negative experiences of the first generation caused by a major life trauma seem to be affecting both their children and grandchildren. For instance, during the interviews of each generation the main themes enclosing the traumatic event have been repeated (Lev-Wiesel, 2007). It has been found that, the reconstruction of reality by second and third generation has been affected by the family history and also the continuing dialogue between hope and fear has been intensified by it (Bar-On, 1995) Also, the following generations show some similarities about the ways of handling the traumatic past: Guilt, trying to forget the information concerning the family's past, fear of extermination, troubled autonomy procedure and acting out the past through psychosomatic reactions and fantasies (Rosenthal & Völter, 1998).

Hence, there are other studies, which address confounding results on transmission of trauma. Sagi-Schwartz et al. (2003) report that while the

transmission of attachment classification occur from one generation to the next, unresolved loss and trauma are not notably transmitted from the survivor to the children. On the other hand, Sigal and Weinfeld (1989) have compared third generation with that of their parents and they have found that the psychological well-being of the third generation is better than the well-being of the second generation. But they have also exhibited higher levels of identification with their grandparents' background and identity because, according to the investigators, third generation felt more secure in their own sense of self, and therefore they could allow themselves this identification (as cited in Lev-Wiesel, 2007). So, it seemed that the third generation was less affected by the trauma comparing to the second generation. However, there are some contrary studies to Sigal and Weinfeld's study (1989). There is a finding that third generation shows more pathological symptoms comparing to the second generation. Also the third generation has higher scores when it comes to the self-esteem measures. Even though they stated that they feel better about themselves, they confirm and also were observed to show more symptomatology (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998).

### **2.2.1. Transmission of Trauma among Armenian Diaspora**

There is only a limited number of literature concerning the intergenerational transmission of trauma among Armenians, but the existing studies with American-Armenians indicate that survivors and their subsequent generations do suffer from the lasting effects caused by that important life trauma (Boyajian & Grigorian, 1986; Esmaeili, 2011;

Garavanian, 2000; Kalayjian, Moore, Aberson, & Kim, 2010; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian, & Saraydarian, 1996; Kupelian et al, 1998; Manoogian, Walker & Richards, 2007; Miller and Miller, 1993).

In 1996, Kalayjian et al. studied survivors of 1915. The subjects were older adults. They reported that they had to go through deportations, physical harm, loss of status, and pillaging. They have reported that their lives were destroyed by this incident. Some of them associated their loss of property, dignity, status, and autonomy with feelings of humiliation. Helplessness, isolation, and fear were also noted by these survivors. Many of them reported having an ongoing imminent fear of death. So, trauma of genocide, emotional sequelae to the stress and recollections can be enduring and easily be remembered after 75 years. The destruction of life generally, and losing the family members particularly were the main themes of 1915 and it has been reported that these two cause the serious pain above all.

1915's enduring impacts have also come up in a study done by Kalayjian et al. in 2010. This study shows that the survivors, who are in their eighties and nineties are still suffering because of 1915. Results show that psychological symptoms and scores of Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) correlate with the change of a location by a survivor. The survivors who have been living longer in their home show lower scores of BSI comparing to those who have moved to some other place else after 1915. And also the more they move to some other place else, the higher their BSI would be. Here we see that, predictability and comfort have positive impacts on this generation of survivors. The correlation between changing countries and

psychological symptoms can be applied to a greater population of people who had to leave their home and as a result are more open to psychological symptoms. During the interviews the authors have observed that sharing Genocide stories have caused a fear of retaliation in the participants, from the Turkish government and citizens due to Article 301 of Turkish Law. According to this law, those who denigrate Turkishness, speak about human rights violations of the Turkish government or genocide are the enemies (Kalayjian et al., 2010). According to this study's results, 60% of participants, who were capable of telling their story finally, had lower PTSD scores comparing to those who couldn't or didn't share their story with anybody until then. Those who showed high levels of resentment and anger towards the Turkish government and had plenty expectation from the perpetrators found less meaning in their lives, their daily task included no definite goals and they were more symptomatic. Absences of goals reiterate the feeling of helplessness (Kalayjian et al., 2010).

It has been observed that the subsequent generations of 1915 survivors share similar symptomatology with the survivors of other populations (such as Jewish people) along with survival guilt, depression, anxiety, enduring nightmares, and anhedonia.

A study on second and third generation survivors of 1915 (Boyajian & Grigorian, 1986; Kupelian et al, 1998), indicates that they have a sense of frustration, anger, anxiety, and guilt. They have also found that there is a correlation between guilt and responsibility of living and doing something for the Armenian people. Especially Armenian survivors commonly suffer

from the survival guilt to a degree in which their ability to savor the assets of their hard work is blocked (Kupelian et al, 1998). Through the experience of guilt, the younger generation might honor the survivors and often they have this feeling of carrying the burden of completing their family's and also the Armenian aspirations and hopes (Boyajian & Grigorian, 1986).

Children of survivors stated that their parents are fully affected by 1915 (Esmaeili, 2011; Garavanian, 2000; Manoogian et al, 2007). They reported that their parents are in a constant emotional chaos or they said this situation made their family ties stronger, bringing the family members closer to each other (Garavanian, 2000). In their recollections there are images in which their parents blame themselves, become angry and cry (Esmaeili, 2011). Children of survivors believed that the genocide have affected them too. Some stated that they identify themselves with their parents' pain. One woman has reported that her nightmares are very much alike with her father's nightmares. Some have also reported being very sensitive towards other Armenians, who have went through the genocide (Garavanian, 2000).

Adult survivors and also their children and grandchildren found to be expressing negative emotional reactions such as resentment, frustration, rage and anger towards the people who deny Genocide or avoid calling 1915 a genocide (Miller & Miller, 1993). This case might be one of the indicators of the effects of 1915 on multiple generations of Armenians (Esmaeili, 2011; Kalayjian et al, 1996). Survivors of 1915 stated that they feel anxious when they hear the word "Turk". Some confessed that when

they think about the Genocide their “hearts burn with anger”. Others reported that they ask for restitution and revenge (Miller & Miller, 1993).

Manoogian, Walker and Richards’ study (2007), analyzed the family legacies, as participants of the study. 24 of them lost a relative in the Genocide. Many have depicted traumatizing experiences. Forced marching through the desert was one of these experiences; the parents or grandparents of these participants had transferred these experiences verbally. Some stated that they have seen the actual scars of their survivor family members. And four of them stated that their mothers suffer from night terrors, waking up at night and screaming. These means the transmission of genocide experience can also happen non-verbally.

Esmaili (2011)’s study with second generation of survivors shows that, idealized and positive characteristics were attributed to Armenia by almost all participants. ‘Home’ or ‘homelands’ were the words to describe Armenia. All participants have mostly Armenian friends and state that being Armenian matters to them (Esmaili, 2011). Patriarchy, Christian religion and beliefs, ethnocentrism were primarily and dominantly related with Armenian identity and being an Armenian. Nearly all of them attributed idealized, sublime, and quite positive characteristic to Armenians.

Following generations of 1915 have stated in this studies, that marrying an Armenian mattered to their parents and it also matters in their own family (Esmaili, 2011; Vosbikian, 2002). All participants had or still have spouses who identify with being Armenian (Esmaili, 2011). Even though marrying someone who is not an Armenian is still a serious issue

among some Armenians, in time it has become somewhat more agreeable (Bakalian, 1993). These participants have stated attending the Armenian Church regularly or occasionally so Christianity matters too (Esmaeili, 2011; Vosbikian, 2002).

The ability to speak Armenian was one of the most important indicators of “being Armenian” as it was the most commonly remarked characteristic (Esmaeili, 2011; Vosbikian, 2002). Nearly all participants grew up in a home in which parents spoke Armenian.

Those who could not speak Armenian noted that they feel less Armenian around those Armenians who are fluent in Armenian (Vosbikian, 2002).

Future generations’ bond with their Armenian culture and history was very important for most of the participants in Manoogians et al.’s study (2007). The woman stated that they’d like to see that their children and families do comprehend the resilience and agony of Armenians. For them, passing down the values and culture to the next generation would be possible through family gatherings and cooking together. To preserve the Armenian language and culture they would push into or encourage their kids in activities in which Armenians or being Armenian is in focus. Participants have also emphasized the importance of Christianity, Sunday school and attending church in order to socialize and for carrying on the community and culture. A great number of participants said that their faith helped them with overcoming the “hard times”. One woman defines the Armenian Church in her local community as a family legacy because her parents helped to found it. On the other hand, the study shows that, many

participants try to carry out the responsibility to preserve the Armenian legacy with their limited cultural knowledge, which eventually causes a clash. Especially Armenian-American women are under a lot of pressure and fear that their kids will be assimilated into the very dominant U.S. culture (Manoogian et al., 2007).

In 1987, Kassabian has studied the effects of this tragedy on Armenian-American families. Three generations of Armenians were in focus: Survivors, their children and grandchildren. Kassabian found that all three generations showed a strong commitment to their heritage, but in different ways: Older generations were into listening traditional music or cooking ethnic food, on the other hand the third generation showed less interest to these activities. Third generation was more into learning about the culture and history and found it important to maintain the language and a sense of community. When the second and third generations were asked “Do you feel different from other people because of the Genocide experience of your parents/grandparents?” question, both said yes. So there are also similarities between them two. The study shows also that while Turkish government’s denial of the genocide causes anger and feelings of loss in the second generation, third generation has a more externalized approach to this issue and their main focus is aimed at preserving the Armenian culture and keeping it strong and alive. It has been observed that the third generation has a more open request for reparation, which is caused by the American respect for human rights and freedom (Kassabian, 1987, as cited in Kupelian et al., 1998).

Bakalian's study (1993) indicates that even though Armenian Americans' attendance and behavioral components of a constant involvement to the Genocide commemoration are less likely, they still have strong sentimental and emotional connections with the Genocide. According to Bakalian this particular connection is identified with generational and cultural connections. Nearly all Armenian Americans –it didn't matter if they were born in the United States or which generational status they had– had firmly this particular way of connection to their roots. On the other hand, it has been observed that, although in each subsequent generation there is a decrease in behavior there is only a little attitudinal change toward the Genocide.

In order to follow the evolution of this culturally noticeable story, the story of 1915 in time, we can compare the narratives among different generations. In Azarian's study (2007) children of the survivors told historical narratives for the most part, instead of telling the memories and experiences of their parents. This situation is an indicator of how detached children of survivors can be from their own family narratives. Their narrative consists of a historical continuum. Generally, they become distanced from the story through this historical continuum –this very historical continuum which was indeed experienced by their family– and not through their emotions. This situation is an explanation of the emotional nature and lacking linguistic resources –for example using plural possessive pronouns maintain collectivity and it has been observed that narrators abstain from using such pronouns– which were dominant throughout the

interviews. On the other hand, the genocide narratives of the grandchildren of survivors consist more of a liturgical story with powerful religious connotations. In their narratives, the traumas of their grandparents are recapped with an ending of redemption and they see their parents as Christian Martyrs. Mythical connotations come into play when we speak of great-grandchildren of the survivors. The narratives of these great-grandchildren, who were born and raised in the United States, Turkish government's political aspirations and their family history is intertwined with a story with mythical aspects and connotations. In their narrative, land reparations from the Turkish government and political actions play an equally important role with their ancestor's trauma (Azarian, 2007). Because the genocide is still present in these fourth generations' conscious, it gives the idea that through this tragedy past and present are related. Presence of the past persists and there is a deformation in the sequentiality of the events. "That is me" is an explanation given by a participant to the researcher regarding his attendance to memorials and genocide is also the reason for being in America: "I wouldn't probably be in, you know in America if that (the genocide) hadn't taken place." This has a significant meaning regarding narrative studies' field: A narrative's tendency is partly affiliated with an ethnic identity (Azarian, 2010).

It has been found that the survivors of 1915 and the following generations use different methods for overcoming their extreme conditions, including denial, emotional distancing, resignation, splitting, religion, work and family (Esmaili, 2011; Kalayjian et al., 1996; Manoogian et al., 2007).

Repression and avoidance, in survivors' terms "blocking the memories" or "forgetting", are of the ways for coping with the intense feelings regarding the Genocide (Miller & Miller, 1993). Loss of control, experiencing the traumatic events recurrently and uncontrollably, resignation, sadness and helplessness are reflected in coping responses. Also, it has been suggested that the reason why Armenian culture values and emphasizes togetherness is linked to another coping response: By "sticking together" they share the suffering and pain (Kalayjian et al., 1996).

### **2.2.2. Transmission of Trauma among Turkish Armenians**

In consequence of ominous experiences of violence, a society in a difficult conflict is apt to develop several negative emotional collective orientations including hatred, fear and anger (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). Studies show that, although there are similarities between Armenians in Turkey and Armenian Diaspora, there also some differences. One of the most significant differences would be that while Armenians in Diaspora have stronger feelings of hatred and anger towards Turks, Armenians in Turkey has stronger feelings of fear towards Turks.

Unconsciously, spontaneously, automatically functioning fear is an evolutionary safeguard, which ensures survival in the case of a potential danger and threat. In order to deal with a stressful situation society members get help from fear; it prepares them for similar kind of situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). There are some ways to this preparation: In case there is a threat aimed at some individual or to the society overall, the unity, mobilization and solidarity among society members are increased; selected

retrieval of information in relation to the perceived cause of fear is facilitated; attention is narrowed and people are sensitized to the threatening information and cues. But fear also captivates individuals or the society. It causes rottenness. It hinders the society from progressing. It leads to a disassociation from the past. In order to resolve a conflict peacefully disassociation from the past might come in handy, because it allows creative thinking about solutions, new alternatives and courses of actions. Major mistrust issues might come up because of fear and it also might delegitimize the enemy. Fear might cause aggressive and/or defensive behaviors, even when there is only little or nothing to achieve. Misinterpretation of information and cues might occur: Everything, even the smallest things or the signals of good intentions might be regarded as signs of danger and threat. And last but not least, a collective freezing of beliefs about the enemy and conflict and also about how to deal with danger might occur (Bar-Tal, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

When the ingroup is appraised as physically weak, it has been experienced fear, but when the ingroup is appraised as strong, then anger. Intergroup emotions theory has been offered into the realm of social identity as an extension of appraisal theory. In their conceptual framework of hierarchical trust dilemmas, Kramer and Jost suggests relatively to other groups, members of groups with low power experience outgroup paranoia. Outgroup paranoia occurs because of a perception of real risk of an exploitation of higher power groups. Argued by Haynes (1986) paranoid ideation is a learned behavior and may be reinforced and modeled by

significant others or parents. So, we should both consider the cultural and social context of paranoia.

Perception of threat leads to fear. The psychological state of hatred, fear and threat perception make people to be more focused on their own group. Also, according to a line of political research, people with feelings of fear tend to be more intolerant towards outgroups and they are more ethnocentric (Feldman & Stenner, 1997). People tend to draw evident distinctions between the rival and their own group in case of a threat perception, fear and violence, which leads to a sense of victimhood. On the other hand, lack of introspectiveness hinders people from thinking that the root of the hatred might be within them even though they want to believe that it lies in the others (Bar-Tal, 1989).

The time of 1915 has the most crucial place in the collective memory of Armenians in Turkey, Armenians in Diaspora and in Armenia (Özdoğan, Üstel, Karakaşlı, & Kentel, 2009). 1915 is a *chosen trauma* for the Armenians living in Turkey. As Volkan mentioned it (1997), *chosen trauma* is when a large community is humiliated by another one, feels itself like a victim and the intergenerational transmission of the trauma that is caused by all the losses and the suffering.

The fear that is led by this trauma has been internalized by Armenians who lost their lives, families, lands, and social statuses during the time of this event. Moreover, this is transmitted from one generation to another. Thus, the experiences of society members maintain the collective orientation of fear, but also society's channels of communication usually

reinforce it. Throughout the history the objects of collective fear, which cause trauma in group members, proceed, even though they change correspondingly to circumstances. On one hand these societies become introverted caused by this situation but also their identities are shaped by it (Muratyan, 2011).

The Armenians are awakened by Hrant Dink's murder and after it a great number of them started to research their past (Muratyan, 2011; Yayloyan, 2015). On the other hand, murder of Hrant Dink led society to notice Armenians again. This event also restarted the debates on 1915 (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016). Fear and insecurity among Armenians in Turkey increased with continual threats and with Hrant Dink's murder (Muratyan, 2011; Yayloyan, 2015).

In year 2011 Muratyan conducted a study, in which she researched 15 Armenians from Turkey, studying how fear is developed in the collective memories of Armenians as a minority group and how it affects their identities and daily lives. According to the results, Armenians who are in contact with the Armenian community in their daily lives, have fear of many things which start from childhood. They are not aware of these fears. The neighborhoods or schools Armenians chose are the ones that are close to other Armenians and the ones where they would feel safe. So they can search for each other and their identity can be maintained (Muratyan, 2011).

When it is required, even today, Armenians would hide their identity in order to maintain it. Of the most common ways of hiding identity are: not using their real name (Özdoğan et al., 2009), not speaking Armenian in

public and not revealing their Christianity. There are some “natural” behaviors that every Armenian has. Some of these are: wearing cross necklaces, which cannot be seen from the outside or displaying the Turkish flag from their homes or workplaces (Muratyan, 2011).

Even though great importance is placed on Armenian language by Armenians living in Turkey, there are Armenians who are not fully comprehensive of the language or cannot speak the language. In this study, a significant number of participant of this study indicated that the language they know “the best” is Turkish. The highest percentage of speaking Turkish compared to Armenian is founded in younger age groups. It can be argued that in terms of the language, newer generations are integrated to the society to a greater extent. Disintegration of the conventional structure of the Armenian community is related to this situation. Reasons regarding the larger society such as the “Citizen, speak Turkish!” campaign is related to this. With a reflex of self-protection, Armenians have abstained themselves from speaking Armenian outside. This lead Armenian to be a language that is kept inside of the house and not easily used language (Özdoğan et al., 2009).

One more important element of being Armenian is religion. In order to fulfill the symbolic action of attending to church, Armenians are going there frequently or infrequently. To establish belonging, attending to church is crucial. Especially for older generations, church has special meaning. For them, church is a place of worship and sign of continuity. They are trying to attend to church as frequently as possible. There is a decrease in the number

of individuals who practice the religion in younger generations. Younger generations use religion as a reference to reproduce their bonds with being Armenian though it is a distanced one (Özdoğan et al., 2009).

Görgülü & Gündoğar (2016) conducted a study on Turkish Armenians' and pointed out some characteristics that stand out both in focus group discussions and in in-depth interviews. These are: uneasiness, feelings of discrimination and being unwanted citizens.

Due to the events happened in the past, Armenians pointed that they are feeling insecure and holding concerns regarding the security. According to them, in Turkey, the notion of citizenship is identified with being Turkish and Muslim and within this scope the discrimination of "us and others" (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009). Armenians believe that there is a discriminative attitude that is demonstrated towards Armenians and that it's being reproduced in social relations. Armenians have to conceal their identities and believe that they aren't treated equally due to the difference in religion and names (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009).

The subconscious thought of Turks against Armenians results in fear and makes Armenian to be alert. The thought pops up in any occasion (Muratyan, 2011). Families hesitate to put their children to be in environment that is out of control. They also don't like their children to be so close to Turks. For instance, one of the woman participants indicated that her father did not permitted her to go dancing with the reason of finding it

dangerous to be in a close proximity with a man. Moreover, her father fears that one day her daughter can marry with Turk (Muratyan, 2011).

In order to preserve and maintain the Armenian identity, in-group marriages have a crucial role for Turkish Armenians. Armenians' negative orientation towards interracial marriage is of the most significant finding of this study. According to them, this type of marriage results in assimilation. In addition, the extent of this negative approach differs from generation to generation. In other words; getting married to non-Armenians is objected by families. However, the rate of interracial marriage is increased to a great extent. Even though marrying to an Armenian is the desired situation, marrying to a Christian is also relatively accepted. But marrying to a Muslim is highly not desired. There are certain arguments behind the refusal of interracial arguments. These are: these marriages won't last and problems regarding children will emerge and also the subjects of an interracial marriage will be excluded from the community (Özdoğan et al., 2009). So Armenians don't only fear for themselves but also for their next generations.

The fear has hindered Armenians in Turkey from talking about 1915 among generations and the dominance of silence has been transferred intergenerationally (Muratyan, 2011; Özdoğan et al., 2009). Because of the fear from the regime and putting their kids under the danger and Armenians in Turkey nearly never speak about 1915 at home. Exclusively, elders start to share their stories with each other when there is a gathering with other relatives at home (Muratyan, 2011; Yayloyan, 2015). During these gatherings while children of the survivors, the second generation tried to

make sense out of the elders' words, the third generation listened these stories directly from their grandparents (Özdoğan et al., 2009). Even though they have been told no stories, each new generation knows about the sufferings of the former generations from 1915 until now (Muratyan, 2011). It has been considered that the new generation would live peacefully and happily if they do not know about the 1915 Armenian Deportation (Muratyan, 2011; Özdoğan et al., 2009). This approach is one of the main differences between Turkish and Diaspora Armenians. In this study, despite of the feeling of victimhood caused by being unable to express openly what happened – the level of integration to the society didn't matter– there were no feelings of grudge among participants, who found about this incident in various ways (Özdoğan et al., 2009).

The interviews demonstrated that significant parts of Armenians are in favor of talking about 1915. Different generations agreed upon and emphasized the importance of telling about 1915 to raise more literate generations about their own history (Özdoğan et al., 2009). In Turkey, Armenians have tendency to be pessimistic regarding being open to discussions on 1915. Widely held belief is that even though incidents of 1915 can be discussed openly, talking too much about it will still cause trouble (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016). When it comes to the history and identity, Armenians, who are always careful about their relations with Turks, distance themselves from even the closest friends because of the fear of facing negative reactions or attitudes (Muratyan, 2011). The reason of this is not only Armenians' collective memories, but also the extension of

nationalism and discourses towards minorities. Armenian Diaspora's action for the recognition of 1915 as "genocide" by the Turkish Government is another reason that fosters the fear in Turkish Armenians. One of the shared thought of all participants is that Armenian Diaspora's actions damage Turkish Armenians (Muratyan, 2011).

Özdoğan et al. (2009) conducted a study and one of the most crucial results of this study is that in recent years in the process of reconstructing the identity Turkish Armenians feel increasingly "being trapped". There are several reasons of this feeling of "being trapped": Turkish Armenians see themselves being ostracized by the Turkish government and society; Diaspora Armenians' raise of voice in the international arena; and another ostracisation, which has emerged after the independence of Armenia. On the other hand, it can be said that Armenians in Turkey feel more marginalized after Armenia gained its independence. So, due to the Diaspora's adverseness towards Turkey, the "Armenity" of the Armenians in Turkey is being questioned. The main elements of this exclusion of Armenians in Turkey would be: becoming away with the politics of the Diaspora; The Armenian Patriarchate of İstanbul's distanced relationship with the Etchmiadzin and continuing to live in Turkey after 1915 (Özdoğan et al., 2009).

According to Yayloyan (2015), Armenians are strongly affected by the unhealed trauma of 1915 regarding the perception of Turks. Therefore, the Armenians still don't trust or suspicious that there will be any kind of positive political progress in Turkey or an intellectual progressive segment

might come out from the Turkish society. On the other hand the collective image of the entire Turkish nation is not that negative on the side of Turkish Armenians. This is mainly because Turks and Armenians live side by side, share experiences and interact with each other on daily basis, which enables the construction of an image that is not only based on 1915.

According to the studies, almost all Armenian participants have pointed the name of a Turk and expressed feeling of gratitude who had protected or saved them during 1915. In terms of healing the Turkish-Armenian relations in this situation is crucial (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009). On the other hand, there are Turkish Armenians who grew up being alienated are biased against those who try to mourn together (Muratyan, 2011). Due to the constantly changing situations, Armenian participants highlighted that both sides need to get to know each other. Though both sides have lived together for over centuries, there is a problem in their perception of each other (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009). Certainly, establishing friendships has a therapeutic influence on prejudices. Younger generations who have higher levels of integration with the society, pointed that in order to come over their prejudices establishing friendship is important (Özdoğan et al., 2009).

There are certain campaign and commemorations that are organized in order to capture attention to 1915. One of such campaign is “I Apologize”. Through this campaign people have started talking about the sufferings, which led to a contentedness. But also they were cautious about not to get exposed (Muratyan, 2011). Fears and concerns caused by the

current situation influences daily lives and citizenship practices of Armenians negatively. Moreover, they lose hope for the future (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Muratyan, 2011).

Some Armenians in Turkey have expressed that, Turks are being criticized by Diaspora and Armenians in Armenia for being apathetic towards the agony of Armenians, but they also do not see that in Turkey, particularly in education, history is told distortedly and Turks are being subjects to this distorted history and not getting any meritable knowledge. Also, Armenians are also subjected to this history taught in schools which can be considered as another element of their psychological trauma (Yayloyan, 2015).

The most crucial expectations of Armenians living in Turkey are: ensuring that they can live in Turkey as equal citizens without a necessity of hiding their identity, without belittlement and fear, and acceptance of their entity on this land (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016).

Turkish-Armenians', global-human, the ingroup (Armenians) and the outgroup (Turkish) identities were analyzed in Der-Karabetian and Balian's study (1992). The variables such as gender, age, involvement in Armenian ethnic organizations, and level and nature of educations were taken into consideration. According the results, those who attended Turkish schools have a lower score on ingroup identity and higher score on outgroup and global-human identity compared to those who attended Armenian schools. This shows that those who have attended Turkish schools possibly experiencing acculturation and distancing themselves from

parochialism. Also younger generation show lower score on ingroup identity compared to older generations, and vice versa. Also men have higher scores on ingroup identity compared to women.

Still, it is important to underline that these results can't be generalized to Turkish Armenians since there are only limited number of academic studies focused on them.

### **2.3. The Silence of Trauma**

Family stories and beliefs are an important part of family identity because they help maintain culture that is based on historic events and preserve the memory of the past. Sharing stories about those who died and how individuals survived was thought to bring for the cultural awareness as well as commemoration (Manoogian et al, 2007). But the traumas are not always transmitted directly from one generation to another but also by using roundabouts such as stories or lullabies.

These stories, which are gateways for the young generations to imagine the lives of their grandparents, create a body of knowledge about being an Armenian in Turkey. They are not very often told to young children in order not to disturb them. But when they are told among family members, they are absorbed by the children whose attention inevitably focuses on the act of storytelling while sitting nearby. This makes the very act of storytelling, with its context and senses, part of childhood memories (Bilal, 2004). Also lullabies which were produced secret spheres, the private of the private sphere, had become means for women to express

themselves, their feelings, the way they see and experience life to the next generations (Bilal,2004).

From the moment a baby is born, lullabies are a mother's indispensable ally in soothing her child for whom everything in the big, wide world is new and frightening. It is in this space that the child experiences her/his first dialogue, her/his first story, her/his first contact with the teachings of tradition, experience and culture, which over time build into an essential part of our collective memory (Bilal, 2004).

After 1915 Armenian women's lullabies were the only carriers of that memory of violence and catastrophe. Women sung what they saw, they sung what they what they felt on their body, they sung nothing but pain (Bilal, 2004). According to Bilal (2004), women's memories and lullabies keep and transmit the 'archives' of the unarchivable elements of a culture, such as secrets, emotions and senses.

The intergenerational transmission of trauma is observed either the family's traumatic memories are transmitted consciously or unconsciously or the family members remain completely silent. The researcher stress that the survivors strongly influence the psychic world of the next generation with their traumatic past. They contend that the children sense what cannot be put into words by their parents, and they are aware of their parent's past trauma, whether or not this had been openly discussed in the home (Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997). The authors observed the complete silences, mysterious secrecies, isolation, and disconnection from intense

affective experience that shaped patterns of the relationships in the families of traumatized parents (Bradfield, 2011; Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997).

In mother and child relationship it is seen that unformulated experience-as a state of reduced awareness of a personal experience – which keeps painful experience housed in an unspeakable space (Bradfield, 2011). In this study, mother's intrapsychic processing of her traumatogenic memories and affects was arranged around disconnection from these memories and affects, and disallowance of the expression of these through language. There is a silent enabling the survivor parent a movement away from experiencing distressful emotions. What we can understand from this is the notion of trauma as held in silence; trauma as an experience that cannot be spoken, and is dissociated from conscious awareness of lived experience (Bradfield, 2011).

According to Kuzirian (2012), when the individual continuously disconnects from and avoids the traumatic stress, not only are trauma symptoms likely to persist, but the memory of the event becomes more and more fragmented. Therefore, a pre-existing avoidant attachment style may facilitate and maintain trauma symptoms. In Kuzirian's (2012) study, individuals high on romantic attachment avoidance may have attempted to distance themselves from the impact of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. However, this coping mechanism may potentially fuel the maintenance of trauma reactions.

Researchers have often found that silence is a common method used in families who have endured trauma. When traumatic events occur they

defy people's ordinary ways of managing and organizing phenomena, frequently causing them to avoid speaking about the traumatic experience (Abrams, 1999). However, simply not speaking about feelings does not make them go away. Rather, feelings are apt to be communicated in other, non-verbal ways.

Silence about historical trauma is common among survivors, often creating impediments to healing and recovery and serving as a medium through which the intergenerational effects of catastrophic experiences are transmitted (Liem, 2007).

On the basis of her research and clinical work with survivors of the Holocaust, psychoanalyst Yael Danieli (1998) proposed the concept of the “conspiracy of silence” to capture the interpersonal dynamics of trauma in family relations. Silence about the parents’ experiences was often motivated by a sincere wish to spare the children such devastating knowledge. She describes a relationship where those survivor parents could not talk about it because of the pain or impossibility of recounting the horror, it served to protect the parents themselves from confronting their memories and helped to stifle their emotions, and those close to them, children and grandchildren, feared asking about it because of what they might actually learn. Silence is the product of this protective collusion. The pain of trauma disclosure and the reciprocal desire to protect one another and the self from re-traumatization can be a powerful interpersonal motive to censor talk (Liem, 2007; Aarts, 1998). Survivor parents welcomed the conspiracy of silence because of their fear that their memories would corrode their own lives and prevent their

children from becoming healthy, normal members of society. But despite a family-stated tenet that “everything was alright,” the children grew up in painful bewilderment; they understood neither the inexplicable torment within the family, nor their own sense of guilt (Danieli, 1998).

In the Holocaust history, the reactions of society at large to survivors have a significant negative effect on their post trauma adaptation and their ability to integrate their traumatic experiences (Danieli, 1998). After liberation, as during the war, survivors of the holocaust encountered a pervasive societal reaction consisting of indifference, avoidance, repression, and denial of their holocaust experiences. Like other victims, survivors’ war accounts were too horrifying for most people to listen to or believe. Their stories were therefore easy to ignore or deny. Such reactions forced survivors to conclude that nobody cared to listen and that “nobody could really understand” unless they had gone through the same experiences. In their interactions with non-survivors, they became silent about holocaust. As a result, conspiracy of silence between holocaust survivors and society emerged. This has further impeded the possibility of their intrapsychic integration and healing, and made their task of mourning impossible (Danieli, 1998).

As mentioned, the conspiracy of silence was not limited to the families. Repression was encouraged by the society and silent adjustment was, therefore, typical of the postwar adaptation of Indian war victims in the Netherlands. One general survival strategy was the avoidance of any display of conspicuous behavior. War experiences, or problems related to their

immigration, were hardly ever mentioned. Children soon learned to share in this conspiracy. Even in families where parents did speak about the war, children refrained from asking particular details (Aarts, 1998).

Armenian traditions reflect a social system which has viewed men as having authority over women and children. It is a patriarchal society in which women did not have many rights, and often times were silenced (Ayvazian, 2008). Although in current day Armenia, this custom is not widespread, the notion of 'silence' may be evident in other aspects of the culture. For instance, the strict religious and patriarchal values and beliefs which have been passed on from one generation to the next have enforced rather narrow standards for Armenian women in regards to their sexuality and femininity. For example, historical recollections have passed on the fact that during the 1915, women had been raped and abused. However, because feelings of shame and guilt have been instilled in the women about their sexuality, the women continue to remain silent. Because they tend to refrain from talking about such traumatic experiences, in order to avoid shame and/or guilt, they keep their feelings buried inside (Okoomian, 2002). Certainly, such traumatic experiences can have long term harmful effects in the lives of Armenian women (Ayvazian, 2008).

Many parents only communicated partially, leaving out various details of the traumatic events. These unimaginable stories were often missing details due to a lack of record or the emotional inability of survivors to recount their painful stories in full. In Miller & Miller's study (1993), more than half of the survivors never discussed what happened or how they

felt about the Genocide with their families, as avoidance and repression were the defense mechanisms most likely used by these Armenians to deal with their trauma. In Kalayjian's research (1996), a majority (75%) stated that they did not talk to anyone about their experiences and did not talk about their traumatic experiences; those few who did, communicated with others of Armenian descent, and few questions were answered concerning the massacre. Those who remained silent and isolated did so largely out of fear of further persecution. However, the studies with second generation of 1915 survivors mention that almost all participants had knowledge of the history of their family about 1915 (Garavanian, 2000; Esmaili, 2011). Those born in the Middle East had a higher degree of exposure to others who survived and knew about the genocide, giving them a higher level of awareness about the genocide at a younger age. Almost all participants recounted their parents' plight during the genocide (Garavanian, 2000). These stories of loss, pain, and survival were transmitted to the participants when they were between the ages of approximately 6 to 13 years old. Exact ages were unavailable because most participants could not remember. Of the 8 participants, 7 had the parent who was the direct survivor tell them the stories of what he/she or their spouse endured. However, all had family and friends who would discuss the events of the genocide as a collective experience during their childhood (Esmaili, 2011). None of the participants stated that their interest in the genocide is declining and six of nine people stated that they think of the genocide "very often" (Garavanian, 2000). Almost all participants informed directly their children of the genocide when they were very young

or in early adolescence. Participants in this study felt strongly that their children should be aware of the genocide, including the horrific details of it, and be active in getting the genocide recognized (Garavanian, 2000). Some parents refrained from talking about the trauma directly. Some stories were told as factual narratives of what happened without any emotional connections. In fact all but 2 participants retold their parent stories of the genocide with a flat or incongruent affect and ambivalent mood (Esmaeili, 2011).

Paradoxically, it is precisely the untold story rather than the told, that is passed on to the next generation with great intensity as the offspring, left with little concrete information regarding their parents' experiences, imagine unbearably terrible fantasies about their parents' experiences (Shmotkin, Shrira, Goldberg, & Palgi, 2011). Non-verbal and indirect communication about the traumatic event to children can lead to a decrease in ego strength and the ability to empathize, as well as an increase in thoughts of paranoia, depression and anxiety (Felsen, 1998).

Virag (1984) also recognized the impact of Holocaust related family secrets on the third generation. She worked with several children who were raised by parents who sought to avoid any discussion of their family Holocaust experience. Virag characterized these children as suffering from kindergarten or school phobias, exhibiting disturbances in eating and sleeping habits, and possessing inclinations to develop psychosomatic symptoms and intensified masturbation responses. In many of these syndromes, Virag noted that physical separation from the child's parent was

equated with a fear of death, representing an unconscious identification with exterminated members of the family. In essence, the symptoms, the play activity, the dreams and fantasies of the children made it very clear that the children knew about the family secrets (Simmons, 2008).

#### **2.4. The Effects of Trauma on Parenting**

The Identity of a family consists mainly of stories and beliefs regarding the family, since the culture concerning historic events carried on by these stories and beliefs and also with their help the memory of the past is being conserved. When we retell the stories of the deceased and the ones who have survived, we might give rise to cultural awareness but also in this way we can remember them (Manoogian et al., 2007). Since 1920s, psychological literature is undoubtedly cognizant of the impact of parenting on children's development. (Darling, 1999) This means, there is a consensus regarding traumatic experiences and their effects are being transferred in the family, from generation to generation (Cole, Woolger, Power, & Smith, 1992; Downs, Miller, Testa, & Panek, 1992; Kashani, Daniel, Dandoy, & Holcomb, 1992; Truscott, 1992). Posttraumatic conflicts that are not yet settled might intervene with parental functioning (Banyard, Williams, & Siegel, 2003; Aarts, 1998). Mostly, it is suggested that because of the adaptive strains which came along with parents' survivorship, the traumas and their symptoms are transferred to the children through the parenting relationships (Kestenberg, 1972; Wilson & Fromm, 1982). Some of the second generation of survivors set an example of this phenomenon; they find it hard to trust others and outside world, they have trouble

establishing intimacy, building relationships, complications with affecting regulation, guilt feelings, depression, over-attachment to the parents, intense loyalty, acting-out behaviors (Staub, 2003; Aarts, 1998).

The theory on psychoanalytic object relation, particularly Mahler's study on the separation – individuation process on children (Mahler, 1975), also enhanced the understanding of family dynamics underlying pathology in the second generation. For survivors with immense traumatization, having children has a significant meaning: They might be unreasonably overprotective, they might have symbiotic needs, or this situation could lead to dander and powerlessness. As a result, the separation and individuation of their children would be harder (as cited in Aarts, 1998).

High level of anxiety of the survivors cause distinctive ways of parenting such as overprotective behaviors and in order to atone for their losses they tend to invest excessively in their children which hinders the process of child's individuation (Barocas & Barocas, 1980; Davidson, 1992; Kestenberg, 1980; Russell, 1974; Trossman, 1968). The consequence of exposure to severe and continued trauma might be that these people will be more likely to see the world as a more hazardous place and so they might feel a great need of protecting their family from this unsafe world which would eventually lead to overprotective behaviors towards their children (Brom, Kfir, & Dasberg, 2001). This sort of behavior contributes to discourage independence. The development of child's autonomy is hindered by overprotective parenting. And also, when parents have no tolerance towards their children's autonomous growth and to their separation, the

children of survivors will end up having bigger family enmeshment (Rose and Garske, 1987).

Especially, Holocaust survivors most probably were not able to thoroughly grieve for their beloved ones and they had to go through sudden separations from the family members. As a result, they have hard times letting their children to separate from them which in the end altered the approach of their parenting which is to keep their children dependent and enmeshed (Shoshan, 1989). Even so, the literature indicates that this enmeshment appears not to be affecting the intimacy between child and survivor parent (Halik, Rosenthal, & Pattison, 1990). The central finding of this study shows that an important number of daughters stated higher levels of enmeshment with their parents but also they have indicated that there is a similar level of intimacy with them. This suggests that although daughters have hard time with individuating from their parents, the level of emotional closeness between them is not affected by it.

Krystal (1968) viewed that survivor mothers are in need of a symbiotic relationship with their offspring which causes interference with accomplished separation and individuation. Early symbiotic relationship between survivor parent and child is defined by Barocas and Barocas (1980); they note that “the normal developmental separation- individuation process represents a severethreat to the family homeostasis” (p. 9). The family experiences the child’s separate sense of self as a narcissistic injury; it suggests rejection of the parent and brings back the mourning process. Parents see this as another loss and add it to their actual losses experienced

during wartime. Reactivated fears of loss may be displayed by first generation survivor parents after child's birth, thereby there might be an escalation of apprehensiveness and overprotectiveness concerning separation from the children (Adelman, 1995). Extreme controlling and over involvement with the children is seen by the Holocaust survivor parents (Davidson, 1992). The portrayal of these parents is that they are highly concerned when it comes to their children's well-being. For instance, a study shows that many expectant mother, who have strong memories about their own malnourishment stated that they are afraid that their developing fetus is improperly fed. Furthermore, a perpetual food-pushing on their children and unnecessary food stockpiles, caused by an anticipation of a disaster soon, are spotted with these mothers. Despite the fact that these children satisfactorily catered materially and well-nourished, many of them suffers emotional deprivation caused by the notably restricted and limited affective sources given by the parents (Barocas and Barocas, 1979). At the same time, parents who fail to show affection to their children, due to the intensity of the trauma they have experienced, might become the person in the family who needs love and affection the most and at the end of this, role-reversing parenting might occur.

In role-reversing parenting, parents expect from their children to meet their emotional needs (Chase, 1999). Consequently, a sense of responsibility caused by the emotional wellbeing of the parent might burden the child and therefore he might abridge his own bonding needs. Parents who constantly keep being affected psychologically by the past trauma, for

example a trauma derived from a genocide, might directly or indirectly pass on their emotional susceptibility to their offspring and by that instill excessive concern in the children for the parents' well-being (Field, Muong, & Sochanvimean, 2013).

By using Mahler's theory, Freyberg (1979) suggests that during the early separation/individuation process, the survivor mothers weren't present and emotionally responsive to their young children. The grieving, devastated and guilty mother withdrew and is afraid of the need for separateness of the child. The parent sees the individuation as a personal loss and eventually leading their children to feel guilty about their own freedom. This concept of guilt and need of protection directed to their parents is described as "mutual overprotection". For example, the children of the survivors of the Holocaust had no expectation of an understanding from their parents in case of a conflict; a conflict which occurred when their needs clashed with their parents' anxieties. Consequently, they were compelled to put their needs eventually in second place; primarily and most importantly came their parents' anxieties (Wiseman, Metzl, & Barber, 2006). There was hardship concerning separation and absence of boundaries. Survivors who became fully and repeatedly involved in child's life, started to get vicarious satisfaction out of it and also they imposed symbiotic relationship. While parents might have unconsciously transmitted that they cannot put up with another separation the child's individuation process was hindered. Any sort of separation can bring out a feeling correlated with loss of a family member and past separations. The

individuation process was never easy for them when they were teenagers and they stated that any kind of attempt would have hurtful consequences. Even later, in adulthood, the child felt anxiety about opening this wound again and felt the necessity to be there for their emotionally fragile parents as a source of happiness and amenity (Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997).

Afterwards, a separation anxiety is developed by the children (Davidson, 1992) which might subsequently effect the attachment relationship with their offspring. According to a range of empirical studies, the role of the parents' representation of their own attachment problems and relationships supported parenting their offspring (as cited in Banyard et al., 2003). Cole (2006) suggests that, parents who are second generation Native Americans do have problems with attachment and relationships which might lead to hardship with their parenting skills. Possibly impacted skills might consist of socialization, passing of cultural norms and traditions, role modeling, discipline, care and protection. These damages might affect the process of individuation, identity formation, trust and separation in children.

#### **2.4.1. The Parenting of Armenian People**

Due to awful and traumatic events Armenian survivors were affected by experience of enforced separation from their parents (Miller & Miller, 1993). As greater numbers of the family members or most of their relatives were lost during the 1915, for an Armenian survivor family, especially children have special meanings. Boyajian and Grigorian (1986) pointed out that there is an extraordinary pressure on Armenian children when it comes to living out their dreams because their families didn't have to chance to

fulfill theirs. This kind of pressure might lead to unhealthy enmeshment within the family. This matter is described as feeling special by Boyajian and Grigorian (1986). Dagirmanjian (1996) indicates that, this sense of specialness meant that these children felt like they were the only vehicle to their parents' and grandparents' lifetime dreams, goals and hopes.

Majority of the Armenian parents do set high expectations for their offspring in terms of financial success and education. As reported by Ayvazian (1996), 23 percent of Armenian Americans in the USA have completed a higher education. In Esmaeili's (2011) study all of the participants indicated that they have an expectancy of getting a higher education. 6 out of 8 participants did get some type of higher education indeed. Among the participant families, 5 of them indicated that they expect or have expected their children to become medical doctors or get higher education.

A finding which has emerged from a study on the intergenerational values of immigrant and non-immigrant minorities demonstrates that the children of Armenian American families have the tendency to comply with their parents' expectations and wishes (Ghazarian, Supple & Plunkett, 2008). The pursuit of academic achievement has become a method of repair for the great-grandchildren of the Armenian Genocide. For the children of the Armenian-American families academic success has become a tool to impress their parents which helped them to ease their low self-esteem (Ghazarian et al, 2008). Among 97 Armenian adolescents, Ghazarian et al. (2008) made a study on adolescent-parent relationship and associations

between familism and developmental outcomes. The extent of the familism here is that, adolescents feel responsible about helping family members and they place the comfort and well-being of the family above themselves.

Ghazarian et al. (2008) found that in Armenian families familism runs high, since Armenian teens are associated with respect for parental knowledge and authority also strongly with conformity. On the other hand, they discovered that Armenian American youth with high levels of parental conformity were more likely to experience higher levels of self-derogation. This was contradictory to the expectation. This suggests that negative feelings toward the self escalates for the Armenian American adolescents who change their behaviors in order to conform to their parents expectations. These individuals are not honest with themselves and there is a feeling of confliction. This is to be emphasized, considering that Armenians have conventionally expected from adolescents to give primacy to the family welfare over their own well-being.

Even though adolescents' academic motivation is notably and positively related to their parents' monitoring and support, there isn't any notable link between adolescents' academic motivation and parents' psychological control. But, parents' psychological control is considerably and negatively affecting adolescents' educational aspirations in the future (Der Sarkissian, 2002).

Barely space for individual thinking or decision making, interdependence, control and influence over the child's actions are seen

seriously in the parenting practices of the Armenian American communities. Armenian American parenting practices with huge deal of expectation and control portray an authoritarian style of parenting instead of an authoritative one (Ayvazian, 1996, Baghdaserians, 2010). Baumrind's notion about the positive impact of authoritative parenting has been confirmed by many studies. According to Baumrind (1971) an *authoritative* parent has high maturity demands, displays behaviors which include warmth and also has an outstanding control with respect to child conformity with parental expectations (as cited in Baghdaserians, 2010). According to recent researchers (Hayrapetian, 2002; Yousoofian, 1995), the transition from a traditional authoritarian parenting style to authoritative one is made by extremely acculturated Armenian Americans, especially mothers, as cited by Ayrapetyan (2005). Ayrapetyan (2005) also suggests that, few studies on Armenian-American parenting manners don't mention any child-rearing practices that could share similarities with Baumrind's (1967) permissive parenting, meaning parent with excessive warmth and nurturance but also request of maturity and low control. These studie's suggestion looks like that in Armenian American families; permissive parenting might not be common.

Nonetheless, Baghdaserians's (2010) study –contradicting with Ayrapetyan's (2005) study– suggests that Armenian American mothers have higher scores on permissive parenting comparing to any other parenting style scale (Baghdaserians, 2010). Apparently, between researches results may vary, since there are only limited studies on Armenian parenting. There

has to be more research as to get better generalizability and consistency about Armenian parenting.

According to Barocas and Barocas (1979), a survivor's child provides a sort of a warehouse for his/her parent's future hopes. Children of Holocaust Survivors (COHS) feel extreme pressure on justifying their parents' survival and succeeding, against the backdrop of survivor guilt. Paradoxically, in their mission of parent-validating COHS were seem to have fear of failure, but also a fear of success, consequently developing independence from the parents and self-sufficiency. In the survivor family relations pattern, it's believed that independence might be a threat regarding close family ties. Either way, according to Russell (1974) the cause of delay in the children's psychosocial development was because they weren't permitted to adopt an independent identity. Parental expectations and needs were to come first, since this was the expectation.

In her study Esmaeili (2011) investigated the intergenerational transmission of trauma concerning Armenian Genocide and its' effect on the participants' families. The study included 8 second generation survivors. Their opinion about individuation and separation regarding their children was in question. 7 participants stated that, their child or children lived or still living with them until they got or get married (Esmaeili, 2011). Feelings of worry towards their children were reported by all participants, though some of them felt it more frequently and some less. Hypervigilant behavior and anxious feelings were involved. Despite the fact that all participants stated that they feel mentally caught up or worried about their children,

some of them also stated that they want to provide more freedom and choices to their children. None of the participants stated that they step in the children's spousal choice or naming of their grandchildren (Esmaeili, 2011).

The effects of the anxious feelings on the attachment relationship between children and parents are discussed above. A study found that there is a relation between secondary trauma symptoms and both attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance (Kuzirian, 2012). These data propose that individuals, who have greater attachment-related avoidance and anxiety, are prone to have increased secondary trauma symptoms if a relative has experienced a mass trauma like Armenian Genocide (Kuzirian, 2012).

This chapter reflects the effects of the trauma of 1915 on the families. The death or the loss of the family members and the forced separations increased the separation anxiety of the next generations and interrupted especially the separation-individuation process that individuals should overcome during the childhood. Furthermore, because of the effects of the trauma, the parents developed high expectations regarding their children, trying to heal the past traumas with their academic success. Therefore, the trauma intensified the parents' overprotective behavior and enmeshment relation. The high level of familism of the Armenian families, the respect towards the families' knowledge and authority, the conformity to the families' wishes and the authoritarian parenting style are due to not only the trauma but also the collectivist cultural structure of the Armenian families.

Consequently, in this part, we came to realize that there are several combinations of risk and protective factors, which helps or prevents the transmission of the trauma to the next generation. When trauma gets transmitted across generations it also influences parenting. However, there are some cases in which children made effort to resolve the problems with their survivor parents and made their own processing of those issues. These children felt for their parents and understood the reasons of their behaviors. As a result they weren't interested in rebelling or question the rules. Eventually, these children turn out to be more successful parents and they showed less overcompensation for their resentment feelings to their parents (Scharf & Shulman, 2006; Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997).

## **2.5. The Place of Women in the Armenian Society**

Historically, the Armenian society is patriarchal, family centered and collectivistic. The oldest man in the family is the head of the family and the oldest woman is the one who is responsible of women in the family (Kirkland, 1984). Before 1915, the Armenian families lived in houses, all the family members together. In these houses, there were the family elders, their children and their husbands and wives and their grand children. The married women moved to these populous houses and they shouldn't talk to any other men than their husband and children (Kirkland, 1984). In the Armenian culture, the role of Armenian woman was to obey in silence. When they had children, they had the opportunity to talk but without children, they remained silent (Villa & Matossian, 1982, as cited in Vosbikian, 2002). If we take a closer look at the social roles in the

Armenian society before 1915, we observe that women were condemned to silence.

Besides, as Armenians considered the non-Armenians as a threat to the Armenian culture, the marriage was an important tool to protect Armenian women (the Armenian blood and the virginity) from other ethnic groups (Villa & Matossian, 1982, as cited in Vosbikian, 2002).

In the study conducted among the young Armenian women living in the United States, Vosbikian (2002) mentions that the roles adopted in the past culture go on. In the past, women were banned to talk, nowadays, they are told that a young woman expressing her opinions openly is looking bad and if they act like this, no man would want to marry them. Nowadays, families protect Armenian women from other ethnic groups by raising especially their daughters in the community, among people they know and warning them since their childhood about mixed marriages (Vosbikian, 2002).

Armenian women, and especially grandmothers have the crucial role of protecting the families' cultural values and taking care of the children (Amoros, Callister, & Sarkisyan, 2010). Women transmitted the legacy by defining it through the motherhood context and they wanted the next generations to remember of them as a caring mother (Manoogian et al., 2007). According to Manoogian et al.'s study (2007), the participant old Armenian women in the United States pay attention to the family unity and the transmission of the ethnic identity (the food culture, the traditions, the activities, the religious participation) to the next generations. Women don't

only transmit the culture and the history. As Erten (2013) mentions it, mothers transmit also the values of womanhood and motherhood, as soon their daughters are born. That might be the reason why in general, women choose their daughters and granddaughters as the receivers of their legacy. This transmission of experience goes on from one generation to another.

During the deportation or the period just before, it has been observed that Armenian women were kidnapped (Ekmekçioğlu, 2014), the attractive ones were taken by force to the harem (Dadrian 1994) or exposed to the sexual torture (Miller & Miller, 1993) and those who weren't attractive were killed or left dead. The Armenian Genocide is an important historical event that left a mark on the Armenian society's collective memory. According to the Armenian literature, during 1915 and afterwards, Armenian women were exposed recurrently to three situations: Young Armenian women who were taken captive were tattooed; they were committing suicide by throwing themselves to the river (collective drowning) and purity of blood (Vosbikian, 2002). This shows how deeply the Armenian history could affect the womanhood perception of the girls.

Genocide stories that women heard from their families and transmitted to the next generations have also an important place. Grandmothers told these stories directly or in a roundabout way by using for instance the lullabies. Women's memory and these lullabies preserved the hidden parts and emotions of the culture, the beliefs and the traditions. Bilal (2004) mentions that way, they transmitted their own and their family story.

These stories help the young generations to imagine how their grandparents lived and to have knowledge about being Armenian in Turkey.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

Based on this literature, this study will take a closer at how the trauma affects the Armenians living in Turkey. As mentioned in the Introduction, the studies on the trauma's impact on Armenians living abroad, most of them conducted in the United States are very limited (Papazyan, 2012; Esmaeili, 2011; Gosdanian, 1999). As for Turkey, in the last few years, the number of the academic research on Armenians increased, as there was a more convenient environment to talk about 1915. But the studies conducted among the Armenians of Turkey are nearly inexistent. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, there is no psychology study conducted specifically on the intergenerational transmission of the trauma among the Armenians of Turkey. In this regard, this study aims to contribute to the literature on Armenians of Turkey. Another purpose is to explore the intergenerational transmission of the trauma, being an Armenian in Turkey and the impact of trauma on parenting and relationships. This exploratory study was conducted using semi-structured interview with three generations Armenian women living in Istanbul. This study is based specifically on women's experiences. It aims to study if the trauma of 1915 and the experiences specific to women (Vosbikian, 2002) affected the womanhood perception of Armenian women of Turkey. The participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation are chosen among mothers and those of 3<sup>rd</sup> generation among women who don't have

children. Thus, it will be possible to study the point of view differences, when the trauma's transmission is made within the motherhood context or not (Manoogian et al., 2007).

#### **4. Method**

This exploratory study adopted a qualitative design to investigate how being an Armenian woman in Turkey is experienced for three generations in a family, how trauma is transferred from generation to generation and to understand the influence of trauma on parent-child relationships. Semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA: Smith & Osborn, 2003). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to ease a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions through the interpretations of the researcher. IPA seeks to understand what an experience means from the way of thinking of the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2003). As a result, IPA uses small sample sizes to get detailed analysis of individual cases and then considers the differences and similarities across cases (Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009).

##### **4.1. Participants**

Five Armenian families consisting of three generations of women (grandmother, mother and daughter) were interviewed for the study. Convenience sampling method was used through word of mouth. During the preparation stage of the study, the researcher declared the study by calling and messaging acquaintances requesting whether they recognize anyone who fit the inclusion criteria and might be enthusiastic about the study.

After the confirmation of Istanbul Bilgi University Ethics Committee, to establish meeting date, the researcher got in contact with volunteer participants by calling them. The inclusion criteria was being three generations of Armenian women living in Turkey and for the grandmothers, being the daughter of at least one parent who directly experienced the 1915 events. During the telephone conversation, participants were informed that the aim of the study was to investigate the experiences of being subsequent generations of 1915 survivor parents. The participants were also told that the interview would be recorded not to miss any information. If the participants approved the criteria of the study, interview meeting date was established. To have more comprehensive knowledge of study, the sample size was increased from three to five families. The participants were all living in Istanbul with middle socioeconomic status. The grandmothers' age ranged from 79 to 88 years old; mothers' from 49 to 65; and the daughters' from 23 to 37. Two out of five grandmothers were illiterate and the other went to the elementary school until third or fourth class; three out of five mothers graduated from middle school, one from high school and the other one graduated from university and two out of five daughters were university student, one graduated from the university, one dropped out the university and the last one graduated from high school.

To be able to follow easily the experiences of each family and generation, the researcher classified each family with different letters and each generation with different numbers (1=grandmother, 2=mother,

3=daughter). The following represents a brief familial background of each family.

### **Family A**

A1, the grandmother, is 79 years old and was born in Bitlis. She is widow and the mother of five children. When she was 30 years of age and pregnant to her daughter A2, she and her family came to Istanbul. A1's family was dislocated two times from their home in Bitlis to Siirt at the time of 1930s. At the first deportation, A1's mother was pregnant to A1's sister and gave birth in the home of their Turkish friends where they were in hiding for some days. After her birthday, the family left the home and they were hidden in the mountain. After months, they turned back to their homeland Bitlis but their home was not available anymore. They started everything all again. At the second time, A1 was newborn baby. When her family heard those gendarmeries were coming, her family left their home and was hidden again. They were located in Siirt but after months they returned their home Bitlis. Because of starvation and miserableness during deportation, her mother left A1 near to the bridge but then a Turkish man found the baby immediately and then gave the baby back to her mother. A2, the daughter of A1, is 49 years old and was born in Istanbul. A2 grew up in Kınalı Island. She is housewife, married and the mother of three children. A3, the daughter of A2, is 22 years old and was born in Istanbul. She is college student and single.

### **Family B**

B1, the grandmother, is 80 years of age and was born in Kayseri. She is widow and the mother of three children. She grew up in Kayseri. B1's mother and father were married separately with another person before 1915 events. During 1915, they were exiled; B1's mother was exiled to Aleppo, B1's father was exiled and he escaped to America. After 6 years in America, B1's father desired to turn back Kayseri. B1's mother escaped from Aleppo and she turned back to Kayseri with her some girlfriends. B1's mother's and father's spouses were disappeared during 1915 and they didn't receive any news about them. After turning back to Kayseri, B1's mother and father got married and had five children. B2, the daughter of B1, is 63 years old and was born in Kayseri. When she was 2 years old, her family came to Istanbul. She is married, housewife and has two children. B3, the daughter of B2, is 37 years old and was born in Istanbul. She is single and working as a teacher.

### **Family C**

C1, the grandmother, is 79 years old and was born in Yozgat. She is widow and the mother of three children. When she was one and half years old, her family came to Istanbul. C1's father was left an orphan when he was child. His all family was disappeared during 1915 events. His father never spoke about 1915 to his children. The brother of the mother of C1 was murdered during 1915. The father of C1's mother lost his sanity after the death of his son. When C1's mother was young girl, they were dislocated from their home to another neighborhood and refugees were placed to their home. At average 14-15 years old the mother and the father of C1 got

married and had three children. C2, the daughter of C1, is 50 years old and was born in Istanbul. She is housewife, married and has one child. C3, the daughter of C2, is 29 years old and was born in Istanbul. She is married and has no children. She is working as a manager in marketing.

### **Family D**

D1, the grandmother, is 88 years old and was born in Sivas. She is widow and the mother of three children. When she was 25 years old, she came to Istanbul with her husband and children. D1's mother and father were married with another person's before 1915. His father had four children and her mother had two children with their ex-spouses. During 1915, all men of the family of D1's mother were sent on an errand and they didn't turn back. Only the husband of D1's mother and his brother got in contact to meet with the mother and sister-in-law. But when the mother and sister-in-law tried to meet with their husbands at night secretly, they were captured by Turks without seeing their husbands and then the mother of D1, sister-in-law, mother-in-law and their children were dislocated from their home to concentration camp. Their all property was confiscated. During the concentration camp the mother of D1 was taken forcibly by a man to marry and she was Islamized. The mother's girl was died because of illness. She didn't have any children with her Turkish husband. After the end of World War I, the mother D1, her sister-in-law and mother-in-law turned back to Christianity and they divorced with her Turkish husbands. After some years, only her husband's brother got in contact with them from long distance country. During that time, the mother of D1 met with the father of D1 and

they got married. But because of her marriage, her ex-husband's brother took her son from her and her son; mother-in-law and sister-in-law went to the country where her ex-husband's brother lived. The mother of D1 had three children in her third marriage but she couldn't see ever her son from her first marriage only they exchanged letters. D2, the daughter of D1, is 65 years old and was born in Sivas. She is married, housewife and the mother of three children. D3, the daughter of D2, is 27 years old and was born in Istanbul. She is single and working in trade area.

### **Family E**

E1, the grandmother, is 82 years old and was born in Yozgat. When she was approximately 22 years of age, she came to Istanbul with her husband. She is widow and the mother of seven children. Her first children were twins and died at 6 months old and the other one was died during birth. She has four children alive. During 1915, when E1's father was soldier, he escaped from soldier military and came to his home. But he witnessed his father's death behind the brush-wood. His father was chopped in front of his eyes. After killers had gone, he buried his father in the ground. Then the mother and the father of D1 got married and had three children. When D1 was young girl, her middle sister was abducted forcibly from their home by Turkish man and her family couldn't do anything because of being exposed threatening with death. E2, the daughter of E1, is 51 years old and was born in Istanbul. She is working as an architect. She is married and has two children. E3, the daughter of E2, is 22 years old. She is college student and single.

## 4.2. Procedure

Researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant in Turkish, which lasted approximately 1.5 hours long. Compared to subsequent generations, first generations' interviews lasted much longer. During the interview, audiotape was used with the participant's permission and then the recordings were transcribed into a typed document. The researcher asked the same open-ended questions to all participants of each generation.

The semi-structured interview questions were prepared by the researcher and the thesis advisor through the adaptation of the previous literature about the similar topic (Garavanian, 2000; Esmaeili, 2011). Interview questionnaire is composed of questions regarding being Armenian in Turkey, their family's trauma related experiences and its effects on their parenting, their own trauma related past and current experiences, their relationship with their children and the communication of trauma across generations (see Appendix A). Only when the responses of the participant were inadequate, the researcher asked follow up questions to obtain more clear and/or detailed information.

Interviews were held in participant's home where confidentiality was endured and participant felt comfortable and secure. One interview with a third generation participant was held on skype since she was studying abroad. Additionally, Armenian identification of the researcher facilitated self-disclosure of participants during interviews.

Before the interviews started the researcher read the informed consent to the participants and gave it to them to read and sign (see Appendix B). The consent form consisted of confidentiality and the right to skip questions or terminate the interview anytime.

It was also mentioned that if the interview induced any disturbing feelings which were unmasterable, the participants could contact the researcher to benefit from the single free consultation with clinical psychologist. Then the participants were given an addendum form (see Appendix C) which provided contact information of therapeutic service. Participants did not demand any consultation session.

Then the demographic form is administered (see Appendix D) and after receiving the demographic form, the interview was conducted with each participant.

#### **4.3. Data Analysis**

In this qualitative study, personal interviews were audio recorded and the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim including pauses, laughs, and nuances in the tone of voices (Smith & Osborn, 2003). To get more detailed information, beside audio record, field notes were used. The data was analyzed following the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis guideline (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Initially, the whole transcription was read by taking initial notes on the margin of the transcription paper then was reread for transforming the initial notes to the emergent subthemes. Second, all subthemes of the whole transcription were listed in chronological order on blank page. Then at the end of all subthemes, the frequency of repetition

was written. Third, similar subthemes were clustered together under the themes. Later, some less important subthemes and themes were dropped in the analysis process. Each transcription was analyzed in a similar process. Fourth, the themes of each generation were compared to other two generations. The differences and similarities across generations and across families were analyzed. Finally, regarding to the results of all participants, the emergent major themes and subthemes were finalized by the researcher and thesis advisor.

To improve the reliability and validity of the study, first family transcriptions and emerging themes were also read and agreed by thesis advisor. Beside the researcher, the thesis advisor helped to finalize the themes and both the researcher and thesis advisor confirmed the final results.

In order to improve the credibility of the data analysis, the researcher used member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). She sent an email to the third generation participants about the emerging themes, and requested them to show these themes to the other two generations and send a feedback if only they didn't reflect their experiences, opinions and feelings. None of the participants gave negative feedback about the results.

## **5. Results**

The results of this research show the most distinctive impacts of living in Turkey as an Armenian on the participants' lives. The Armenians of Turkey establish a strong link between the Armenian identity and the religion, they express their proud and happiness of being Armenian but they

also put an emphasis on how they are discriminated in Turkey. While talking about the deep sorrow provoked by what happened in 1915 and mentioning the importance of not forgetting 1915, they also express their worries that 1915 could happen again. Because of the important impact of the trauma experienced in 1915, the participants developed a behavior to protect the future generations from the harm that could come from outside. This defense mechanism reveals itself through their overcontrolling attitude to shape their children's relationship with the outside world, being against marriages with Turks and not talking to the future generations about 1915. The Armenians of Turkey mention the good relationships they established with Turks and how Turks helped them, but at the same time, they live with a constant fear of getting harmed by them, and therefore, they put distance between themselves and the Turks.

According to all the information obtained during the interviews, the analysis of the research generated four main themes: Being an Armenian in Turkey, protecting the future generations, relations with Turks, feelings regarding 1915.

### **5.1. Being an Armenian in Turkey**

The interviews made with 15 participants reflected the diverse impacts of living in Turkey as an Armenian. One of the observations that stand out is that the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation expresses itself more easily about being an Armenian in Turkey, comparing to the first two generations. As a result of this research, the following subthemes were stressed permanently: “The

Strong Association of the Armenian Identity and the Religion”, “Proud and Happy of Being Armenian” and “Being discriminated”.

### **5.1.1. The Strong Association of the Armenian Identity and the Religion**

It has been observed that when the participants were asked to think about what “being Armenian” means to them, 11 out of 15 mentioned immediately “Christianity” or gave answers in relation with Christianity. This idea was quite common among the participants of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation but declined among those of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. To give some examples; “Being Armenian... I would love to carry on my religion, I still want to carry on my religion ... carry on my religion... love and happiness... we are *Hay Kristonya* (Armenian Christian), do you understand?” (B1), “Being Armenian is first of all to be Christian, to get baptized and to believe in Jesus Christ.” (B3). E3 told that:

    Hmm... what does it mean... I never thought about compromising on my religion, being converted... I mean, that’s how I think I mean this is my religion, I was born like this I mean and it doesn’t make me, I mean... for the future... (E2).

If we take a closer look to the answers of the 4 other participants, the grandmother (C1) said that being Armenian didn’t make a change in her life and that she kept living like a “normal person”. It has been observed that she put an emphasis on “humanity” and she explained finally that as she didn’t receive education she couldn’t develop a thought about being Armenian and she couldn’t differentiate.

One of the grandchildren of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (E3) considered the Armenian identity as an ethnic one and defended simultaneously the idea that claiming ones Armenian identity is a political statement. However, two other participants from the 2<sup>nd</sup> (D2) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (C3) considered being Armenian as a privilege, diversity and described the Armenian identity as superior to the other ethnic identities.

As the Armenian identity and Christianity are considered inseparable, the grandmothers of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation were strongly devoted to religion and against the religious conversion:

Morakuyr (the aunt) has such a faith... you wouldn't know... it's not a thin string. Sorry, what was the name of that cordon (pointing the cordon on the wall)? It's not even a cordon, I mean; it's a thick rope, like the one which pulls the big ships (B1).

I was calling them Dacig. The one who renounces his religion, may he perish! I said you want this I wouldn't want it personally. You think ours didn't convert? They did, too many. I said you don't interfere with my religion, I don't interfere with yours. I am happy and I feel peaceful with my religion. Another religion, I said... you renounced your religion; you left, tell me was it of any use? (A1).

But in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, the religious devotion declines with an equal rate. Nonetheless, if we compare the families, the family which brings up the religion the most and where the members are the most devoted

to religion, it's the family B. In the community, this family is considered as a religiously devoted family. One of the main reasons of this devotion could be the fact that the way the grandmother survived during the deportation of 1915 is considered as a miracle of God.

### **5.1.2. Proud and Happy of Being Armenian**

When asked about being Armenian, 9 out of 15 participants expressed their proud and happiness of being Armenian. This feeling was equally distributed among the generations. However, the frequency of expressing it declined from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. While examining the reasons of this happiness and proud, some of the participants, especially from the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation think that being Armenian is a privilege due to their rich culture and they consider themselves superiors to other ethnic groups:

It's great. I'm so happy of being Armenian. It has advantages, I have the privilege, I have all kind of privileges. I think that I have a rich culture, I mean, my language, I feel like I'm different because I say that I'm Armenian (C2).

Special, it was special to me. Being Armenian was special to me. They had a particular place within the Turkish society. A distinctive community and I considered (them) superior. We considered ourselves superior, I mean, that's how I considered. We were much more intellectual than the Turkish society. Our schools had higher standards. We wouldn't go

to public schools, we were in private schools, we were in Armenian schools... (D2).

Especially, the members of the family D consider being Armenian as a privilege. It could be a reaction and a feeling developed to counterbalance the fact that they have been treated like inferior after 1915 because D1's mother married a Turkish man and then divorced; something that wasn't approved by the Armenian community.

Some of the participants (especially the grandmothers) linked the happiness of being Armenian with the religion and expressed their happiness of being Christian and Armenian.

For some others (especially the grand children), the reason they feel happy of being Armenian is to belong to an ancient culture with a rich cultural heritage and to be cultured and well-educated:

...but you know, I love it, it's clear and neat. It's not like being proud but I can glory in a little bit while I'm saying that I'm Armenian but it's not only about the ethnicity, it's because I love our cultural richness (D3).

### **5.1.3. Being Discriminated**

According to the participants, the biggest difficulty about being Armenian in Turkey is to be discriminated because of the ethnic origins. 13 out of 15 participants agreed on that Armenians are considered as "the other" in Turkey. All of the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generations think they have been discriminated as "the other". As the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation, one participant never mentioned the discrimination during the

interview and another participant explained she has never felt discriminated. Three participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation who think that they are being discriminated told that in the past, there was no discrimination and they were getting along like brothers and sisters but that now people have a discriminative discourse using sentences like “you are an Armenian” or “you are an infidel”. Another participant also mentioned that when she was young, they collected money for the refugees, from the Armenians and not from the Turks.

The participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation put the emphasis on other aspects such as: People being surprised of learning one is Armenian and looking at her as if she was a “creature”, people often using the word “gâvur” (infidel) to point at an Armenian, people putting a term to a friendship when learning one is Armenian, people using humiliating words towards Armenians. One of the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation expressed the inequality he experiences and the unease felt because of being pointed as “the other”:

...there were such beautiful things, but there were also other neighbors (smiling slightly) they weren't our neighbors anyway, I don't consider them as neighbors for instance you are collecting woods, he comes and says ‘you are an Armenian, you should give some of it to me’ he says for instance. I witness this kind of things...(A2).

A participant from the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation confessed that being insulted by children that were younger than her because she was Armenian had a negative impact on her psychology and she couldn't forget that humiliation:

One day, we went to the church. There was a primary school across. For instance, when we were entering the church, the children were in the yard, we entered the church, visited and then we went out... the children were insulting us and small children, it's only a primary school. I have never heard insults like this in my life, they were cursing and while they were doing it, their teacher was there beside them, their mother were sitting on the benches and none of them stopped them... seriously, for instance I felt very bad that day. I mean... if someone didn't pull me from the arm, I seriously couldn't walk away because I was shocked... I was sad because I felt very bad because I was... I mean I felt sad because I was Armenian... I mean... what a pity you know... I mean another person who humiliates you, who holds you in contempt just because you are Armenian, just because you are Christian – you know... I don't know how to call what they did, what these small children did but seriously, suddenly... you know... you don't understand what is going on anyway... you know like, what did I do wrong you ask your self and you can't apprehend, you are mad at your self because you can't apprehend but then you say 'no, I didn't

do anything' then you are mad at them, and then you are not mad at them anymore because that's the way they have been taught (A3).

Some of the participants put an emphasis on the way they feel despite the problems that are directly connected to being an Armenian in Turkey:

you know in our country... I don't know... the writings they put on the church walls, since two days... especially on Bakırköy Church... I don't know if you saw them or not... still bad writings about Armenians... of course that identity, I am happy of being Armenian but when I see this kind of writings, I think it's a backward country (B3).

## **5.2. Protecting the Future Generations**

When asked about what kind of impacts the events of 1915 had on their families and their parenthood, the participants mostly mentioned the importance of protecting the future generations, in other words the children, from the dangers of the outside world. According to the results of the interviews, the theme of "protecting the future generations" can be divided into three subthemes: "Limiting Individuation", "Being against Marriage with Turks" and "Not Telling Much About 1915 to The Future Generations".

### **5.2.1. Limiting Individuation**

10 out of 15 participants talked about how overprotective and repressive their parents were because they were worried their children might

get hurt. Comparing the answers of the participants of different generations gives the following result: Only one person from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation mentioned her parents were overprotective while all of the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation and 4 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation agreed on that. In addition to 1915, the period of high social violence witnessed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation might have caused the overprotective behavior of the parents.

C1 from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation explained the repressive behavior of her family:

But in our house, it was like this. Don't steal, don't be friend with ayl azk (people from the different ethnic identities), know your path. We were under pressure all the time. Once, I put some nail polish (she adopted a small girl's voice). My brother and my mum took it off and I never did it again. I can't because my mum and my brothers were grown up like this... a tight discipline.

The repression on the 1<sup>st</sup> generation was mostly about the clothing while the women of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation were also banned from going and working outside or going to school. Fearing they will marry a Turkish man, the families especially attempted to keep their daughters inside the house. A participant from the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (C2) told that her family didn't allow her much to go outside, tried to keep her at home and that when she was at home, her family felt safe and secure. Another participant talked about the borders put between the house and the outside world:

I think that it had an impact on their parenthood so that at the end, they lived it in a overprotective way, always scared.

Because they always came... to protect themselves and their children... raising 4 children here... with much more burden on your shoulders, with fear that at any moment something bad could happen again to your children. Especially for girls, a Dacig (Turkish) would come and kidnap her... always a fear, they were never peaceful regarding this subject. I think that their interaction with us was also more authoritarian, I mean, we had to behave mostly according to what they told us to do, you know, not like the freedom you are living in now, our going out, coming back home, the hours, everything was more under their control. We couldn't go outside alone for instance if we wanted to go to the movies, oooohhh, we had to ask for several permissions. You know, the main reason is that 'she will have a boy friend, he will be a Dacig (Turkish), ah, if she marries him.' I think it was the main reason why. That's why we were always like... 'Where were you?' We couldn't go anywhere without asking for permission and telling when we were coming back, and there were so many things we couldn't do (E2).

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, the limits about the clothing and the education disappeared but other limits were still observed such as not going out at night, if going out with Turkish friends, coming back home early, not going on holidays with friends or not being able to go to university in another city.

Especially, when children go to university and have their first Turkish friends, the families seem to worry intensively and need to control more:

You know in university, the first idea of getting Turkish classmates occurred. At that point, you know, from the kindergarten to the high school, they were so used to... the situation was like the parents of my friends were somehow relatives or acquaintances. But when I went to university, it was a bigger trauma for them. Because they didn't have any idea about my friends, they didn't have any idea about their families and they were incredibly alert. For instance during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of my university studies, I couldn't go out with my friends because they were afraid. When I was going somewhere, they were calling me all the time and if they couldn't reach me, they would send someone to look for me, it was like a nightmare to me. It took me such a long time to be able to break these taboos for them. They were incredibly tense, incredibly tense. Because, yes, they knew me, they trusted me but they had this reasoning like we don't trust the others but they were incredibly tense, they didn't know what could happen, what I will be confronted with and subsequently, what they will be confronted with, what themselves, they will be confronted with and they were so tense (C3).

Nonetheless, all of the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation stated their unease about the repressive behavior of their parents; 3 out of 5 told that they had the same kind of behavior with their own children.

The parents of the family D and E present especially an overprotective behavior, trying to control everything. The main reason could be that during the events of 1915, the women of these two families had been kidnapped by Turkish men and forced into marriage. The behavior of the parents is associated to the fact of being a woman in Turkey and the Armenian community's level of evolution and conservatism. To protect their children from the opposite sex is motivated by the instinct of protecting them especially from the Turkish men.

### **5.2.2. Being against marriage with Turks**

The participants were asked two separate questions about their own expectations and their families' expectations regarding their relations with Turks. One of the most recurrent answers was being against to the marriage with Turks. The majority of the participants told that their families were strongly against to the marriage with Turks. All of the married participants are married to an Armenian. Especially, the single participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation mentioned more, comparing to the participants of the two other generations, their families being against to this kind of marriage. For instance:

And I lived something, for instance for me, the one I would want to marry should be Christian, the ethnicity it's not important for me but for my family, he shouldn't be Turkish.

It's not because of the hatred, it's because they don't want to be mixed, I mean, there is this feeling of not giving his child to a Turkish. It's absolutely not hatred but it's a different psychology. I mean, they don't want to give children to a nation that reduced them to a small community and if I don't marry an Armenian (smiling) , I will become the one to reduce my people and I will make them increase in numbers and they don't want this (D3).

When asked about their own opinions about the relations with Turks, 11 out of 15 participants answered they were against the marriage with Turks, for them selves and for the future generations. The main reasons are the extinction of the Armenian identity and culture, being a minority, the fear of getting assimilated, the problems that may occur in the marriage because of the religious differences and being worried of getting hurt.

...Whoever it is, someone who recognizes Kristos (Jesus Christ), a Christian Armenian shouldn't be eager to (get married) to a Dacig (Turkish), they shouldn't because no matter how often they say 'I love you', it's a lie. They have their eyes on your wealth or on your honor, on your wealth or on your honor, that's what I wanted to add. Because the young people don't understand... how do they find the courage to go to them, my child? How? (B1)

But when we take a closer look to the last 4 participants, the singles from the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, they have more diverse opinions about marrying

Turks. A3 is uncertain about the subject while E3 has a moderated statement about getting married to a Turkish who wouldn't be nationalist and who would be humanitarian. B3 who was against these marriages in the past has now a more moderated approach while D3 who had a positive approach in the past approves now, as she gets older, a marriage with someone from her own ethnicity because of her religious faith.

Furthermore, some participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation told that they moved to Istanbul to be able to “preserve the Armenian identity” which means not to get assimilated and mixed with Turks. When we look to the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, the majority want their children to “preserve their Armenian identity” which means to get married to an Armenian and to preserve the Armenian culture and language. Among the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, the majority didn't mention anything about preserving and keeping the Armenian culture or language.

### **5.2.3. Not Telling Much About 1915 to the Future Generations**

When asked about if there was any transmission from their parents about 1915, 10 out of 15 participants told that their families didn't pass on to them directly, any information about 1915. The families don't want to make their children sad and they are worried they would get harmed and into trouble if they talk carelessly because of anger; these are the main reasons why the families don't want to talk to their children about 1915. The majority of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation learned about what their family went through in 1915 by overhearing the discussions between the older family members. If we take a look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, only the families of two participants

talked to their children about 1915 directly while the majority heard nothing from their family and learned about it when they grew up, from friends or books. Among the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, some listened to the story of 1915 directly from the family, and especially from the grandmothers. The majority said that there was no family transmission about 1915:

I know a little bit now but in our family, it was never discussed. My mum and my dad, they were like 'It's better if they know nothing, they should remain ignorant.' That's how they raised us. In fact, the idea behind this was first of all, to protect them selves and then, protect us. They believed that if we didn't know anything, we would be protected. I... a lot... it is something that has a big impact on me... I fought a lot with my family asking them why they really raised me as such an ignorant (E3).

Another important point is that the majority of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation mentioned that after the murder of Hrant Dink, the grief of 1915 recurred and people started to talk about 1915. Some participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation started to make some research about 1915 after Hrant's death:

According to me, this grief recurred more with Hrant Dink. It has been this way for me... I mean sometimes for some things you...cover them up but then, that event provokes a spark you know and it comes out from your unconscious. Maybe that's what happened to me (E2).

When asked if they talked about 1915 with their children, 7 out of 10 participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation didn't pass on any stories about 1915 to their children. Commonly, the reasons why they prefer not to talk about 1915 with their children are "to protect them", "to prevent them from getting sad" and "to prevent them from feeling furious against Turks and adopting a hostile behavior":

My children shouldn't feel hostility and fury. My father didn't tell us neither, I overheard when my mother was talking with her friends. My father didn't tell us anything. I never told them about those bad days I mean my mum has been through this, my dad has been through that... I never told them, never told them you know, so that I won't annoy them (soft voice). They shouldn't consider them as enemies. Why would I sadden them? (D1)

The participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation who are not parents yet expressed their inconvenience about not having been told about 1915 and complained about having grown up without knowing their own history, they told that in the future, they will pass on to their children, all their knowledge about 1915.

...A lot of people fell apart, there are people who couldn't see each other, who couldn't reunite, of course I will tell all this. Because a person should know his own history, his past culture... he should know his past as he should know his future (B3).

It is noteworthy that the family B is the only one whose whole members learned 1915 from the family. B1's mother narrated constantly to her daughter what happened in 1915 with tears in her eyes and she mourned after her daughter died of illness; this could be the reason why she passed this on to B1 in an intensive way. B1 attempted also to pass these intensive feelings on to her children but B2 got bored, avoided to listen to her mother and didn't want to hear it.

Furthermore, the majority of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation wasn't told about 1915 but all of them used the sentence "I always knew about 1915":

I also thought about this a lot, it is as I didn't learn it in a flash, it has always been I mean I don't remember the exact date when I learned it or how I lear... I don't rememb... but I feel like I always knew it, I knew that in the past something somewhere... When I was a child for instance... you know 'put your cross under your shirt', 'don't tell anybody your name', 'don't go outside a lot' when you interrogate, it's always 'they will harm you'... Somehow, you always feel it as a child like someone was harmed and that's why they behave like this otherwise why would they try to protect like this? That's why I don't remember when I first learned about it but --- I mean if I wasn't surprised, I mean if I was surprised, if I was really shocked I think I would remember, I mean as I reacted very normally – I mean I don't remember it (A3).

### **5.3. The Relations with Turks**

During the different interviews, the participants shared diverse opinions about the relations with Turks. The subthemes that stand out the most within this theme are “Being Afraid of Getting Harmed by Turks”, “A Distant Relationship with Turks”, “Being on Good Terms with Turks” and “The Help of Turks”.

#### **5.3.1. Being Afraid of Getting Harmed by Turks**

One of the topics that came up spontaneously during the interviews was the fear of getting harmed by Turks. 13 out of 15 participants were worried about getting harmed or that their children would get harmed by Turks. All of the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation felt this fear while only three people from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation mentioned it. The remaining two people (C1 and D1) didn't talk about it. The frequency of expressing this fear was higher among the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation; it declined from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. For some of the participants, this fear of getting harmed by Turks revealed itself as the fear of the Turks who would covet their wealth or “honor”:

If you talk about the bad ones... As I said, if you give them this, they will always ask for more and take more from you, they could harm you. You should always behave in an optimistic way, otherwise they will harm you (in a lower voice) They would take your properties or your honor; that kind of nation they are (B1).

The fear that the future generations would get harmed was dominant between the members of the family B, especially in the case of B1 and B3, in a very intensive way comparing to the other families. The only participant among all who expressed a deep anger is B1; that's maybe why she developed such a strong fear. This anger could be triggered by the constant narration of 1915 by her family and by the lack of knowledge about her parents' life before 1915.

...of course she had Hay (Armenian) and Dacig (Turkish) friends. I always told her like... my girl... when you go to your other friends' house, they could give you something, make you sleep... they... be careful, take it and put it in your pocket, I was saying... they could give you drugs... I was thinking of things like this when they would go somewhere with friends... wherever they go I was like don't go there, something bad could happen, they would make you sleep, I was saying... things like that... I was saying be careful, don't eat if they give you something (E1).

Some of the participants felt the need to hide their identity by fearing they could get harmed:

For instance, I told you about to put a cross as a necklace... when I was a young woman, according to me, this diversity is a beautiful thing... we were hiding our cross under our shirts. For instance, my daughter... despite her father's warnings, despite my warnings, I know that when she was at university,

she put her cross on her shirt. I mean she was going around with the cross on her neck. I don't know, maybe she attracted trouble, I didn't ask her about it to be honest but she did that. And all the young people now... a few women of my age put also their cross when they go outside but for instance, I still can't, I don't know why. But maybe I don't want to attract trouble by putting it, I don't know, maybe that's how I protect my self (C2).

Some of the participants didn't feel secure and were living with the fear that someone would injure them:

...But you know... it awakens in me... it's like there is constantly someone behind me and he would stab me, you know, it's a little bit of anxiety. But there is also another thing, in this case, one should leave this country and go and live in Hayastan, Armenia but when I go there, it was an incredible feeling for me. Every day, every minute, on the streets, when I was looking around, I wanted to cry constantly and I was really crying, I mean, you know for instance, I went there for business. I don't know, sometimes, when I think deeply about it, I feel unsecure and as a matter of fact, like in the purgatory. And why? Because I don't belong here, I don't belong there, as a matter of fact, I don't belong to anywhere. We are just trying to keep living. I feel

tense, I mean, like somebody will do something to you and maybe, suddenly, those days could come back (C3).

### **5.3.2. A Distant Relationship with Turks**

Although in the previous theme, they mentioned they were on good terms with Turks, 10 out of 15 participants expressed their mistrust and vigilance towards Turks due to the fear of getting harmed by them:

The difficult part is that (she stops) you have to keep on living in Turkey as an Armenian and no matter how often you say like for instance my grandparents etc. we keep on living. No matter what, they always think of this, I mean, under no circumstances you establish a natural relationship. Every time you approach someone, always this state of vigilance. To be at ease... to establish a dialogue without difficulty, this is to give a simple example. For instance, I apprehended it a little bit in Vienna for instance in Turkey, when I talk with people, I get closer to them always after checking their political views. Here also, that's how I choose my friends but I am more comfortable, it's like I'm more comfortable (E3).

As E3 mentions, a distant relationship and the permanent vigilance obstruct the establishment of a natural relationship. The lack of a natural and sincere dialogue keeps the Armenians from talking easily with Turks about 1915. 13 out of 15 participants told they don't talk with Turks about 1915, they avoid talking or they are not able to talk:

A participant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation expressed her discomfort about not being able to talk about 1915 with her Turkish friends:

...I mean they were saying anyhow, your name is Gülizar, they wouldn't understand etc. but it doesn't keep you from thinking or feeling this way. I never felt at ease, you know, you can't talk with your friends with ease, I mean, like a taboo, this thing was never discussed, he never tells you something about this subject, you can't tell him something either. Not being able to talk about it, not being able to mention, it troubles you (E2).

One of the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation was trying to stay on good terms with Turks by not talking about 1915:

...Who knows, it may cause sadness, I might also get mad, lose control and say something, he might tell me something as well, the hearts would get broken, as we can not repair what has already happened... if you can't beat it, you should accept the situation... I mean, that's how I keep on living. I'm talking about what I'm going through. Look, my old neighbor still calls me, we keep seeing each other. But if we mention 'it', she might get hurt, I might get hurt (fragile voice). That's why it's like this. I don't care if it's right or wrong... it's my right and wrong (C1).

The fact that the remaining two participants (D3 and E3) are from the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation shows that the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation is more open to talk about

1915 with Turks, comparing to the other two generations. These two people often talk about 1915 with Turks. E3 mentioned she often talked about 1915 with her close Turkish friends in university while D3 confessed that she didn't only talk with her close friends but also with Turks she just met, even in a slightly provocative way:

I think I talked with nearly every new person I met (slightly smiling), the subject changes and finally, this subject always comes up. If someone asks 'When did your family come?', for me, this is about History. I need to teach him his own History because where they came.... (slightly smiling, like provocative tone). But in general, the subject always comes up, and I, I am the provocative one but mostly they open up the subject. I mean, I think that the part of me that pushes them, makes them ask more questions, I mean, I push them, I push them until they ask me the question they want to ask, the question they are curious about (provocative tone) because sometimes, they hesitate to ask directly. They try to approach step by step, without getting noticed and I push them so that the subject comes up quickly.

### **5.3.3. Being on Good Terms with Turks**

During the interviews, 11 participants out of the 15 mentioned that they were on good terms with Turks. "Being on good terms" was defined as having very close friends, seeing each other very frequently, being good neighbors and sharing. The frequency of putting an emphasis on this aspect

was higher among the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation while it has been equally mentioned among the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation:

...There wasn't that much interest; there wasn't that much insult anyway. You can believe me when I say that my Dacig (Turkish) friends... they were all Turks. We were shepherds, we were sleeping together, and we were eating together. They loved each other a lot. How many girl friends I had! We loved each other so much that I mean now I don't love my own daughters that much (he laughed, I laughed too). We were eating together, they never said something. I was drinking water, who drank from this glass? We were eating together, we were working as shepherds together, we were sleeping together... (A1).

... and you know we were on good terms with our Turkish neighbors and we still are. I mean, the neighbors living in the apartment across, for instance I could go and knock on her door at 1.30 in the night and go in but I couldn't do this with my brother-in-law. But I can knock on her door. That is to explain it in a simple way but in the past, they did... Was it their ignorance? But this discussion of the events of 15 goes on (B2).

#### **5.3.4. The Help of Turks**

11 participants out of 15 mentioned that the Turks helped the Armenians during the difficult periods. The majority of these participants

put an emphasis on how the Turkish neighbors helped their families during 1915. Some of these people made them work for them and when they became adult, they made them marry an Armenian, or they hid them in their house and helped them to survive while some others took the children, converted them into Islam and raised them as their own children:

...you know, what I heard is that... some families, Muslim families took them under their protection so that they won't be killed, that's how they preserved their identity. Those who were converted... like there are some in Diyarbakir or in other cities... those who were converted, were converted and those who didn't, didn't. That's how it goes (B3).

2 participants out of 11 mentioned their Turkish neighbors who helped and protected them during the Events of 6-7 September:

And they protected us during the Events of 6<sup>th</sup> of September, that's what the elder people in the family tell. At that time, I was two. Of course, they put the flag, they said 'There is no Christian here', I mean they hid us. They also told us about their kindness, that the Turks were good people (B2).

#### **5.4. Feelings about 1915**

When asked about what their families went through in 1915, the participants expressed diverse feelings. Some of them are: the anger felt for what has been lived, the interrogation of why this happened to Armenians and the revolt, the suffering. But the feelings that come up the most when

talking about 1915 are: “The Deep Sorrow”, “1915, Never Again” and “Not Forgetting 1915”.

#### **5.4.1. The Deep Sorrow**

During the interviews, all the participants mentioned the deep sorrow they feel about 1915. Especially, it has been observed that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation felt it in a more intensive way. They were internalizing it as they lived that period themselves. But the intensity of the sorrow and the frequency of expressing it declined with the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, and even more with the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. In other words, the sorrow about 1915 is observed among the participants of all the generations but from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation towards the 3<sup>rd</sup>, it declines. E1 from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation used the words “*as if it has happened just now...*” to tell that the sorrow is still very much alive while C1 from the same generation expressed the sorrow and the permanent pain as following:

That sorrow is a torch that never blows out. Today, I’m living but I didn’t forget them. What can I do? I think of them and get sad. Why this had to happen? But there is nothing we can do, only pain and sorrow, there is nothing we can do, there is nothing left but pain and sorrow.

B1 expressed the pain her family went through with these following lines her family passed on her:

I couldn’t do away with the deserts of Deir ez-Zor  
People lost their teeth because of worry  
They executed 50 thousands people

My mum told me, 'my child, we witnessed this, may you never witness it.'

Mint sprouts in the deserts of Deir ez-Zor

The smell of the mint would be enough for the entire world

For us, this deportation is worst than death.

B1 compared this pain to a boil:

You can eat, drink, laugh, go to the disco, go to the dance, you wouldn't be able to throw it away, the boil is in you, the head of the boil is in you, do you understand? They were talking about so much pain, so much pain, so much pain... they were crying like this (claps her hands together to imitate), do you understand? The boil is in you. If you have a boil on your skin, what do you do? You can't be at ease until you pierce the head. We carry this boilin us.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation also mentioned that they were feeling deep down this pain about 1915. A participant (E2) said that when she listens to a sad music, the pain of 1915 comes alive in her mind and she feels the pain in her deep soul while another participant (C3) confessed that she could feel the pain inside and at that moment, for 5-10 seconds, life would stop for her. Some participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (A3 and B3) were asking themselves why this happened to their families in 1915 and felt a kind of sorrow mixed with anger. Nonetheless, one of the participants said that the sorrow they are feeling couldn't be the same as the one felt by their families:

It is something that will make you feel bad. Of course you can feel their pain inside, I mean, you feel bad, that's how I feel bad. I mean, how much they suffered, how many things they experienced, the hunger, the poverty... I mean, this makes me sad, I mean, we didn't go through traumatic things like they did, not even a quarter of it, we are just the remnants, that's how I can put it (C2).

#### **5.4.2. 1915, Never Again**

When asked about 1915, among the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation and especially among those of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, came up the worry that what happened in 1915 could occur again. Some participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation and all of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation mentioned that their families used a similar discourse like “We witnessed all this, may you never witness it” and pronounced the words “Never again!”:

My wish right now... I wish that we wouldn't live the same things that they lived, do you understand? The children... I am now in my seventies, may my children never see what they saw. Am I making myself clear? May young people like you never see. It's not easy. It's easy to talk about it now but what they went through, hunger and thirst... (B1)

What can I say now? Now or before... Now I say, may those who never witnessed it, never witness it. That's what I know. May God let nobody witness things like this. How many people suffered! Those who passed away are already dead.

They didn't witness anything but suffering. They suffered and they died (slightly smiling). Left hungry and thirsty on the mountains... That's what I say now; may those who never witnessed it, never witness it! (A1).

Nonetheless, some of the participants declared clearly that they don't feel safe and they are worried about what happened in 1915 could occur again:

Here, we have a double and even a triple responsibility, I mean, to preserve the churches, to preserve the schools, to raise our children, I mean, passing also this to them... you know, not trusting them a lot... I mean, I always feel a lack of trust towards them, anything could happen anytime; they could make us live this again. To be honest, I have reservations about this (E2).

But the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation didn't mention the worry that what happened in 1915 could occur again.

#### **5.4.3. Not Forgetting 1915**

7 out of 15 participants mentioned the importance of not forgetting 1915. Some participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation talked about the transmission of the story of 1915 to the future generations so that the past won't be forgotten. One person of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (E2) and especially the majority of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (A3, D3 and E3) mentioned that not forgetting 1915 is their responsibility and that they should do whatever it's necessary

not to forget 1915. And they put an emphasis on the fact that 1915 shouldn't be forgotten to be able to prevent 1915 from happening again:

The burden, I mean, it's a very heavy burden. And at the same time, I feel like I have this burden we should carry. I think like I have this burden and I should carry it, I should look after it. On one hand, maybe it puts limits on what you are doing because for instance I have interests on other subjects also for instance in sociology but no, I am directed towards this subject because I want to carry this burden. Maybe for instance I enjoy more the cinema but I am directed towards this field because I think it's my duty, I think it's our duty... In life, there are so many problems, if you live in Turkey, of course it's a difficult thing to be an Armenian in Turkey but I volunteer to carry this burden. And also, what can I do to prevent what has happened from being forgotten and from happening again. I mean, according to me, to be able to ask this question is one of our biggest responsibility (E3).

Some participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation put a strong emphasis on what happened in the past is now part of the past and they also want the future generations to forget about 1915:

No, now I can say it, I mean I say it, we were kids... the past... because of course that those who lived all this passed away full of sorrow but we have to look to the future... I

don't know... May they forget about the past, may they ignore it, life is too short anyway so... I don't know... may we be friends, brothers (B2).

C1 put an emphasis on the fact that she left the past behind her, that she is only looking forward because living in the past is useless and that they don't talk too much about 1915 but despite all this, she confessed that she can't forget what her family went through in 1915.

## **6. Discussion**

The primary aim of this study was to see how the Armenians in Turkey experience the fact of being Armenian, how the trauma of 1915 is transmitted from one generation to the next one, what changes and what remains unchanged and how all this affects the relationship between parents and their children.

When asked about what being Armenian means to them, the majority thought of the Christianity immediately. In general, the three generations associate the Armenian identity with the religion that represents similar results as the literature (Esmaeili, 2011; Garavanian, 2000) and as Garavanian mentions it (2000), the fact that the Armenian kingdom was the first state that adopted the Christianity is crucial. The members of the Armenian community go to the church, more or less and they preserve their identity through religion (Özdoğan et al., 2009; Vosbikian, 2002). Similar to the literature (Özdoğan et al., 2009), the results of the study show that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation is attached to the religion and goes to the church more while we witness a decrease in the devotion level of the younger generations. This

difference could be explained by the growth of the death anxiety with age and seeking refuge in religion but also by the fact that the religion has been an important coping mechanism (Manoogian et al., 2007) for the Armenians to get over the difficulties during 1915. It also could be explained by the fact that the church has been the only educational institution especially for the 1<sup>st</sup> generation; a place where they could receive education but also socialize and maintain their culture (Manoogian et al., 2007). The decrease of the religious devotion among the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation could be the repercussion of the modern life and the secularization process which increased the number of people questioning the existence of God and the degradation of the traditional Christian beliefs, especially among the European communities thus there was an interruption regarding the religious beliefs' transmission between generations (Gill, Hadaway & Marler, 1998).

Moreover, the growth of individualism (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton, 1985) and the contradiction between the parents' attitude and behavior regarding the religion cause also the decrease of the religious beliefs' transmission from the older generations to the younger ones (Bader & Desmond, 2006). As can be seen from the results of the study, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation associates the Armenian identity less with the religion and a part of this generation evaluates the Armenian identity from a more ethnic, political and cultural point of view. The communication and socialization mediums of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation are not limited to the religious institutions; diverse communication channels and the education life that become

effective could be the reason why the members of this generation associate the identity less with the religion and define the Armenian identity from other perspectives.

In parallel with the result above, some of the Armenians, mostly grandmothers, associate the proud and happiness of being an Armenian with the religion while especially the majority of the grandchildren express this happiness associating it with the cultural richness and cultural values and not the religion itself.

Especially the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, mostly mothers, think that being Armenian is a privilege because of their cultural diversity and richness and consider themselves superior to other ethnic groups and especially to Turks. Especially, among the members of a specific generation, this pride marks the construction of the Armenian identity. As in the study conducted by Esmaeili (2011), the participants described the Armenian identity by idealizing it cultural wise, intellectual wise and on other aspects, feeling pride about it. This situation could be a reaction developed against the fear of annihilation and of humiliation caused by the trauma of 1915. As mentioned by Wilkeson (1987), to be able to cope with the deep sorrow caused by the past trauma, they might have developed a defense mechanism against the threats of the outside world by feeling themselves superior to others and adopting omnipotent beliefs, developing an emotional detachment with feelings that cause pain and fear and isolating themselves from other people. This could be also explained by the separation method of Berry's (1997) acculturation model. In this procedure,

the minority group considers its own culture as superior and avoids communicating with other different groups. That is to say, they resist the opinions and the values of the dominant culture. In this present study, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation mostly considers as appropriate the separation method while the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation adjusts more to Berry's integration model (1997). As in this model, the members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation identify themselves within their ethnic culture but at the same time, are in interaction with the dominant culture, trying to get to know it. That is to say, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation develops a bicultural tendency with its own culture and the dominant one, lives more in a harmony. In another study, we observe that among the members of the younger generations and those who went to Turkish schools, the out-group identity shows up more than among the members of the older generations and those who went to Armenian schools. As mentioned in Der-Karabetian and Balian's study (1992), this situation shows that with globalization, the new generation steers away a little bit more from the parochialism and experiences more the acculturation.

The majority of the Armenian participants mention also the discrimination and the marginalization they are exposed as the difficulties of being an Armenian in Turkey. The members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generations mention that the inequalities they experience as Armenians, the fact that they are considered as different *creatures* and being exposed to insults have negative impacts on their psychology. These results show parallelism with diverse studies conducted among Armenians in Turkey. The Armenians believe that the marginalization is made through ethnic and

religious identities and that in Turkey, there is a discriminative discourse and behaviors in social life but also in politics and in the media, towards the non-Muslims and especially towards Armenians (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009). But in this present study, although some of the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation admit the marginalization, it is noteworthy that they mention that in the past, there wasn't a discriminative discourse such as "You are *gâvur*" and that they were living like brothers and sisters, on good terms. This could be because during the youth period of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation, the neighborhood culture mattered more and it generated close relationship where everyone knew each other well. Yet, the modern-day life in the cosmopolite cities brings individualization and herewith, the alienation from the *other*; this might be the reason why people have more prejudices about the identities they aren't acquainted with. Another reason might be the transmission responsibility of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation to the next ones. This could be the reason why the 1<sup>st</sup> generation wanted to prevent the next generation from feeling angry with Turks and to maintain the current relations with Turks and ameliorate them. It might be also a way to not only preventing the anger of the next generation but also their own anger. As Akhtar mentioned (1999), the nostalgia developed by the 1<sup>st</sup> generation could be a defense mechanism to deal with the aggression caused by the anger felt by a person against the country he lives in. Also as mentioned by Muratyan (2011) and Görgülü & Gündoğar (2016), they might be trying to give hope by putting an emphasis on the good memories of the past because the younger generation's hope for the future decreases as the worries and

fears caused by the present situation increase and affect in a negative way the lives of the Armenians in Turkey. As Jarymowicz and Bar-Tal (2006), mentions it the hope purifies people from their obsessive beliefs and sets them free in order to let them find solution; it helps you to imagine a future different than the past and the present. Motivated, the societies change their behavior; for instance, a path of reconciliation and empathy could be constructed between them and the people they consider as the enemy. Therefore, the hope is the unique way to overcome our dominant fears (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006).

We mentioned that the hope was the most important way that would purify us from our fears. But the collective fear is an intense feeling that obstructs the societies' emancipation and the hope building for peace (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). A study in the literature (Lev-Wiesel, 2007) showed us how the trauma experienced by the 1<sup>st</sup> generation increases the intensity of the shuttling between fear and hope for the next generations. These fears are caused by current situations and also the deep fear of being hurt, caused by the trauma of 1915. As mentioned in the literature, in 1915, people lost their families, their wealth and their station which engendered the trauma and caused the fear's internalization by the Armenian community, the shaping of their identity around the fear and its intergenerational transmission (Özdoğan et al., 2009). In parallel with the studies conducted in Turkey (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009), the results of the present study reflect the anxiety of the majority of the Armenian participants of being hurt by Turks or/and that the next

generations would get hurt. The participants' fear of being hurt by Turks shows up as the fear of Turks who would cover their wealth or "honor" or would kill them. Because of this fear, some of the participants feel the need of covering her identity within the out-group. As mentioned by Özdoğan et al. (2009) and Görgülü & Gündoğar (2016), they exposed this fear by using Turkish names for the business, not talking Armenian or carrying a cross outside the house. The fear of being hurt by Turks was mostly expressed by the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation and their number decreased towards the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. There might be two reasons for this: The younger generation is less experienced and the fear might be caused by the unknowns about life or the younger generation being more exposed to discrimination and threats because they communicate more with the outside society, and the social media plays a big part on this. As mentioned in Muratyan's study (2011), the participants of this present study don't feel safe and in their subconscious, they feel the permanent need to be on their guard against Turks. This permanent vigilance obstructs the establishment of natural and sincere relationship and thus, the majority of the participants can't easily speak with Turks about 1915.

Although in a limited number, the people who manage to talk about 1915 with Turks are from the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. As Akyil mentioned (2012), with the rising of the industrialism and the capitalism, the autonomy and the sense of initiative stand out among the members of the young generation. In this way, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation is more open to talk than the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, believing that the problems could be solved by talking and not

repressing them. This could be also connected to a more appropriate environment that enabled a mutual discussion on 1915 within the last few years.

Although the Armenian participants intensely expressed their fear of being hurt by Turks or their distant relationship, at the same time, the majority mentioned they are on good terms with Turks while some told that they have very close Turkish friends and they've got good neighborhood relations. Besides, they put an emphasis on Turks who helped the Armenians during 1915 and during the events of 6-7<sup>th</sup> September by hiding them in their house or saving their children. "The help of Turks" which is one of the results of the present study is in parallel with the literature in Turkey. In these studies, almost all the Armenian participants mention that Turks protected them during 1915 and express their gratitude because their family survived thanks to their help; which is very important for the Armenian-Turkish reconciliation process (Görgülü & Gündoğar, 2016; Özdoğan et al., 2009). The Armenian participants think that to be able to solve the problems of the Armenian-Turkish relations, the two nations should get to know each other better and this can be done by strengthening the friendship (Özdoğan et al., 2009). Within the societies exposed to a trauma, collective feelings such as fear, anger, hatred could be developed (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). The studies conducted among the Armenians living outside Turkey show that in opposition to Armenians of Turkey, instead of fear, it's the anger that is transferred from one generation to another (Kalayjian et al., 2010; Kupelian et al, 1998; Miller & Miller, 1993;

Esmaeili ,2011). As mentioned by Yayloyan (2015), the trauma of 1915 that isn't cured yet affects in a negative way, how Armenians perceive Turks. The Armenians living abroad cope with the unbearable pain caused by 1915, by using the splitting defense mechanism, by defining Turks as the "absolute bad" and the Armenians as the "absolute good" (Esmaeili, 2011).

According to Tummala-Narra (2005), the feeling that our motherland would protect us could be interrupted because of the political terror. Especially during the babyhood, the baby starts to perceive the environment through the eyes of the primary caregiver who reflects to him his own experiences through the mirroring process that has a great importance on the child's development. With the influence of the intense social trauma, people who were exposed less to the positive mirroring start to split by segregating in their minds ethnic groups or religions as good or bad.

As mentioned by Yayloyan (2015) and observed in our study, among the Armenians of Turkey, there is not such a negative collective perception about Turks. The in-group's permanent interaction with the out-group could be an important factor. The studies (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) show that the interaction is an important strategy for the recovery of the relations between groups. A study (Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008) showed that the interaction between Bosnians and Serbs in Bosnia Herzegovina increased the Bosnians' will to forgive the Serbs, by using the perspective taking and trust.

While mentioning the fear of being hurt by Turks or their distant relations, the participants also talked about the help of Turks and the good

relations they have with them. One of the important factors is Armenians living together with Turks and shaping their perception not only through 1915 but also their everyday experience with Turks (Yayloyan, 2015). This ambivalent situation is due to living together with the majority society. This ambivalence observed within the present study reveals itself mostly among the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation who after mentioning their fear of being hurt by Turks or other negative aspects talk immediately about the positive aspects; as if they were feeling guilty of having manifested their anger too much and mentioning immediately the positive aspects. The fear of being hurt by Turks could be connected to the real threats but also their own psychological inner process. To be able to get rid of the bad feelings, a person can project them onto other people; by projecting all the bad feelings onto the opposite side, a person can feel better in his inner world. As it is a worrisome process to cope with the anger caused by 1915, felt by Armenians towards Turks, this feeling is projected to Turks and perceived as if Turks were feeling angry with Armenians and would hurt them. As mentioned by Paker (2012), as the individual's identification with the in-group increase, in parallel, his negative feelings and behavior towards the out group such as hatred, anger, prejudice increase as well. When this situation is projected to the opposite side and the negative behavior of the opposite side is added top it all, the fear of being hurt increases and enters a vicious cycle. In fact, this fear helps the individuals to cope better with stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Fear and hatred push people to focus on their in group while the fear increase the ethnocentrism and

decrease the tolerance towards the out group (Feldman &Stenner, 1997; Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, & Wood, 1995). Thus, a clear distinction is formed between the in-group and the out-groupthat causes victimization. But as mentioned above, most people prefer not to face their own anger and to believe that other people carry it (Bar-Tal, 1989).

Information provided by the participants during the interviews show that the families of all the participants were exposed to deeply traumatic events during 1915 or afterwards. While some of them tell about how people lost their husband and wife, how much pain, suffering and hunger they witness during the deportation and how they started a new family and a new life, others mention how the women in their family remained without husband, conducted to the concentration camps, forced to be married with Turks and all the difficulties they went through during this period.

One of the participants narrated how his father witnessed the murder of his own father and how he had to burry him himself. The same person mentioned how Turks assaulted their house, threatened them and kidnapped his sister and how the desperate family couldn't do anything to prevent them. Some participants explained how they had to migrate leaving all their properties behind because of the assaults and how they started from scratch when they return.

All these findings bring to light how much pain and suffering the 1<sup>st</sup> generation who experienced 1915 went through. The studies conducted among the 1<sup>st</sup> generations who witnessed a collective trauma support these findings; they uttered the 1<sup>st</sup> generation's pain and suffering, their feeling of

inferiority and the intense fear of death with their own words (Kalayjian et al., 1996).

This present study analyses the three generations following the 1<sup>st</sup> generation and the results show that the deep sorrow was transferred from one generation to another. Similarly, other studies about the intergenerational transmission of the trauma found out that the negative experiences of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation had their impacts on the long term on the following generations (Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Bar-On, 1995; Rosenthal and Völter, 1998).

In this present study, it has been observed that comparing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation developed a deeper sorrow about 1915; they interiorized it as if they experienced 1915 themselves. They expressed this feeling with expressions such as “as it happened now”, “that pain is a torch that never blows out”, “the boil is inside us”. This condition could be explained by a secondary trauma; although the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation didn’t experience the trauma of 1915 directly, their life has been affected by the verbal or non-verbal family transmission (Schuengel et al., 1999). As mentioned by Figley (1995), the internalization of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation that has been observed also in this present study is due to the identification with the pain of those who were exposed to the trauma, caused by an excessive empathy.

This study shows that the sorrow about 1915 has been transferred to all generations but the intensity of the sorrow decreased from one generation to another. But contradictory results stand out when we look at other

comparative studies about generations. One of the studies (Sigal & Weinfeld, 1989) detected that psychologically, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation felt better than the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation families because the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation felt safer in its own sense of self and could identify easier with the grandparents' identity and past. That's how the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation was less affected by the trauma than the 2<sup>nd</sup> one. However, the study conducted by Kupelian et al. (1998) exposed how the members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation presented more pathological symptoms although their self-confidence was higher than the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation's. That is to say, although both studies show that the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation has a higher sense of self and self-confidence, in one, this generation seems to be less affected by the trauma than the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation while in the other, it is more affected. The results of our study seem to be more coherent with Sigal and Weinfeld's (1989).

According to the present study, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation is the one who mentions the least, the sorrow about 1915 but at the same time, those participants are those who express the most that 1915 shouldn't be forgotten and that it's their responsibility to do their best not to forget it. These results are in parallel with the studies conducted among the Armenians abroad. The studies conducted in the United States show also that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation present deeper feelings and reflect its feelings more and compared to older generations, the young generation is less emotional but struggles for the remembrance of 1915 and the establishment of justice (Kassabian, 1987, as cited in Kupelian et al., 1998; Azarian, 2010). On the other hand, Bakalian's study (1993) shows that all the generations have a strong emotional link

with 1915 but the younger generations follow less the behavioral activities such as participating to the commemoration ceremonies. But all these results prove that we need more intergenerational comparative studies to acquire reliable results.

In the present study, half of the participants mentioned the importance of not forgetting 1915 and especially the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation took this responsibility; it shows that the Armenian identity is associated with 1915. The Armenians may put 1915 in the center and build their identity around it. A study conducted among the Armenians of the USA presents similar results. In a study conducted by Azarian (2010), young participants stated building their identity around 1915.

The intergenerational transmission of the trauma, from the generation who experienced the trauma to the younger generations, affects the families' behavior patterns and values (Cole, Woolger, Power, & Smith, 1992; Downs, Miller, Testa, & Panek, 1992; Kashani, Daniel, Dandoy, & Holcomb, 1992; Truscott, 1992). In this regard, unresolved traumas may frustrate the parenting skills (Banyard et al, 2003; Aarts, 1998).

The findings of this present study show that the trauma of 1915 has been transferred in the Armenian families, from one generation to another. One of the recurrent topics of the study was the anxiety of the parents that the younger generations would get hurt. This is why the parents presented an overprotective and overcontrolling behavior towards their children. One of the participant mentioned how her parents worried excessively when she started to go to university and make Turkish friends and how they called her

permanently to check if she was safe when she went out with Turks.

Another participant spoke about how she didn't trust Turks; she thought the next generation should be very careful. Some of the participants were afraid that a Turkish man would lust after their daughter and didn't let her go out late and felt safe when she was by their side.

The parents' overprotective behavior could be associated with the grief of losing children in 1915, the insecurity feeling caused by the immediate immigration and the families tearing apart. The fact that the families feel safe when their children are by their side could be explained by the intense separation anxiety. This anxiety pushes the mothers to try to protect their children permanently and keep them by their side. These findings support the results of the studies on collective trauma. The previous studies show also that the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation had difficulties in trusting people, developed an excessive attachment to their parents (Staub, 2003; Aarts, 1998) and a high separation anxiety that affected the attachment relation with their own children (Davidson, 1992). They demonstrated how the attachment to their parents affected in a negative way their parenting skills. The study conducted among the Armenians of Turkey also show that the parents wanted to have the children under their control and preferred them to have a distant relation with Turks (Muratyan, 2011).

In the present study, there is another aspect that points out: While all the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation mentioned that they parents were overprotective and repressive, the majority of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation didn't. This could be connected to the "mutual overprotection" mentioned by

Freyberg (1979): during the development period, when the children of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation enter the separation-individuation process, the mothers of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation live intensely the feeling of losing their children and due to their individuation efforts, the children feel guilty. Therefore, the children develop a mutual overprotection and they give the priority to their parents' needs and worries (Wiseman, Metzler, & Barber, 2006). The high anxiety of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation is reflected in their overprotective parenting. Due to the previous losses they witnessed, they prevent their children's individuation process and the children develop an enmeshment relation with their parents (Rose and Garske, 1987; Shoshan, 1989; Brom et al., 2001; Kestenberg, 1980; Russell, 1974; Trossman, 1968). Therefore, the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the present study who are the children of those who lived the trauma may have submitted to their rules and repressions and remained silent because they were affected by their intense grief and they didn't want to sadden them. They may have accepted this condition as natural and let them cross their limits. But we shouldn't forget that it might be also associated with the social behavior of that period. These results may be connected to the fact that these people are the children of the generation who was exposed to the trauma of 1915, but it may be also the cohort effect, that is to say, as observed in our study, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation represented the traditionalist generation called the silent generation and we shouldn't forget the impact of this generation's loyalty and submission to the authority (Adıgüzel, Batur & Ekşili, 2014).

The overprotective behavior of the parents is also associated with the fact of being a woman in Turkey and the development and the conservatism level of the Armenian community. In the past, Armenian married women didn't talk to other men than their husband and children (Kirkland, 1984). If we take a look at the modern families, although the Armenians are still patriarchal and collectivistic, the man-woman relationships are much more advanced.

Behind the overprotective and overcontrolling behavior of the parents lies also their protection instinct; they want to protect their children from the opposite sex and especially from Turkish men. During this study, the parents were asked about their expectations from their children. The most recurrent answer was "the children not to marry a Turkish". All the married participants were married to Armenians. As mentioned by Özdoğan et al. (2009), the reason why the single participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation bring up often the families' opposition to the marriage with Turks could be the increasing number of the mixed marriage among the Armenians of Turkey. The study conducted among them demonstrates that they are mostly against marriages with Muslims. One of the main reasons could be the fear of assimilation and the possibility of marriage problems due to the difference of ethnicity and religion. However, some of the single participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation felt uncertain about marrying a Turkish while others had a more moderate approach. This change could be associated with the increasing educational level of the young generation that allows them to enter different social environments and to communicate more with people from other

ethnic groups, and especially, the Turks who constituted the majority group. The 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation who grew up in a more closed society communicated less with Turks. Another reason could be the religion's loss of authority.

The studies conducted among the Armenians in the USA show that the parents' expectations are mostly centered around their children's success on their school life (Esmaeili, 2011; Ayvazian, 1996). These expectations reveal a desire to win back the power and security lost after 1915. These differences prove us that the expectations vary according to the different majority groups the communities live with.

In this study, the majority of the participants mention that their families didn't make a direct transmission about 1915. As in the results of Yayloyan's (2015) and Muratyan's (2011) studies, some of the participants learned 1915 by overhearing the conversation of the elder members of the family while others learned it by their friends or by reading, researching themselves. Some participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation specify that their maternal grandmother transferred to them the information about what happened in 1915. In another study (Özdoğan et al., 2009) also, a significant part of the Armenians of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation told that they heard the story of 1915 from their maternal and paternal grandmothers. It could show us how the older generation took the responsibility of the transmission while the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation adopted an equilibrating attitude by not telling it.

In this study, most of the participants who are also parents agreed with their children and told they didn't talk about 1915 to their children.

They told that they didn't talk about it because they wanted to protect their children, to prevent them from being sad. They were also worried that their children might get angry with Turks and show hostility. In Turkey, this fear prevented the Armenians from talking about 1915 with the younger generations and the domination of the silence has been transmitted from one generation to another (Muratyan, 2011; Özdoğan et al., 2009; Yayloyan, 2015).

The studies conducted in Diaspora among the Armenians of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation who lived 1915 also show that the majority of the participants didn't talk about 1915 with their families (Miller & Miller, 1993; Kalayjian, 1996). According to Kalayjian's study (1996), the reason of their silence was the fear of getting hurt again. But some other studies conducted among the Armenians of the Diaspora of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation tell that almost all the participants learned about their families' story from their family, when they were children (Garavanian, 2000; Esmaeili, 2011).

In the present study, all the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation who are not parents yet noted that they were annoyed having grown up without knowing their own identity and history and that in the future, they were going to transmit to their own children, all they knew about 1915. The young generation may think that talking about the problem and not hiding it could solve the problem. Another study conducted in Turkey similarly demonstrates that the Armenians are in favor of talking about 1915 and they mentioned that the young generation should know their own history (Özdoğan et al., 2009).

Besides, although they weren't told about 1915, the majority of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation told that they always knew about it; it proves that although not verbally, the trauma was somehow transmitted silently, using non-verbal means. Similarly, Muratyan's study (2011) shows that although people weren't told any stories about 1915 by the older members of the family, every generation ever since 1915 knew about the pain and suffering witnessed by the previous generation (Muratyan, 2011). The researchers defend the idea that the survivors affected in a very strong way the psychic world of the young generations with their traumatic past. According to them, whether or not the trauma was mentioned openly within the family circle, the children were aware of their families past traumas (Rowland-Klein and Dunlop, 1997).

Using the defense mechanism such as avoidance and repression, by not telling their children about 1915 or by repressing it, the families try to cope with their traumas.

But the stories that are not told verbally are transferred from one generation to another in a more intense way than those that are told verbally.

Furthermore, from the scraps they learned from their families, the children reconstruct in their fantasy world, their families' experiences in a more frightening way (Shmotkin, Shrira, Goldberg, & Palgi, 2011). Such traumatic information that is transmitted in a non-verbal way may cause serious pathological symptoms to the children (Felsen, 1998; Virag, 1984).

If we compare the families, there is only one family where all members talked often about 1915. But in their case, it didn't have a healing effect

because the 1<sup>st</sup> generation was exposed to an intense growth of anger while as Figley mentioned (1995), the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation intensely exposed to the trauma. Exposed to energy depletion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation intensely avoided listening to the stories of 1915 and tried to forget. It may have caused the intense fear of being hurt observed among the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. It shows us the importance of the open communication and the important part it plays in the healing process but if we are exposed to too much information when we are not ready for it and the way we are exposed to it could have a damaging effect instead of a healing one.

Although the results of this study were evaluated from different angles, as all the participants are women, it would be also important to evaluate them from the womanhood and motherhood perspective. The traditional Armenian culture condemned women to the silence (Villa & Matossian, 1982) while this behavior is reflected among the Armenians living the United States as presenting women who express themselves openly as women that no man would want (Vosbikian, 2002). In this present study, although we can observe that both mothers and fathers remained silent and didn't transmit 1915 to the next generations, the cultural silence that weighs down the women could also have an impact on this silence. But the young generation talks more easily about 1915 and takes the responsibility of the transmission, which means that women of the young generation don't remain silent as in the past and the cultural perception of the silence for the women changes. Not to be able to talk about 1915 could also be connected to the motherhood. The mothers' overprotective behavior

shows itself by limiting their children's freedom to go outside and not talking to them about 1915. This behavior could be connected to the mothers' protective instinct. This could be why the single participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation who don't look from a mother's perspective, prefer to talk about 1915 to the next generations or are annoyed of their parents' overprotective behavior and mention they will raise their children in a more free way.

The kidnapping of Armenian women during the deportation, the sexual harassment they were exposed to (Dadrian 1994; Miller & Miller, 1993), as well as the protection of Armenian women from the non-Armenian men in order to preserve the Armenian blood and honor before 1915 (Villa & Matossian, 1982, as cited in Vosbikian, 2002) had a deep impact on the Armenian women's womanhood perception. According to the present study, women from the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation could have reacted to the humiliation experienced during the deportation by developing a feeling of considering themselves privileged. The parents' fear that a Turkish man would lust after their daughters and their oppositeness to the marriages with Turks show that the protection reflex of Armenian women from the out-groups and the stories of Armenian women harmed by Turks during the deportation was transmitted from one generation to another.

To sum up, the results of the study show us the aspects of the trauma of 1915 which have been transferred intergenerationally but also the changes that occurred during the process. In this study, even though the similarities and the differences between the generations stood out, some

family differences also showed up as well. As mentioned in the result part, it could be explained by the families' different experiences about 1915 (such as marrying a Turkish man or talking often about 1915) or the fact that they have been living other traumas independent from 1915 (loss of a brother-sister or of a child etc.). It shows us how complex the trauma is and how it is affected by diverse factors.

### **6.1. Clinical Implications**

In accordance with the interviews, we observed that the traumatic effect of 1915 on the generation that witnessed it had also its impact on the following three generations. The results of the study show how much impact 1915 had on the lives, the point of view, the relationships, the parenthood skills and on the decisions of these generations.

Therefore while working with Armenian families, as in the case of the other groups exposed to a trauma, the clinicians should be aware of the importance of the intergenerational transmission of traumatic experiences. The therapist, especially if he or she belongs to a different ethnic group, must acquire some knowledge about the Armenian culture and specifically 1915, to be able to understand and help them. As we know from the multicultural counselling literature, there is a fine balance between being curious about the clients' cultural background and holding them responsible for teaching the therapist about their culture. The therapist must educate him or herself regarding the shared characteristics of Armenian families, their history and trauma, but also should learn the client's unique family and individual history so that he or she would be able to recognize how much of

the clients' experiences are associated with the collective trauma. On occasions, the therapists are closely interested in the client's cultural identity and spend too much time on this. This kind of counter transference affects in a negative way the therapist's activity and he might start to interpret everything according to the cultural explanations. But sometimes on the contrary, the therapists consider identical all the clients, ignore the cultural differences and the countertransference reactions that might occur during the therapy (Comas-Diaz & Jacobsen, 1991). Therefore, the therapists should avoid connecting every information the client shares to his Armenian identity and as well ignoring the Armenian identity's impact on the client.

The trust relationship between the client and the therapist is crucial in order that the therapy can process efficiently. While working with the Armenians of Turkey who express an intense fear of being hurt by the outside world and a feeling of insecurity, especially Turkish therapists should be very sensitive. Talking about the confidentiality policy in detail and providing a safe and inclusive environment would be crucial in establishing a trusting therapeutic relationship.

Studies show that clients from a minority group perceive therapists from their own race more positively and they tend to work with them (Cabral & Smith, 2011) also in case of cultural mistrust, they develop negative attitudes towards therapists from the majority group (David, 2010) and it hinders them from getting psychological help professionally. Armenian clients might prefer to work with an Armenian therapist but because they belong to a minority group in Istanbul and so everyone knows each other

closely might be the reason why some have concerns about opening up their inner worlds and therefore prefer a therapist who is not Armenian. We should also keep in mind that the Armenian client might examine how non-Armenian therapist perceives Armenians or 1915. In that case, negative prejudices might hinder therapist's communication skills and it would be more favorable to direct the client to another therapist, if needed.

While working with Armenian clients, the therapists should be aware of the collectivist structure and especially the process of enmeshment and individuation within the families due to losses and intense fear caused by the trauma. While working with children and families, the therapist should first respect the families' structure and boundaries to build the alliance. Especially while working with small children on the separation-individuation process of the development period, the therapist should take into consideration the intense separation anxiety expressed by Armenian families and guide the parents accordingly. After joining with the family where they are, and acknowledging the effects of past trauma, the therapist can help the family to draw the necessary boundaries between the generations and help them to negotiate a healthy separation-individuation process while keeping a close relationship.

According to Akhtar (1999), to be able to attain a therapeutic healing while dealing with a trauma, the most important duties of the therapists are to acknowledge the traumatic experience, to help the client to process the trauma, to facilitate the process of mourning, to help him for taking responsibility for his destructiveness and to let him making meaning.

The results of the present study show that the traumatic events of 1915 caused a deep sorrow to all the three generations, that despite this feeling, the families abstain from telling their children about 1915 however, whether or not, the children know about it. To be able to talk about the effects of 1915 within the family or during the therapy is part of the healing process. During this process, the therapist may play an encouraging part in order that the family members make out a shared meaning of what have been told and support them in reorganizing their lives (Walsh, 2015).

The studies show that non-verbal communication ways are associated with the maladaptive coping while those who use the verbal communication way develop the adaptive coping (Lichtman, 1984, Sorscher & Cohen, 1997). When there is an open communication, the risk of the secondary trauma decreases (Giladi & Bell, 2013). In the study conducted by Kalayjian et al. (2010) with people who lived 1915, the majority of those who shared what they experienced in 1915 with their family had a low level of PTSD. By talking with their families, they had their support and they started to make meaning out of what they have experienced. To establish an open communication and to share the stories gave to them the opportunity of processing their experiences and discovering a new meaning in their lives (Kalayjian, 2010). For the families, it is important to share these experiences with the family members because they think that the trust can be repaired within the family (Weine et al's, 2004). The sharing of the traumatic experiences could trigger the healing while the denial and the avoidance could prevent it. The open communication enables the easy expression of

the emotions and helps to strengthen the resilience by encouraging the whole family to create a shared meaning out of the experience and to solve the problem. But we shouldn't forget that the cultural norms about the emotion and information sharing could change (Walsh, 2015). The family stories both carry a meaning and guide the families in creating a common meaning (Kiser, Baumgardner, & Dorado, 2010). In our study, as the families avoid to openly transfer their painful experiences, the family members can't create a common meaning, share the emotions or solve the problem together. This situation may have been effective in the transmission of this kind of fears from one generation to another.

As long as the traumas are not healed, although it might seem to sleep for generations, when the individual encounters a threat to the group identity, it shows up again. To solve the problem, one should be able to talk about the trauma and mourn (Volkan & Itzkowitz, 2000).

In fact, there is a need for communication, talking and sharing in the greater society. I think that individuals should talk to their therapists, families and communities and finally the whole society altogether and this will preclude collective trauma, constellation, discrimination and becoming silent. In this way, even though we might not meet on a common ground, we can reduce the pain while making it an effable subject.

However if especially the families can't overpower their reactions while narrating what happened to their children, fulfil the child's needs at this very moment and consider how much information should be transmitted, when and in what way, to disclosure the story to the children

might have a negative impact. Besides, to disclosure this kind of information could have different consequences in different cultures. While the disclosure is encouraged especially in the Western cultures, it is the opposite in the Eastern cultures because it is believed that the disclosure might awake hostility (Angel, Hjern, & Ingleby, 2001). Therefore, while working with Armenian clients, the therapist should sense which cultural values this family prioritize and should attune according to their speed and their need.

It is crucial that a therapist who deals with a trauma pays attention to and examines its own countertransference. While working with Armenian families, the stories that have been told may cause pain, anxiety and anger to the therapist and the latter may develop a countertransference and an excessive identification which will cause the loss of his neutrality and making him feel desperate and insecure. This would seriously harm the efficiency of the therapy (Herman, 1992). Sometimes, the intensity of the transmitted feelings causes the development of such a countertransference that the therapist expresses a loss of motivation in working on the client's trauma, avoids facing his own feelings and put some distance between himself and the therapeutic process (Danieli, 1998). However, a Turkish therapist might be affected from his own past or own point of view while working with an Armenian client (Kağnıcı, 2013). In a similar way, people who were exposed to the trauma or who inherited it by intergenerational transmission don't want to talk about this subject with other people because they think they wouldn't be understood. Therefore it's crucial that the

therapist should be able to review and analyse his own countertransferences and shows to the client that he is ready to listen to him. For this reason, it is very important for the psychology training programs have a course where students process their issues with working with different populations (Kağnıcı, 2013). Also, the supervisors must be cognizant about the supervisee's cultural background and how it reflects in working with clients from different ethnic groups.

While dealing with a collective trauma, there is a good number of treatment methods but many researchers/therapists specify the narrative therapy as an efficient one (Dagirmanjian, 1996; Kiser et al., 2010; Silverman et al.; 2008, Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1994). By the family trauma narrative method, the therapist brings together the family members in order to let them share their trauma stories, he works on the trauma as the family starts to bring up the stories, helps the members to develop a shared meaning about the trauma and uses problem solving techniques to reduce the stress. The therapist supports the family in creating a trauma narrative (Kiser et al., 2010).

In order to let the family bring its culture to the therapy, while working with Armenian families, Dagirmanjian (1996) suggests practicing the narrative method. In this way, the therapist understands the cultural context of the client's life and the client decides by himself how much his own cultural affects him.

### **6.1.2. Limitations& Future Research**

This present study explored intergenerational transmission of trauma across three generations with five Armenian families in Istanbul, Turkey. Small sample size was inevitably one of the major limitations of this study. Even though the sample size was good enough for qualitative study and the results obtained from in-depth interviews were meaningful, it is important to mention that the findings are not generalizable to the entire Turkish-Armenians. Therefore, with the understandings acquired from this exploratory study, a quantitative study can be conducted to understand general perspective of Turkish-Armenians about intergenerational transmission of 1915 incidents.

Another limitation of this study was that only Turkish-Armenians from Istanbul participated to the study. The participants from various cities in Turkey could impact the results in many aspects such as parenting or being Armenian. Similar research may add Turkish-Armenians from other regions to enrich the interpretations.

Further research can benefit from following these families when youngest generation becomes parent to see whether being a parent changes their opinions and feelings in regard to parenting issues. Future research could also include Turkish population to understand how they perceive 1915. It would be a comprehensive study to compare the similarities and differences between Turkish and Armenian populations regarding the trauma of 1915.

This study was conducted only among women participants. A similar study could be conducted among only men in order to examine 1915's effects on men and their fatherhood. In this way, the gender differences and its impact on parenting could also be observed. A future research on the intergenerational transmission of the trauma could also study all the members of the Armenian families together. Thus, the trauma's transmission could be viewed through an integrated approach including the family dynamics, the mother-father relation, the siblings' relation etc.

In this study, the results are evaluated without regarding the participants' level of trauma. Further research could also use a quantitative trauma scale at the beginning of the interview to differentiate the effects of the trauma on each participant.

This study investigated the effects of intergenerational transmission of trauma in different areas of participants' life. However the findings in parenting and identity areas can not be considered only as a result of the 1915 trauma but also as a result of social conjuncture of Turkey. To understand whether these findings are the results of the trauma or not, future research could also include other communities in Turkey. By investigating these other communities, we can compare similarities and differences in parenting and identity areas between Armenians and other communities.

In qualitative study, the researcher's own inner processes, relation with the participant indispensably affect the interpretation of the findings. Further research could include more deeply the effect of the researcher's

countertransference during the interpretation process which will enrich the study.

The effects of the trauma stand out through every participant's own language structure; how a sentence is formulated is as important as what is said. The repetitions, hesitations and the choice of words of the participants during the interview could be analyzed in details using the discourse analysis. The effects of the trauma could also reveal themselves beyond language. Thus, further research could examine the non-verbal datas by using different systematic codings.

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## Appendices

Appendix A  
Interview Questionnaire

### Questions prepared for the first generation

**1) When you grew up, what “Being Armenian” meant to your family?**

**2) What does it mean to you now? What do you think it means to your children?**

**3) Could you tell me about what your family went through in 1915?**

- When did you first find out about the 1915? How?
- What is the most striking incident that stuck on your mind?
- How could you describe the feelings of the older members of your family while talking about the 1915?
- Do you remember how you felt during these talks?
- What are now your feelings about the 1915?
- How often did you talk about the 1915 in your family?
- How often did you talk about the 1915 outside the family sphere? With Armenians and/or Turks?

**4) What did you pass on to your children, of what you have experienced and what has been passed on to you?**

- Did you tell your child/children about the 1915?
- If yes, when and how? If not, why didn't you?
- How often do you talk about the 1915 in your family?
- How often do you talk about the 1915 outside the family sphere? With Armenians and/or Turks?
- Which opinions about the 1915 are important to you, to pass on to your children?
- Which feelings about the 1915 are important to you, to pass on to your children?
- According to you, what could be the positive and negative impacts of telling it?

**5) How do you think the 1915 affected your parent's parenthood?**

- How did it affect the relationship they established with you?
- How did it affect the household rules?
- How did it affect their feelings about the parenthood?

- What were their expectations of you about being an Armenian? (To speak Armenian, to go to an Armenian school, to have Armenian friends etc.)
- What were their expectations of you about your relationship with Turks?

**6) How do you think the 1915 affected your parenthood?**

- How did it affect the relationship you established with your children?
- How did it affect your household rules?
- How did it affect your feelings about the parenthood?
- What are your expectations of your children about being an Armenian?
- What are your expectations of your children about their relationship with Turks?
- What are the similarities and the differences between the way your parents raised you and the way you raised your children? How do you explain these differences?

**7) In general, how would you describe being the daughter of someone who survived the 1915? Does this condition have positive or negative impacts on you, your children and your family?**

**Questions prepared for the second generation**

**1) When you grew up, what “Being Armenian” meant to your family?**

**2) What does it mean to you now? What do you think it means to your children?**

**3) Could you tell me about what your grandmother/grandfather went through in 1915?**

- When did you first find out about the 1915? How?
- What is the most striking incident that stuck on your mind?
- How could you describe the feelings of the older members of your family while talking about the 1915?
- Do you remember how you felt during these talks?
- What are now your feelings about the 1915?

- How often did you talk about the 1915 in your family?
- How often did you talk about the 1915 outside the family sphere?  
With Armenians and/or Turks?

**4) What did you pass on to your children, of what you have experienced and what has been passed on to you?**

- Did you tell your child/children about the 1915?
- If yes, when and how? If not, why didn't you?
- How often do you talk about the 1915 in your family?
- How often do you talk about the 1915 outside the family sphere?  
With Armenians and/or Turks?
- Which opinions about the 1915 are important to you, to pass on to your children?
- Which feelings about the 1915 are important to you, to pass on to your children?
- According to you, what could be the positive and negative impacts of telling it?

**5) How do you think the 1915 affected your parent's parenthood?**

- How did it affect the relationship they established with you?
- How did it affect the household rules?
- How did it affect their feelings about the parenthood?
- What were their expectations of you about being an Armenian? (To speak Armenian, to go to an Armenian school, to have Armenian friends etc.)
- What were their expectations of you about your relationship with Turks?

**6) How do you think the 1915 affected your parenthood?**

- How did it affect the relationship you established with your children?
- How did it affect your household rules?
- How did it affect your feelings about the parenthood?
- What are your expectations of your children about being an Armenian?
- What are your expectations of your children about their relationship with Turks?

- What are the similarities and the differences between the way your parents raised you and the way you raised your children? How do you explain these differences?

**7) In general, how would you describe being the granddaughter of someone who survived the 1915? Does this condition have positive or negative impacts on you, your children and your family?**

**Questions prepared for the third generation**

**1) When you grew up, what “Being Armenian” meant to your family?**

**2) What does it mean to you now? What do you think it means to your children?**

**3) Could you tell me about what your great grandmother/grandfather went through in 1915?**

- When did you first find out about the 1915? How?
- What is the most striking incident that stuck on your mind?
- How could you describe the feelings of the older members of your family while talking about the 1915?
- Do you remember how you felt during these talks?
- What are now your feelings about the 1915?
- How often did you talk about the 1915 in your family?
- How often did you talk about the 1915 outside the family sphere? With Armenians and/or Turks?

**4) In the future, what would you like to tell your children, of what was passed on to you?**

- Which opinions about the 1915 are important to you, to pass on to your children?
- Which feelings about the 1915 are important to you, to pass on to your children?
- According to you, what could be the positive and negative impacts of talking about it?

**5) How do you think the 1915 affected your parent’s parenthood?**

- How did it affect the relationship they established with you?
- How did it affect the household rules?
- How did it affect their feelings about the parenthood?
- What were their expectations of you about being an Armenian? (To speak Armenian, to go to an Armenian school, to have Armenian friends etc.)
- What were their expectations of you about your relationship with Turks?
- When you will have your own children, what would you like to maintain? What would you like to change?

**6) In general, how would you describe being the great granddaughter of someone who survived the 1915? Does this condition have positive or negative impacts on you, your children and your family?**

Appendix B  
Informed Consent Form

## Informed Consent Form

This research is conducted within the Master thesis of Janin Marazyan, student in Istanbul Bilgi University, Clinical Psychology/Child-Adolescent MA program.

This study will focus on how Armenians from different generations who keep living in Turkey are affected by the experiences accumulated during the Events of 1915.

The researcher will make a private interview of 1 or 2 hours with you. The interview will be audio recorded. The researcher will ask you questions regarding your personal history, your family's experiences and your personal past and actual experiences. The interview will be conducted in a place where you would feel comfortable and safe and where the confidentiality could be assured. All the identifying information will be kept private within the framework of this study and on every medium where it might be published.

Your name won't be mentioned on the audio recordings, on the transcription documents where the audio recording will be transformed into writing or the question forms, they will only be assigned a number. These materials will be stored in a locker. Your name will only figure in the consent form you are reading right now. The consent form will be stored in another locker than the one where will be the other documents. All this information will only be accessible to the researcher and the supervisors. All the data (the audio recordings, the transcriptions, the consent forms) will be destroyed 6 months after the study is completed.

By participating to this study, you will give important information to the experts working on the psychology field. You will make a contribution to the literature about the Armenian families. Nevertheless, you will have the opportunity to express freely, your feelings and opinions about what happened in 1915. Furthermore, upon your request, the researcher will send you a resume of the results.

Although with a low probability, some questions (especially the questions regarding the experiences of your ancestors) might affect you and cause worries or sadness. If these feelings persist after the end of the interview and if you contact the researcher, Janin Marazyan, upon your request, you will be directed to one free therapy session.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may prefer not to answer the questions that cause discomfort during the interview. At any time during the study, you may decide not to continue participating without giving any justification and you may ask the researcher to delete the recordings. If you have any questions about the study, you may call the researcher, Janin Marazyan, any time you want or contact her by mail ([janin\\_m@hotmail.com](mailto:janin_m@hotmail.com)).

I read and understood the information and conditions mentioned above and I consent to participate in this study. I was giving a copy of this consent form.

Name/surname:

Date:

Signature

Appendix C  
Addendum Form

## Addendum Form

Dear Participant,

Following the interview, if you think you are going through an emotional discomfort, you may benefit from one free therapy session by contacting the following unit. Thank you for your participation.

### **Contact Information**

Istanbul Bilgi University

Psychological Counseling Unit

Phone number:0212 311 76 74

E-mail address:[pdb@bilgi.edu.tr](mailto:pdb@bilgi.edu.tr)

Appendix D  
Demographic Form

Demographic Form

Your age:

The city you were born in:

Where did you spend most of your life?:

Your profession:

Level of study:

Illiterate

Literate

Primary School

Secondary School

High School

University

MA

PhD

Civil Status:

Married

Single

Divorced

Widowed.

Financial Level:

Very low

Low

Middle

High

Very High

Do you have a psychiatric history?: Yes

No