**THE ASSASSINATION OF HRANT DINK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ARMENIAN YOUTH IN TURKEY: A TIME OF TRAUMA OR SOLIDARITY?**

by

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Where is my hero? Mr. Halepliler, you helped me a lot when I was arranging the contacts for the interviews. Thanks for your support… Thanks for your infinite patience for the times we couldn't see each other…  And thanks for all the love you gave me… Yours 'kiddy' is now graduating with this thesis.

And… The last words of these lines are for the most special person in my life… My guardian angel… My inspiration… My mom… You are the person who always encouraged me and helped me make good decisions. I couldn't overcome any difficulty if you were not there. You are my everything... I love you Semoş…

And yes, this degree is for you…

*Annem Taliha Semra Kır'a…*

**ABSTRACT**


**THE ASSASSINATION OF HRANT DINK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ARMENIAN YOUTH IN TURKEY: A TIME OF TRAUMA OR SOLIDARITY?**


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**Keywords:** Turkish-Armenian conflict, assassination of Hrant Dink, protracted social conflicts (PSCs), trauma, intergenerational transmission of trauma, narratives.


The 1915 conflict between Turkey and Armenia resulting in a contested genocide has produced a vigorous public debate and an extensive body of literature. The assassination of Hrant Dink, a highly regarded Armenian journalist living in Istanbul, is a significant dynamic within the Armenian issue. While the assassination flamed the debates on the genocide claims and the Turkish-Armenian conflict, the funeral ceremony of Hrant Dink reflected the common reaction of Turks and Armenian citizens against the murder, and an outpouring solidarity between them. With all these characteristics, the assassination of Hrant Dink poses an important opportunity for the study of such critical events and their impacts on ongoing ethnic conflict.

This research is designed to explore the psychological effects of Hrant Dink's assassination on the Turkish Armenian youth living in Istanbul. Specifically, the study analyzes how the murder influenced these young people's images towards Turks, and approaches to the Turkish - Armenian conflict and its resolution. The in-depth interviews which are conducted with twenty young Turkish Armenian people, who are selected via using snowball technique, provided the main data of this research. The content analysis was used as the basic methodology for the data analysis.

# <u>ÖZET</u>

## TÜRKİYE'DE YAŞAYAN ERMENİ GENÇLİĞİNİN BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN HRANT DİNK SUİKASTI: YENİ BİR TRAVMA YA DA DAYANIŞMA ZAMANI?

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Danışman: Dr. Riva Kantowitz

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk-Ermeni çatışması, Hrant Dink suikastı, uzun süren sosyal uyuşmazlıklar (PSCs), travma, gençlik, ve hikayeler.

Türkiye ve Ermenistan arasında tartışmalı soykırım iddialarına yol açan 1915 olayları şiddetli bir kamuoyu tartışması ve önemli miktarda yazılı çalışma yaratmıştır. İstanbul'da yaşayan ve saygın bir Ermeni gazeteci olan Hrant Dink'in suikastı ise bu Ermeni meselesi içinde önemli bir dinamiktir. Suikast, soykırım ve Türk-Ermeni çatışması hakkındaki tartışmaları alevlendirirken, cenaze töreni ise Türk ve Ermeni vatandaşlar arasında cinayete karşı gösterilen ortak tepkiyi ve dayanışma duygusunu yansıtmıştır. Tüm bu özellikleriyle Hrant Dink suikastı, bu tip kritik önem taşıyan olayları ve bu olayların süregelen etnik çatışma üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmek için önemli bir çalışma zemini oluşturmuştur.

Bu araştırma; Hrant Dink cinayetinin İstanbul'da yaşayan Ermeni gençliği üzerindeki psikolojik etkilerini incelemektedir. Spesifik olarak, suikastın bu gençlerin zihinlerindeki Türk imajını ve Ermeni meselesine ve çözümüne dair olan yaklaşımlarını nasıl etkilediği irdelenmektedir. 'Kartopu' tekniği kullanılarak seçilen yirmi Türk Ermeni genciyle yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler bu araştırmanın temel verisini oluşturmaktadır. Verilerin analizinde ise içerik analizi temel yöntem olarak kullanılmıştır.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. The Aim of the Study

When conflicts which include identity-based issues and are deeply important to people remain unresolved for long period of times, they tend to escalate, transform and resurface repeatedly, and eventually become stuck at a high level of intensity that result in destructive outcomes among conflicting parties. According to Coleman (2000), many of today's difficult conflicts are such deep-rooted and resolution-resistant conflicts, which are named as "protracted social conflicts" (PSCs) in the literature. Traumatic elements within the issues and trauma transmission across generations are critical components that make conflicts so protracted (Bar-Tal, 2000; Coleman, 2003). The literature especially points out the important position of youth as being both the target of trauma transmission in PSCs, and builders of future relations in conflict. Additionally, although understanding the rooted-issues of such intractable conflicts is vital to find the right path for resolution, following and analyzing the dynamics within the ongoing conflict is also seen very significant to comprehend how the process develops from the past to the present, and make meaningful suggestions for the future (Kriesberg, 1998).

By being inspired from the literature above, this research is designed to make a reference to the aforementioned concepts, such as protracted social conflicts, trauma and youth, and relations among them. The Turkish-Armenian conflict which is a well-known protracted social conflict taking place at the agenda of Turkey, and the assassination of

Hrant Dink which is a very recent dynamic within this conflict, are chosen as the main subjects of this study. The atmosphere this assassination has caused is a valuable motivating factor to analyze this case. As it is known, the assassination of a significant Armenian journalist by a young Turk has produced various debates about the existing conflict and relations. The solidarity between Armenians and Turks in the funeral and Armenia government's subsequent offer to build diplomatic relations with Turkey on an unconditional basis are among the vital positive developments in the Turkish-Armenian conflict.

In the light of these developments in the Armenian issue and aforementioned concepts in the literature, the aim of the research is to dig out the psychosocial effects of the assassination on an overlooked population: Armenian youth living in Istanbul. With this aim, the research analyzes how this murder impacts Turkish Armenian youth in terms of their attitudes towards Turks, and their approaches to the conflict and its resolution. The concept of trauma in the context of war and conflict at multiple levels of analysis (e.g., individual, family and society) as well as theory and research on protracted social conflict, inter-generational transfer of trauma, dialogue, and the role of historical memory are used to understand those effects of the assassination.

Through the research, the reader will reach insights, feelings and opinions of the sampled Armenian youth regarding Turks, the conflict and its resolution and the assassination. To provide such data, the content analysis of the narratives told by the Armenian interviewees about their past, family-history stories, childhood days and memories is a significant tool that helps to comprehend if there is a trauma transmission about the genocide[1], and existing perceptions of youth before the assassination. In relation with the main aim of the study, how the assassination has shaped or re-shaped those young people's attitudes and approaches to Turks and the conflict will be sought by benefiting from the analysis of the narratives regarding the assassination day and impressions about the funeral. It should be noted that this research looks at the assassination and funeral

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[1] This word is not a personal choice of the researcher; instead it is used according to the preferences of the interviewees of this study.

ceremony separately, and assumes that these two events can have different and even opposite meanings for the youth. In that sense, the research analyzes the effects of the assassination by including the influence of the funeral ceremony. By approaching in that way, the study aims to give a more complete picture of the effects of assassination on Turkish Armenian youth as a whole. Additionally, the reader will find the young Armenians' suggestions for resolving the conflict and the reasons they attribute to those suggestions in this paper, too.

By analyzing the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink and seeking to reach a conclusion about how it affects young Turkish Armenians, the study aims to draw a picture of whether the assassination has caused a new trauma in the conflict or led to a new atmosphere of solidarity for Armenian youth. With this aim, this research will not only help to understand a very significant dynamic of the Turkish-Armenian conflict but it will also help to enrich our understanding and suggestions for the future relations and process of the conflict.

## 1.2. Significance of the Study

The 1915 conflict between Turkey and Armenia resulting in a contested genocide has produced a vigorous public debate and an extensive body of literature. However, these literature studies mostly focus on the historical explanations and proofs to confirm or deny the claims on the genocide, and some psychological works related to how this event shapes or contributes to shaping the identities of Turks and Armenians. Therefore, while existing works are generally gathered on reasons or results of the conflict and relations, there is very little research analyzing the present time and process of the issue. The assassination of Hrant Dink, which has precipitated an outpouring of solidarity from Turks and Armenians, poses an important opportunity for study to analyze a critical event within the process and its impact on ongoing ethnic conflict. With this approach, the present study not only involves the past of the conflict but also becomes an initiative analyzing the current process in the Armenian issue and making references for the future relations and resolution. Beside

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its timely research, the study also enriches the literature related to youth and war by addressing a new chapter in the Turkish-Armenian conflict by examining the psychosocial effects of the assassination. To the best of my knowledge, there is no academic study on Armenians living in Turkey; hence this study turns out to be a resonant of the voices of this overlooked group in the conflict.

## 1.3. Outline of the Study

This thesis is composed of 6 chapters. Initially, in chapter two, the reader is introduced to the research question of this study so that the reader can follow the other chapters by having the understanding of the basic question and aim of the research in detail. In the chapter, the literature on research methods and frameworks which are employed to collect and analyze the data will be explained by giving the rationale behind preferring those techniques. The strengths and weakness of the selected research strategy, methods, and design will be presented as well.

In the following part, chapter three, the reader is introduced to the literature on related concepts in the thesis. The focus of the literature review will include protracted social conflicts, trauma, trauma transmission, the importance of dialogue, and the significant position of youth in such intractable conflicts. The literature on PSCs will provide the necessary background to understand and describe the Armenian issue as a protracted conflict. Traumatic elements within the issues of such conflicts and trauma transmission across generations are the critical components making conflicts protracted; hence the information concerning trauma and its transmission will help the reader comprehend the features of PSCs and the Armenian issue better. In this chapter, the need for dialogue for the resolution of such conflicts will also be reviewed briefly. Lastly, the literature over the important position of youth as being both the target of trauma transmission in PSCs, and the builders of future relations in conflict constitutes the reasons of choosing the 'youth' as the sample unit of this research.

In the fourth chapter, a general overview of the Armenian issue will be provided. The history of the Turkish-Armenian conflict and relations, discussions to define the conflict as a protracted social conflict, and very brief information on the assassination of Hrant Dink will be the subjects of this chapter.

The subsequent chapter, the fifth chapter, analyzes the data gathered from the interviews. The meaningful themes which were found through the content analysis of the interview answers and narratives will be presented in detail via the help of some charts, tables and quotations in necessary sections.

In the last chapter, discussions concerning the analysis of the findings will be presented with reference to the parallel conceptual literature given in previous chapters. Implications and future research questions of this study will be also touched upon at the end of this chapter.

# CHAPTER 2

# METHODOLOGY

In this section, the research methods and frameworks employed to collect data will be described. Further, the rationale behind the usage of these specific methodologies and their strengths and weaknesses are discussed. The application of these methods and the strategy followed in analyzing the collected data is another topic within this chapter.

The main research strategy used to generate data is the interviews which are conducted with a sample of Armenian youth living in Istanbul. The answers and stories narrated by the interviewees are analyzed by using the content analysis technique. In an effort to address the research question, this study provides descriptive detail on the experiences, memories, feelings and views of the Armenian youth regarding the Hrant Dink assassination, the Armenian issue, the image of Turks, the future relations between the two communities and the ways of resolving the conflict. The main research question and sub-questions which are sought throughout this study will be explained within this section. Afterwards, before moving onto the description of the main methods used in this research project, the qualitative nature of the study is also briefly discussed because it is important to understand the rationale behind the preference of specific methods employed for conducting the study.

**2.1. Research Questions**

The broad research question of this study is how the assassination of Hrant Dink is perceived by Armenian youth living in Turkey in the context of the Turkish-Armenian issue. In order to specify the question better, the research question is rewritten as follows:

*"From the perspective of Turkish Armenian youth living in Turkey, what are the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on their attitudes towards Turks, and approaches to the Turkish - Armenian conflict and its resolution?"*

While assessing the assassination event and its influence on young Turkish Armenians, this study also aims to find out answers of the sub-questions below:

- What do family-history stories of the Armenian youth include? What are the issues in these stories?
- What do young Armenians know or are told about the conflict by their parents?
- What are the feelings about being an Armenian in Turkey?
- What do they know or think about Hrant Dink?
- What do they think about the assassination and the funeral atmosphere?

Questions related to the family and family-history stories have the aim of illuminating the term before the assassination, namely childhood and adolescent periods. Through learning about these terms, the effect of family-history stories and trauma transmission via such stories can be analyzed. Hence, their influence on shaping the attitudes and background knowledge of young Turkish Armenians towards the conflict and Turks is also comprehended. Besides, more general questions such as describing the feeling of being an Armenian in Turkey and how they perceive the conflict help to put forth their individual stance on the conflict better since answers of these questions show to what extent youth have internalized what they have been told by their families. In sum; all of these questions help to clarify what the Turkish Armenian youth knew about the conflict and how they

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approached the issue before the assassination. This enables the researcher to make a comparison among the terms before and after the assassination, and evaluate if the event caused a change in the approaches. In spite of the comparison, it should be also noted that because this research is done after the assassination, getting knowledge on how the youth had thought and approached the conflict before the murder of Hrant Dink is not definitely possible. Thus, it remains one of the biggest limitations of the study.

Other questions concerning the death of Hrant Dink are gathered in two categories in order to analyze the assassination and funeral separately because there is the possibility that these two events might connote different, even adverse things for the young Armenians. The questions which are designed to uncover reactions, feelings and opinions of the Turkish Armenian interviewees about the murder and funeral bring a general understanding of how the assassination is interpreted by the youth and show that there are diverse perceptions about the assassination and funeral events. By evaluating those perceptions and interpretations, and analyzing whether they are similar or different with the previous thoughts and attitudes of the Turkish Armenian youth on the issues of the conflict and Turks, the general effects of the assassination on young Armenians' approaches to the Turks, conflict, and its resolution become clear.

## 2.2. Qualitative and Exploratory Nature of the Study

Qualitative research entails detailed examination of cases and tries to present authentic interpretations that are sensitive to certain historical-social contexts (Neuman, 2006). Instead of converting social life into numbers or statistics, as quantitative approaches do, qualitative methods are based on ideas from the people under study and aim to uncover their insights. Of course those numbers of quantitative studies also derive from people's views, approaches and insights; yet the difference is that while quantitative researchers speak a language of variables and hypotheses which depends on causal explanations, and stress more 'mechanical' techniques for objectivity, qualitative researchers don't test something or try to control and eliminate the human factor for the

sake of impartiality (Neuman, 2006). On the contrary, qualitative people take the advantage of being involved and analyzing subjective creation of the meaning and inferences in order to see the world better from the eyes of the people studied (Huberman & Miles, 2002). For this reason, qualitative techniques are seen more useful to "get a feel" of the research field rather than the quantitative methods which mostly have an emphasis on numbers or variables (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Neuman, 2006). Additionally, qualitative research is more concerned with providing descriptive detail about the outcomes of their research than quantitative research; thus such studies are more inclined to put emphasis on the process of how events and patterns unfold over time (Bryman, 2004). With these characteristics, qualitative research is frequently used by exploratory researchers who aim to examine a little understood or a very new issue to develop more preliminary ideas and questions which the future research can answer (Neuman, 2006).

In the light of the literature above, the research question of this study concerning the influences of Hrant Dink assassination on Turkish Armenian youth's approaches to Turks, the conflict and its resolution, implies the need to have a qualitative research design. The basic reason is that the question does not depend on a 'testing approach', namely it has not a hypothesis for the starting point like the quantitative studies have. Also, the question makes a reference to the Turkish-Armenian conflict which might have very subjective, emotional and sensitive issues for the respondents. The concern is that mechanic attitude of quantitative research that rely on numbers can fail to evaluate the human factor and subjectivity embedded in the research question, which would be very vital to lead to a meaningful inference and answer at the end. In this regard, employing a qualitative design seems to uncover insights of the Turkish Armenian youth better. Also, because qualitative techniques are defined as very effective means to deal with interpreting social realities, especially in areas where there is little research, a qualitative design would be more appropriate to the object of this study which questions a very new issue which has not been studied before.

Beside the qualitative approach as the focus of this research, the study also carries an exploratory purpose in methodological terms because the assassination is a recent event

which has not been researched or comprehended in detail. As being inductive, this study does not test a hypothesis or a theory but rather designed to shed light on a little-explored topic and develop some ideas and questions on which the future researchers can ponder.

## 2.3. Research Design

This part of the chapter presents detailed information on the design of the conducted research in this study. Specific techniques, their justifications, the sample, the criteria for selecting the sampled population, and particular method chosen to analyze the data collected during the research will be discussed.

## 2.3.1. Research Instrument: Interviews

This research employs the qualitative interview for the collection of qualitative data but before moving onto the discussion about sampling and analysis, certain factors leading to conducting interviews shall be explained.

The interview, as a research instrument, can be seen as one of the widely employed methods in qualitative research. The fact that people cannot observe feelings, thoughts, interpretations or behaviors that took place at some previous point in time, makes researchers ask questions about those things. As Patton (2002) suggests, interviewing people becomes a good way of learning such things which cannot be directly observed. When we look at the research question of this study, which concerns the effect of the assassination on the perception and approaches of Turkish Armenian youth, it is seen that it would be difficult to gather empirical data without talking and listening to the ideas or feelings of the sampled young Armenians. This necessitates the employment of interviews as a way to learn more about their views on the conflict. Conducting a survey can also be an alternative to get to know people's approaches, tendencies and opinions but the quantitative feature of the surveys which reduces the results into numbers and statistics can

limit understanding of the reasons and subjective elements behind the answers, and fail to catch various details that signify important insights in the data.

Qualitative interviewing can involve different approaches to collect qualitative data. In this research, a semi-structured in-depth interview has been used by meting with single respondents. This type of interviewing has the objective of generating a fine-textured understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the behaviors of people in particular social contexts (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). The 'semi-structured' character of the interviewing gives the advantage of flexibility on the general conversation and questioning style since the interview is not based on a certain structure. In other words, the broad content and aim of the interview is structured, but the main idea is not to ask a set of standard questions. Nevertheless, it is vital to underscore that there should be a well-prepared interviewer behind the apparently natural and causal conversation scene (Gaskell in Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). The researcher keeps an interview guide containing a list of questions, in both open and close-ended question forms, and specific topics to be covered. This guide has been provided with the interviewees in order to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed (Bryman, 2004). By asking several questions, the purpose is not to count the opinions but explore the range of opinions or different representations of the issue.

As Gaskell (2000) points out, this type of interview ought to be chosen when the topic concerns detailed individual experiences and issues of sensitivity. This technique fits into the research question of this study because the topic contains a sensitive issue and makes an emphasis on feelings, opinions and interpretations; so it requires a less structured style which is far from the basic survey understanding. Beside these, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) underline that the less structured style of the in-depth interviewing provides the chance to combine the method with other methods. The present study benefits from this opportunity. It is enriched by the combination of narrative-based questions which ask depictions about childhood, memories with Turks, experiences of identity realization, and the days in which they learn about the assassination and the funeral of Hrant Dink. Thus, an in-depth interviewing technique which is mostly based on the narrations of the interviewees arises. In the literature, some authors, such as Flick (in Bauer and Gaskell, 2000), call this

technique 'episodic interviewing' in which both narratives and certain answers are required by the interviewer. Nevertheless, in order to provide clarity, it is important to explain the significance and relevance of 'narratives' in such a research study and question. Hence, the following part is dedicated to put forth the contribution of narratives.

**2.3.1.1. The Contribution of Narratives and Narrative Interviewing to the Research**

Some of the recent discussions in the field focus on how the increased awareness towards the role of story-telling in shaping social phenomena has given a new momentum to interviewing techniques (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). The basic reason of the increasing use of narratives in the research interviews is tied to the rich data which narratives carry (Huberman & Miles, 2002). When we look at the literature, narratives are described as stories based on one's own experiences (Lieblich & Zilber, 1999). However narratives are affected by both current contexts and transmitted cultural, social and historical meanings in the individual and group identity. Druckman (2005) also suggests that "narratives can tell us many things about conflicts and people involved in them" (p.282). In addition to these, Ross (2001) sees narratives as the stories about unfolding events, which reveal the motivations or reactions of the parties; yet he also underlines how the past grievances or fears of societies are rooted in such personal stories. Therefore, narratives not only become important to understand current perceptions but also build a bridge to the rooted reasons of perceptions in the past. As Ross (1995) states, when the aim is to understand how people make a sense of complex and emotionally powerful events, basic surveys fail to catch the insights; hence group narratives on those events become helpful 'reflectors'.

The relationship between narratives and interviewing shows that the interview models strengthened by narratives encourage the respondent better to tell a story about some significant event in their life or social context. The basic idea is to reconstruct social events from the perspectives of informants as directly as possible; so that an overall feel of specific eras or events can be reached (Neumann, 2006). This type of interview is helpful

when a researcher aims to analyze events which are especially related to recent, traumatic or very sensitive issues (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Huberman & Miles, 2002).

By having these features mentioned above, narratives can contribute to the present study in terms of enriching the data which will be collected via interviews. Interview questions can remain weak in some points in terms of understanding the approaches of the Turkish Armenian youth regarding the period of "before the assassination" because the respondents might give very short and non-descriptive answers which would make it hard to get details about this period. Narrations about past life, memories and experiences of the sampled Armenian youth are needed to comprehend how and in which way the assassination affects young Turkish Armenians' feelings and opinions concerning Turks and the Armenian issue. In that sense, questions asked in the form of narratives will have the aim of prompting respondents to depict certain events, moments, or terms. Stories told will provide details about the experiences of the respondents, which are significant to understand the motives lying behind their answers to other questions. Also, narratives will help to discover not only respondents' emotions but also indicate rooted and transmitted grievances; hence this shall broaden the understanding of the group-identity of the Armenian community. All these contributions of narrative-based questions in an interview are vital to make a relevant and sufficient inference about how the assassination affects Turkish Armenian youth's approaches and attitudes towards Turks and the conflict itself. Therefore, narratives become vital tools that should be integrated into in-depth interviewing technique of this study.

Due to some limitations of the technique, narrative interviewing, which has a very similar structure to in-depth interviewing, is not preferred as the basic type of interview model of this study. Although narrative interviews have a semi-structured style which combines both narration and questioning, it avoids asking too many direct and 'why' questions in order not to create a 'judging image' for the interviewer and anxiety for the respondents. Narrative interviewing is generally based on a few broad questions, such as "let's talk about your childhood" or "tell me about your graduation day", which will encourage the respondent to start his/her story, and followed by some probing questions. This feature of the technique can be a disadvantage because of several reasons. First, the

interviewer might not ask direct questions needed to find an answer to the research question so that his/her questioning flexibility is limited. Additionally, because the questions are broad, it is likely that interviewees will tell irrelevant details which are beyond the scope of the research topic. This situation diminishes the control of the interview over the interview, reduces the quality of the data and becomes time-consuming. In order to prevent such problems, Huberman and Miles (2002) suggest that narrative interviewing should be combined with more open or even close-ended questions.

In summary, an in-depth interview focusing on narratives fits the research question of this study well since listening to the narrations of the Turkish Armenian youth can be beneficial in revealing their insights, feelings, thoughts, and how they interpret the assassination. As mentioned before, narratives of people are linked to the collective memories of their societies somehow; thus, narratives can be very important sources for not only revealing individual thinking but also collective worldviews, fears and threats of a whole group (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Ross, 2001). As a result, narration-based questions in an in-depth interview can give a better complete picture of the reasons behind the youth's interpretations on the assassination and how this event affects them, and build a link with the collective memories and trauma of the Armenian community, which is thought to be transmitted to the younger generation.

### 2.3.1.2. Pilot Study

Before starting to collect data through interviews, four pilot studies were conducted to evaluate the methods of the research as a whole. In keeping the lessons learned through the pilot studies, certain adjustments have been made on wording and sequence of the questions, and other details regarding the research instrument.

First of all, the reactions and the comments of those interviewed in pilot studies emphasized the importance of the confidentiality issue because many of the interviewees asked whether their names would be declared in the thesis, and displayed their unwillingness for this issue. Thus, for the real interviews, respondents were particularly

reminded that their names, other personal information and narratives they provided would remain anonymous. Related to this, prospective interviewees' permission was also asked to use the tape to record their narrations.

Pilot interviews also indicated difficulties in learning answers to some of the questions in the interview guide. Although, in the beginning of the interview instructions were given to the respondents about the main topics and issues that would be asked, some interviewees began to talk about irrelevant details while answering questions. Such experiences showed that a more interventionist and active approach might be needed to encourage the respondents to focus on the questions provided within the interview guide. Another contribution of the pilot studies was the opportunity to see whether there was a problematic feature of the prepared questions in terms of their sequence, wording, directedness, or clarity. Also, the pilot interviews showed the need for adding more questions to the guide to get a more insightful data, and detail the narratives of the respondents. Questions concerning the feeling of being an Armenian in Turkey, family relations and childhood days and memories are added for this reason. Also, due to concerns and hesitations of the respondents in pilot interviews, some direct questions about the genocide and feeling of being Armenian are turned to be more indirect questions not to bother or hurt people emotionally.

**2.3.1.3. Interview Guide**

As a result of the nature of the narration-based in-depth interview model, interviewees are more likely to be the determiners of the course of the conversation. Due to this, the manipulative influence of the interviewer is reduced; yet the researcher has a guide to follow in each interview.

In the present study, after taking the feedback of the pilot studies into account, the final interview guide includes some close-ended questions needed to learn personal background information of the participants. However, there are mostly broad-based and

open-ended questions since they are helpful for the respondents to focus on certain issues they will narrate, such as family life, childhood, the Turkish-Armenian conflict, and the assassination. Specifically, the content of the narratives focuses on two themes. The first narrative theme concerns the stories about the respondents' past. These narratives are necessary because there is a need to know what they were thinking about the conflict and Turks *before the assassination* in order to evaluate their later responses to the assassination and the reasons behind those responses. Thus, whether the event has caused a positive or negative change in the Armenian youth's previous attitudes towards Turks and the conflict itself can be understood clearly. For these reasons, the study aims to start with an exploration on memories of the young people as Turkish Armenians living in Turkey. Their narrations give specific information about childhood days, past atmosphere of those years and relations with Turks, which will be very valuable as the building blocks of their interpretations on the assassination, conflict and resolution suggestions. Also, this shows how the assassination event fits into the context of past experiences and memories of the youth clearer. After asking those questions about the past, the interview flows to the second theme which focuses on the assassination. In order to perceive the assassination from the eyes of the young Armenian people, and understand how they interpret this event, narratives on the assassination, including funeral, are asked. (See Appendix A for the interview guide and questions).

## 2.3.2. Research Sample

### 2.3.2.1. Sampling Technique

The qualitative data of this study were collected by recording in-depth interviews conducted in Istanbul. Since this is a qualitative study in nature, the sample used is identified through non-random methods. In accordance with tenets of qualitative research, the selection of the people to be interviewed depends on the *relevance* of the sample unit to the research topic rather than its representativeness (Flick in Neumann, 2006).

Since the topic covers a very rooted conflict and a sensitive assassination event, making previous connections with the people who will be willing to talk is more suitable for this study. For this reason, purposeful sampling is used to choose the group of people to be interviewed. It increases the chance of the researcher to select the people who want to participate and have different perspectives on the topic; yet using purposeful sampling aims at presenting an insight about the assassination and overall conflict, not empirical generalization from a sample to population (Patton, 2002). This drawback of the sampling technique will be discussed later in the methodological caveats and limitations

Among different ways of purposefully choosing, the snowball technique (chain sampling) is especially preferred in determining the interviewees. In this technique, the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses them to establish contacts with others (Bryman, 2004).

## 2.3.2.2. Unit of Analysis

The general unit of analysis of this study is the Turkish Armenians living in Turkey. The motivation in choosing this sample unit is the lack of study concerning this community. Due to this lack, understanding the interpretation of the assassination from the perspectives of these Armenians, and how this event affects their approaches to Turks, conflict and its resolution are thought to be important.

Istanbul, as the location of the interviews, has no important relevancy with the research topic or question; instead it is preferred for logistic and time-saving concerns to arrange the meetings easily.

As it is stated in the research question, Turkish Armenian *youth* is the specific unit of analysis of this study because of the special importance of youth itself. Youth are seen as important actors especially in difficult and prolonged conflicts. Young people are generally seen as victims of today's traumas and peace-builders of the future (McEvoy & Levy,

2006). With such a character, youth become a significant target to be studied not only for today but also for future relations. From this perspective, comprehending Turkish Armenian youth's perceptions, how they understand the assassination and how this event affects them become valuable in order to make a future reference about their attitudes, conflict processes, and relations between Turks and Armenians.

By using a snowball sampling technique, the researcher made personal interviews with twenty Turkish Armenian young people from Istanbul. As Bauer and Gaskell state (2000), the ideal number of interviews for a single interviewer is among fifteen and twenty-five. However, determining the number of interviews in such a qualitative research which is based on a purposeful sampling approach also depends on the 'feel' of the saturation point which the researcher realizes. This saturation point is reached when the researcher discovers that there are no new words, and interviewees' responses start to become similar.

Gender is considered a significant feature to be balanced in the sample because if the differences in responses are shaped according to gender, this can lead the researcher to make a conclusion which puts the gender as a mediating factor in views and feelings. In order not to avoid such a variable, and to reach better findings and discussions, the unit of analysis includes nine males and eleven females.

15-24 is generally thought to be an ideal interval defining youth (Sommers, 2001). A recent report on youth in Turkey also uses this interval to clarify the youth category in the country. However, as the reports of the United Nations (UN) on youth underline, youth is a very difficult concept to describe in terms of age since the meaning of youth can alter from culture to culture and embrace different age intervals (Lore, 2005). The definition of young people tends to be younger and narrower in Western countries when it is compared to Eastern regions. For example, an age range reportedly developed by African personnel for a Lutheran World Federation youth program in Kenya is 7-40 (Sommers, 2001; Youth and Violent Conflict, 2006; Aytaç et al., 2008). Due to changing meaning and descriptions of the ages of youth, and lack of a study on the youth concept in Turkey or in Armenian community lead to have a broader age interval in this study. Thus, an age ratio, which is

between 20-30, is preferred for the sample unit of the study in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the Turkish Armenian youth. As a result of the characteristic of purposeful sampling approach, the attention is given to select the interviewees who can show diverse characteristics in terms of the level of education, occupation, marital status and family relations; so that a broader picture and a rich variety can be achieved within the studied unit.

### 2.3.3. Methods for Analysis

The general literature on analysis of qualitative data reveals that qualitative researchers rarely rely on statistical quantitative analysis. Although quantitative methods have clarified and recognized rules for data analysis, these methods are thought to lack the understanding of non-observable things such as feelings and their subjective reasons (Neuman, 2006).

The basic method of analysis used in this study is the content analysis. Content analysis can be done with a quantitative style by involving numerical description of the data but there are also qualitative versions of this analysis, which bring an interpretative touch to the content (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In a qualitative approach, content analysis lets the researcher reveal the content, probe into and discover the content in a different way from the ordinary way of reading (Neuman, 2006). In this regard, studying on the answers to open-ended questions, as it happens in this study, is seen as an appropriate topic for employing content analysis. Very briefly, content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of texts. The content refers to words, meanings, symbols, ideas and themes that are communicated, and the text can be anything written or spoken that serves as a medium for communication (Neuman, 2006). In the present research, the written transcriptions of the conducted interviews carve out the texts which will be analyzed. Hence, the content is the words, ideas and themes taking place within those texts.

The literature indicates that there are two coding methods in the content analysis. One is 'manifest coding' which codes the visible, surface content in a text. For example, the researcher counts the number of times that a word or phrase appears in the text and finds out its frequency. The direction of a message can also be evaluated in the manifest coding in terms of whether the message is at the positive/negative or supporting/opposed course (Neuman, 2006). The second coding method of content analysis is 'latent coding'. This type of coding does not *code* the content of a text; but looks for the underlying meaning in the content. Thus, the researcher's interpretation determines whether particular themes or moods exist in the text. This coding method actually fits into the nature of the qualitative approach better because a qualitative researcher does not have to describe specifics and verify universal laws (Neuman, 2006). Instead, he/she develops explanations or generalizations that are close to concrete data and contexts, but are not free of using his/her interpretations (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000).

The present study mostly depends on both manifest and latent coding. By using manifest coding, the visible content of the texts of transcribed interviews are analyzed and the researcher tries to evaluate common and different points which would help him/her create themes and reach general results within the sampled unit. Therefore, the analysis section involves some sort of numerical results which are represented in charts and tables. In order to support the reality of and add a more qualitative dimension to these numbers, quotations of the respondents which reflect the meanings of the numbers are also used in the analysis. Additionally, when the similar answers given for a question exceed the half of the total number of interview participants, the researcher prefers to use phrases such as "majority" or "generally" rather than numbers to show the generality within the findings. By using latent coding, the researcher makes inferences from the statements of the respondents. This coding type contributes to the explanation of the numerical results and the overall analysis of the data through enriching the frame of the themes and meanings given. Because people communicate meaning in implicit ways that depend on context, not just specific words, benefiting from both manifest and latent analysis brings a balanced approach to the analysis, clarifies the findings and strengthens the discussion on these findings (Neuman, 2006).

## 2.4. Methodological Caveats and Limitations

When the methodological constraints are considered, the present study is not free of some difficulties or problems which can affect the validity and reliability of the research.

At first, although it is known that qualitative researchers do not have the promise of generalizable results, the type of sampling can be seen as a block to this issue. The snowball sampling is appropriate for difficult-to-reach populations or sensitive issues; yet it usually limits the researcher into his/her network by making a small circle of contacts. So, it is likely that the researcher talks to people who have similar ideas and personal backgrounds, and reaches alike answers. In that sense, the researcher cannot know how the other people out of his/her network are thinking. This can be a disadvantage because it limits the variety of the responses of the people interviewed and reduces the quality of the results in terms of representing different perspectives (Neuman, 2006). In order to minimize that drawback, the researcher of the present study has paid attention to find interviewees who have diverse characteristics such as age, occupation, education, or family ties; yet still generalization of the results should not be expected from such a study. On the other hand, the analysis method, content analysis, can create another limitation for the study. As it is discussed in previous part, the analysis of the findings depends not only manifest coding but also latent coding. This means that the researcher uses his/her ability to make inferences from the responses of the interviewees. This situation can create a drawback because it can cast a suspicion onto the validity of the analysis (Neuman, 2006).

Additionally and very importantly, timing and the content of the study ought to be taken into account regarding the caveats and limitations of the research. Both the Turkish-Armenian conflict and the assassination involve sensitive and emotional issues which could affect the way Turkish Armenian people answer to the questions. It is possible that interviewees, consciously or unconsciously, can avoid giving direct or sincere answers; and this can damage the aim of the research. To reduce the effect of this situation, the researcher has particularly underlined the confidentiality issue to the respondents of the

study. Similarly, the presence of a Turk as the researcher of the study can be thought as a limitation. Because the subject of the research basically concerns with a sensitive conflict between Turks and Armenians, the questions which are asked by a Turk can make the interviewees hesitant to share and explicate their real views and feelings.

Because there is no previous research done on the Armenian youth in Turkey, it leads to another disadvantage for the present study which tries to understand the period of before the assassination. The research includes questions and narratives related to the childhood days and adolescent days of Turkish Armenian youth to comprehend their former attitudes and approaches towards Turks and the conflict itself. Nonetheless, because the research is done after the assassination of Hrant Dink, it is likely that interviewees' responses are affected by the recent developments. Therefore, it will be impossible to uncover past approaches of the youth before that assassination accurately.

Lastly, since the assassination is a very recent event, its emotional reflections are likely to persist and influence the respondents. Especially, the coincidence of the time period of interviews with the anniversary of the death and memorial activities of Hrant Dink is a significant note should be taken into account. This could be a drawback for the study because it can lead interviewees to give highly emotional answers and reactions which might not be valid or change if another time-period is chosen for the interviews.

# CHAPTER 3

# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As discussed in methodology chapter, the research question of this study is related to the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on the perceptions of Turkish Armenian youth in different topics such as Turks, the conflict and its resolution. The main objective of this chapter is to construct the theoretical background of the study and to introduce the terms that will be used throughout the paper in order to find an answer to the research question.

The chapter consists of three sections. The first section concerns the literature on 'Protracted Social Conflicts' (PSCs). By focusing on PSCs and stating their definitions and features, the first part provides a theoretical ground for specifying the Turkish-Armenian conflict as a protracted conflict. Such theoretical understanding of the conflict is necessary to make a better analysis on the assassination and its influences. In the following section, the literature on trauma is covered because it will help to analyze the Armenian issue and the assassination of Hrant Dink, and evaluate their impacts on Turkish Armenian youth. This section also details the relationship between youth and trauma, which will give the implications of why youth is chosen as the target in the research question of this thesis, and guide the way for comprehending the approaches of Armenian youth towards the conflict and assassination. At the last part, the importance of dialogue as a constructive step in PSCs is discussed in order to commentate the gathering of the two communities, Turks and Armenians, at the funeral of the Hrant Dink from that dialogue perspective. Within the

same section, a specific dedication to the youth's position in dialogue is made to underline the vitality of the young people in such intractable conflicts and their resolutions.

## 3.1 Overview of Protracted Social Conflicts

In the present study, the Armenian issue which has recently became one of the important agendas of Turkey, Armenia, and the international politics is defined as a 'protracted' conflict because the issue shares many features of this type of conflict. Similar to protracted social conflicts (PSCs), the Turkish-Armenian conflict is based on a complex set of historical, identity and political issues, hangs over unresolved for a long period of time, and continues to evolve with new developments. In order to form a good theoretical background for the description of the Turkish-Armenian conflict as a protracted conflict, the following literature presents detailed knowledge on the definitions and characteristics of these conflicts. With this knowledge, the subsequent chapter which is about the history of the Armenian issue can reveal better how this conflict carries various features of the PSCs stated in the literature.

### 3.1.1 Basic Definitions of Protracted Social Conflicts (PSCs)

When conflicts which are deeply important to people remain unresolved for a long period of time, they tend to escalate, transform and resurface repeatedly, and eventually become stuck at a high level of intensity that results in destructive outcomes ranging from mutual alienation and contempt to mutual atrocities such as murder among conflicting parties. These are the 'protracted, intractable conflicts' (Coleman, 2000). By using this phrase, Coleman emphasizes the enduring and intransigent feature of both the structure and experience of such conflicts which are resistant to resolution.

Edward Azar also uses the term "protracted social conflict" (PSC) in order to refer to the ongoing and apparently irresolvable nature of disputes in locations such as the Middle

East, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the Horn of Africa, Cambodia and Africa (Azar, Jureidini and McLaurin, 1978; Fisher 1997). Azar defines "protracted social conflict" as:

*"Mutually incompatible goals among parties, amidst a lack of resolution mechanism cause communal cleavages to become petrified and the prospects for cooperative interaction progressively more poor." (Azar, 2002: 16)*

To illustrate this type of conflict which is hard to manage, intense, stuck, and extremely difficult to resolve (Coleman, 2000), other classifications emerge and depict similar phenomena as 'deep-rooted conflicts' (Burton, 1990); 'enduring rivalry' (Goetz and Diehl, 1993; Sandole, 2003); 'intractable conflicts' (Kriesberg, 1998); 'moral conflicts' (Pearce and Littlejohn, 1997); 'communal conflicts' (Gurr and Davies, 2002); and recently, the common term, 'identity-based conflicts' (Rothman, 1997).

### 3.1.2 Characteristics of Protracted Social Conflicts

Although each conflict is unique and has its own 'life cycle' and features, it is possible to find some common and clarifying characteristics concerning PSCs. In the literature, many different terms are used to capture the features of these conflicts. Some of the terms used are 'destructive', 'deep-rooted', 'resolution-resistant', 'intransigent', 'grid locked', 'intractable', 'identity-based', 'needs-based', 'complex', 'extremely difficult to resolve', 'malignant', 'enduring', and 'deadlocked' (Burgess & Burgess, 1996; Coleman, 2000; Lederach, 1997).

As these terms imply, this type of conflict has complex situations with important historical, political, legal, cultural, and human dimensions. It involves paradoxical issues which are central, symbolic and defining for individuals and groups; for instance, justice and injustice or right and wrong. The groups in PSCs become polarized over the conflict by seeing themselves as the righteous side and the other as the enemy. For this reason, the general nature of protracted social conflicts is defined as: bitter, hostile interaction among

groups, where hatred, political or other types of oppression and victimization run along the identity-based lines and periodically flaring up in the acts of violence (Rasmussen, 1997). As a result of these stated features, PSCs are seen demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting and costly in both human and material terms (Bar-Tal, 2000). This prompts the conflicts to persist for long years with little change in the direction, and have the potential to endure in the future. Ultimately, they inflict both personal and communal trauma (Coleman, 2003).

When the studies designed to specify the basic characteristics of PSCs are analyzed, one of the important source belongs to Coleman. Coleman presents a detailed analysis of the different aspects and features of PSCs, which distinguish those conflicts from the tractable ones. By getting an inspiration from the study of Coleman (2003), the next part of the paper will review the literature in a more detailed way to make a clarified evaluation over the characteristics of protracted social conflicts

FIGURE 1  Protracted, intractable conflict systems
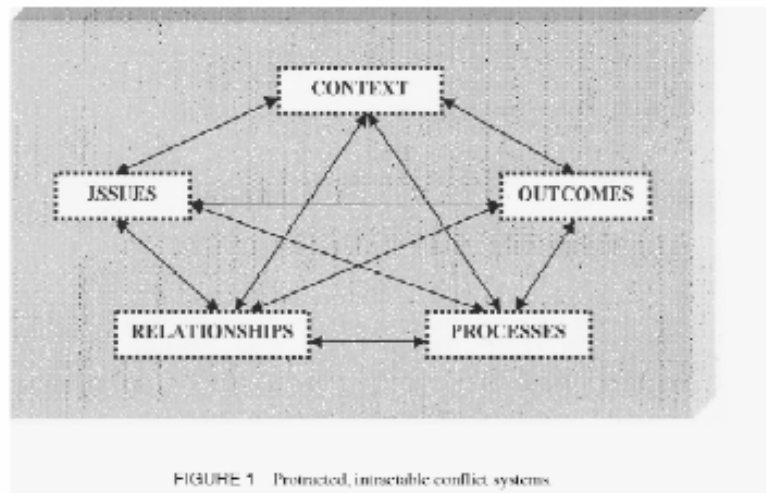
**Figure 3-1: Protracted, Intractable Conflict System**

*Taken from:* Coleman, Peter T. (2003). "Characteristics of Protracted, Intractable Conflict: Toward the Development of a Metaframework–I", *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 9(1), 1–37

### 3.1.2.1 Context: *A history of domination and perceived injustice*

Coleman (2003) argues that PSCs, particularly at the inter-group or international level, are rooted in a history of colonialism, ethnocentralism, racism, sexism or human rights abuses between disputants. In that sense, such conflicts generally occur in situations where there is an apparent or perceived power imbalance, in which the more powerful exploits, controls, or abuses the other. Edward Azar's term of "structural victimization" fits into this context of PSCs very well. In essence, structural victimization refers to the denial of the very basic human needs of people. According to Azar (2002), the context of PSCs includes victimization as a result of the denial of identity, lack of recognition, and security for the culture and other important group memberships of the members of low power groups. In this point, Deutsch (2003) underlines that when this victimization is tied to

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group membership, such as ethnicity, class, race, or gender; it leads to intense inter-group struggles and increases the protractedness of the conflict.

Intractable, protracted conflicts have a dynamic structure so they are likely to surface or resurface under conditions of significant change, instability or anarchy. Nicolaidis (1996) states that sudden events such as terrorist attacks, riots or assassinations can be considered as 'conflict triggering events' which increase the tension between the groups in conflict. Related to this, Coleman (2003) underlines that such significant changes, especially when sudden, can weaken the normative influences and allow for the expression of individual and subgroup needs and concerns by bringing the question of existing rules, patterns and institutions, and reminding old wounds and traumas.

### 3.1.2.2 Issues: *More subjective elements*

As it is understood from the context of PSCs, the atmosphere of these conflicts is generally emotionally-laden due to historical circumstances and struggles. Historical traumas, memories of personal or collective losses or wars can cause the core issues of such conflicts (Broome, 1997). From this point, a more detailed analysis of the literature reveals that underlying interests of many protracted conflicts are the basic human needs such as security or recognition (Azar, 1990; Burton, 1987). Coleman also states that PSCs tend to involve needs or values which the disputants experience as critical to their own or their group's survival. More specifically, it is claimed that identity-based concerns, which are tied to the most fundamental human needs, are very salient in protracted, intractable conflicts; therefore these issues are often experienced as threatening to individuals' very existence and also have a depth of symbolic meaning and centrality for the parties so that the conflict itself sometimes become a part of group identity (Coleman, 2000; Burton, 1987; Lederach, 1997; Northrup, 1989). Similarly Lederach (1997) and Rothman (1997) state that intractability of conflicts are often embedded in more subjective elements such as values, beliefs, identities and cultures which carry emotional importance for the disputing groups (Lederach, 1997; Rothman, 1997). Kriesberg (1998) explains this situation with the

terms 'totality' and 'centrality' of PSCs. He states that because intractable conflicts often concern basic needs like recognition or security which are essential for the group survival; leaders, public and various institutions become involved in the conflict somehow. It leads to the preoccupation of the group members with the conflict and the centrality of the issues in the public agenda. This nature of the issues of PSCs overwhelms people's capacity to separate different issues or recognize shared concerns. Thus, it creates nonnegotiable circumstances and makes participants "see no way of extricating themselves without becoming vulnerable to an unaccepted loss" in their self-esteem or self-identities (Coleman, 2000, p. 301).

### 3.1.2.3 Process: *Humiliation and deprivation*

As the deep rooted character of the issues imply, protracted social conflicts are fueled by intense emotionality since these types of conflicts are replete with humiliation, rage, threat and resentment between groups and deep feelings of pride, esteem, dignity and identification within the groups. Humiliation and deprivation are especially seen having a central function in intractable conflicts. Various researches emphasize that feelings of humiliation are among the strongest emotions available to humans, which can permeate people's lives with intensity and act as a potent force to create rifts between people (Lindner, 2001). Feelings of relative deprivation which groups experience when they sense an unjust gap or an unjust behavior by the other group is a significant emotion in the process, which provides the impasse in the conflict. Although human suffering, pain and sorrow are the vital things defining the domain of the intractable conflicts, the overall distinction between emotionality and rationality can be dubious, too. They seem to be inseparable. Thus, "it is not merely the type, depth or staying power of emotions which distinguishes tractable conflicts from intractable ones" because the difference lies behind the structures and processes that imbue them with meaning (Coleman, 2003, p.26). Our feelings of raw emotion such as hate, rage or pride are labeled, understood and acted on in the ways that are socially constructed.

When those structures and processes are analyzed, many scholars in the field suggest that PSCs prompt cognitive processes such as stereotyping, ethnocentrism or selective perception. These strengthen the dehumanization and deindividuation of the enemy and lead to disengagement and exclusion which cause the development of rigid boundaries between groups. This situation can result in a variety of antagonistic behaviors such as autistic hostilities (cessation of direct communication) or violence (Opotow, 2001). Coleman (2003) points out that violence is more likely to arise in such conflicts because it can be seen as an instrument to recover from the feeling of dehumanization or heal past grievances. Therefore, intractable conflicts endure over time and have a turbulent process with the sporadic increases in their intensity and occasional outbreaks of violence. In sum, the malignant social processes which shape cognitive dimensions of the disputing groups contribute to the protractedness of the conflict and obstruct resolution attempts (Coleman, 2000; Kriesberg, 1998).

### 3.1.2.4 Relationship between adversaries: *Exclusive structures and lack of communication*

As the 'process' reveals above, PSCs have the tendency to involve violent events. This ongoing violence maintains the centrality of the conflict in public life and also contributes to the existing animosity (Kriesberg, 1998). Coleman (2000) asserts that such processes make the relations between the parties develop in exclusive structures. In other words, disputing groups in an intractable conflict exclude each other somehow and avoid direct communication. Perceptions take a shape of in-group versus out-group approaches. Thus, these exclusive structures in which one group ignores the other limit the inter-group contact. The lack of contact facilitates the development of stereotypical images of the other, autistic hostilities and inter-group violence. Also, the relations are perceived as inescapable and parties see no way out of any aspect of the conflict other than total victory or defeat. So, non-negotiability of the issues and 'win-lose' approaches are significant terms to define the nature of the relations between the disputing groups. Protracted conflicts escalate and de-escalate but continue to persist over time by damaging the trust, faith and cooperative potential which are necessary for constructive or tolerant relations. According to Deutsch

(2001), this situation is likely to occur when there are polarized identities constructed around a negation or disparagement of the out-group. It becomes particularly possible with the collective identities of ascribed statuses, such as family, sex, racial or national membership, where there is a long-term emotional attachment to the group that is unalterable and significant (Druckman, 2001; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kelman, 1999). As a result, these polarized identities become primary obstacle of any constructive form of contact, relation, conflict engagement or sustainable peace (Hicks, 1999; Kelman, 1999).

### 3.1.2.5 Outcomes: *Damaged trust and intergenerational perpetuation*

The general consequences of PSCs are not only physically detrimental such as economic costs, loss of lives, violence, and division of communities or damages to property but also include social and psychological costs. Fear, hatred, anger or guilt embedded in intractable conflicts and long term exposure to atrocities and suffering, and the loss of loved ones can destroy people's spirit and cause prolonged trauma associated with unhealed PSCs (Coleman, 2003). Therefore, these conflicts tear apart relationships, damage trust and lead to protracted state of trauma for individuals and communities. In that sense, another important outcome of PSCs is the intergenerational perpetuation of the conflict. Atrocities and long term animosity between disputing groups become integrated into the socialization process of the next generations, which ensure the maintenance of the conflict and its protractedness. Through this type of socialization, both parties continue to develop deep-rooted animosity and prejudice which affect and shape the collective memories of the each generation; hence new generations become the potential disputants and are propagated and fed on the images of the 'evil enemy' (Coleman, 2000; Kriesberg, 1998).

**3.2 Trauma**

Although the literature on PSCs touches upon the relationship between intractable conflicts and trauma, this part presents a more detailed analysis on trauma. This analysis contains definitions of trauma and traumatic events. The relationship between youth and trauma, the transmission of trauma across generations, and remembrance of the trauma are also reviewed by stressing related theories on large-group identity, and chosen and collective trauma. These literatures are significant since they will contribute to the evaluation of the traumatic side of the Armenian conflict and the assassination of Hrant Dink. Moreover, these concepts help to make an analysis of the data regarding the effects of the murder on the approaches of Turkish Armenian youth towards Turks, the conflict ad its resolution. Lastly, the emphasis on youth and trauma in this section will bring another explanation of why youth are chosen as the focus of this study.

**3.2.1 Trauma and Traumatic Events: Basic Definitions**

Trauma literally means "wound", but takes many forms. It can be the result of a loss of home and property; betrayal by friends or family; exposure to violence or torture; or having loved ones killed or missing (Agger, 2001). As its core, we can explain the term of trauma 'as a loss of trust in a safe, predictable world" (Coleman, 2003, p.29). Trauma is also defined as a real or perceived threat to the survival of an individual or a larger community (Kantowitz, 2006). From this point, it is understood that trauma doesn't only occur at the individual level but it also has collective implications for the community or society. Yoder (2005) states that when a traumatic event or series of events affect large numbers of people, such events are not merely private experiences but have an impact at the national or communal levels resulting in collective trauma. In that communal level, trauma does not have to be experienced directly because witnessing or only hearing about the event can cause the same effect and set off widespread fear, horror, helplessness or anger. These feelings, with the addition of loss of control and threat of annihilation, are shown as the common denominators of trauma by the Comprehensive Textbook of

Psychiatry (Herman, 1997). Also, traumatic events often leave the people feeling that they have been victimized and treated unjustly; thus they arouse the urgent need for safety and security (Yoder, 2005). Herman (1997) defines traumatic events as extraordinary, not because "they occur rarely but rather they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life" (p.33)

Such traumatic events are specified with the given features below:
- Involving threats to lives or bodies
- Producing terror and feeling of helplessness
- Overwhelming an individual's or group's ability to cope or respond to the threat
- Leading to a sense of loss of control
- Challenging the sense that life is meaningful and orderly

*(Yoder, 2005:10)*

### 3.2.2 Chosen Trauma, Its Transmission and Remembering

According to Vamık Volkan (1993), the most difficult traumas are the ones which are believed to be deliberately caused by others. These traumas include historical traumas like slavery, colonialism, persecution or genocide (Yoder, 2005). They have huge impacts on people and lead to intense emotional implications. As Volkan points out, when the members of the group perceive themselves as weak, helpless, damaged or victim as a result of such traumas, the group carries the past traumatic event or events into the present as a 'chosen trauma'. In other words, deliberate acts of harm become a shared traumatic event that is *chosen* to be kept alive since they become an integral part of the group's identity (Yoder, 2005).

Keeping alive the trauma occurs through transmission. Regarding the term 'transmission', Albeck (1993) underlines the importance of 'intergenerational aspects of trauma'. It is stated that in the same way as heat, light or sound can be invisibly carried from a transmitter to a receiver; it is possible that unconscious experiences can also be

transmitted from parents to their children (Kellerman, 1999). When an older person unconsciously externalizes his traumatized self onto a developing child's personality, the child turns into a reservoir for the unwanted, troublesome parts of the older generation. His self-esteem becomes impaired as a result of the over-identification with the parent's victim-survivor status. Preoccupation with dead and the fear of another holocaust are especially seen in the new generations whose ancients had experienced traumatic events such as mass killing or genocide (Kellermann, 1999). As a result of social learning, the child absorbs the wishes and expectations of his elders; hence it now becomes the child's task to mourn and feel the humiliation pertaining to the trauma of his forebears (Volkan, 2004). It is important to note that such intergenerational transmission of trauma does not have to be occurred intentionally and verbally. The mental images can be delivered unconsciously through non-verbal communication or while transmitting family history by stories, fairy tales or songs (Göral, 2005). For this reason, the transmission of the trauma through generations can even occur when the current generation is not told the trauma story directly or knows only its broad outline. Consequently, *the event* is in the past but its effects become cumulative in each generation. This is critical in terms of keeping the conflict alive but remembering the chosen trauma is another dimension that ought to be discussed. For this, the concept of large-group identity would be analyzed.

Large group identity is constructed through the mental codes which are gained during the development and socialization process of an individual. In this process, the individual embraces core beliefs, values, thoughts, emotions and collective chosen traumas related to the large group identity (Göral, 2005). Adolescence can be seen as a significant term for gaining this group identity since it provides the ground for the socialization process of the individual. Through socialization with others, the individual achieves a personal reflection and observation of himself (Erikson, 1968). Therefore, ethnic or racial identity formation and realization of such a large group identity are more salient in the adolescent period than childhood (Rosenberg, 1965; Erikson, 1968). However, it is suggested that the individual is not so aware of the existence of this large group identity unless there is an evident threat. Volkan (1999) tells this in his 'tent model': When the canvas of the tent is threatened by an outside danger, the shared 'we-ness' within the group increases and eventually leads to the

awareness of being a member of the large group. This identity becomes even more important than the personal identity in such threatening crisis moments, and fuels the in-group versus out-group differentiations. The chosen traumas can provide the ground for outside threats and play an escalatory role in the conflict since the consequences or situations which look similar to the original trauma can cause time to collapse, the trauma memory to come back vividly and the large group identity to revive (Yoder, 2005). In a nutshell, the large group identity, which has been sleeping for a while, is mobilized and enlivened by the dynamics which make the group remember the past trauma or the loss again (Göral, 2005). As Baker (2005) says, "in people's experience, what happened centuries ago has echoes in what happened last week" (p. 39). This shows the vitality of the concept of time collapse and trauma transmission because even if there is a great amount of time between the traumatic event and the present, the trauma can be re-experienced by the group as if it is happened to them (Göral, 2005).

Nonetheless, there is also another discussion on trauma. Although the general premise discussed in here reveals the negative consequences, the traumatic events --whether it happens in the past and becomes a chosen trauma or occurs in the present and functions as the reminder of past grievances-- have the potential of awakening the best of the human spirit. In other words, trauma can be a call for change and transformation by making people see there is no interest in the protractedness of the conflict. This is not an automatic process, however. As Göral (2005) signifies, it requires people shift their emphasis from group security to human security and acknowledge the history.

## 3.3 Inter-Group Dialogue: A Step towards a Resolution in Protracted Social Conflicts

The characteristics and definitions of PSCs imply that achieving a resolution is a difficult process for both of the parties because they have identity-based, nonnegotiable and survival-related issues which are generally fed by traumas or ongoing violence. This part of the chapter aims to analyze the importance of inter-group dialogue as an initial step towards a resolution in such intractable conflicts. The literature presented mainly touches upon what

dialogue means, and how it helps to heal protractedness of conflicts, and contributes to peace-building. The optimal conditions building the frame of an effective communication are also discussed. By making references to the concepts mentioned in previous sections, such as PSCs, trauma, and relationship between transmission of trauma and youth, this section has a special part dedicated to reveal the importance of the youth in dialogue in PSCs. The general literature within this section will be beneficial while evaluating the gathering of Turks and Armenians at the funeral after the assassination of Hrant Dink, and how this ceremony shapes the approaches of the Turkish Armenian youth onto the conflict and its resolution.

### 3.3.1 Basic Definition and the Importance of Dialogue in PSCs

The term 'dialogue' is an ancient Greek word which is composed of dia (meaning 'through' or 'across') and logos (meaning 'the word' or 'reason'); hence together with these linguistic roots, the term implies a sense of creating meaning through talking or reasoning together (Broome and Hatay, 2006). In other words, dialogue can be defined as way of being with others, in which both sides acknowledge the complexity of the other's experience and seek understanding (Buber, 2006). By emphasizing the mutual understanding and empathy embedded in dialogue, Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) stress the transformative power of the discourse which can make it possible for the parties to work through their differences and issues.

As the section on 'relationship between adversaries' emphasizes, the general atmosphere of PSCs limits the communication between disputing groups. This lack of contact is not only a result of the PSCs but also it can be seen as a very critical element providing the maintenance of the intractability of the conflict. It increases the possibility of violent, destructive responses of the parties and prevents the potential improvements in the existing enemy-based images, and negative perceptions towards the other group in conflict (Coleman, 2000; Broome and Hatay, 2006). Papadakis (1998) makes a similar point and says that the insufficient contact allows each community to propagate myths and

misconceptions about the other community more easily. Hence, the lack of communication contributes to both the maintenance and the escalation of the conflict. In that sense, providing an atmosphere for dialogue becomes important to lessen the intractability and pave the way for a resolution between the disputing groups. As Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) state, communication makes the necessary cognitive change possible. Inter-group contact is seen as beneficial to reduce bias, undermine stereotyping and improve the relations since it enhances empathy between the groups. Interaction reshapes the perceptions which are generally deriving from mirror-images, in which both sides see itself as the good and the other as the evil (Dovidio et al., 2003). Also, with dialogue, groups become more open to learn new information about the other (Dovidio et al., 2003). This can be seen as an important point for peace-building because new information about the other can challenge the existing known images. So, new information or new perceptions gained through dialogue can cause a re-categorization process of the other, in which the differentiation lessens and the two groups begin to feel as if they have a more common identity (Kawaki, 2003). This means a transformation among the members of the two groups from an 'us versus them' approach towards a more inclusive 'we' perception.

### 3.3.2 The Frame of the Dialogue

The origin of the inter-group dialogue approach, which can be defined as a peace-building tool in protracted social conflicts is rooted in the "contact hypothesis" of Gordon Allport (1954). Although the basic assumption of this hypothesis is the more contact with the out-group the less stereotyped perception and prejudice, Allport (1954) specifically remarks that not all the dialogues are effective to lead changes in groups' perceptions or attitudes. In other words, contact does not serve the same positive results under every circumstance.

According to the contact hypothesis of Allport (1954), the deeper and more genuine the communication, the greater its effect; yet specifically there are four optimal conditions which make the dialogue produce more positive results in inter-group settings. These are:

- Equal group status

- Inter-group cooperation

- Common goals

- Support of authorities, law or custom

*(Dovidio et al., 2003:7)*

In brief, these conditions underline that inter-group dialogue would be more effective for reducing bias and improving the relations when groups enter the contact with equal status, in which no other party exerts a dominance over the other, when there is cooperation between the groups towards a common, super-ordinate goal and when this situation is supported by some authorities, institutions or norms in the societies. Nonetheless, it should be noted that these four optimal conditions are not accepted as the ultimate circumstances for good communication in the literature. Some scholars, like Forbes (1997), have proven that these conditions cannot always make the contact more successful in promoting harmony.

Stemming from contact theory, Pettigrew (1998) suggests that inter-group contact sets into motion four kinds of processes of change. These changes contain breaking prejudices and re-shaping stereotypes by having new knowledge about the other; hence they seem to be the summaries of what is discussed in the previous part. The first change is 'learning about the out-group' and it leads to a shift in 'behavior'. 'Generation of effective ties' in which positive emotions arises between groups is defined as the third change; and in the last step, an 'in-group reappraisal' appears which is similar with the re-categorization of the other group. In that level of change, the groups start to question their own knowledge prior to the contact situation.

Coleman (2000) also calls attention to the frame of the dialogue and suggests that various communication methods developed to address predominantly resource-based conflicts, such as negotiation or mediation, appear to be inadequate for resolving the issues which are primarily related to the sense of self and group identity in PSCs. Burton (1997)

remarks that more official or traditional means of approaching protracted conflicts, like negotiation and mediation, can be insufficient to open the way for a resolution since they deal mostly with surface interests rather than deeper motivations and needs of the parties. Therefore, as Kelman (1999) states, unofficial dialogue initiatives would be better to help parties overcome the psychological barriers of the conflict. These initiatives would ease the peace-building process and efforts for resolution because coming through those obstacles, such as monolithic views of the other (by perceiving it as the enemy), lack of empathy, denial and non-recognition can give a chance to develop a more different perception of the enemy and "assist the parties to persuade each other that there is someone to talk to and something to talk about" (Kelman qtd in Broome, 2006, p.179). In this regard, interactive conflict resolution, problem-solving or reconciliation-transformation workshops can be shown among the significant means of unofficial dialogue studies in PSCs. All these initiatives have the goal of reducing the existing or transmitted cognitive distortions, anger, hostility, fear, victimization, and increasing the mutual empathy, reaching common grounds and finally normalizing the relations and providing reconciliation between the groups in conflict (Bargal, 2004). Apart from these, community-based rituals between the disputing groups are shown as potential dialogue and even healing mechanisms which provide a conversation between the past and present and present an opportunity to build a bridge towards new relations in spite of the existing conflict memories of the groups (McEvoy-Levy, 2006).

However, creating such a process and persuading the parties to enter this type of communication studies will be difficult and can even fail as it happened in the Armenian-Turkish conflict which will be touched upon in the following chapters. Yet, Coleman (2000) points out that some driving forces, such as perception of a hurting stalemate, which is deriving from suffering losses in a conflict that cannot be won, or an experience of a recent catastrophe or a horrific event can bring the feeling of ripeness in an unplanned manner into the conflict and play as an important dynamic determining the opportunity for the groups to communicate and see their similarities.

### 3.3.3 The Youth as the Target of the Dialogue

Previous parts explain the relation between the inter-group dialogue and peace-building in PSCs, and give detailed information about the literature concerning the general frame of the dialogue by drawing the attention to unofficial communication. Nonetheless, whom to communicate is another vital point that should be considered and discussed. Saunders explains that initiating an informal dialogue among *citizens* is a particularly important step for transforming conflictual relationships, which are not yet ready for official studies such as negotiation and mediation (Broome and Hatay, 2006). Such a society-level communication might also influence powerful, official actors in the long-run and create a bottom-up effect in the research of the conflict. In terms of specifying the 'citizens' as the target of informal communication, youth has a significant place in the literature on dialogue and protracted social conflicts.

### 3.3.3.1 A Definition of Youth?

There is a strong tendency to use an age range to determine the youth category. The common range which is advocated by UNICEF and some other associations is between fifteen and twenty-four (Sommers, 2006). However, World Youth Report of United Nations in 2005 remarks that the period of transition from childhood to adulthood can begin as early as age 10 and may continue to mid-to late 30s, and is mostly related to the culture of the groups or society (Lore, 2005). Therefore, the definition of youth is very difficult by relying on only age ranges because the youth is a socially constructed concept which changes across cultures (McEvoy-Levy, 2006; Sommers, 2001).

**3.3.3.2 The Importance of Youth in Conflicts and Dialogue**

Today more than a billion people are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. This covers almost a fifth of the world's population; yet another important statistics signifies a very critical fact: 85% of this young population reside in developing countries, where nearly all of the difficult or protracted conflicts of the world take place (Sommers, 2006). This information on the high population of youth, especially in dispute areas, can be seen important in terms of indicating the special and different situation of the youth. The literature also shows the youth among the significant community members of societies. The next generation of leaders, facilitators and stakeholders who will give a shape to the conflicts and future relations emerge from the current cohort of young people; thus they become a vital resource for the society (Sommers, 2006). The youth are seen as the future agents of change but whether they will bring a positive or negative change in the re-production or transformation of the conflicts and peace remains as a question-mark. The reason is that because young people rarely have the ownership in peace processes, there is a little attention given to the youth and their roles in conflict situations (Helsing et. al in McEvoy-Levy, 2006). In this regard, Lederach (2005) defines young people as "the vanguard" of social movements and believes that including youth and their energy is critical and positive for the peace (p. 235).

However, there is the other side of the coin. The youth are not free of ongoing conflicts or prolonged chosen traumas which are mentioned in the part on trauma. McEvoy-Levy (2006) explains that the young generation is the most sensitive one to the existing disputes and violence. Similarly, Bargal (2004) underlines that the emotional costs of intractable conflict are tremendous for youth. Beside these, various researches show that the deep sense of psychological vulnerability of young people increases with each new exposure to violent or traumatic events (Sommers, 2001). In other words, the young people who can be the leaders of tomorrow are deeply affected by the current conflicts which shape their socialization. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) underlines that although young people have the potential to create positive changes in the

future, they are, at the same time, the passive victims of current conflicts, which can turn them into threats or primary building blocks of peace. Moreover, Senehi and Byrne (in McEvoy-Levy, 2006) warn that exposure to violence can increase the risk that young adults will develop negative images and attitudes and likely engage in violence in the future. This situation especially escalates when we think about the youth in a prolonged conflict because these conflicts mostly have traumatic implications. As it is highlighted in the trauma transmission, young people are the carriers of old conflict memories and traumas transmitted through their parents and socialization process within the group. By carrying these old wounds and by being the future transmitters to the next generations, the youth have the tendency to seek out confirming points in the new events, which will help to make an association with the past grievances and disputes (Galtung in McEvoy-Levy, 2006). This shows the fact that it is difficult to change young people's mentality; yet, if the youth are both our future chance to move beyond continuing cycles of violence and conflict, and threats to the future peace, a dialogue atmosphere which involve, listen and understand perceptions of today's young people can result in valuable implications for the future of the conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2000; McEvoy-Levy, 2006).

### 3.4 Summary and Conclusion

This first chapter of the paper, which consists of three sections, presents a theoretical background of the study. All the sections create a completion to discuss and analyze the data which will be introduced in the following chapters, and find the answer of the research question of this study.

The first section concerns protracted social conflicts and their characteristics. The concept of PSCs can be seen irrelevant with the research question which focuses on the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on Turkish Armenian youth. However, in order to follow the discussions on the influences of the murder and have a comprehensive understanding of the context in which Turkish Armenian youth live, the conflict itself should be understood in detail. For this reason, the first section, which informs about PSCs,

provides the necessary knowledge in order to define the Turkish-Armenian conflict as a protracted conflict in the literature. This knowledge will be significant for the reader when the subsequent chapter touches upon the history of the Armenian issue and reveal its protractedness.

The second section of this chapter is dedicated to the literature on trauma. Specifically, it explicates the frame and meaning of trauma and traumatic events. This information will lead to a basis to discuss the trauma within the Turkish-Armenian conflict and the assassination of Hrant Dink. Hence, the reader can get a better comprehension of the conflict and the murder, which will be vital while evaluating effects of these events on the sampled young Turkish Armenian people. Intergenerational transmission of trauma and its remembrance by the youth are other concepts mentioned in this section. These concepts especially put an emphasis on the relation among youth, trauma and perpetuation of the conflicts across the generations. These concepts are important because they will clarify the discussions on the effects of the assassination on young Turkish Armenians.

Inter-group dialogue is the topic of the last section of this chapter. The literature on dialogue details the optimal conditions of communication between disputing groups and reveals the importance of contact as a constructive step in intractable conflicts. By the knowledge presented, the section will help to illuminate the atmosphere at the funeral of Hrant Dink. As it is underlined throughout the methodology chapter, the funeral ceremony is another subtitle which will be evaluated and discussed alongside the murder. Therefore, the last section on dialogue serves to provide the literature which will be valuable for the analysis of the funeral and how the gathering of Turks and Armenians in this ceremony affects the effects of the assassination on Turkish Armenian youth. By explaining how youth are affected from intractable disputes and ongoing traumatic events, and remarking the significant position of youth as the 'shapers' of future relations, the section puts forth the need of involvement of young people in dialogue in protracted conflicts. This emphasis made on youth and dialogue underlines why the youth is chosen as the sample unit of this research, and reveals the importance of listening to their views and understanding their approaches in order to make appropriate references for the future of the conflict.

# CHAPTER 4

# THE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE ARMENIAN ISSUE

Before presenting the assessment of the assassination of Hrant Dink from the perspectives of Turkish Armenian youth, this chapter will present an overview of the conflict itself. While introducing such an overview, the aim is to discuss the Armenian issue with the chronology, context and escalatory dynamics. For this reason, the first section will touch upon the historical development of the conflict. It starts with the Ottoman Empire period and lasts to the recent developments involving the assassination of Hrant Dink. After indicating the current stage of the dispute, the protracted character of the Turkish-Armenian conflict will be evaluated by making references to the literature on PSCs stated in the previous chapter. Therefore, the main objectives of this chapter are to construct the general picture of the conflict from the past to the present; and to authenticate that the aforementioned conflict is a protracted inter-group conflict in which identity issues are at the centre. These provide the ground that will help the reader have a clearer understanding of the Armenian issue and the murder of Hrant Dink, and follow the analysis of the data on the approaches of Turkish Armenian youth about the conflict better. It should be noted that because both Turkey and Armenia have different claims regarding the genocide issue, there is a considerable attention paid to present an objective review over the history of the conflict.

## 4.1. Brief History of the Conflict

Even though the Turkish-Armenian issue is one of the hot topics of today's politics, its roots last to the Ottoman Empire period. In many historical resources, there is an emphasis on how Turks and Armenians lived peacefully for 800 years under the roof of the Ottoman Empire (Timur, 2001; Ayverdi, 2005). Although Armenians were one of the minorities in the Ottoman society, they were given significant official duties in the government and benefited from the same rights which the dominant community, namely Turks, had. Furthermore, as a result of the hardworking and cooperative stance of the Armenian population, the Ottoman Empire called these people 'millet-i sadıka' which meant 'loyal community' (Ayverdi, 2005; Şimşir, 2005). However this peaceful atmosphere turned out to be problematic during the decay period of the Ottoman Empire (Eroğlu, 1999). In this period, the nationalism movement, which started with the French Revolution and continued to spread to the various parts of the world, was a significant factor prompting many minority groups, like Armenians, to leave the Ottoman Empire and establish their own countries (Ataöv, 1999; Şimşir, 2005).

The 1877-1878 war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia is generally defined as the first appearance of the Armenian issue (Şimşir, 2005; Ayverdi, 2005; Tekinoğlu, 2007). The Russian government, which aimed to conquer the places in Mediterranean and dominate the Middle East, planned to invade some regions of the Ottoman Empire, in where Armenians mostly located. This situation leaded to cooperation between Russia and Armenians against the Ottoman Empire. Armenians who wanted autonomy believed that Russia could help them achieve their independence in return of this cooperation.

At the end of the 1877-1878 war, the Ottoman Empire was defeated and Armenians who were living in east regions started to requisition territory and autonomy from Russia. Nonetheless, the treaties of Ayastefanos and Berlin, which were signed after the war, made a reference only to the security issue of the Armenians because of the ongoing dispute between Armenians and Kurds. The treaties emphasized that the Ottoman Empire should

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have saved the Armenian community from the malignant actions of Kurds. These treaties, however, did not satisfy the demands of Armenians (Eroğlu, 1999; McCarthy, 2001). In 1890, the first Armenian revolt occurred in Erzurum and this revolt was followed by various other revolts (Ayverdi, 2005). With the start of World War One, these revolts became more detrimental for the unity and power of the Empire (Ataöv, 1999). Also, Armenians' cooperation with Russia generated a problem for the Ottoman soldiers who were fighting with Russian armies. All these increased the existing tension between the Ottoman Empire and Armenians (Şimşir, 2005). While World War I continued, in 1915, another Armenian riot occurred in one of the critical war zones. Since this riot could damage the effectiveness of the Ottoman army in war, the Ottoman government described the revolt as a crime: *Treason* (Eroğlu, 1999). The Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a circular on April 24, 1915, which required closing the headquarters and branches of the Armenian parties and committees, and taking their leaders into custody. Additionally, another act was disseminated to send all the Armenians, without looking whether they were faithful to the government or not, from their current locations to the other places determined by the government (Eroğlu, 1999).

History resources belonging to Turkey define this act as an arrestment. It is stated that 2345 Armenians were arrested and displaced from the war zones to other regions to be judged. However, it is also reported that many of those people died during the displacement because of several reasons, such as epidemics or starvation (Kantarcı, 2000; Ataöv, 1999; Ayverdi, 2005). This is the point on which the Turkish-Armenian conflict depends since the arrestment and displacement of Armenians which is known as '1915 events' are described as *genocide* by the Armenian community. In this point, it would be vital to define the concept of "genocide" to provide clarity. The agreement on the prevention of genocide and its punishment, which was approved by the general assembly of United Nations in 1951, defines genocide as the actions aiming to eradicate a national, ethnic, racial or religious group of people because of their group membership and identity (Ayverdi, 2005). By relying on this definition, Turkey rejects assertions and claims about the genocide in 1915. Turkey defines the events as a displacement of the Armenian population due to difficult conditions of the war at those years, and emphasizes that there was no intention to kill

somebody because of his/her ethnic identity. However, the Armenian government states that the Ottoman Empire did not simply arrest or displace Armenians but planned and killed nearly 1 million Armenians on purpose (Kieser, 2001; Ataöv, 1999).

In addition to these claims regarding the 1915 events and genocide, the Turkish-Armenian conflict are affected and flamed by other issues emerging in more recent history. For example, at the beginning of the 1970's, an Armenian organization called ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for Liberation of Armenia) assassinated nearly fifty Turkish diplomats with the aim of taking revenge of their fathers who were killed in the genocide (Kantarcı, 2000). While this increased the existing tension, the invasion of Armenia in Karabahk, a contested part of Azerbaijan, became another conflict issue between Turks and Armenians (Ataöv, 1999; Perinçek, 2007). The Karabahk issue prompted Turkey to close its borders with Armenia in 1993.

Even though Turkey recognized the independence of Armenia, the two countries failed to build any diplomatic relationships due to problems about the genocide and the Karabahk issue. Meanwhile, the Turkish-Armenian conflict also became a part of international agenda. The International Center for Transitional Justice and the United Nations' sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination & Protection of Minorities determined that the term of genocide was suitable to describe the events of 1915 (Timur, 2001). Afterwards, many countries declared their support for the truthfulness of the genocide. Furthermore, as a pre-condition for membership, the European Union pressured Turkey to formally recognize the genocide (Şimşir, 2005).

In 2005, on the 90th year of the genocide, the Armenia government called on Turkey to make Turkey accept the genocide (Timur, 2001). As a counter response to these developments, the Turkish government offered to build a committee consisting of Turkish and Armenian historians to re-examine the events (Ayverdi, 2005). Abdullah Gül, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, also suggested for an arbitration to resolve the conflict; however none of these offers of Turkey were accepted by Armenia. The Armenian government underscored that there was no need to discuss a *real* event which already

became a political issue, not a historical (Ayverdi, 2005). Similarly, many of the dialogue projects such as the Turkish and Armenian Reconciliation Commission (1991), the Turkish and Armenian Rapprochement Commission (2001) or the Turkish and Armenian Platform (2004) disbanded as a result of reactions and counter-statements of Armenia (Timur, 2001; Ataöv, 1999; Kasım 2004).

The most recent development in the Turkish-Armenian conflict after the Karabahk issue is the assassination of Hrant Dink, the chief editor of Agos newspaper, on January 19, 2007. The funeral, in which Armenians and Turks came together to show their sorrow regarding the event, and the slogan of 'All are Hrant, All are Armenians' were among the discussed topics about the event. Additionally, the subsequent offer of the Armenian government to re-shape the diplomatic events with Turkey was a first in the historical relations between Turkey and Armenia (Bal, 2007). Nevertheless, the arrested murderer who was a 17 year-old Turkish boy, the broadcasted pictures and videos of him with the state flag and in the company of law enforcement bodies, and critiques directed at the Turkish government for hiding information and decelerating the trial were important issues debated during the trial of the murder. Very recently, the reactions to the anniversary of the death of Hrant Dink revealed that such critics towards the government continued to exist, and many Armenian people wanted the murderers to be arrested and penalized (Radikal, 2008). The lawyer of the Armenian community, Diran Bakar, also indicated that Armenian people living in Turkey, especially youth, were thinking to leave Turkey because of increasing security issues following the assassination (Radikal, 2007). Some studies of Armenian associations and groups had the researches confirming this statement. Nevertheless, the rising numbers of groups founded by young Turkish Armenians after the murder pointed out positive developments for the resolution of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. The groups which are established or became more active after the assassination, such as 'Nor Zartonk' and 'Hadig', had the aim of working for new relations and dialogue opportunities that will contribute to the healing process of the conflict.

After explaining the historical developments in the Turkish-Armenian conflict, the following part is dedicated to present an overview of the life of Hrant Dink, which will

provide a better understanding of his stance in the Turkish-Armenian issue and of his symbolic meaning for the Armenian community in Turkey.

### 4.1.1 Who is Hrant Dink?

Hrant Dink was born in Malatya in 1954. He was the eldest of three sons of Sarkis Dink. His father's gambling debts prompted the family to move to İstanbul in 1960, where they sought a new beginning. However, one year after their move, Dink's parents separated by leaving the seven-year old Dink and his brothers without a place to live. Dink's grandfather enrolled the boys at the Gedikpaşa Armenian Orphanage. This institution which was run by the Armenian Evangelical Community became a new home for Hrant Dink for the next ten years. The Orphanage children spent their summers at the Tuzla Armenian Children's Camp. This camp played a significant role in Hrant Dink's life, both personally, as he met his future wife as a child and later married her at the Camp, and professionally, as the government-led closing of the Camp in 1984 was one of the factors that raised Dink's awareness of the issues of the Armenian community and eventually led to his becoming an activist (Armutçu, 2007).

After having an education on zoology at Istanbul University, Hrant Dink completed his military service in Denizli. In spite of his full marks on the examination he was not promoted to sergeant; and this discrimination became another turning point on his way to activism (Armutçu, 2007; Söylemez, 2007). Returning to İstanbul, Dink established Beyaz Adam, a bookstore, with his brothers Hosrop and Yervant in 1979. Encouraging students to browse and borrow needed books, the store gained recognition by word of mouth and gradually expanded into a multi-location bookstore and publishing house that specialized in textbooks, children's books, atlases and dictionaries. When Hrant Güzelyan, who ran the Tuzla Camp, was arrested and charged with anti-Turkish propaganda, Hrant Dink, together with his wife Rakel, took over the management of the Tuzla Armenian Children's Camp (Armutçu, 2007). In 1979, the General Directorate of Foundations started a court action to annul Gedikpaşa Armenian Protestant Church's ownership of the camp, based on a 1974

ruling by the Court of Appeals that made it impossible for minority foundations to own real estate (Varlık, 2007).

After these developments, Hrant Dink continued the bookstore business with his brothers; meanwhile he started to write critics on various books. His writings were realized more with the corrections he sent to the news in journals and newspapers (BBC Turkish). In the same years, when there was an increase in PKK terror and the media stream began to link Armenians with this terror organization, Hrant Dink thought that Armenian community in Turkey lived in a very isolated environment which could feed such severe prejudices towards Armenians. In order to break those biases, he suggested finding a way to build a communication between Turkish Armenians and Turkish society at large (Oran, 2006). Therefore he founded Agos, an Armenian newspaper, in which he was both the production director and editor-in-chief. Up to the founding of Agos, the Armenian community had two main newspapers, Marmara and Jamanak, which were published only in Armenian. Agos made a difference in that sense because it was the first Armenian newspaper which was published in both Turkish and Armenian. By using both languages, Hrant Dink managed to open up the channels of communication to the society at large for the Armenian community (Oran, 2006).

Dink's unique perspective in Agos has been described as a 'four way mirror' which was simultaneously empathetic to people of the Armenian Diaspora, citizens of the Republic of Armenia, Turkish Armenians, and citizens of Turkey (Mercan, 2007). Under Hrant Dink's editorship, Agos concentrated on five major topics: Speaking against any unfair treatment of the Armenian community in Turkey, covering human rights violations and problems of democratization in Turkey, carrying news of developments in the Republic of Armenia, with special emphasis on the Turkey-Armenia relations, publishing articles and serials on the Armenian cultural heritage and its contributions to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, criticizing malfunctions and non-transparency in the Armenian community institutions (Oran, 2006).

By acting as a voluntary spokesperson for the Armenian community in Turkey, Hrant Dink, through Agos, addressed the particular prejudices, injustices and problems the community faced in its interaction with the Turkish society and state (Oran, 2006; Mercan, 2007). He always said that his aim was to improve the difficult relationship between Turks and Armenians (BBC News). Dink emphasized the need for democratization in Turkey and focused on the issues of free speech, minority rights, civic rights and issues pertaining to the Armenian community in Turkey. In that sense, he was a very important peace activist. Although he never refrained from using the word 'genocide' when talking about the 1915 events, he made clear that this term had a political meaning, rather than a historical one. Hrant Dink was strongly critical of the strategy of the Armenian Diaspora of pressuring Western governments into official recognition of the Genocide (Oran, 2006; Arsu & Fowler, 2007). Dink believed that Diaspora Armenians should be able to live free of the weight of historical memory and the residues of the past by considering first and foremost the needs of the living majority (Oran, 2006).

Indicating that a show of empathy would have nothing to do with accepting or refusing the genocide, Dink called for dialogue and said that "Turkish-Armenian relations should be taken out of a 1915 meters-deep well." (in Oran, 2006). By pointing out issues of rhetorical discourse that hampered Armenian-Turkish dialogue, he believed these obstacles could be overcome to the benefit of Turkish Armenians. For this reason, he was opposed to the French law that makes denial of Armenian Genocide a crime, and was planning to go to France to commit this 'crime', when the law came into effect (Sazak, 2006).

According to Hrant Dink, Agos helped the development of the Armenian community since it trained many journalists and became the community's face to the Turkish society. He voiced his intention for an 'Institute of Armenian Studies' in Istanbul (Oran, 2006). He tried to make it the democratic, opposition voice of Turkey, which was used to inform the public of the injustices committed against the Armenian community. One of the major aims of the newspaper was to contribute to a dialog between the Turkish and Armenian communities, as well as between Turkey and Armenia. Thus, after Agos started its publication, the participation of Armenians in the political-cultural life in Turkey increased

greatly, and public awareness in Turkey of the issues of the Armenians started to increase (Armutçu, 2007; Oran, 2006). By being willing to speak on the issues Armenians faced, Hrant Dink emerged as a leader in his community and became a well-known public figure in Turkey (Çandar, 2007).

In spite of such a stance of Dink in the Armenian issues, he was prosecuted three times for denigrating Turkishness under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (Humans Rights Watch, 2007; Mahoney, 2006; International Press Institute, 2007). The first charge under the previous version of Article 301, then called Article 159, stemmed from a speech he had delivered at a panel hosted by human rights NGO Mazlum-Der in Şanlıurfa (Taşçılar, 2007). Speaking at the panel, Dink and another speaker, lawyer Şehmus Ülek, faced charges for denigrating Turkishness and the Republic. On February 9, 2006, Hrant Dink, and Şehmus Ülek, who stood trial for another speech at the same panel, were acquitted of all charges (Hürriyet, 2006).

The second charge under 301 was pressed for Dink's article called 'Getting to know Armenia', in which he suggested to Diaspora Armenians that it was time to rid themselves of their enmity against Turks. In the article, his statement, "replace the poisoned blood associated with the Turk, with fresh blood associated with Armenia" resulted in a six-month suspended sentence (in Bilgen Reinart, 2006). Dink defended himself against the charges and told that he never meant to insult Turkish citizens. According to Hrant Dink, the term in question was taken out of context and was only symbolic (Reporters Without Borders, 2005).

In September 2006, another case was opened against Dink on charges of 'denigrating Turkishness' under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which Amnesty International considered to be part of an emerging pattern of harassment against the journalist exercising his right to freedom of expression (Amnesty International-UK, 2006). The charge was brought against him by the Istanbul Prosecutor's Office after he referred to the 1915 massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide during an interview with Reuters. After these courts and charges, Dink explained that while he had always been a

target of Turkish nationalists for his statements on Armenian identity and the Armenian Genocide, there was an increase in their efforts (Oran, 2006). He complained about the indifference of the Turkish government to this atmosphere of terror. Indeed there were lots of debates and criticisms about the rising Turkish nationalism at that time (Hürriyet, 2006).

In Dink's final Agos column, he noted that propaganda targeting him led many Turkish citizens to consider him as an enemy of Turkey. Despite his complaints, Dink never formally requested protection from the authorities because he did not want to lead a sheltered life (Armutçu, 2007). A week before his assassination, Dink wrote that he felt nervous and compared himself to a dove which was frightened by the others. Like confirming the concerns of Hrant Dink, he was assassinated on January, 2007, by Ogün Samast, a 17-year old Turkish nationalist. This was shortly after the premier of the genocide documentary 'Screamers' in which he is interviewed about Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the case against him under article 301 (Söylemez, 2007).

The life-story of Hrant Dink shows that he was a prominent member of the Armenian minority in Turkey. Dink was best known for advocating Turkish-Armenian reconciliation, democratization and human and minority rights in Turkey. While he was often critical of Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide, he also criticized the Armenian Diaspora's campaign which aimed to provide an international recognition of the genocide. Nationalist Armenians and especially the Diaspora often objected the ideas and acts of Dink because they accused him for resigning himself to the disregardful attitude of Turkey towards the genocide issue. Actually, Dink also defended the genocide claims but he especially underscored the need for improvement of the relations between Turks and Armenians which was very vital for the future peace. With all his efforts, he became the voice of the Armenian community in Turkey; and gained a symbolic meaning for Armenians (Zaman, 2007). However, in spite of his studies to bring a dialogue between Turks and Armenians, the blame put on him for denigrating Turkishness made Dink receive numerous death threats from Turkish nationalists, and finally led to his death (Mahoney, 2006; International Press Institute, 2007; Committee to Protect Journalist, 2007).

**4.2 Defining the Armenian Issue as a Protracted Social Conflict**

In very general terms, the present study defines protracted social conflicts (PSCs) as the conflicts which are based on a complex set of historical, identity and political issues which become prolonged for the parties. Although each conflict might be seen as unique, Coleman (2003) suggests that the common features of PSCs can be evaluated under five headlines: Context, issues, process, relationships and outcomes. When the Turkish-Armenian conflict is analyzed briefly, the set of complex historical and political problems, the constant counter discussions of the parties on the genocide issue, and prolonged but evolving character of the conflict give sufficient signs to define the dispute as an intractable conflict.

By depending on the historical overview of the conflict, this section of the chapter provides a detailed examination of the Armenian issue from the concept of protracted social conflicts which is discussed through the literature review part, and reveals that the Turkish-Armenian conflict has many similar characteristics PSCs carry.

In terms of *contextual features*, protracted social conflicts indicate a history of domination and perceived injustice between groups. Ethnocentralism, racism or human rights abuses are probable tendencies in such conflicts in which more powerful exploits the other. When we look at the history of the Turkish-Armenian issue, it is realized that the context of the conflict implies such an imbalance in power of the parties because, as the Armenians assert, the Ottoman Empire uses its power to eliminate the Armenian population who revolt to leave the Empire. Therefore, the displacement and planned murder – genocide– of the Armenian community living in the Ottoman Empire show how the powerful party controls and victimizes the other. The victimization concept, as Azar (2002) points out, has a significant meaning within the context of PSCs. The victimization does not only occur when there is a physical damage. It can also be tied to the denial of identity or other important group membership of the members such as ethnicity, race or class. The Armenian issue seems to involve both types of the victimization. While the genocide represents the physical victimization directed at a specific ethnicity, the further denial of the

1915 events by Turkey can be evaluated as an identity-based victimization towards Armenians because the genocide is one of the important components describing the Armenian identity (Göral, 2005).

Another critical element in the context of PSCs is its structure. As it is discussed in the literature review, protracted conflicts which involve injustice and victimization also have a dynamic structure (Coleman, 2003). This dynamism means that even though such conflicts seem to de-escalate, they can surface or resurface easily in any potential change, instability or anarchy, and remind old wounds and traumas. In this regard, 'conflict triggering events', like attacks, assassinations or riots, can spoil the apparent peace and increase the tension among the disputing parties (Nicolaidis, 1996). As a very recent example of this situation in the Armenian issue is the assassination of Hrant Dink, which flames up the discussions and debates on the genocide and the Turkish-Armenian relations and conflict. The analysis chapter of the paper will discuss the malignant effects of the assassination clearly.

In terms of *issues*, PSCs generally derive from very subjective issues involving historical struggles that have emotional importance for the parties. Identity-based concerns which are seen as threatening to the existence of individuals, such as lack of recognition and security, are salient in these conflicts (Azar, 1990). Broome (1997) also emphasizes that historical traumas and losses become the core issues of such conflicts. Therefore, the issues carry a symbolic meaning, sensitivity and centrality for the group (Kriesberg, 1998). When the Turkish-Armenian conflict is analyzed from this point, the core of the conflict is very subjective and emotional because it derives from the genocide issue which can be seen as a historical trauma for the Armenian community (Göral, 2005). Moreover, since the target of the genocide is a specific community, this event refers to a threatening identity-based issue in which the security or survival of the group members is in peril (Göka, 2001). Also, the constant position of the genocide issue in the agendas of Turkey and Armenia implies the totality and centrality of the issue (Göral, 2005).

By having deep rooted and sensitive issues, *the process* of protracted conflicts usually involves humiliation and deprivation between the disputing groups, which increase the pride, dignity and identification within the group (Coleman, 2003). Thus, cognitive processes, such as stereotyping or ethnocentrism, are most salient behavioral tendencies of the parties, which cause enemy images and exclusion of the 'other' in the frame of cessation of direct communication or violence (Opotow, 2001). In terms of enemy images, "Turks and Turkey constitute the essential 'other' for the Armenian side to project their aggressive parts and maintain the identity of wretchedness" (Göral, 2005, p.69). Besides, the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the assassinations of ASALA organization and lastly the murder of Hrant Dink indicate the violent acts and communication problem within the process of the conflict.

Regarding *the relations between adversaries* in PSCs, disputing groups are generally in exclusive structures. Because of the non-negotiability of the issues and win-lose approaches onto the conflict, groups prefer to exclude or ignore each other (Coleman, 2003). This not only restricts the communication and contact between the groups but also facilitates the development of stereotypes and increases the tendency to encounter violent events. When we look at the Armenian issue by focusing on the sample unit of this paper – Turkish Armenians living in Istanbul–, it would be hard to mention about exclusive structures. Because Turks and Armenians live in the same country together, their contact is inevitable. However, if we think more generally, the information given in the historical background of the conflict indicates how various dialogue studies between Turks and Armenians failed. This information confirms the claims of Hicks (1999) and Kelman (1999) on how polarized identities on the core issues of the conflict become the basic obstacle for any constructive communication or conflict engagement. In summary, although Turks and Armenians live together and contact is inescapable for them, their relationships have exclusive structures and contact does not develop in a productive way on the behalf of the resolution or healing of the conflict.

Under these circumstances, *outcomes* of protracted conflicts are both physically and psychologically detrimental for the members of the parties (Coleman, 2003). The examples of the attacks of ASALA organization and recently the murder of Hrant Dink signify the physically harmful results of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. Regarding the psychologically destructive outcomes, the literature draws the attention to the communal trauma and transmission of the trauma in intractable conflicts (Coleman, 2003; Kantowitz, 2006). The transmission of old sorrowful memories about an unhealed conflict creates a chosen trauma for the younger people, which provides intergenerational perpetuation of the conflict and leads a damaged trust for the next generations (Kriesberg, 1998). For the Armenian issue, the trauma transmission concerns the 1915 events. Göral (2005) underlines that the genocide trauma operates as a mental home-land for Armenians, which emotionally supplies the construction of a shared Armenian identity and takes a role in the transmission of this identity to the next generations.

**4.3 Summary and Conclusion**

The overall aim of this chapter is to present a historical overview on the Turkish-Armenian conflict and link it to a theoretical ground as a protracted social conflict. For this reason, the chapter is consisting of two sections. The first part explains the development of the conflict from the Ottoman Empire period to the present time. It not only makes the reader have a clear understanding of the flow of the dispute in a historical basis but also increases understandability of the data that will be discussed about the approaches of the sampled Turkish Armenian youth regarding the conflict. The section also touches upon the assassination of Hrant Dink as a recent dynamic within the Turkish-Armenian conflict. This knowledge is significant in terms of informing the reader about the murder, which is the main subject of this study, and of evaluating the data on the approaches of the Turkish Armenian youth towards the murder and on the effects of the death.

By depending on the historical overview done in the first part, the second section tries to define the dispute theoretically. The literature on protracted social conflicts (PSCs), which is mentioned in the third chapter, leads the way to analyze the historical development of the conflict. Through looking five characteristics of PSCs, context, issues, process, relationships and outcomes, in the frame of the Armenian issue, the Turkish-Armenian conflict is described as a protracted social conflict because it shares similar features of this type of conflict. This conclusion of the section clarifies the comprehension of the conflict and will contribute to the discussions on the data about young Turkish Armenians' attitudes and perceptions towards the conflict in a theoretical basis.

# CHAPTER 5

# DATA ANALYSIS

The main research question of this thesis is "from the perspective of Turkish Armenian youth living in Turkey, what are the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on their attitudes towards Turks and approaches to the Turkish - Armenian conflict and its resolution?" To find the answer to this question, this section will present the data collected through the 20 interviews conducted with the Armenian youth. The data are completely based upon the responses of the interviewees and described by using the methodology detailed in the previous chapter. As will be recalled, content analysis is the main method for the analysis of the data. Content analysis is based on coding the content of the written material depending on manifest and latent coding techniques. While manifest coding is concerned with the visible content and contributes finding frequencies of a word or a theme appears in the text, latent coding is related to make an inference from what is said in these texts. The data presented in this chapter are achieved through benefiting from both of these techniques.

The data analysis chapter includes six parts. Each part presents a theme which is considered meaningful within the frame of the research question. Because there is no link found between the data concerning the personal background of the interviewees', such as occupation, education, family relations or marital status, and the responses given to the questions, the chapter does not touch upon those background details of the young Turkish Armenians (See Appendix B for the detailed personal information of the participants). The

age is the only mediating factor achieved throughout the data; thus it will be emphasized in the related themes.

In the first part, general data on the family-history stories will be discussed. The second part makes an analysis of the childhood term and presents the memories and experiences of the youth about realizing the Armenian identity and Turkish identity. The aim of these two parts is to gain a basic understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of the Armenian youth before the assassination; thus the basis of their current approaches to Turks, the conflict and its resolution can be better analyzed. The following part makes a reference to the assassination of Hrant Dink and presents the data concerning how the Armenian interviewees interpret the event. To get a comprehensive picture of their interpretations of the murder, this part consists of three sub-sections, which detail the Armenian youth's perceptions towards Hrant Dink, the assassination itself, and the funeral separately. While the subsequent part reveals young Armenians' diverse attitudes about the issues of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, the final section is concerned with the respondents' resolution suggestions for the conflict. These two parts together provide implications regarding how the assassination affects the Armenian youth's approaches to the conflict and its settlement. The significance of all the data given in this chapter will be discussed in detail in the discussion chapter of the paper.

## 5.1. Analysis on Family-History Stories

As the literature on trauma transmission and the chosen trauma theories point out, narratives, especially family-stories, are valuable ways of transferring the pain and trauma experienced in the past by the family to the next generations. For this reason, the aim behind the questions about family-history stories is to learn whether these stories involve genocide issue, and in which context and meaning they transmit the 1915 to the young people. This data will not only reveal the role and effects of narrations in the transmission of the genocide trauma but also contribute to the comprehension of the Armenian youth's previous perceptions and knowledge about the Turkish-Armenian conflict and the

genocide. The knowledge about how the youth learn about the conflict and genocide from the family stories will extend the understanding of their current attitudes towards the conflict, and better enrich the discussions about the influences of the assassination on the youth.

The data derived from the family-history stories show that all the respondents listened to such stories which were told to them by their grandfathers or grandmothers at very early ages. The details about issues, events and concepts in the stories indicate that all the respondents have painful family-history stories which make a very clear reference to the genocide. Thus it is found that the narratives act as means of transferring the genocide issue and the sorrow lived in 1915. Using manifest coding, the terms and adjectives which the Turkish Armenian interviewees used frequently to define the stories are presented in the following graphic:

**Graphic 5-1: The Most Common Concepts and Issues in Family-History Stories**
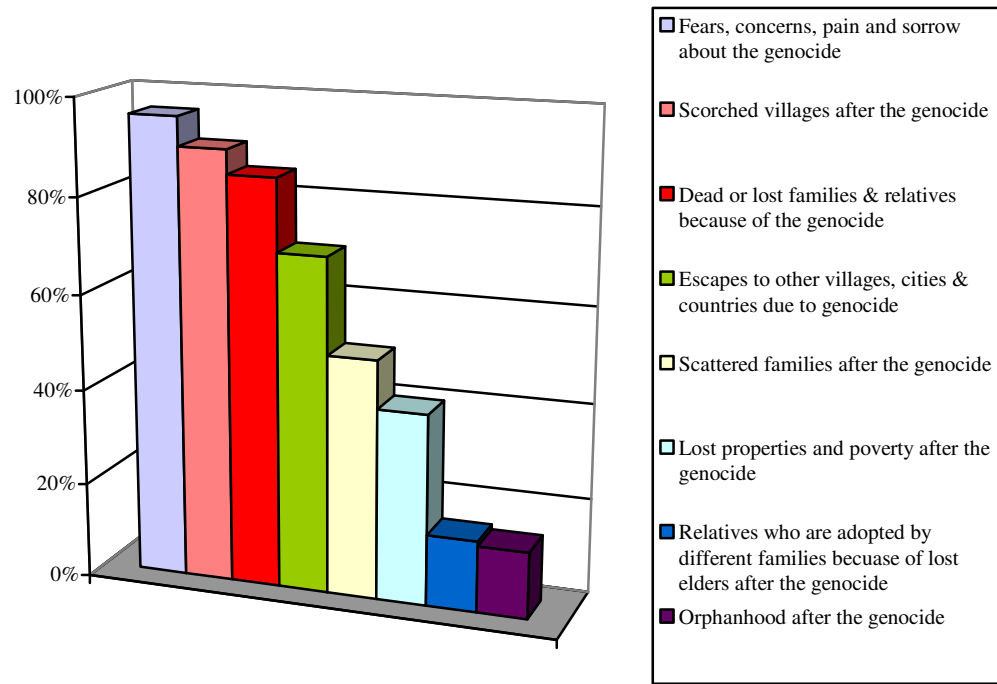


Because the respondents mention about more than one issue and concept in their family-history stories, the graphic indicates the most frequently stated themes describing the stories. According to the data achieved, 'fears, concerns, pain and sorrow about the genocide' are the most underlined concepts by 95% of the interviewees. While 90% of the Armenian respondents mention about 'scorched villages after the genocide', 85% of them also refer to the 'deaths or lost families and relatives' because of the events in 1915. 'Escapes to other villages' due to the families', 'lost properties and poverty', 'adopted relatives' and lastly 'orphanhood' are among the relatively least declared issues and concepts in the family-history stories of the Armenian interviewees.

An important finding relates to how the age plays a mediating role in the frame of responses and described family stories. Older interviewees, especially at the age of 27, 28,

29 and 30, tell more detailed stories including lots of sorrowful issues, which they emotionally hesitate to share. On the other hand, younger respondents who are in the 20 and 25 age interval know less detail in their family-history stories. When their narrations are compared with the older ones', younger interviewees tend to use fewer negative and less emotional terms in the stories. For example, words such as 'sorrow', 'pain', 'orphanhood' don't exist in the stories of those younger respondents. These results can imply that younger Armenian participants' narrations don't carry as many emotional and somehow traumatic elements as the older ones' have. The quotations and the graphic below summarize the data clearly:

**Table 5-1: Quotations of Younger and Older Respondents Regarding The Family-History Stories**

| Younger Interviewees | Older Interviewees |
|---|---|
| *"Babam aile hikayemizi anlatmıştı bana ve tabiki soykırımdan da bahsetmişti ama çok da detaylı bir hikaye değildi bu. Sadece o yılların ailemiz ve tüm Ermeniler adına zor günler olduğunu biliyorum."*<br><br>*(My dad had told me the story of the family and he, of course, mentioned about the genocide but the story did not involve so much details. I just know that it was difficult days for our family and for all the Armenians.)* | *"Ailemizle ilgili, nereden geldiğimizi ve 1915'de yaşanılanları anlatan pek çok hikaye dinledim. Anneannemin soykırım yıllarını ve köylerinden kaçışlarını anlatırken nasıl da ağladığını hatırlıyorum. Orada hissettikleri korkuyu ve acıyı aklım almıyor. Bir günde ailelerini kaybetmişler. Bu çok acıklı dayanılmaz bir şey."*<br><br>*(I listened to many stories about our family, where they came from and what they experienced in 1915. I remember, my grandmother was crying while telling the genocide years and their escape from the village. I cannot figure the pain and the fear they felt. They had lost their families in one day! It was too sorrowful.)* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *"Soykırım meselesi her Ermeni ailesi içinde anlatılan, konuşulan bir hikayedir; özellikle de aile tarihinden bahsederken ama çok fazla şey hatırlamıyorum bu hikaye ile ilgili. Daha doğrusu o kadar çok şey anlatılmadı bize.. Annemler sadece bazı akrabalarımızın bu olayda öldüğünü ve ailenin geri kalanının bir şekilde İstanbul'a taşındığını anlatmışlardı; onu biliyorum o kadar."*<br><br>*(The genocide issue is a common story which is told in every Armenian family especially when they mention about the family-history. But I don't remember so many things about it. I know that some of our relatives died in this event and the rest of the family managed to come to Istanbul somehow.)* | *"Aile tarihimiz ile ilgili bildiğim hikayeler çoğunlukla 1915'e dayanmakta. Hem anneannem hem de dedem böyle hikayeler anlatırlardı; o yüzden de nasıl bir trajedi yaşadıklarını çok iyi biliyorum. Onlardan bunu dinlemek çok zor bir şeydi."*<br><br>*(What I know about our family-history story mostly depends on 1915. Both my grandfather and grandmother had told such stories; hence I know what a big tragedy they experienced. It was very difficult to listen to them.)* |

**Graphic 5-2: Age as a Mediator in the frame of Family-History Stories**
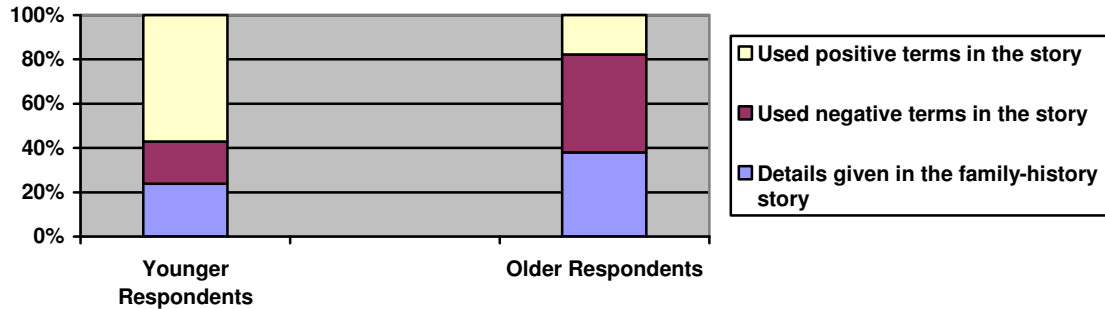


While 60% of the positive terms which describe the family-stories are used by younger respondents, 40% of the negative terms describing the stories are preferred by older respondents. The graphic also reveals that the details given in the narratives are higher in the answers of the older participants (as 40%) than the responses of the younger interviewees (20%).

## 5.2. Analysis on Childhood

The memories in the childhood period are another theme that will contribute to the further discussions of the whole data. This period is thought to be important in terms of shaping young Armenians' current perceptions. Thus, the data on the general childhood atmosphere and memories with Turks and their own community will help to understand the Armenian interviewees' attitudes towards the conflict and Turks, and indicate the ground and reasons behind those attitudes. In that way, a more comprehensive discussion on the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on the Armenian youth's approaches to the conflict and Turks can be built.

Regarding the question about the childhood days and memories, all the respondents generally declare that they have happy and peaceful childhood stories. However, as the graphic below shows, the mediating age factor again creates differences in the responses of

the interviewees. By relying on the manifest coding, which analyzes the words, themes, and their frequencies in the interview texts, it is seen that younger Armenians, who are between 20 and 24 years old, tend to use more positive adjectives, such as good, happy, peaceful, joyful, funny, when they describe those years than the older respondents who are at the ages of 27 through 30.

**Graphic 5-3: Age as a Mediating Factor in the Frame of Childhood Memories**
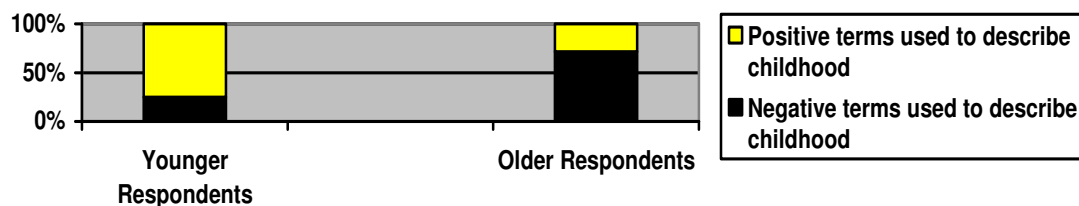


75% of the positive terms to describe childhood days are stated by the younger respondents while nearly 70% of the negative terms are used by older respondents.

Beside these findings, when the questions about childhood are related to the identity issue and the feeling of being an Armenian, the respondents start to imply that their childhood days have some issues they can only understand as adults. They remark that there were concerns, questions, admonitions, disquiet and uneasiness about *something* they did not figure out in those years. As the quotations below signify, manipulations of the families to hide their identity and language are the most frequent examples of the atmosphere of childhood days.

   *"Annem beni hep uyarırdı; sakın dışarda bana 'mama' deme, 'anne' de."*
   (My mum has always warned me by saying that 'don't call me mama out of the home, say anne.')

(27 years-old / Female)

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*"Antalya'ya taşındığımız zaman ailem bana uydurma bir Türk ismi bulmuş, onunla çağırıyorlardı beni.. O zamanlar bu ismin nereden çıktığını, niye bana böyle seslenmek zorunda kaldıklarını anlayamamıştım."*

(When we move to Antalya, my family started to call me with a made-up Turkish name and I did not understand why.)

(24 years-old / Female)

The memories of childhood term show that all the respondents had Turkish friends during those years. Young Armenians define their relations with Turks peacefully. However, they also underline that they did not have a perception of 'Turkish versus Armenian' identity. In other words, they knew that there were Armenians and Turks, and there was a problem between them; yet because they did not have a comprehensive idea about the ethnic differentiation, or feeling of being a minority at the childhood period, they thought that everybody was the same somehow. However, as they grew up, started to make future plans and socialized in more diverse environments, like in Turkish high schools, universities or military services, they began to understand that there was a dissimilarity and something like 'you' and 'us'. Therefore, although all the Armenian interviewees see themselves as a part of the society of this country, the passing term from childhood to adolescence becomes a critical realization period due to the first discovery of the feeling of being a minority, of difference with others and some sort of segregation. They all mention about experiences which are focused on disturbance and uncomfortable when they introduce themselves to other people. The reason of their disturbance depends on insistent questions about their names, accent, where they are coming from, and what they think about the genocide. Many of the complaints emphasize the hidden pressure to add the word of 'so-called' when talking about genocide, exposure to treatment like a stranger, and the given label of a foreigner in Turkey. Here are some statements of the respondents which summarize these feelings and attitudes:

*"Din dersleri notlarım iyi olmasına rağmen sırf Ermeniyim diye dersin hocası beni o dersten bırakmıştı."*

(Although my grades were very good, I had failed from the religion course because of the Turkish teacher of this course.)

(29 years-old / Male)

*"Küçüklüğümden beri hep bir pilot ya da uçak mühendisi olmak istemişimdir. Sonunda bu isteklerimi gerçekleştirebilmek için gerekli sınav ve mülakatlara girdim. Çıkışta, asılı listede herkesin isimleri tükenmezle yazarken benimki kurşun kalemle yazılmıştı. Dikkatimi çekmemesine imkan yoktu. O zaman anladım ki bu beni sizlerden ayıran bir şeydi…Yani ben bir Ermeniydim ve ne yaparsam yapayım ne bir pilot ne de bir uçak mühendisi olabilirdim."*

(I have always wanted to be a pilot or a flight engineer and someday I applied to the related school. In the list, my name was written by a pencil while others' names were written by a pen. That was the thing distinguishing me and you and showing that I cannot be a pilot or a flight engineer because I am an Armenian.)

(25 years-old / Male)

*"ASALA suikastlarının gündemde olduğu bir zamandı, ben de orta-okuldaydım. Ermeni olduğumu bilen yan sınıftan bir çocuk beni arkadaşlarına gösteriyor, terrorist mi acaba diyordu."*

(When the issue of ASALA was at the agenda of the country, a children from the other class of the secondary school was pointing at me and asking her friends whether I am a terrorist or not.)

(22 years-old / Female)

*"17 yaşındaydım. İstiklal'de yürürken başı kapalı bir kadın bir anda üzerime doğru geldi ve boynumdaki haçı kopartıp 'Gavurlar sizi!' diye bağırmıştı Taksim'in orta yerinde. Hiç o kadar korktuğumu hatırlamıyorum."*

(While I was 17 years old, a woman with a headscarf had pulled my cross from my neck and shouted at me 'gavur!' at the middle of Taksim. I was too scared." (gavur means "stranger" but in a negative and insulting way)

<div align="right">(23 years-old / Female)</div>

*"Ne zaman yeni insanlarla bir tanışma ortamına girsem, ismimi söylediğim anda bana çevrilen tuhaf bakışlardan, nereden geldiğimi sorgulayan gereksiz bir dolu sorudan o kadar çok sıkıldım ki! Artık böyle soranlara uzaydan geliyorum diyorum."*

(Whenever I say my name to new people, I really get fed up with the strange looks directed at me and unnecessary questions about where I come from. I tell them I come from space!)

<div align="right">(25 years-old / Male)</div>

It is important to note that while respondents tell such memories and experiences as stated above, they underscore how their positive attitudes and images towards Turks start to be replaced with negative labels such as 'uneducated', 'unconscious', and 'nationalist'. However, none of the Armenians, whether younger or older, declare a purposeful antagonism, racism or enmity in the behaviors or approaches of Turks towards Armenians. The graphic below indicates the image change of Turks in the childhood and adolescent periods of the Turkish Armenian youth comparatively.

**Graphic 5-4: Comparative Image Change of Turks**



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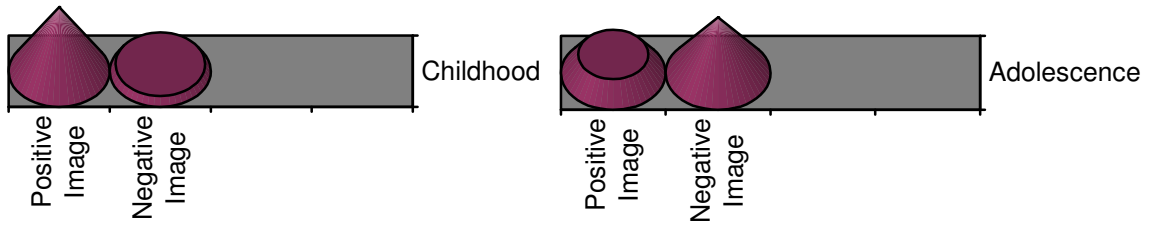
In terms of their perceptions and thoughts about the conflict at those years, Turkish Armenian interviewees' responses show similarities. Both older and younger respondents state that they only knew the genocide. They didn't have a comprehensive idea about the conflict because this issue was seen as a taboo which their parents advised them not to mention. They tell that such an attitude of the families generally prevented them from developing personal arguments, and creating discussions concerning the Turkish-Armenian conflict.

## 5.3. Analysis on Hrant Dink Assassination

The data presented in this section aims to bring a general overview of the young Armenian interviewees' attitudes and perceptions about the assassination of Hrant Dink, which will contribute to the evaluation and discussions about the effects of the assassination on the Turkish Armenian youth. The part consists of three sub-sections. The first sub-section is about the perceptions of the youth towards Hrant Dink. Because this part creates an idea of what they know and think about Hrant Dink, it will better extend the understanding of the importance and effects of the assassination on the youth. The second part focuses on the perceptions of the Armenian youth towards the assassination itself. Learning how they interpret this event will provide a basis to answer the research question concerning the effects of the assassination on these young Turkish Armenian people. The third sub-section concerns the perceptions of the Armenian youth towards the funeral of Hrant Dink. This knowledge will contribute to the understanding of the assassination as a whole and help to see whether the assassination and funeral generate different meanings and influences on the young Armenian interviewees' attitudes.

### 5.3.1 Perceptions towards Hrant Dink

As relying on both manifest and latent coding of the interview texts, the words the Armenian interviewees chose and the meanings behind these words indicate that most of the respondents know, respect, and love Hrant Dink. Seventeen out of 20 respondents stated very clearly that they were the strong followers of his writings. They also emphasized that Hrant Dink was an important person who represented their identity and became the voice of their overlooked presence in Turkey. This shows the symbolic and emotional meaning of Hrant Dink for the sampled Armenian youth. Four out of these 17 respondents also asserted that they knew Hrant Dink personally. Among the interviewees, only three people say that they did not know him very well but had a very general familiarity and sympathy about him.

### 5.3.2 Perceptions towards the Assassination

**Graphic 5-5: The Most Common Reactions to the News of the Assassination**
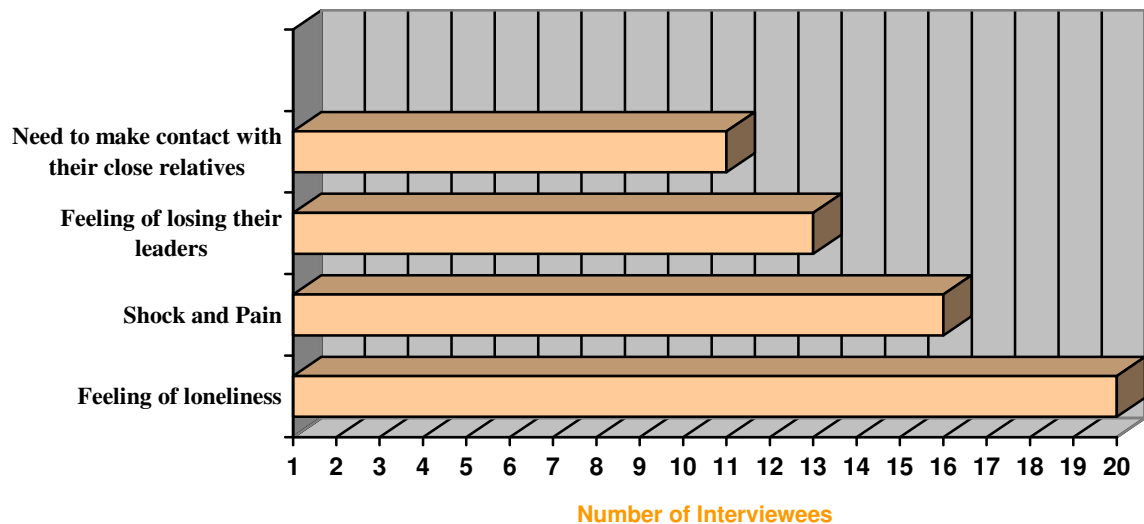
Because the respondents did not explain a specific reaction but various reactions regarding the murder of Hrant Dink, the graphic above shows the most emphasized words and themes in their overall statements. According to it, feeling of loneliness is a common reaction of all the Armenian interviewees have. Sixteen out of 20 respondents also mention about a shock and deep pain they experienced when they heard the assassination. They say that they did not expect such a thing to happen. The feeling of losing their leader is stated by thirteen out of 20 young Armenians. Besides, 11 of the interviewees tell they felt a need to call their mothers or grandfathers as soon as they saw the news about the murder. The reasons given for such a behavior generally focus on the emotional need to heal their feeling of loneliness by sharing this news with their close relatives and families, and also some sort of fear and concern about their relatives. The quotations below reflect the immediate reactions of the respondents towards the murder conspicuously.

*"İnanamadım. Sadece çok büyük, derin bir boşluk ve yalnızlık hissettiğimi hatırlıyorum o anda."*

(I couldn't believe. I just remembered that I felt a big, deep emptiness and loneliness.)

(21 years-old / Female)

*"Şoke olmuştum. O kadar yalnız hissetim ki kendimi bir anda. Hemen annemi aramak istedim nasıl olduğunu öğrenmek için."*

(It was shocking! I felt too lonely and called my mum to check how she is.)

(26 years-old / Male)

*"Temsilcimizi ve kendi sesimizi kaybetmiştik bir anda. Çok şok edici ve acılı bir andı."*

(We lost our representative and our voice. It was a shocking and painful moment.)

(29 years-old / Male)

Beside these general reactions, age takes a mediating role again and causes some differences among the responses of older and younger interviewees. On the one hand, older respondents who know more details about the painful family narratives tell that the assassination was something they could expect. Their immediate reactions to the death of Hrant Dink are very emotional and sharp. Majority of the older respondents told that it was a pure sign of the genocide, discrimination and antagonism towards Armenians, and extreme nationalism in Turks. So, in terms of attitudes towards Turks, older respondents were quick to relate this death to the genocide in 1915 and tended to state negative and accusing words for Turks. On the other hand, younger respondents find the event more shocking, unbelievable and unexpected than the older ones. They don't display a very apparent change in their views towards Turks when they talked about Turks and the assassination; for example none of these younger Armenians made a relation between the genocide and the assassination. In another dimension, the assassination causes hopelessness regarding the future relations, the conflict and its resolution for all the respondents; yet the source or the reason of this feeling varies among younger and older participants. For younger interviewees, the hopelessness derives from a disappointment which the murder has created. Thus, the event itself is the main point of this hopelessness, and damages their beliefs in peace and a relatively positive image of Turks. However, when we look at the replies of older respondents, the feeling of hopelessness comes from remembering the past again; hence the murder leads to very pessimist ideas about Turks. Furthermore, these concerns of older people make them think to leave the country. The clear diversity in reactions of older and younger participants can be seen in the following table.

**Table 5-2: Quotations of Younger and Older Respondents Regarding Their Reactions towards the Assassination**

| Younger Interviewees | Older Interviewees |
|---|---|
| *"Şok ediciydi.. Barış içinde yaşamayı becerebildiğimizi düşünüyordum ama şimdi çok da emin değilim."*<br><br>(It was shocking. I believed that we managed to live in peace but now I am not sure) | *"Türkler işte… Belki ırkçı gibi görüneceğim ama söylemem lazım ki Türkler, tarihin de bize öğrettiği gibi, böyle şeyler yapmaya meyilliler."*<br><br>(Turks... Maybe I will be also seen as a racist but I have to say that Turks tend to do such things as we know from the history.) |
| *"Bu ölümle beraber bütün umutlarım da uçtu gitti sanki."*<br><br>(All my hopes just flew away with his death.) | *"Korkunç! Bu olay bir soykırım, ayrımcılık ve ırkçılıktır. Türkiye adına büyük hayal kırıklığı"*<br><br>(Awful! This is the genocide, discrimination, racism. A very big disappointment for Turkey.) |
| *"Haber çok şaşırtıcıydı; böyle bir şeyin olabileceğini asla düşünmezdim."*<br><br>(The news was very surprising; I have never thought that something like this could ever happen.) | *"Böyle bir olayı bekliyordum çünkü çok uç görünen ama bir o kadar da haklı söylemleri vardı. Böyle insanlar, hele ki bir Ermeni'yse, Türkiye'de pek yaşayamıyor."*<br><br>(I was expecting this because he had very extreme but rightful statements. Such people, especially if he is an Armenian, cannot live in Turkey.) |

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## 5.3.3 Perceptions towards the Funeral

### Graphic 5-6: The First Scenes the Respondents Remember about the Funeral of Hrant Dink
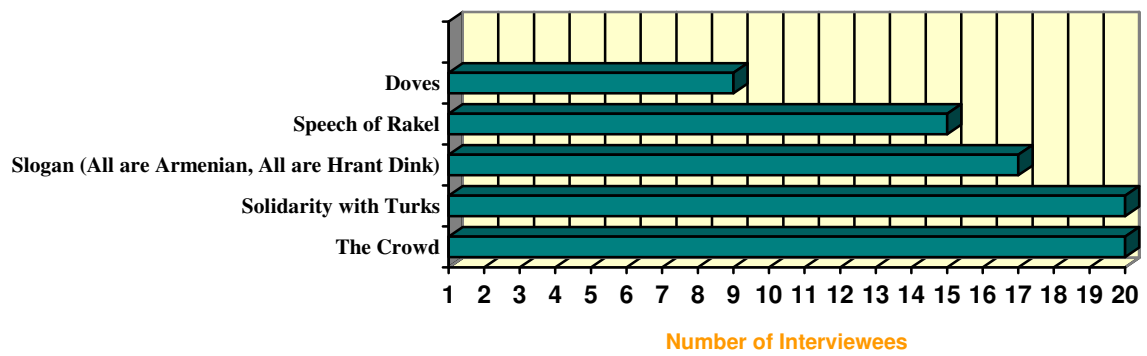


As the graphic indicates, all of the Armenian respondents firstly remember the big crowd and the solidarity atmosphere when they are asked about the funeral. Also, 17 out of 20 interviewees state the slogan Turks yell, "All are Armenian, All are Hrant Dink, as a remarkable scene of the funeral. The speech of Rakel Dink is another theme which 15 Armenians remember (See Appendix C for the speech). Lastly, nine out of 20 interviewees emphasized the doves as a scene from the funeral. The doves become a symbol of Hrant Dink because he had mentioned about "a timidity of a dove" in his last article, which implied his concerns about the threats he got from anonymous people.

While the interviewees remarked on those scenes about the funeral, their replies to the questions related to the funeral atmosphere generally signify that they believe the sincerity and brotherhood of Turks in the funeral. The crowd and the slogan are considered as very touching and meaningful. They also explain that they really did not expect such a

significant support from Turks after the assassination. To sum up, the general reactions show that the funeral of Hrant Dink, in spite of the murder, draws a relatively positive picture in the minds of the Armenian interviewees.

Nonetheless, when we dig out the details within the responses, this category, similar to the previous sections, indicates how age becomes a mediating factor, too. Younger interviewees tend to use more positive words about the support of Turks in the funeral. In other words, younger Armenian people, who had said that their future hopes were damaged because of the assassination, show different perceptions regarding the funeral. Their disappointment and negatively shaped image of Turks are 'repaired' somehow after the funeral. Although younger Armenians stated that they felt frightened and hopeless after the assassination, most of them underline that they would not leave the country after seeing such solidarity in the society. The most frequent statement was "*we see that we are not alone*". The funeral increases their hopes for the future relations and resolution of the conflict. Also, as a result of the support of Turks in the funeral, the hatred seemed to turn towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and politicians rather than Turks. The detailed quotes in the table below imply how the funeral atmosphere touched them deeply and built or improved some sort of positive attitude and image towards Turks and the future of conflict itself.

Although some older respondents agree with these positive reactions of the younger interviewees about Turks' support, and increasing hopes for the conflict and its resolution, the older respondents display more sensitive and reproachful reactions towards the funeral. They are very skeptical of the solidarity and sincerity in the funeral and keep their hopeless and negative attitudes about Turks and the resolution of the conflict. They thought that the support of Turks did not reflect the whole country's attitude, but just a small group of Turks. For this reason, they perceived this solidarity atmosphere as a temporary situation. Because of these doubts, five out of eight older respondents did not attend to the funeral purposefully. By not participating, they show their reaction to the artificial solidarity in there. 3 of them also state that that they are still thinking to leave the country; while other don't decide yet. In sum, the older respondents seem to be confused a little after seeing the

atmosphere in the funeral; but they are mostly closer to think pessimist and negative regarding the image of Turks, the conflict and its resolution.

Chosen quotations from the interviews below show and summarize all of the diverse approaches:

**Table 5-3: Quotations of Younger and Older Respondents Regarding Their Reactions towards the Funeral and also Turks in the Funeral**

| | **Funeral** | **Turks** |
|---|---|---|
| *Younger Interviewees* | ▪ *"Çok gurur verici bir andı, hiç böylesi bir dayanışmayı beklemiyordum."* (It was a proud moment for me and I did not assume such solidarity.)<br><br>▪ *"Rüya gibiydi, yalnız olmadığımızı görmüş olduk böylece."* (It was like a dream, we see that we are not alone.)<br><br>▪ *"Neredeyse böylesi bir trajedinin yarattığı bu tablodan mutlu oldum."* (I nearly became happy because of what such a tragedy leaded.)<br><br>▪ *"Hiçbir yere gitmeyeceğim çünkü aslında bunu yapmamızı istiyorlar. Aksine, cenazede gördüğüm dayanışma ortamından sonra kalmalı ve Türkler ve Ermeniler arasındaki bu birliği güçlendirmek için çalışmalıyız."* (I won't go anywhere because this is the thing some people want us to do. Instead, we ought to stay and go on building and strengthening the solidarity Turks and Armenians just | ▪ *"Kalabalık Türk milletinin büyük vicdanını ve bu ülkede yalnız olmadığımızı gösterdi bizlere."* (The crowd showed the big conscience of Turkish people and we are not alone in this country.)<br><br>▪ *"Her ne kadar başka taraflar bunu bozmak istesede tören hepimizin aslında kardeş olduğunu gösterme fırsatı verdi bize."* (We all showed that we are sisters and brothers although other parties want to spoil it.) |

| | got.) | |
|---|---|---|
| *Older Interviewees* | ▪ *"Kalabalık sanki beraber hareket eden tek bi vücut gibiydi, gözyaşlarıma hakim olamadım."* (The crowd was like a sole body moving together and made me cry.)<br><br>▪ *"Törene katıldım ama hiçbir şey hissetmedim açıkçası çünkü bu sadece o anlık bir şeydi. Gelip geçici ve bir daha yakalanması mümkün olmayan bir an."* (I have attended but feel nothing, it was just a "moment" which will pass and never happen again.)<br><br>▪ *"Cenaze ve oradaki kalabalık benim için hiçbir şey ifade etmedi çünkü kafaları değiştirmeyeceğini biliyorum. Bu yüzden de katılmamayı tercih ettim zaten."* ▪(The funeral and the crowd meant nothing for me since it wouldn't change the minds; so I did not prefer to attend.)<br><br>▪ *"Gitmek istemedim törene çünkü Hrant Dink'in ölümü aslına hepimizin bildiği bir gerçeği bir ked aha onaylıyordu: Bu savaş ve önyargılar hiç bitmeyecek."* (I did not want to go to the funeral because the death of Hrant Dink was | ▪*Kalabalık çok şaşırtıcıydı ve hoştu belki ama aynı zamanda şunun da söylenmesi gerek: Bu Türkler Hrant Dink yargılanırken ve ölüm tehditleriyle karşılaırken neredeydiler?"* (The crowd is surprising and nice but at the same time I wanted to say that 'where you Turks were when Hrant was being judged and faced with threats?')<br><br>▪ *Türklerin bizimle olduğunu ve acımızı paylaşmaya çalıştıklarını görmek güzeldi ancak bunlar sadece belli bir kesim iyi eğitimli Türkler. Ülkenin geri kalanının bizmle beraber olduğunu hiç sanmıyorum."* (It was nice to see Turks are with us and share our sorrow but they are some isolated and well-educated Turks. I don't believe that the rest of this country is with us.) |

| | just confirming something I already knew: This conflict and prejudices would never end.) | |
| --- | --- | --- |

## 5.4. Analysis on Approaches to Turkish – Armenian Conflict

The questions related to the Turkish-Armenian conflict aim to learn how the sampled Armenian youth approach this dispute. The respondents are asked to state the main issues in the conflict and explain how or if the assassination affected their approaches on those issues. In this regard, this section of the paper not only provides data about the present perceptions of the young Armenians on the core issues of the Turkish-Armenian conflict but also gives implications regarding how the assassination shaped or re-shaped these perceptions. This knowledge will be valuable to evaluate the effects of the assassination in a broader sense. However, because the interviews are conducted after the assassination, it is not completely possible for the respondents to clarify their previous and later approaches about the conflict and explain how the assassination impacted their current perceptions clearly. This is a vital limitation of the research, and an influencing factor for the data presented here.

**Graphic 5-7: The Most Common Issues Maintaining the Protractedness of the of the Turkish-Armenian Conflict**
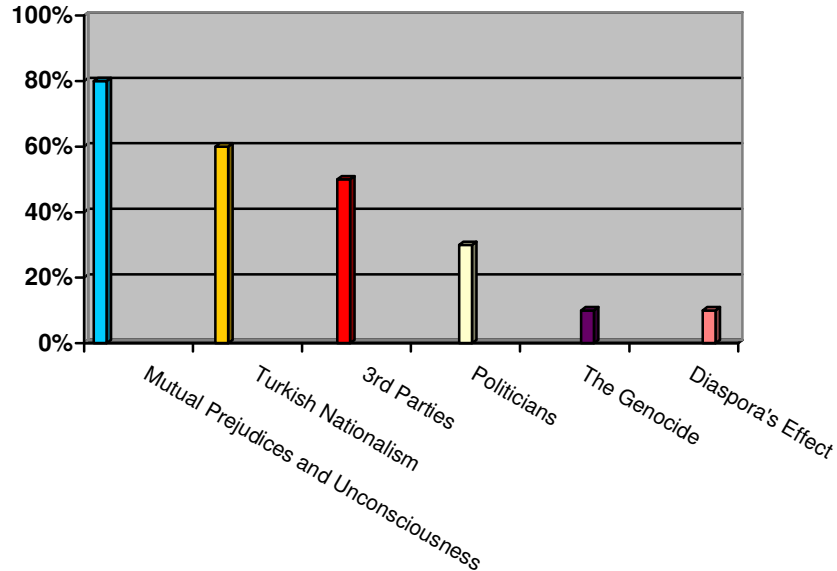


Through the analysis of what the interviewees frequently said, the graphic above indicates the current approaches of young Turkish Armenians to the core issues which maintain the protractedness of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. 10% of the young Armenians criticize their own communities, but especially the Diaspora, for making the conflict intractable. According to them, the Diaspora uses the enemy image of Turks and permanency of the conflict to connect and keep the Armenians together and save their identity. Also, 10% of the respondents believe that because 1915 events are not accepted by Turkey, the genocide remains as the core issue of the dispute. 30% of the 20 interviewees think that the conflict is not between the societies but it is sparked by the politicians. Besides, half of the participants point out that the conflict is re-created and flamed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> parties (implying other countries especially America) who want to benefit from the results and chaos of such a conflict. However, 60% of the young Armenians consider that the Armenian issue is a result of rising Turkish nationalism. Although the respondents give such answers, the majority of the Armenian youth, (80%) underline the role of mutual

prejudices and unconsciousness between the communities as the core issue and perpetuator of today's Turkish-Armenian conflict.

As the general picture in the chart shows, the unacknowledged genocide issue, which is generally seen as the main issue of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, seems to be less important within the priority of the issues of the conflict for the sampled young Armenians. While interventions of 3$^{rd}$ parties and rising Turkish nationalism are among the most stated answers regarding the core issue in the conflict, the mutually existing are perceived as the essential problem. Two conspicuous examples from the statements of the Armenian interviewees reflect how they see the prejudices and unconsciousness as the most critical issue of the conflict:

*"Türkleri suçlayamıyorum çünkü gördükleri eğitim sistemi onlara bizim de Anadolu'dan geldiğimizi ve en az onlar kadar uzun zamandır bu ülkenin topraklarında yaşadığımızı unutturuyor."*
(I cannot blame Turks because the education system makes them forget that we, Armenians, are coming from the Anatolia and living in this country for so long years like them.)

(21 years-old / Male)

*"Türkler Atatürk isminin bir Ermeni tarafından önerildiğini biliyorlar mı? Hayır. Kendi ülkelerinde yaşayan azınlıklar hakkında o kadar eğitimsiz ve cahiller ki… İşte bu yüzden Türkler bizi hep 'öteki' gibi görüyor."*
(Do Turks know that the name of "Atatürk" is made up/offered by an Armenian? No. They are so uneducated about the minorities in their country; hence Turks see us 'the other'.)

(27 years-old / Female)

*"Türkler zannediyorlar ki bizler yani Ermeniler onların toprak bütünlükeri için bir tehdidiz bu ülkede. Bize karşı çok önyargılılar çünkü aslında bizim kim olduğumuzu ve gerçekte ne ile ilgilendiğimizi hiç bilmiyorlar."*

(Turks assume that we are a threat for their territorial integrity. They are so prejudiced towards Armenians because they don't who we are and what we really care.)

(24 years-old / Male)

It is important to note that the age differences which became a strong mediating factor in the previous data, do not take such a powerful role in this theme. Both older and younger interviewees point out similar things. However, it can be still said that issues about Turkish nationalism and the genocide are mostly emphasized by older interviewees; while it is the younger ones who criticize the Diaspora because of its interventions making the conflict prolonged. Also, although older participants underscore mutual prejudices and unconsciousness as a vital issue of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, this answer is more common among the younger respondents.

Apart from these current approaches of the sampled Armenian youth towards the issues of the conflict, the effect or role of assassination in shaping these attitudes is another point. The statements of the respondents reveal that the assassination did not make an important change in Turkish Armenians' previous thoughts about the issues of the conflict, but rather reinforced them. The majority of the respondents who mostly think prejudices, unconsciousness and nationalism as the core issues of the conflict also state that the assassination of Hrant Dink is a result of these issues. Hence, the murder increase and strengthens the existing concerns of the youth about these aforementioned issues. Some of the quotations of the interviewees representing this situation are as follows:

*"Suikast öncesinde de böyle düşünüyordum, o yüzden fikrim değişmedi hala önyargıların ve bilinçsizliğin bu çatışmayı tetiklediğini ve Hrant Dink suikastının da bunların bir sonucu olduğunu düşünüyorum."*

(I was thinking in the same way before the assassination; thus the murder didn't change my mind. I still believe that it is the prejudices and unconsciousness which flame the conflict up. I see that the assassination of Hrant Dink is also a result of these issues.)

(22 years-old / Female)

*"Türkler bizi tanımıyorlar; önyargılı ve eğitimsizler. Bu da onları daha da milliyetçi yapıyor bence. Tüm bu çatışmanın da altında bunlar yatmakta. Olayı soykırımdan ibaret görmek çok dar bir bakış açısı olucaktır. Hrant Dink suikastı bu konuyla ilgili fikrimi değiştirmediği gibi güçlendirdi bile diyebilirim. Önyargılar olmasa 17 yaşındaki bir çocuk gidip niye birini vurur ki?"*

(Turks don't know Armenians. They are biased and uneducated, and this makes them more nationalist. Biases and ignorance are the core things behind this conflict. Therefore, if we see the Armenian issue something consisting of only the genocide, then it would be a too narrow-minded view. The assassination didn't change my mind in the way I looked to the conflict and its core issues; instead it confirmed my thoughts. Can be any other reason --except the prejudices-- which made a 17 year-old boy a murderer?)

(26 years-old / Male)

## 5.5. Analysis on Approaches to Resolution of the Conflict

By depending on the previous questions about the core issues of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, the respondents' resolution suggestions for the dispute are also asked. The data presented in this section will show how the sampled Armenian youth think about the resolution of the conflict by revealing their offers for the resolution. This knowledge is

not only significant in terms of revealing young Armenians' approaches but also of generating practical implications for the settlement of the Armenian issue. In order to evaluate the effect of the assassination on development of these suggestions, the interviewees are asked questions such as 'did you think the same settlement offer before the murder of Hrant Dink or how the assassination affected your opinion in this regard?'. Nonetheless, as mentioned in the previous section, none of the responses are out of the influence of the assassination; thus it becomes methodologically problematic to evaluate the real role of the assassination on the suggestions given for the resolution of the conflict.

**Graphic 5-8: The Most Common Suggestions for the Resolution of the Turkish-Armenian Conflict**
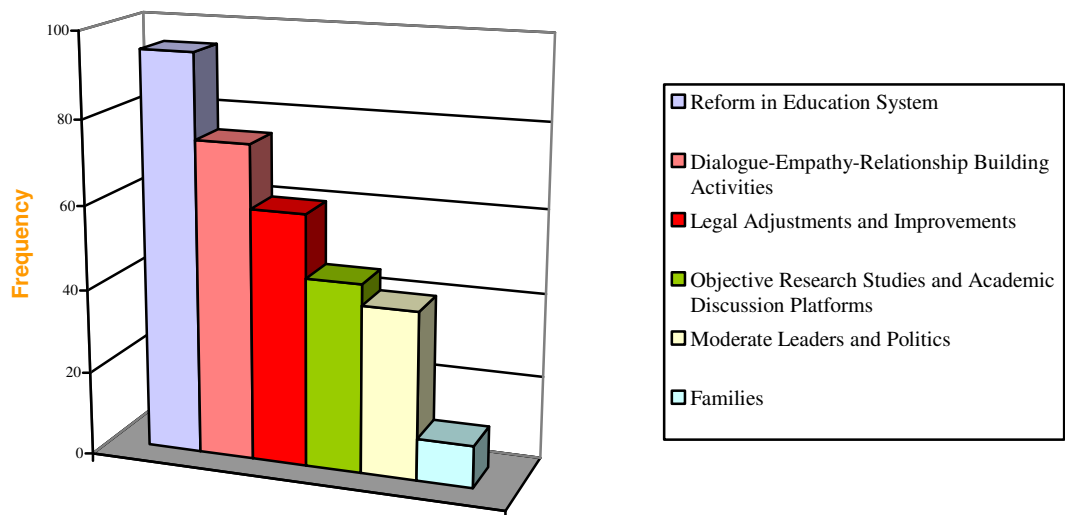


The graphic above reflects the resolution suggestions which are frequently emphasized by the Armenian interviewees. By relying on the manifest coding of the responses, the data shows that the majority of the respondents (95%) state the need for a reform in the Turkish education system. They believe that the current education system instigates nationalistic feelings, and leads prejudices and unconsciousness about other ethnicities living in Turkey. Hence, a more objective education would be a key towards

resolution. History courses are especially underlined because of their subjectivity. The suggestion for the reform in the education system in Turkey and the reasons given correspond to the previous common answer about the prejudices, unconsciousness and nationalism as the core issue of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. Selected quotes below show the young Armenians' emphasis on the reform in the education better:

*"Tıpkı Mustafa Kemal'in annesinin adını öğretir gibi, Türkiye'de başka toplumların yaşadığını ve toplumdaki böyle bir çeşitliliğin aslında iyi bir şey olduğu da çocuklara öğretilmeli."*

(Like teaching the name of Mustafa Kemal's mother, children also should be taught that Turkey consists of diverse societies living in peace and this is a good thing actually.)

(20 years-old / Male)

*"İlkokullarda Türkçe öğretirken çok genel bir başlangıç cümlesi vardır hani…Ali topu ya Ayşe'ye ya Hasan'a atar ama artık Ali şu topu Agop'a da atmalı diyorum ben."*

(In the primary schools, when teaching Turkish, a very starting sentence is 'Ali, throw the ball to Ayşe or Hasan' but I say that Ali must throw the ball to Agop, too.)

(29 years-old / Female)

The graphic also indicates that 75% of the Armenian participants think that dialogue, empathy and relationship building studies through social activities, such as arts, music, sports or theatre, will be helpful for the resolution of the conflict. The respondents again make a reference on prejudices, and signify that such activities can break stereotypical perceptions which limit the communication between Turks and Armenians. Also, because they see the politicians as one of the perpetuating factors of the conflict, as it is stated in previous section, the Armenian participants suggest for the social activities which will start a dialogue at the society-level. In addition to these, legal adjustments and improvements are

seen very significant by the 60% of the Armenian interviewees. They underline the need for a government which behaves more equally and do not have racist or nationalist laws and practices. Specifically, reform in minority laws to improve and equalize rights with Turks, and constant control of those laws in practice are suggested. Beside the legal approach, objective and academic research studies and discussion platforms, such as seminars, symposiums and panels, are proposed by 40% of the participants. They believe that such studies will make the Armenian issue not a taboo anymore. In general terms, this suggestion of young Armenians again emphasizes the need for dialogue. On the other hand, 40% of the respondents think that the resolution of the conflict is in the hands of moderate leaders. In other words, they state the necessity for more moderate leaders and politicians who would take constructive steps to develop relations between Turks and Armenians. Trading, diplomatic relations and opening of the borders between the countries are the examples given under this suggestion. Lastly, and interestingly, a few interviewees (10%) consider that families can play a role in the resolution of the conflict by lessening the transmission of traumatic narrations, feelings, fears and prejudices about Turks and genocide to the next generations. These Armenian respondents believe that nursing a grievance does not help anyone.

Similar to the previous section, no distinctive age difference can be found as a mediating factor among the answers about the suggestions given for the resolution of the conflict. Younger and relatively older respondents give answers similar to each other and both of them underscore a more objective and less nationalist education system as the most important need in order to preclude the conflict to become more prolonged in the future. In terms of the effect of the assassination, they state that because the murder increased the general concern on prejudices and nationalism, the event also increases their belief to the reform in education.

**5.6. Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter presents the data collected through the interviews conducted with the sampled Turkish Armenian youth. Each of the six sections in the chapter present different data which will contribute to frame the answer of the question of the research. The first two parts which focuses on family history stories and childhood days give implications about the background of the sampled Armenian youth and illuminate their previous attitudes towards the genocide and Turks. The following sections concern with the interviewees' approaches towards Hrant Dink, the assassination and the funeral. These help to understand how the youth interpreted the murder as a whole and enrich the discussions that will be built on the effects of this event. Subsequent two sections which seek out the respondents' perceptions about the core issues of the conflict and resolution present their current approaches after the assassination. These parts also give the information of what they were thinking on the issues and resolution before the murder, although the data cannot be out of the current effect of the assassination.

The next chapter will provide a summary and discussion of all these data in detail.

# CHAPTER 6

# CONCLUSION

## 6.1. Discussions on Findings

This study has aimed to answer the research question exploring the effects of the Hrant Dink assassination on Armenian youth in Istanbul. The influences of the murder on young Turkish Armenians are especially analyzed in their attitudes towards Turks, and approaches to the conflict and its resolution. The objective of this study is to further the understanding of this tragic assassination and its consequences on an overlooked but valuable group, the Turkish Armenian youth, who are likely to take a role in shaping relations and peace in the future of the conflict.

With that aim, this chapter is designed to discuss the data presented in the previous section by relating it to the literature, and find a conclusion to the research question of the study. Although the data was introduced in various themes in the previous chapter, the discussion in this chapter will be built upon three parts which would help to have a meaningful picture of the general results and debate on the effects of the assassination. Each part shall make a summary of the related data and then provide discussions on them.

The chapter consists of four sections. The first part focuses on the data about the period before the assassination and tries to evaluate previous approaches of the respondents towards Turks and the conflict. For this reason, it analyzes the themes on family-history

stories and childhood. The subsequent section analyzes the data about the assassination. By questioning attitudes of the interviewees about the death of Hrant Dink, the section clarifies the influences of the murder on the Armenian youth's attitudes and approaches towards Turks, the conflict and its resolution. However, in order to expand the comprehension of how the assassination is interpreted, the third section concerns approaches about the funeral ceremony. Through bringing all the data and the arguments made in these sections, the last part creates a general discussion on the effects of the assassination on the young Turkish Armenian respondents' attitudes towards Turks, and approaches towards the conflict and its resolution.

### 6.1.1. Findings and Discussions on the Period of Before the Assassination:

This first part focuses on the data about family-history stories and childhood days and memories of the young Turkish Armenians; thus it aims to present a general picture and discussion of the attitudes of the sample unit in the period of before the assassination.

The data about family-history stories indicate that all the participants listened to such stories by their parents. Among the topics within those stories, genocide is seen as a common narrative which carries sorrowful and negative issues. This situation reveals three things. First, it shows that genocide is a transmitted story across generations. The transmission method of the historical experience of the Armenian community in a narrative format also confirms the discussions on the role of narratives which are stated both in the methodology chapter and trauma section. As it is suggested, narratives not only reflect one's own experiences but also are affected by cultural, social and historical meanings in the group identity. In that way, personal narratives in which past grievances or fears of societies are rooted become a very effective way of transmission of the past of a community to the new generations (Druckman, 2005; Ross, 2001; Lieblich & Zilber, 1999). The existence of the genocide issue in the family stories parallels with the literature, which suggests family-history stories are the transmitters of traumatic events in families (Kellerman, 1999; Göral, 2005). Secondly, the adjectives and issues stated by young

Turkish Armenians to tell the transmitted family stories point out how the genocide became a traumatic event for the Armenian community. The sampled youth used very negative terms and mentioned sorrowful details in the narratives concerning the 1915. They described the genocide as an extraordinary event including the issues of exposure to violence, having loved ones killed and missing, threat to group survival, fear of annihilation, and feeling of victimization. Those issues imply the traumatic dimension of the genocide because the concepts they used to define the genocide correspond to the features of traumatic events (Herman, 1997; Agger, 2001; Yoder, 2005). With these characteristics, it is possible to describe 1915 as a 'historical trauma' for Armenians. As Volkan states (1993), the events which are believed to be deliberately caused by the others, such as slavery, persecution and genocide, make the group see itself weak, helpless and victim, and generate a historical trauma which would be transmitted among generations. Thirdly, the genocide issue in the family narratives and its position defined as a historical trauma support the argument which describes the Turkish-Armenian issue as a protracted social conflict. As it is stated before, issues of PSCs have a centrality and totality features which make them very important pervasive for the group members. The very dominant existence of the genocide issue in the family-life stories can confirm this point and reveal how the event becomes a central issue for the Armenians. Also, the theory about PSCs indicates that outcomes of such conflicts are related to communal trauma. In that sense, the traumatic side of the genocide, which is described as a historical trauma transmitted to the next generations, underpins the theory about the trauma-based outcomes of PSCs.

Although the given data can be sufficient to conclude that the genocide is a traumatic event and it is transmitted through narratives of the families, this situation cannot clearly state that there is a trauma transmission between generations. In other words, because the genocide is seen as an important historical event for the Armenian community, it is likely that it will be told and transmitted from one generation to the other; yet whether the trauma of this event is also transferred and embedded by the new generation can be 'assumed' but it is not so apparent within the frame of the data in this point.

Another piece of data that should be discussed in this part is the differentiation in the responses of younger and older interviewees. As it is stated in the data analysis part, age acts as a mediating factor in the results. Younger respondents, who are generally between twenty and twenty-four ages, had less detail on the transmitted family-history stories about the genocide, while relatively older ones, who are between twenty-six and thirty ages, listened to more narratives about the 1915 from their parents. Although, the genocide is a negatively described story in general, the diversity on the details within the narratives make younger interviewees state less negative terms regarding the genocide event when it is compared with the intense negative approach of older ones. The reason of this situation can be explained by analyzing the opportunity of younger and older Turkish Armenians to access the people who witnessed those years. It is seen that younger participants could not get so much chance of talking with their elder family members and listening to the stories of the 1915 from them because of their death. Differently, older interviewees had gotten in contact with their grandfathers and grandmothers who had experienced the events, and were told much more detailed and various stories about the genocide years. It is understood that such a difference regarding the opportunity of listening to the people who had lived in those years creates a disparity between younger and older interviewees' detailed knowledge about the genocide. This disparity also affects the presence of emotional and sorrowful details transmitted on the genocide issue; thus it leads two different attitudes towards the remembering of the genocide between younger and older respondents.

When we analyze the data on childhood days of the young Turkish Armenians, it seems that stories on genocide and its trauma did not have a big influence on them at those years. They all told peaceful days and positive memories with their Turkish friends at their childhoods. Very importantly, they also stated that they did not have a rigid identity differentiation as Turks and Armenians. In other words they did not have a minority feeling in their childhood and thought that everybody was the same somehow. However, the data related to the adolescent period of the young Armenians reveal that adolescent is the term they started to realize the concept of 'being a minority'. This situation can be explained by referring to the literature on large-group identity. As it is stated, large group identity which makes an emphasis on ethnic and racial identity formation and development is likely to

occur in adolescent term rather than childhood because it requires socialization of the individual and experiences with the people both in and out of his group (Erikson, 1968). Therefore, young Turkish Armenians could not have a clear mental code of being an Armenian versus being a Turk in their childhood days because the large group identity which depends on the perceptions of ethnic identity did not develop sufficiently. Through adolescent term, Turkish Armenians began to socialize and get experiences with Turks much more, and this let them to shape their large-group identity better. Within this socialization process, experiences are vital. Quotations about this term which are given in the previous chapter, symbolize negative experiences of with Turks and the increase of the feeling of being a minority for the sampled young Turkish Armenians. As a result of those experiences, the Armenian youth who had approached Turks positively in their childhood, started to develop negative feelings for Turks. They draw a picture of unconscious, nationalist and uneducated Turk image in their minds. However, this picture did not cover a purposeful Armenian antagonism, racism or enmity in the behaviors or approaches of Turks.

When the interviewees are asked about their approaches towards the conflict and relations at those years, they expressed that they had no clear idea or view regarding the dispute or relations at their childhood and adolescent periods because the conflict was seen as a taboo which should not be mentioned and discussed.

Beside these general findings and their analysis, the mediating age factor is again a significant discussion point of the childhood theme. As the data in the previous chapter indicate, the adjectives used by the respondents to describe their childhood days changed among younger and older respondents. In comparison with the older participants, younger ones tend to employ more positive terms while telling about their childhoods. Although there is no clear evidence, the details and emphasis within the answers imply that the there is a nuance in the general childhood atmospheres of the older and younger respondents. It seems that older Turkish Armenians had lived their childhood in a more closed environments in which they were isolated from Turks, and in which there was more pressure by their families to hide their identity and language. The reasons of these pressures

and concerns which they could not comprehend at those years caused question-marks and puzzles in their minds. On the other hand, younger respondents did not have such isolation from Turks; moreover they socialized with Turks and other people from different ethnicities earlier. Schools are very significant in this point because while older Armenians went to Armenian schools, due to the closing and poor quality of Armenian schools most of the younger interviewees attended Turkish schools which provided them a quick contact with Turks. Thus, younger Armenians felt the pressure and concerns about their ethnic identity less in their childhood because they became used to expressing and showing this identity in their early ages. In here, the contact theory becomes significant. As will be recalled, the basic idea this theory defends is the power of dialogue and contact in breaking prejudices and improving empathy among people (Dovido et.al, 2003). By being inspired from this proposition, it can be said that the mediating factor of age in the descriptions of the childhood days of younger and older respondents relies on the difference on the time and level of contact the respondents had in their childhood and adolescent years. Unlike older interviewees, younger respondents expressed less negative terms for their childhood days because they had more chance to socialize and get in contact with Turks, and this early dialogue helped them normalize the relations with 'other people' and decrease the concerns or pressures to hide their identity.

### 6.1.2. Findings and Discussions on the Assassination

The second part of the discussions analyzes the data related to the assassination of Hrant Dink. It brings the data about the sample unit' approaches towards Hrant Dink, the assassination and the funeral together and generates a discussion on them in order to clarify how this murder is understood by the Turkish Armenian youth comprehensively.

Agger (2001) and Yoder (2005) suggest that traumatic events are generally caused by having loved ones killed or being exposed to a violent event. These events cause sensitivity and bring feeling of helplessness and urgent need for safety and security on behalf of the group members. When we think about the assassination in the light of this literature, this murder is likely to be considered as a traumatic event for the sampled Turkish Armenian

youth because immediate reactions of the interviewees over the death of Hrant Dink displayed similar sensitivity and emotions stated by the authors. The youth talked about a deep pain, shock, and fear for their relatives, and a feel of loneliness. Also, because Turkish Armenians explained that they all had a personal love and respect for Hrant Dink and saw him as their voice, the level of intensity of these expressed emotions and trauma becomes high. The section about 'who is Hrant Dink?' provides better understanding of those attitudes of the Turkish Armenian youth towards Hrant Dink by explaining his symbolic meaning for the Armenian community.

By defining the assassination as a traumatic event for the Armenians, the data also help to eliminate the blurry assumption about the transmission of the genocide trauma which is mentioned in the previous discussion part. The responses and reactions of the Turkish Armenian youth imply the existence of such a transmission. As the data analysis indicates, the sampled Armenian youth were quick to make a connection or build an association between the genocide and the murder of Hrant Dink. Quotations of the Turkish Armenian interviewees reveal that they took a more negative and even accusing approach towards Turks after the murder because this event reminded them Turks and events in 1915. In this point, remembering the genocide event after the assassination -as if the youth had lived in those years- reveals the trauma transmission of the genocide across the generations and how this transmission is powerful in affecting today's perceptions and providing inter-generational perpetuation of the conflict itself. As Kellerman (1999) emphasizes, new generations whose ancients had faced with traumatic events such as mass killing or genocide are likely carry such a trauma because of their preoccupation with death and another holocaust. Furthermore, because intergenerational transmission of trauma is a significant feature in chosen trauma theory, we can conclude that the genocide is a historical trauma which the Armenian community carries into the present as a chosen trauma (Göral, 2005; Yoder, 2005). In other words, 1915 is a shared traumatic event which is chosen to be kept alive and transmitted within the group since it is seen as an integral part of the Armenian identity. This argument also confirms the characteristics of the outcome of protracted social conflicts which are based on collective trauma and intergenerational transmission of the conflict.

In this point, probing the sensitivity of the assassination by making a reference to literature will be critical. The very basic question can focus on why the Armenian youth made a connection between the assassination and the genocide. Nicolaidis (1996) states that sudden events, such as assassinations, can become 'conflict triggering events' by reminding old wounds and traumas; but in order to make a more detailed comment and discussion on the relation between the assassination and the genocide, we ought to look back to the large group identity and tent model of Vamık Volkan (1993). As it is mentioned before, individuals embrace core beliefs, values, approaches and collective traumas of a group in the frame of large group identity; yet they are not aware of such an identity in their daily lives. The only thing reviving this identity which underlines in-group vs. out-group behaviors and perceptions is an outside threat to the group. In the literature, Volkan (1999) explains this situation with his tent-model. He tells that groups can live together in peace although there are traumatic events in their past; however when the canvas of the tent of a group is threatened by the other, the solidarity within the group increases and finally leads to the awareness of being a member of the large group. Hence, large group identity becomes more vital than personal identity in crisis moments. Nonetheless, crisis moments or outside threats remain too general concepts which are needed to be clarified. Yoder (2005) underscores that situations or events which look similar to the chosen traumas can remind the past trauma and be perceived as a powerful outside threat which can play an escalatory role in reviving large group identity. After the events which carry alike characteristics of the collective trauma, the time collapses and trauma memory which is transmitted from the former generation arises and affects perceptions of the new generation.

When we turn back to the question of why Armenian youth associated the assassination with the genocide, the 'tent model' and large group identity mentioned above offer an explanation. Emotional reactions of the Turkish Armenians to the murder, their remembrance of the genocide and the change on the perceived image of Turks after the death of Hrant Dink reveal that the assassination was considered an outside threat by the Armenian youth. Not only because the murderer is a Turk but also he had extreme-nationalist expressions and enmity towards Armenians, the meaning and frame of the assassination extend from a personal murder to an attack the whole Armenian community.

With these features, the assassination which is defined as a traumatic event for the sampled youth becomes an outside threat reminding the chosen genocide trauma of the Armenians, in which many Armenian people were killed deliberately by Turks. This is the point which explains the reason of the connection built between the genocide and the assassination, and of negatively changing image of Turks. The canvas of the tent is torn and the large group identity which hides the transmitted trauma of 1915 revives for the Turkish Armenian youth. As a result, the rise of large group identity makes the time collapse and trauma memory come back vividly and dominate the perceptions of the current generation. This explanation has a link with the theory of PSCs and confirms the thesis which shows the Armenian issue as an intractable conflict. Coleman (2003) argues that protracted conflicts have a dynamic structure in which any instability, anarchy or sudden change can remind old wounds and traumas (Coleman, 2003). In this point, the assassination provides such an unexpected and immediate instability and chaos and indicates the dynamic structure of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. Apart from these, the data in the analysis chapter underline that the revival of the trauma memory not only worsens the relatively positive image of Turks but also generates a great hopelessness among the Turkish Armenian youth on the behalf of future relations and resolution of the conflict.

Interestingly, the situation expressed above mostly fits into the responses of the older interviewees because they tended to relate this death to the genocide issue more by stating it as a pure sign or reflection of the genocide, discrimination, Armenian antagonism and extreme nationalism in Turks. They believed that the assassination was not an unexpected thing because Turks are inclined to do such things. For the older participants, the relatively positive image of Turks which were previously described as uneducated or unconscious are replaced with more harsh statements such as enemy, barbarian and antagonist. As a consequence, older Turkish Armenians had very sharp and pessimist feelings for the future of the conflict, and negative and skeptic attitudes towards Turks after the assassination. On the other hand, the younger respondents found the event shocking and unbelievable but did not display a very apparent change in their views towards Turks. Importantly, none of the younger interviewees made a relation with the genocide and the assassination. Although they became hopeless for the future of relations and had a negative stance towards Turks,

they were not so skeptical and pessimistic like the older Armenians. As it is seen, younger and older respondents displayed different reactions and attitudes to the questions about the murder. This analysis, which put the age as a mediating factor within the perceptions of Turkish Armenian youth over the assassination is another dimension extending the discussion on trauma transmission and roles of narratives.

As will be recalled, narratives are seen vital to provide an understanding on past conflicts and the people involved; yet they are not the only means of learning about the past but also effective transmitters of the old traumas from one generation to the other. In this point, Yoder (2005) especially draws attention to family-history stories due to their capability to transmit the chosen and collective traumas of a group onto the individuals. When we dig out the data achieved about the narratives of the young Turkish Armenians, which are told by their parents, a very clear difference appear and explain the differentiation among younger and older interviewees' attitudes after the assassination. The data indicate that while younger Armenians had a superficial knowledge in their genocide stories because of the death of elder relatives who had witnessed the events, older participants had much more details on genocide and listened to many stories which were told by the people who had experienced the events in 1915. Therefore, we can conclude that, even though the signs of trauma transmission are seen in all the interviewees somehow, there is a difference in the level of this transmission. Older Armenians who were exposed to detailed stories on genocide in both quantitative and qualitative meanings were affected by the trauma transmission much more than the younger ones who knew it very broadly. As a result, this level of difference in the embedded trauma memory creates difference in the level of their reaction and attitudes towards the assassination. The murder is understood as an outside threat for all of the participants but because younger Armenians had less detail in their trauma memory, the assassination could not remind so many things about the genocide or revive their large group identity sharply. Thus, they did not tend to make a connection between the assassination and 1915; and did not take a very negative and accusing attitude towards Turks after the murder. In contrast, older interviewees who were carrying much more sorrowful details, issues and memories of the genocide issue, were very inclined to remember the genocide and blame Turks when they heard about the

assassination. As McEvoy-Levy (2006) points out, the intensity of trauma transmission impacts the tendency on the people to seek out confirming features of the transferred trauma in the recent events.

The role of narratives in the level of trauma transmission and in the level of reactions and attitudes which are changing between younger and older interviewees create not only a clear diversity in their perceptions on the assassination and attitudes towards Turks, but also lead to a little contrast in their approaches to the conflict. All the respondents suggested that the core issues of the conflict lie behind mutual prejudices, unconsciousness and nationalism. They thought that the assassination of Hrant Dink was a reflection of these issues. However, the answers on the aforementioned core issues of the conflict were more frequent among younger participants while older respondents who had exposed more trauma transmission and carried more negative memories also underlined the unacknowledged genocide as one of the core issues. Additionally, all the interviewees had a feeling of hopelessness after the murder; yet, for younger participants, this feeling derives from a disappointment which the murder caused. This death damaged their beliefs in peace and positive image and attitudes towards Turks. On the other side, the hopeless attitude of older participants is mixed with pessimism and comes from remembering the past again. The positive perceptions on Turks disappear since the murder re-awakens the negative enemy image of Turks which already existed in their transmitted trauma memory. Hence older Armenians' negative or hopeless approach to the conflict and its resolution were deeper and more rooted when it is compared with younger Armenians.

However, in spite of these different views and perceptions, young Turkish Armenian participants were like-minded regarding the resolution matter. Although their views on this issue were not clear in adolescent term, with the assassination they all supported the need for a reform in the education system for the resolution of the conflict because they believe that the education in Turkey is instigating the aforementioned core issues of the conflict, namely prejudices and nationalism, which also cause the assassination. Beside this suggestion, the data reveals that dialogue activities in both academic and non-academic environments, such as through the social activities, are also seen as a need by the

interviewees for the resolution of the conflict. As will be recalled, the literature underlines the importance of communication in protracted and traumatic conflicts. Additionally, the legal improvements regarding the minority rights are another issue stated for the resolution. However, when the data and quotations about the resolution of the conflict are analyzed carefully, it is seen that there is a common point behind all these resolution suggestions of the respondents. Specifically, young Turkish Armenians mention about the need for a reform in the education system, dialogue activities and legal adjustments; yet the main emphasis made for the resolution is 'being realized and respected'. For this reason, although they all underline the need to legally recognize the genocide, this issue does not have a very unique place among the rank of the resolution suggestions given. Their resolution suggestions reveal that the respondents want an acknowledgement of the issue but because they care about how they are currently treated and behaved in Turkey, they also have a need of recognition. The studies of Burton (1987), Azar (1990) and Kriesberg (1998) indicate that underlying interests of protracted social conflicts mostly depends on basic human needs, in which recognition is very vital.

Besides the effects of trauma transmission which cause different attitudes among the respondents, another supporting factor of this diversity can be related to the childhood days of the individuals. As it is stated before, older participants who had lived in more isolated environments in where the Armenian community is gathered expressed much more concern, question-mark and uneasiness in their childhoods while younger respondents were relatively away from such feelings and had a more peaceful childhood due to their early socialization with Turks. These two different frames of childhood can likely affect the trauma memory and reactions expressed after the assassination because childhood experiences can be confirming or reinforcing information of the transmitted ideas, fears and images (Kellerman, 1999). In that sense, older respondents who had lived with full of fears, concerns and doubts which they could not comprehend at their childhood years could feel the intensity of the transmitted trauma and approach the assassination much more emotionally than younger ones who did not experienced so much fears or worries in their childhood days.

**6.1.3. Findings and Discussion on the Funeral**

The third section of this chapter focuses the data collected about the sampled young Turkish Armenians' approaches towards the funeral of Hrant Dink. The discussion on these data will contribute to have a broader picture of the assassination, its effects and how it is perceived by the respondents.

Although there are differences in the perceptions of younger and older interviewees towards the assassination, the assassination generally changes the images and attitudes towards Turks negatively and causes a disappointment and hopelessness for the future of conflict and relations. As it is stated, the murder of Hrant Dink is perceived as an outside threat, revives the large group identity and reminds the genocide especially for older respondents; however the data on the attitudes of the interviewees towards the funeral ceremony indicate that the funeral acts in a different even contradictory way.

The table about the first scenes which respondents remember regarding the funeral reveals that the general approaches and perceptions of the Turkish Armenian youth towards the ceremony were positive. They all underlined how they were surprised by the support of Turks and solidarity atmosphere in the funeral, and thought that this would be a constructive step for the future. What make the respondents so surprised are the lack of dialogue in this issue and the existence of exclusive structures which prompts the parties to see each other as 'the other'. This shows the exclusive relations in PSCs and intractability of the Armenian issue. Beside positive atmosphere of the funeral, it is seen that the blame put on Turks seemed to be directed towards 3$^{rd}$ parties. The solidarity in the funeral made the youth believe that the Turkish murderer of Hrant Dink was just a pawn and there were spoiling parties behind this event, who would benefit the rise of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. Emphasis was still made on the role of prejudices, unconsciousness and nationalism as the core issues of the Armenian issue. Therefore, although all the respondents believe in the need to legally recognize the genocide issue, which is mostly seen as the core issue of today's Turkish-Armenian conflict, they also consider that there

are other important steps that should be taken. While the positive atmosphere of the funeral increases the hopes for the conflict and its resolution, reform in the education system of Turkey is still a highly underlined topic by the sampled Armenian youth when they were talking about their views and perceptions on the funeral ceremony.

However, when we dig out the details of the responses from the perspectives of younger and older Turkish Armenians, the findings again showed differences as a result of interviewees' previous diverse attitudes. As it is mentioned in the data analysis, the negatively damaged attitudes towards Turks are 'repaired' somehow for the younger respondents after the funeral. In other words, the images of Turks took its former shape back, and younger Armenians started to express more hopes for the relations and future of the conflict after seeing the solidarity in the funeral. On the other hand, older participants kept their pessimist and skeptic attitudes towards Turks and implied their doubts about the sincerity of support and solidarity in the funeral of Hrant Dink. As it is seen, the difference in the level of trauma transmission among younger and older respondents shows its effects again by generating diverse perceptions about the funeral. However, it is interesting that some older respondents agreed with the positive and hopeful statements of the younger ones. In that sense, by focusing on the repaired image of Turks in the eyes of the younger interviewees, and the changing ideas of some of the older participants, what makes the funeral special to lead such alterations should be discussed with the help of the literature on dialogue in protracted social conflicts.

As the literature review on dialogue specifies, the atmosphere of protracted social conflicts generally limits the communication between disputing groups (Broome & Hatay, 2006). The historical overview of the Turkish-Armenian conflict section underlines how the Armenian issue shares similar characteristics of intractable conflicts, and also shows how various dialogue studies between Turkey and Armenia failed to achieve their goals. This lack of contact is not only a result of the protractedness of the conflict but at the same time it is a perpetuating element of the intractability of the conflict by preventing empathy building and feeding existing prejudices and enemy images (Kelman, 1999; Bar-Tal, 1998). For this reason, creating dialogue opportunities between the groups in conflict is as

significant to reduce bias, undermine stereotyping and improve the relations because groups develop empathy and become more open to learn new information from each other (Dovidio et al., 2003). The literature also explains the frame for a good dialogue. Instead of well-known official communication studies, unofficial dialogue is seen as more beneficial because it helps people overcome the influence of psychological barriers such as stereotypes and prejudices (Coleman, 2000; Bargal, 2004; Broome, 2006). However it is also emphasized that persuading individuals to participate in unofficial dialogue studies would be difficult due to non-negotiability of the issues and harsh reactions of the parties in conflict. The disbandment of problem solving workshops between Turkey and Armenia symbolizes this situation clearly.

When we analyze the funeral ceremony in the light of the literature and brief information on the Turkish-Armenian dialogue projects above, the basic discussion is built on how the funeral of Hrant Dink generated a communication chance between Turks and Armenians and caused changes in the perceptions. Of course because these two communities live together in the same country, they are in contact somehow but the funeral, by coincidence, leads to a first time solidarity and dialogue opportunity between these groups under the title of the Armenian issue. As McEvoy-Levy (2006) discusses, such community-based rituals between disputing groups can turn out to be a potential healing mechanism which will prompt a conversation between the past and the present, and provide an opportunity for new relations despite the existing conflict memories. A very apparent reflection of this positive dialogue at the funeral is the altering perceptions and approaches of the Armenian interviewees towards Turks and the future of the conflict. Additionally, the offer of the Armenian government after the funeral to start diplomatic relations with Turkey is another point indicating the effectiveness of the dialogue in the funeral.

In order to make a more reasonable evaluation of the funeral and its feature as an effective dialogue within the conflict, the characteristics of a good dialogue ought to be emphasized. In this point, contact theory is significant. It defends that not all the communication types would be beneficial since contact does not lead to the same positive consequences under every circumstance (Allport, 1954). According to the criteria of

contact theory, optimal conditions making dialogue produce positive results in inter-group settings are equal group status, inter-group cooperation, common goals, and support of authorities, law or custom (Dovido et. al, 2003). When we think about the funeral from these criteria, it is seen that it provided some of them clearly. The solidarity atmosphere in the funeral implies the inter-group cooperation, and 'one-voice' of the Turks and Armenians for condemning the assassination signifies the common goal both groups had.

As Pettigrew (1998) suggests, when all or some of these criteria are met, the contact is likely to create positive changes. As it is stated before, these changes are related to cognitive changes, namely reshaping the existing images and prejudices of the groups. Dialogue brings learning about the other and then provides a shift in the behavior and re-categorization of the other group because learning challenges the rooted ideas and causes questioning of the prior knowledge. By meeting some of the criteria of a good dialogue, the funeral made similar effects on the Turkish Armenian youth. The younger and some of the older participants' replies showed that they changed their negative approach towards Turks while talking about the ceremony. The solidarity, empathic behavior, and support of Turks in the funeral were surprising for the youth because having such a dialogue with Turks leaded to a new knowledge which challenged existing and remembered negative enemy image of Turks in their minds. In spite of the association built between the assassination and the genocide, Turkish Armenian youth re-categorized Turks more positively after the contact they got in the funeral. This change can be seen likely in younger interviewees who did not tend to make a connection between the murder and Turks in 1915, and had closer relations with Turks in their childhoods. Nonetheless the shift in the perceptions of some older respondents revealed more clearly that how the funeral became a positive and effective platform for dialogue between Turks and Armenians and helped to heal the pain and trauma appeared after the assassination.

In addition to the positive dialogue atmosphere presented by the funeral, the traumatic side of the assassination can also be seen as an ironic factor supporting such a solidarity and conversation between Turks and Armenians somehow. As Coleman (2000) points out, driving forces such as a recent catastrophe or horrific event can create the feeling of

ripeness and perception of hurting stalemate in the conflict in an unplanned way. Hence such events play a vital dynamic which prompts the groups to realize the damages of intractableness of the conflict, and to communicate and see their similarities (Göral, 2005). In that sense, the assassination, which is described as a traumatic event can be a factor which might lead such ripeness within the groups of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. In that sense, the assassination which revived the large-group identity and reminded the chosen trauma could be the reason of the unexpected solidarity and constructive dialogue atmosphere in the funeral.

### 6.1.4. General Findings and Discussion on the Effects of the Assassination of Hrant Dink on young Turkish Armenians' Attitudes towards Turks, and Approaches to the Conflict and its Resolution

The findings, which are discussed by analyzing three periods, before the assassination, the assassination and after the assassination (funeral) help to build a general summary and discussion on the effects of the assassination on the sampled Turkish Armenian youth on three issues: Attitudes towards Turks, approaches towards the conflict and its resolution.

*In terms of the attitudes towards Turks*, the assassination shook the previous perceptions of the young interviewees. When we look at the term before the murder of Hrant Dink, it is seen young Armenians did not have a very negative image for Turks. Although they criticized Turks for their nationalist attitudes and defined them as uneducated, unconscious and nationalist, there was no clear enemy image of Turks in the minds of the Turkish Armenian youth. Their attitudes showed that they did not put the blame on the Turkish society for the 1915 events. The approach of the youth was 'the past is past'; hence they did not express that they perceived Turks as their enemy. However, with the assassination, the attitude towards Turks changed very negatively for all the young Armenian participants. In spite of this general alteration, age becomes a mediating factor between younger and older respondents' approaches towards Turks, and creates differences due to the diverse effects of the trauma transmission, chosen trauma and large-group

identity. The assassination reminds the genocide and Turks in 1915 sharply for older respondents who had known more details about the genocide by listening to various stories by the people who witnessed those years. They described Turks very negatively; hence Turks took some sort of enemy image for this group of interviewees. On the other hand, younger participants, who had listened less story and exposed less trauma transmission due to the death of the people who lived in 1915, couldn't make a connection between the genocide and the murder. They just felt a disappointment for the positive image of Turks in their minds; but they did not tend to define Turks so negatively like their elders.

While all the young Turkish Armenians who attended the interviews expressed a negative image and attitude change on the behalf of Turks, the perceptions towards the funeral showed a different dimension of change. As the assassination becomes a traumatic event and revives large-group identity and in-group versus out-group attitudes in the sampled Armenians, but especially for older ones, the funeral ceremony acts differently and creates a healing mechanism within the escalating conflict. It generates a dialogue opportunity between Turks and Armenians, which they could see their similarities in condemning the murder. In general terms, the negative image of Turks is repaired due to the solidarity and support of Turks in the funeral and the blame and hatred are put on the third parties. However, as a result of the previous diverse approaches of younger and older participants towards the image of Turks, the shift the funeral prompted has dissimilar meanings for these two groups. Younger interviewees who had a less damaged view on Turks stated very positive attitudes after the funeral. Moreover, there are even some older respondents whose perceptions on Turks are altered from negative to relatively positive when they saw the solidarity and empathy in the ceremony. But still, because the older participants made a relation with the assassination and the genocide, their sharp attitudes towards Turks did not change. The majority of older interviewees, although they are confused a little after the funeral, still continued to keep their pessimism, doubts and negative attitudes for Turks.

To sum up, although there is diversity between younger and older respondents' attitudes towards the image of Turks, the assassination generally affects the image of Turks in a negative way. However, the funeral leads to a conversation among Turks and Armenians; thus it contributes positively to this negative and enemy image of Turks, and heals the remembered fears, concerns and escalating conflict.

*In terms of the approaches towards the conflict itself*, the assassination plays an important role for the Turkish Armenian youth. The respondents generally saw the murder as a result of the existing prejudices, unconsciousness and nationalism, thus this event leaded them to perceive these issues as the core issues of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. As the data and discussions reveal, the acknowledged genocide which is seen as the core of today's Armenian dispute is still vital but there are also other issues, such as prejudices and nationalism, which have a privileged place in the agenda of the young Turkish Armenians.

When we analyze how the Armenian youth take an attitude towards *the future and resolution of the conflict*, it is seen that the assassination and the funeral generate diverse impacts on their perceptions. At first, the death of Hrant Dink creates a great hopelessness regarding the conflict and its resolution for all the Turkish Armenian interviewees. Nevertheless, younger respondents' hopelessness was deriving from a relatively less intense feeling of disappointment when it is compared with the sharper attitudes of older respondents. Younger Armenians were shocked and surprised because of the murder and their existing positive beliefs and hopes for the peace in the conflict are damaged. On the other hand, older respondents who defined the assassination as an expectable event were very pessimists for the peace or any resolution in the dispute. Their belief in the intractability of the conflict increased through the death of Hrant Dink. In this point, the funeral makes a difference again. The funeral which was acting as a healing mechanism in this event, helped to decrease those hopeless feelings in general. The disappointment of younger respondents disappeared quickly after they saw the solidarity atmosphere in the ceremony. Again, they started to have hopeful and optimist feelings for the resolution of the conflict. Similar changes are also seen in some of the older respondents. Although older

respondents generally kept their pessimist and hopeless attitudes for the resolution and future relations, some of them became confused after the funeral and began to take a more moderate approach for the settlement in the conflict. In conclusion, the general hopeless atmosphere caused by the death of Hrant Dink evanesced after the solidarity and positive dialogue Turks and Armenian got in the funeral ceremony. Regarding the resolution suggestions, the most frequent answers emphasized the common view on the reform in the education system of Turkey. According to the young Turkish Armenian participants' thoughts, such a reform is needed because the existing education system generates and increases the aforementioned core issues of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. In other words, they believed that the content of the education in Turkey instigates prejudices, unconsciousness and nationalism; thus contributes to the feeding and protractedness of the conflict somehow.

## 6.2. Summary and Conclusion

As will be recalled, the research question of this study examines the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on young Turkish Armenians', attitudes towards Turks, and approaches towards the conflict and its resolution, and asks whether this murder has caused a new trauma or solidarity for these young people. The overall discussion in this chapter presents a theoretical understanding of the data achieved and helps to frame the answer of this research question of the study.

According to the discussions, the basic result is that while the assassination increases the existing concern about prejudices and nationalism issues, and the need a resolution with the reform in education system, more dialogue and legal improvements, the murder also causes negative changes on young Turkish Armenians' perceptions regarding Turks and the conflict. Nonetheless, when the assassination is analyzed with the funeral ceremony, it is seen that the assassination and the funeral act and affect the youth differently. On the one hand, due to the influences of the chosen trauma and large group identity, the assassination is perceived as an outside threat and becomes an exclusive event which excludes Turks as

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'the other' and reminds the genocide and the Turks in 1915. On the other hand, the funeral is an inclusive event which brings Turks and Armenians together, and emphasizes the concept of 'we' because the dialogue opportunity in the funeral generates an effective contact between these communities. The contact in the ceremony heals the increasing tension caused by the assassination, and challenges to the existing information about Turks in the transmitted trauma memory of the young Turkish Armenians. Hence the funeral leads a positive improvement and change in the damaged image of Turks. This result points out the power of dialogue in difficult and intractable conflicts.

However, the different level of transmission of the chosen trauma (the genocide) creates a nuance in the approaches of the younger and older respondents. Thus, although there is not a generational difference among the respondents, the age becomes a mediating factor for the effects of the assassination (including the funeral) which change among these groups. According to the findings, older Turkish Armenian respondents who knew much more sorrowful details about the genocide by listening to many stories by their grandfathers and grandmothers tended to make a connection between the assassination and the genocide. Their remembrance of the genocide issue after the assassination -as if these young people had lived in those years- reveals the existence of transmission of the genocide trauma across Armenian generations, and how it shapes current perceptions. With the effect of this trauma, older respondents are more pessimist and skeptical about Turks, the conflict and even the solidarity in the funeral. These interviewees carry more negative attitudes for Turks and are less hopeful for the future and settlement of the Armenian issue. In the contrary, younger respondents knew less detail about the genocide issue because they had less contact with the victims of 1915 events. The death of older people who had witnessed 1915, causes scantiness in the details of the genocide narratives, and generates less intense memory of the trauma for the younger respondents. These result in the decrease in the effects of the transmission of the genocide trauma on the younger Turkish Armenian people. In that sense, these respondents are always the ones who are more hopeful and take a more moderate approach for the conflict, and have a less negative attitude for Turks and more positive beliefs for the future and resolution of the conflict. All these data underlines

the role of narratives and families in the trauma transmission, the impact of the trauma transmission on generations and the inter-generational perpetuation of the conflict.

After providing an overview on the data and discussions, the answer of the research question of this study becomes clear. From the general perspective of the Turkish Armenian youth, the effects of the assassination (including the funeral) in terms of causing a new trauma or solidarity have dual dimension and irony. In general terms, the murder of Hrant Dink does not create a new trauma for young Turkish Armenians but it reminds old wounds and traumas and causes doubts on Turks and future of the conflict.

## 6.3. Implications of the Research

### 6.3.1. Theoretical

Much of the literature on the Turkish-Armenian issue focuses on either historical overview of the conflict by providing confirmative or counter arguments regarding the genocide event, or psychological effects of 1915 onto the development of identity of Turks and Armenians by referring to the trauma and victimization concepts. The studies are generally limited with the past and genocide issue; hence it is difficult to find a literature which would bring a different perspective by analyzing contemporary relations between Turks and Armenians and flow of the conflict. To the best of my knowledge, only the recent scientific research of TESEV[2] on mutual perceptions between Turks and Armenians presents a current understanding and a distinct point of view into the literature; however dynamics within the conflict which would shape future relations have not been studied in a single study before. In this respect, this study makes an important theoretical contribution to the existing literature by examining the effects of current dynamic, the assassination of Hrant Dink, in the context of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. Besides, because there is no

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[2] TESEV (2005) "Armenian and Turkish Citizens' Mutual Perceptions and Dialogue Project" http://www.tesev.org.tr/etkinlik/Turk_ermeni_rapor.pdf

study done to analyze the murder, the present paper is valuable in terms of drawing the attention to the event for further research. Additionally, because the sample unit of this research is consisting of young Turkish Armenian people, the study not only enriches the growing literature regarding youth and conflict but also contributes to the literature on the Turkish-Armenian conflict by making a research on an overlooked population which have not been studied before. Although this study has such theoretical contributions, it is vital to underline that the findings and results are valid for the frame of the sample unit and cannot be generalized on the behalf of the whole Turkish Armenian youth in Turkey.

Secondly, while defining the Armenian issue and explaining the reasons of the effects of the assassination on the sampled Armenian youth, the study utilizes various theories, such as contact theory, trauma and trauma transmission, chosen trauma theory, large-group identity and protracted social conflicts, from the areas of trauma, conflict resolution, ethnic conflict and social psychology. By referring to these theories, the study both extends the theoretical understanding of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, and contributes to theory-building by testing and enriching the frame of the aforementioned theories. Specifically, defining the Armenian issue by using Coleman's framework about protracted social conflicts, this study not only provides an opportunity to implement the framework on a real conflict case but also contributes to the theory through expanding the trauma concept in the existing framework.

### 6.3.2. Practical

Investigating the effects of the assassination on the sampled Armenian youth living in Istanbul, and uncovering how their attitudes towards Turks, the conflict and its resolution are shaped by this murder is significant because providing an answer to my research question was not merely of academic concern. Rather, comprehending the influences of the assassination will not only indicate the current perspectives of the youth in conflict, but also it will make practical implications by revealing the steps that should be taken in Turkey for the resolution of the conflict. The general findings on the Turkish Armenian youth's

approach to the resolution and settlement suggestions indicate that the reform in the education system, dialogue-building studies through social activities and improvements in the minority rights in a legal basis are among the mostly underlined resolution offers. At the core, these suggestions reveal that the priority for the resolution is not about the acknowledgment of the genocide issue; but concerns with 'being recognized and respected'. Despite the fact that the findings cannot be generalized, these suggestions are still valuable and timely guidance for the frame of the strategies in which the policy-makers in government or NGOs shall take to de-escalate the conflict and develop better relations and dialogue between Turks and Armenians.

## 6.4. Future Research

The aim of this research has been to further the current understanding on the Turkish-Armenian conflict by analyzing the effects of the assassination of Hrant Dink on the Turkish Armenian youth' approaches towards Turks, the conflict and its resolution. In line with the aim of this research, interviewees are conducted to collect the data; nonetheless these interviews are done with the sampled Armenian youth. Therefore, subsequent researches can include diverse sample units in order to get a more comprehensive picture of the impacts of the murder. Because older Armenians living in Turkey are also a part of this conflict and exposed to the effects of the assassination, the next research strategies can involve interviewing with this sample and make a comparative study regarding the effects of the death of Hrant Dink on younger and older Armenian generations in Turkey. Generational differences or similarities shall present the static and changing perspectives and dynamics in the Armenian community in Turkey. Besides, another further research can be done on how the Armenians living in Armenia interpret the assassination. This research might also lead comparative studies on the murder of Hrant Dink. By analyzing the influence of the assassination, the comparison can be done between the attitudes of Armenian Armenians and Turkish Armenians. These suggested future studies will allow the researcher to compare how the same case is narrated by two different points of view. Additionally, the mediating role of age in the results can be a topic for the next studies.

Because the age ratios of the respondents are very close to each other, it is not possible to mention about a generational difference among the interviewees. Therefore, why the age becomes a mediating factor within the results and create diversity between younger and older respondents should be researched deeply in order to find other likely factors which can affect the results.

# APPENDIX A

## In-depth Interview Guide and Questions

### I. Personal Background

**1.** Name & Surname

**2.** Age

**3.** Education

    **3.a.** If you still continue to your education, what are your future plans?

    **3.b.** If you graduated and are working now, what is your occupational information?

### II. Family and Childhood

**4.** Where are you from? Where is your family from?

**5.** Where did you born and spend your childhood days?

    **5.a.** If you are not from İstanbul, when and why did you move to this city?

**6.** Tell me about your family? How can you describe the relations and family ties in your family? (Strong or weak)

**7.** Are there any special days that the family members come together? Can you attend such days and ceremonies?

    **7.a.** If yes, what do you do in these days? Tell me about the atmosphere.

**8.** Is there any story that you know about your family and your ancients?

    **8.a.** If yes, who did tell the story?

    **8.b.** What was about it? What details do you know?

**8.b.1.** If the respondent touched upon genocide issue, ask more detail about his/her knowledge and story about the genocide.

**8.b.2.** If the respondent didn't mention about the genocide, try to

**9.** How can you describe your childhood? (Funny, peaceful, colorful, silent…)

**10.** What about the relations in your childhood? Who were your friends?

**10.a.** If there were Turkish friends, then ask about specific relations and memories with Turks, and how he/she perceived Turks at those years.

**11.** What kind of schools did you go? How were your school days?

**11.a.** If you went to Turkish schools, tell me about those years..

**11.a.1**. Was there any difficulty that you faced because of being an Armenian?

**12.** Was there any identity-difference -as Turks and Armenians- that you feel at those years? Was there any such experience you can share?

**12.a.** If yes, what kind of a differentiation feeling you had?

## III. The Assassination of Hrant Dink

**13.** What did you know about Hrant Dink? For example, did you read his articles or agree with his ideas?

**14.** Where were you when you heard the assassination? How did you learn?

**15.** Do you remember your first reaction, feeling or action when you heard the assassination?

**16.** Did you attend the funeral?

**16.a.** Why or why not?

**17.** Is or are there any scenes that you remember from the funeral? Why that scene?

**18.** What did you think about the general atmosphere of the funeral? (Was it an expected or surprised picture for you and why?)

**19.** In general terms, what can you say about the feeling of being an Armenian living in Turkey?

**19.a** What about your concerns or disturbances, can you share with us?


**20.** What do you think about the Turkish-Armenian relations and the conflict?

**21.** What are your suggestions for the improvement of the relations and resolution of the conflict? Why do you think that these suggestions are valuable or necessary for the settlement?

# APPENDIX B

## Detailed Information about the Young Turkish Armenian Interviewees

This research conducts interviews with twenty young Turkish Armenian people. All these respondents live in Istanbul and are selected by the researcher through using her network. Apart from these common features, the interviewees have dissimilar characteristics in terms of their age, gender, education, occupation, marital status and family ties. Except the age factor and related themes such as childhood days and narratives of the genocide, none of these features make a difference in the responses of the participants but still detailed information about these characteristics are valuable to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sample unit of this study.

**Age:**

As it is mentioned in the methodology chapter, the concept of youth has not a definite description but changes from culture to culture. In order to have a broad picture of the Turkish Armenian youth in Istanbul, the age range of the sample is determined between twenty and thirty. The data analysis and discussions reveal that the age range acts as a mediating factor by causing diversity in the approaches of the respondents. For this reason, the study remarks a distinction between the younger Turkish Armenians and older Turkish Armenians However this distinction is done to bring a clarity on the data; thus it does not mean a generational difference indeed because the age intervals of those younger and older Armenians are very close to each other. The age range of the younger participants generally changes between twenty and twenty-five; while the older ones are at the ages of twenty-six through thirty.

**Gender:**

There is a balance in the ratio of the gender of the respondents. The sample consists of nine male and eleven female Turkish Armenian participants.

**Family Ties:**

While the respondents tell their families and family relations, the half of the Turkish Armenian people state that they have a big family while the other half of the interviewees mention about a small family. Regardless the sizes of the families, the respondents generally underline strong ties in their family relations. As a note, no specific relation can be found between the variables of family ties and the respondent's perceptions and approach to the conflict/resolution.

**Marital Status:**

Only two out of the twenty respondents are married, and only one of them has a child. The rest of the interviewees are single.

**Education:**

Eighteen out of the twenty participants have a university education, while two people have a high-school education. Six out of the eighteen Turkish Armenians are still in the university, and they all have different fields such as tourism, MBA, advertising, design, law, literature..

**Occupation:**

Fourteen out of the twenty interviewees completed their education and started to work. Occupational interests of the Turkish Armenian respondents show diversity because each of them is in different sectors such as management, consultancy, human resources, communication, research & development.

# APPENDIX C

## Rakel Dink's Speech at the Funeral of Hrant Dink

"Letter to My Beloved" by Rakel Dink 23 January 2007

"I was chosen to be the spouse of my 'chutak.' I am here today full of immense grief and dignity. My children, my family, you and I are very mournful. This silent love bestows upon us some fortitude. It enables us to experience within us a sorrowful contentment. In the Bible Johannah 15:13, it is stated that there is no greater love than people giving up their life for the sake of their friends.

My dear friends, today we send off half of my soul, my beloved, the father of my children and your brother. We are going to actualize a march without any slogans and without showing any disrespect to those around us surrounding us. Today we are going to generate immense sound through our silence.

Today is the beginning of the day when the [darkness of the] gorges rise into brightness. Whoever the assassin may be, whatever his age may be, either 17 or 27 [years' old], I know that he was once upon a time a baby. My brothers and sisters, one cannot accomplish anything without first questioning the darkness that creates an assassin from such a baby...

My brothers and sisters,

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It was [Hrant's] love for honesty, for transparency, for his friends that brought him here. His love that challenged fear made him great. They say "He was a great man." I ask you, "Was he born great ?" No ! He too was born just like us. He did not come from the heavens ; he too was [created] from earth. A body that rots just like ours ! But what made him great was his living spirit ; his deeds, his style, and the love in his eyes and his heart. It was what he did, the style he chose, the love in his heart that made him great.

A person does not become great naturally ; it is through his deeds that he becomes great... Yes, he became great because he thought great things and pronounced great words. You too all thought great things by coming here. You talked great through your silence ; you too are great. But do not let this suffice ; do not be content with this much alone.

He marked the birth of a new era in Turkey today and you have all been his seal. With him changed the headlines, dialogues, and bans. For him, there were no taboos or forbidden topics. As it is stated in the Scriptures, it all sprung from his heart. He paid a great price. Futures for which great prices are paid can only be accomplished through loving Hrants, believing in Hrants ; not with hatred, insults, by holding one blood superior to another. This rise is only possible if one sees and respects the other as oneself, if one assumes to be the other.

They separated him from the heaven of his home he had created with the help of Jesus. They made him spread his wings to the eternal celestial heavens. They made him spread his wings to the celestial heavens before his eyes tired out, before his body had the chance to age, before he could become sick, before he could spend enough times with his loved ones.

We too shall come, my beloved. We too shall come to that matchless heaven. Love and love alone enters there. Love and love alone that is superior to the speech of humans and angels, to prophecy, to mastery of all the mysteries, to faith that moves mountains, to almsgiving all one possesses, to even giving up one's body up to flames [only that love] will enter that heaven. There we shall live together forever in true love. A love that is not

jealous of anyone, a love that does not covet the property of anyone else, a love that does not murder anyone, a love that does not belittle anyone, a love that holds one's brother and sister more dear than oneself, a love that abandons one's own allocation, a love that demands the rights of one's brother and sister. A love that is found in the Messiah. And a love that has been poured onto us.

Who could forget what you have done, what you have said, my beloved ? Which darkness could erase them ? Who could have what has happened, what is happening forgotten ? Could fear have them forgotten ? Could life ? Could injustice ? Could the temptations of the world ? Or could death have them forgotten, my beloved ? No, no darkness is capable of having them forgotten my beloved.

I too wrote you a love letter, my beloved. Its cost was dear to me too, my beloved. I owe it to Jesus that I was capable of penning this [letter], my beloved. Let us give his due to Him, my beloved. Let us give back everyone their due, my beloved.

You departed from those you loved ; you departed from your children, your grandchildren. You departed from those hear who came to send you off, you departed from my embrace. You did not depart from your country."

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