# THE ARMENIAN GRANDDAUGHTERS OF 1915

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# THE ARMENIAN GRANDDAUGHTERS OF 1915

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Berrak Karahoda, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
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ABSTRACT

The Armenian Granddaughters of 1915

The aim of this study was to qualitatively explore the experiences of Armenian granddaughters who are the descendants of those who experienced 1915 and to explore the possible intergenerational consequences of a massive social trauma via a psychoanalytically informed perspective. Ten participants were found through convenience sampling. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in an open-ended question format. The analyses revealed some intergenerational consequences involving transmission of trauma, a disrupted intergenerational and familial communications as well as operation of silences within various contexts, a range of emotional responses that coincide with sequelae of trauma, an interrupted sense of cohesion and continuity of culture, identity, and history as well as a discussion on how mechanisms of transmission may operate non-verbally. The accounts of participants also indicated some consequences of being embedded in a "traumatogenic" social context. Although the sample size only gives a cross-sectional view of the experiences of Armenian granddaughters living in Turkey, mostly Istanbul, the intergenerational traces of trauma were observed through the existence of a variety of intense emotions, responses and mechanisms of transmission as well as a struggle between a sense of disrupted personal agency and attempts at resurrecting agency and healing.

# ÖZET

## 1915'in Ermeni Kadın Torunları

Bu çalışmanın amacı 1915'i deneyimlemiş Ermenilerin kadın torunlarının deneyimlerini ve sosyal bir travmanın olası kuşaklararası etkilerini niteliksel ve psikanalitik temelli bir perspektiften incelemektir. Uygun örnekleme yoluyla on katılımcı bulunmuş ve açık uçlu sorular kullanılarak yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Analizler, kuşaktan kuşağa aktarılmış travmanın varlığı, kuşaklararası ve ailesel iletişimin bozulması ve farklı bağlamlarda sessizliklerin işleyişi, travma sekelleriyle uyum gösteren duygu dünyaları ve bütünlüğü ve sürekliliği sekteye uğramış kültür, kimlik ve tarih algısı gibi bazı kuşaklararası etkilerin varlığını ortaya koymuş ve aktarımın sözel olmayan mekanizmalarla nasıl aktarılabileceğine dair bir tartışma sunmuştur. Katılımcıların anlatıları aynı zamanda "travmatojenik" bir sosyal bağlam içinde yer almanın bazı sonuçlarını aktarmıştır. Örneklemin boyutu Türkiye'de ve çoğunlukla İstanbul'da yaşayan Ermeni kadın torunların deneyimlerine dair sadece kesitsel bir bakış sunuyor olsa da çeşitli yoğun duyguların ve tepkilerin ve aktarım mekanizmalarının varlığı itibarıyla travmanın kuşaklararası izleri gözlemlenmiş ve aynı zamanda etkinlik gösterebilen bir "faillik" algısının sekteye uğraması ile bunu geri kazanma ve iyileşme çabaları arasında deneyimlenen uğraşlar tartışılmıştır.

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*To my great grandmother Siranuş Vartabedyan whose story had to been known as Nazire's;*
*To all those women whose stories had to be whispered or silenced;*
*And to my sweet daughter Sağanak…*

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation aims to explore the accounts of Armenian women who are third generation granddaughters of The Ottoman Armenian population who experienced the events surrounding 1915.

This first section covers a literature review of the concept of and studies and perspectives on intergenerational transmission of trauma, a brief summary of the literature on the events of 1915, on women survivors of 1915, a literature review of studies on multiple generations of diaspora Armenians as well as Turkish studies on the third generation Armenians and finally an overview of this study.

## 1.1 Intergenerational transmission of trauma

Intergenerational transmission refers to the direct and/or indirect transmission of the effects of an experience (in the case of trauma, a traumatic experience) between multiple generations. Besides the use of the word "intergenerational," this topic is also referred to by the use of the terms "transgenerational" and "multigenerational." The use of "transgenerational" seems to have been replaced by the use of "intergenerational," especially within psychoanalytic literature. De Mijolla (2009) explains this preference by defining the word "intergenerational" as a term that involves mutual processes that work both ways between generations (see also Lebovici as cited in Lassman, 2013), in contrast to "transgenerational" that seems to connote a direct transmission of a past subject's unconscious to the unconscious of the subject belonging to a later generation with a "transcendent" quality. Reflecting

on and agreeing with de Mijolla's (2009) argument the use of "intergenerational" is preferred for this topic in this study.

The concept of the intergenerational transmission of trauma has a history of about fifty years which dates back to the first clinical observations of the Nazi Holocaust survivors' children. The first paper regarding clinical observations on the subject appeared in 1966 (Rakoff, Sigal, & Epstein). The preliminary empirical research and first discussions, presentations, workshops, symposia were conducted in psychoanalytic congresses in the 1970s (for a detailed review see Bergman & Jucovy, 1982; Grubrich-Simitis, 1981). Various study groups such as the Group for the Psychoanalytic Study of the Effect of the Holocaust on the Second Generation (1974), which aimed to explore the effects of the Holocaust on a clinical sample of second-generation patients through case presentations by psychoanalysts and psychotherapists and implications for psychotherapy, were founded (Bergman & Jucovy, 1982; Danieli, 1998).

Despite growing interest, empirical research on this subject with a history of about forty years can still be considered to be in its infancy. There is a vast research literature on the second-generation effects of the Holocaust. However, there is growing interest in intergenerational effects of various other trauma populations such as war veterans (for a review see Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008), genocide survivors (see Danieli, 1998) and torture survivors and refugees (see for example Daud, Klinteberg, & Rydelius, 2008; Daud, Skoglund, & Rydelius, 2005) as well as intergenerational effects on third generation offspring (for example Lev-Wiesel, 2007). The methodologies used in these studies have ranged from case studies and qualitative analyses of in-depth interviews (which are less in number) to quantitative measures using various questionnaires and diagnostic tools.

Overall, there has been a wide spectrum of heterogeneous results that sometimes seem inconsistent. There seem to be differences between findings from clinical observations or case studies and findings from empirical research on clinical and nonclinical samples (Danieli, 1998; Felsen, 1998; Yehuda, 1998). In clinical samples the research on whether children whose parents with post-traumatic symptomatology are at a higher risk for developing post-traumatic and/or other psychopathological symptomatology have provided varying results with diverse clinical pictures of the children (Lehrner et al., 2012; Yehuda, Bell, Bierer, & Schmeidler, 2008) and in nonclinical samples of offspring the findings do not point to a consistent overall maladjustment or psychopathological profile (see for reviews on samples of Holocaust offspring, Felsen, 1998; Solomon, 1998; van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Sagi-Schwartz, 2003). However, these "inconsistencies" may be a reflection of the uniqueness of each family's and offspring's subjectivity and because most of these studies use structured instruments, they may be missing certain commonalities and/or distinctions. Assessing the children of trauma survivors on a continuum with regards to functioning levels on various dimensions rather than only assessing the existence of certain psychopathologies and symptomatologies, seem to give a more comprehensive picture about the transmission's effect on children and seem to indeed show patterns of effects (for discussions see Danieli, 1998; Wiseman, 2008; Wiseman & Barber, 2004 and for reviews see Felsen, 1998; Solomon, 1998). For example, Albeck (1994) suggests looking for "intergenerational consequences of trauma" and similarly Wiseman & Barber (2004) argue that research questions need to address the relational world of offspring generations. Hence, many authors call for more in-depth and narrative-based work for a more comprehensive picture (Braga, Mello, & Fiks, 2012; Danieli, 1998; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Wiseman, 2008). Danieli (1998) argues that the obtained knowledge

so far reflects the existence of the transmission of trauma across generations and as a universal phenomenon across various populations and cultures; and calls for a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach so that integration can be established from various perspectives.

Based on findings from clinical and nonclinical material the factors that seem to play a role in transmission influence the level of traumatization of the survivor such as conditions before trauma, during and post-trauma, gender of the survivor (for example Herzog, 1982; Lehrner et al., 2012; Yehuda, Bell, Bierer, & Schmeidler, 2008), whether offspring were born during or after trauma, patterns of interpersonal, social communication (Danieli, 1998), group, family and social support, socio-historical, socio-cultural and socio-political factors (Danieli, 1998). Although there are still remaining questions on how transmission occurs and what factors play a role in the transmission, there has been accumulation of findings for these questions in the literature from various contexts and there still needs to be further research from various other contexts and populations.

The psychobiological aspect of transmission has been explored in various human samples; nonhuman primate samples in both natural and lab environments (Suomi & Levine, 1998) and in other animal samples such as rats and mice. Studies on human samples have shown that the stress related neuroendocrinological functioning of the offspring is similar to the traumatized parents' functioning, even in the absence of offspring psychopathology (Yehuda et al., 1998; Yehuda, Blair, Labinsky, & Bierer, 2007; Yehuda, Engel, Brand, Seckl, & Berkowitz, 2005; Yehuda, Halligan, & Grossman, 2001; Yehuda, Teicher, Seckl, Grossman, Morris, & Bierer, 2007) and suggest that the alterations in the offspring of traumatized parents are due to in utero exposures during pregnancy and parent-infant relationship quality

during postnatal and early developmental periods (Yehuda & LeDoux, 2007; Yehuda, Teicher, Seckl, Grossman, Morris, & Bierer, 2007). Studies on monkeys and rats have indicated that similar maternal caregiving behaviors can be observed in at least three generations of offspring (see Champagne, 2010 for a review).

Studies on epigenetics also seem to shed light on how environmental influences can have an influence on genetic expression and thus various psychobiological consequences that reflect intergenerational transmission (see Champagne, 2008; Champagne, 2010; Champagne & Meaney, 2007; Harper, 2005; Kellermann, 2013).

An extension of work that has relevance to the studies on the mechanisms of transmission consists of studies with developmental and attachment-based approaches. Studies that investigate adult attachment styles of caregivers and the attachment styles of their children suggest a correlation between attachment styles of caregivers and their children (see Fraiberg, Adelson, & Shapiro, 1975) and the empirical study by Fonagy, Steele, Moran, Steele, & Higgitt (1993). These results may be extended to propose that if attachment styles of the survivors are somehow affected by trauma (especially interpersonal trauma) (e.g., Schwerdtfeger & Nelson Goff, 2007), it is possible that the children's attachment styles may be adversely affected.

Studies on micro-analyses of parent-infant interactions that involve nonverbal communication patterns such as tone and rhythm of voices, quality and frequency of touching and holding, facial expressions also provide very important information on how dysregulated affect and behavior due to traumatic experiences of the parent can impact the infant's affect and behavior and the dyadic interaction (Beebe et al., 2010), hence provides an important source for transmission of trauma.

From a family dynamics perspective, the communication patterns within the family seem to be significant in understanding the mechanisms of transmission. It is suggested that disrupted communication of the traumatic experience within the family leads to adverse consequences in the offspring generations (see Braga, Mello, Fiks, 2012; Danieli, 1998). Danieli (1998) suggests what she describes as "conspiracy of silence," that acts on intrapsychic, interpersonal, and social dimensions, to be due to the nature of trauma that cuts the link to verbal expression, symbolization and representation. She argues that it also represents a kind of defense mechanism in a particular social context which indicates another kind of trauma following the initial trauma. Hence, it seems important to look at different communication patterns within family dynamics when investigating the effects and mechanisms of transmission of trauma. Questions regarding whether there is silence about the traumatic experience; what aspects of a particular traumatic experience are over disclosed or under disclosed (for example the factual aspect of experiences may be over disclosed but affective component under disclosed verbally); who in the family discloses, seem to be significant for further research.

From psychoanalytic perspectives three major lines of literature seem prominent. A vast literature comes from case studies and theoretical considerations regarding second generation offspring of Holocaust survivors (Auerhahn & Laub, 1998; Bergman & Jucovy, 1982; Danieli, 1998; Grubrich-Simitis, 1981; Kestenberg, 1982a, 1982b). A second line of literature can be considered to belong to the contribution of French psychoanalysts (see Lassman, 2013). More contemporary conceptualizations can be found within the relational psychoanalytic literature (e.g., Bollas, 1987; Bromberg, 1998; Mitchell, 1991). Often the mechanisms through which survivor's trauma is transmitted to the offspring involves psychoanalytic

concepts such as identification, projection, projective identification, internalization, denial, splitting, reenactment, dissociation. Within the literature, the intergenerational transmission of trauma has been attempted to be explained through various concepts and metaphors by various authors such as “transposition” (Kestenberg, 1982), “phantom” (Abraham & Torok, 1994), “osmosis” (Danieli, 1998), “radioactivity” (Gompel, 2009), “echoes” (Wiseman, 2008).

Kestenberg (1982b) taking off from her work with Holocaust survivors’ offspring proposes “transposition” as a mechanism different from and “beyond identification” (p. 155). The survivor’s child transposes himself/herself into the survivor parent’s past and takes on the role of more than one person in that past including the parent, deceased relatives, victims, and persecutors (Kestenberg, 1982b). Through this mechanism Kestenberg (1982b) suggests that the survivor’s child lives in a world of “double reality, one current and the other transposed “into the era” (p.155) of the past.

French psychoanalysts, Abraham & Torok (1994; see also Lassman, 2013; Rashkin, 1999) introduced the concepts of “the crypt” and “the phantom” as a significant expansion of Freud’s theory (Rashkin, 1999). The crypt refers to a part of self that is repressed or concealed or kept as a secret because it is too overwhelming, too shameful. It is a split off, dissociated part of the self that cannot be represented, symbolized. Although it is kept as a secret it is transmitted in silence with encrypted language, affect, behavior, nonverbal expressions. This is somehow received by the child into the unconscious and resides like a “phantom.” This “phantom” can be expressed in various behaviors of the child, even in certain symptoms such as obsessions, compulsions, phobias (Rashkin, 1999). Hence, Abraham & Torok (1994) argue that these symptoms are not due to repression of the child from a Freudian

perspective but rather due to the repression or secret that the child has unknowingly received.

Rashkin (1999) compares the concepts of "transposition" (Kestenberg, 1982b) and "phantomatic transmission" (Abraham & Torok, 1994). She suggests that in cases of transposition the trauma concealed by the parent stimulates the child to uncover and reenact the parent's trauma and to attempt to undo the trauma in those reenactments. However, in cases of phantomatic transmissions "a child haunted by a phantom thus inherits, along with the secret, the additional imperative to suppress any desire to know or understand its origin as a means of maintaining the parent's and the family's integrity" (Rashkin, 1999, p. 446). This comparison between these concepts seem to parallel the two aspects of "conspiracy of silence" proposed by Danieli (1998): one in which the silence is a consequence of the trauma itself and the other in which silence acts like a defense mechanism in order to maintain integrity.

Other French psychoanalysts also bring their criticisms and reconceptualizations to the work of Abraham & Torok (1994). For example, Tisseron (2009) (also as cited in Lassman, 2013) emphasizes the leaks that occur through nonverbal communication of the parent including gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions through which unsymbolized material can only be partially symbolized, and how these influence the parent-infant interaction.

Another French psychoanalyst Lebovici (as cited in Lassman, 2013) introduces the concept of "fantasmatic interaction" as an account of the early mother-infant mutual interaction and how the parent's own personal history can enter the interaction and the unconscious fantasies of the child. In his view the infant triggers in the mother emotions that she may even be unaware of from her personal history. The infant with its being and bodily expressions demonstrates its proto

representations. The mother, with her own fantasies already in the interaction, responds to the infant with particular ways of touching, holding, looking, staring, rhythm and tone of voice and makes changes in the infant's inner world. From this system of interaction that is full of affect the infant's proto representations transform into fantasies (as cited in Lassman, 2013). In other words, "whatever has been transmitted to the mother and has entered her various layers of conscious and unconscious imagination therefore also interacts with and participates in the creation of fantasies in the child" (Lebovici & Castarede, 1992, p. 102 as cited in Lassman, 2013). This conceptualization can be supported by studies conducted by Beebe and her colleagues (see for example Beebe et al., 2010) and seems to make an important contribution by emphasizing a mutual interaction that involves a two-way transmission.

More contemporary contributions within the relational psychoanalytic literature can also be considered. For example, Bollas (1987) introduces the term "the unthought known" to explain what is known but not yet been thought about. He explains that what is known becomes thought through the establishment of object relations. Using grief as an example he explains using the mechanism of projective identification: "If the mother or father projectively identifies the element of grief into the child by isolating any sign of sadness as a major psychic occasion, biasing the child to be the family bearer of loss, how will the child know this? Will he know it analytically? Of course not… Then how will he know what he knows? He knows because he bears a projective identification that will seem to him to be part of the nature of his being or of life itself. Containing the other's projective identification seems life defining; grief, in this last example, feels like the essence of his person; it is not to be thought – it cannot be: it is lived" (p.281) He adds that we carry the

legacies of our ancestors through this mechanism and “In thinking the unthought known we ponder not simply the kernel of our true self, but elements of our forebears” (p.283).

Bromberg’s (1998) discussion on trauma and dissociation and introduction of the concept of multiple self-states can be considered to enhance the term of “the unthought known”. According to Bromberg psychological trauma occurs in explicit or implicit interpersonal contexts where “Physiologically what takes place is an autonomic hyperarousal of affect that cannot be cognitively schematized and managed by thought” (p.12) Emotionally charged states that cannot be regulated, soothed, reflected upon cannot be processed cognitively thus cannot be owned as a “me” experience. Therefore, according to Bromberg dissociation in this context is the most adaptive solution to preserve a sense of self-continuity. This pathological form of dissociation due to traumatization involves “failure of symbolization and impairment of ability to cognitively represent affectively intense or complex experience within a self-narrative of “me-ness”” (p.11).

One of the most prominent figures within the relational psychoanalytic literature Stephen A. Mitchell (1991) also describes how the experiences of parents pass onto the offspring while challenging the idea of a unitary “self” and introducing the concept of multiplicity:

> The mother's emotions ‘become’ part of the baby's emotional experience and supply the tone and the contours that make up the world in which the baby lives. Thus, the child's sense of the world and its contents literally derives in no small measure from the contents of the mother's affective life. There are people whose life's project seems to be the creation of experiences that give meaning and form to affective states inherited from parents, that is, grief connected to losses before the child was born. This kind of process is common in children of survivors of catastrophic tragedies like the Holocaust (p.132).

From psychosocial and socio-political perspectives how social and massive traumas are transmitted across generations in certain groups and populations are also demonstrated. Volkan (2001) for example describes how particular traumas get chosen by groups and get transmitted across generations and how that defines the identity of the group. Considering autobiographical and collective memories regarding massive social traumas from a psychosocial lens, Chaitin and Steinberg (2013) suggest that the autobiographical memories of the elders in the family are "remembered" by the younger generations, although they have not witnessed the trauma, with intense emotions and that these memories get connected with the collective memories of social traumas of ethnic, national, and religious groups.

## 1.2 Historical background and current Turkey

Armenians have been reported to exist in today's Anatolia since at least 6$^{th}$ century B.C. (Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012) as one of the oldest people of Anatolia until the beginning of 20$^{th}$ century. During the final period of the Ottoman Empire the Ottomans joined World War I in alliance with Germany in 1914. In 1915 the decision to relocate/deport Armenians was put into effect as a measure of ensuring security. Armenian members of the parliament, intellectuals, authors, journalists were taken away from Istanbul on 24 April 1915 and later from other cities. At the end of the period of 1915-1918, the Armenian population of Anatolia was significantly reduced (Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012).

24 April 1915, during which nearly two hundred Armenian politicians, community leaders and intellectuals were arrested, has been considered as symbolic of the beginning date of the 1915-1918 period. This initiated a catastrophic period for Armenians in which most of the men were separated, arrested, and killed. Most of

the women, children and elderly were forced into mass deportation during which they faced starvation, illnesses, overfatigue due to routes with extremely difficult conditions. The deportation of Armenians happened from regions that were considered problematic and gradually contained all regions to Syria. Once deportations were completed in 1915 Armenians were placed in poorly designed camps which also resulted in natural deaths due to starvation and illnesses with very limited resources. Here, they also faced a second wave of forced deportations due to military and security related reasons and contagious diseases and death. Those who were able to survive within the borders of Anatolia did so either by hiding or converting to Islam. Some children were placed in orphanages or with Muslim families, some young women were forcefully wedded with Muslim men. Some others who were able to survive deportation and camps either returned to Anatolia or spread across the world.

Altınay (2009) discusses how politics to forget the past is not only established through historical accounts but through private and public domains as well through omission of Armenians and events surrounding 1915. She argues that on the other hand this attitude is a “selective” (p.210) forgetting since Armenians are reminded of their origin on various occasions by governmental structures. Thus, the mechanism involves dismissal and denial of their existence on the one hand and discriminative practices with the fears associated with their existence on the other hand.

The Armenian situation was nearly completely forgotten until the 1970s. The remembrance meetings for the 50$^{th}$ year anniversary as well as assassination demonstrations of ASALA brought the topic to the surface again. Although international disputes around the topic were dense these disputes did not enter Turkish public opinion until the 1990s.

From the beginning of the 1990s the Turkish public opinion started to reconnect with the Armenian issue. Some of the factors that contributed to this tendency were: the advancements in information technology which allowed access to all kinds of information, the publications on critical arguments about the Armenian issue by publishers (e.g. Belge Yayınları), the inception of "Agos" the weekly newspaper under the leadership of Hrant Dink in 1996, increased work on minority rights by human rights foundations, increased studies by Turkish and Armenian academicians and especially the 2005 Istanbul Conference that hosted more than a hundred academicians. However, the assassination of Hrant Dink in 2007 can be considered a cornerstone in the awakening of civil society. The slogan "We're all Armenians, we're all Hrant" was a precursor to a new era of developments and discussion on the Armenian issue: The "Apology Campaign" in 2008 initiated by a group of academicians and intellectuals, the establishment of the Hrant Dink Foundation, series of conferences and meetings organized by universities, organization of annual Remembrance Day events on 24th April. Those Armenians who were forcefully converted to a Muslim identity started to surface and various studies and conferences were initiated. Unfortunately, this atmosphere of an initiated partial democratization has seen a difficult progress in the last decade. Thus, it is important to note that this dissertation topic was designed a few years before the coup attempt in 2016 and the interviews were conducted in 2017 while the final discussions were written in 2021.

### 1.3 Studies and literature on 1915 and multigenerational studies

What the Armenians experienced especially during the dark period of 1915-1918 was in deep silence within the area of academics and research until the mid 1970s.

The first systematic gathering of official and personal documents dates to 1960s (see for example Krikor Guerguerian archive for Ottoman documents as well as documents from international archives, https://wordpress.clarku.edu/guerguerianarchive/tr/arsiv-hakkinda-genel-bilgi/). Vahakn Dadrian, can be considered as the founder of academic studies on the Armenian issue with various published articles (Kevorkian, 2015). This first era of studies focused mainly on confronting denial and breaking the silence and indifference of the academic community.

### 1.3.1 Turkish studies and literature on 1915

Altınay (2009) argues that the omission of 1915 and Armenians from studies and literature is based on an essentialist perception of a newly established Turkish nation in which anything representing the "other" is regarded as a national threat and any discussion about the "other" is to be silenced. According to her, this discourse in the academic world was reflected as an academic silence (Altınay, 2009). The political debates regarding the Armenian issue and 1915 especially after the 1980s have influenced research by Turkish academics. Altınay (2009) discusses the diversification of political debates and research since the 1990s, especially about the issues that were considered as taboos including a variety of discriminatory practices. She argues that this intellectual and political expansion also involved a diversification of accounts on 1915 and the Armenian presence in Turkey beginning from the 1990s. According to her, this notion has been expanding especially after the 2000s with the increase in the number of published books about Armenians (memoirs, Armenian literature, culture, and arts), 1915 and Muslimized Armenians (e.g. Fethiye Çetin's book *Anneannem)* with the special contributions of Aras

Publishing and Belge Publishing as well as the publishing of the newspaper *Agos* (1996), broadcasting of public discussions on the topic and declarations and research by Turkish historicists and social scientists. This trend can be seen as part of a context of academic, political, and popular critical approach to essentialist national identity perspectives, of feminist criticism of patriarchal structures, of critical post-nationalist discourse, and of an attention to the concept of identity (Altınay, 2009).

### 1.3.2 Studies and literature on women and 1915

Sanasarian (1989) discusses the lack of studies on Armenian women who survived the 1915-1918 period which is significant because the majority of those who were deported were women. Altınay (2009) sees the patriarchal perspective as one of the causes of the silence dominating the social and historical sciences on Muslimized Armenian women; only a recent and limited number of studies focus on the experiences of women during and after 1915 (e.g., Bilal, 2019; Bilal & Ekmekcioglu, 2006; Derderian, 2005; Miller & Miller, 1993; Peroomian, 2008; Sanasarian, 1989; Tachjian, 2009). Altınay elaborates on how women are not perceived as subjects but rather objects – as "victims," as "owned" by men or as "unclaimed" - in the 1915 literature authored by all researchers, whether Turkish, Armenian, or American. According to Tachjian's (2009) discussion the stories of "resistance" should be expanded to include stories of the women who survived under grave circumstances in various ways, not only those that are considered as "heroic stories" of resistance.

### 1.3.3 Studies on multiple generations of diaspora Armenians

In comparison to the psychological consequences of the Holocaust on the Jewish population – including intergenerational studies- studies on 1915 and its

consequences on the Armenian population are much less. In addition, almost all of the studies on the intergenerational consequences of 1915 on Armenians have been studied in the diaspora population.

Studies conducted in the US involve studies on survivors (Boyajian & Grigorain, 1988; Kalayjian, Moore, & Aberson, 2008; Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian & Saraydarian, 1996; Kupelian, 1993 as cited in Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1998) as well as second and third generation children (Kalayjian & Weisberg, 2002; Kassabian, 1987 as cited in Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1998). Altounian (1999) has published papers on her reflections as a second-generation offspring of a survivor from a psychoanalytic perspective as well as Topalian (2013). Boyajian & Grigorian (1998) have published their observations on the environment after 1915 and its effects on survivors, second and third generation offspring. There is also one empirical study conducted in Greece which involves a sample of second, third and fourth generation offspring of Armenian family members (Karenian, Livaditis, Karenian, Zafiriadis, Bochtsou, & Xenitidis, 2011).

The studies on survivors indicate that they suffered most from the loss of family member(s) and from deportation, relocation, physical harm, loss of property, loss of status (Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian, & Saraydarian, 1996) but have endured and coped with their trauma through religion/faith, group and family support, work ethic (Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian & Saraydarian, 1996) and pride in survival, retaining their Armenian identity and faith (Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998). Studies show that most of the survivors did not talk about their experiences to anyone and if

they did, they talked only to fellow Armenians (Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian & Saraydarian, 1996).

Studies that involve second and third generation offspring suggest that Armenian identity (religious faith and practice, language) was preserved (Boyajian & Grigorian, 1998; Kassabian, 1987 as cited in Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998), family adaptability and cohesion was similar across three generations (Kassabian, 1987 as cited in Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998). Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian (1998) argue that "historical descriptions of the Armenian family's functioning throughout its turbulent existence indicate its survival strategies of "closing up" to the outside world to regroup and then "opening up" temporarily when acute danger passed" (p.200). It is suggested that first and second generations put more internalized effort to maintain cohesion and to transmit their ethnic identities to the youth, whereas the third generation shows more externalized efforts such as being more politically active for human rights and against injustices (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998). Nearly all studies indicate anger towards the denial of what happened during 1915-1918 by the Turkish government as well as other governments around the world (Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian & Saraydarian, 1996; Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian & Weisberg, 2002).

Although many similarities exist with regards to the experiences of Holocaust and 1915-1918 survivors (see Kestenberg & Kestenberg, 1982; Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998) Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian (1998) suggest that cultural differences may reflect varying intergenerational responses. For example, with regard to the commemorative function of guilt prevalent in the Holocaust offspring population, Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian (1998) suggest that the guilt in the Armenian offspring population is associated with responsibilities towards survivor

parents/grandparents and Armenian community. Another important difference between Holocaust survivors' and Armenian survivors' experience is in the nature of the "conspiracy of silence" as described by Danieli (1998). According to Danieli (1998) the "conspiracy of silence" that operated between the survivors and the rest of the society (all non-survivors) involved society's indifference, avoidance, repression, ignorance, and denial, as the material was too overwhelming to believe or listen (p.4) and survivors' feelings of not being cared for or understood, isolation, mistrust and eventual silence. Sharing of experiences was only possible with fellow survivors. These factors made mourning, reintegration on all dimensions and healing difficult and/or impossible. It is suggested that in case of the Armenians the silence did not create a division within the Armenian community but rather between the Armenian community and non-Armenians since the 1915-1918 period affected all Armenians (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998). The lack of acknowledgement from the outside has resulted in a similar picture described by Danieli (1998). However the lack of acknowledgement and denial of Armenians' experiences by the Turkish government as well as other governments around the world is argued to have resulted in additional emotional and psychological burden (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998).

### 1.3.4 Turkish studies on third generation Armenians

Although Turkish studies associated with 1915 and the Armenian population exist within the fields of social sciences no studies exist associated with the psychological conditions of the Armenian survivors of 1915 and their second-generation offspring. Psychologically oriented studies on third generation offspring are sparse. There is one recent master's thesis that was initiated after and completed before the initiation

and finalization of this dissertation which explores main themes generated in the interviews conducted with three generation women (women who were the children of survivors of 1915, their daughters and granddaughters) from five Armenian families living in Istanbul (Marazyan, 2016). The semi-structured interviews revealed themes dealing with the experience of being an Armenian in Turkey, protection of following generations, relationship with Turks and emotions associated with 1915.

There have been recent accounts of third generation children of Armenian survivors who were captured, adopted, taken, hidden and/or saved by Muslim Turkish and/or Kurdish families and whose Armenian identities were concealed through Muslimization (see Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Çetin, 2004). Altınay & Çetin (2009) in their book *Grandchildren* present accounts of twenty-five grandchildren whose grandparent(s) were Muslimized. According to the authors, the grandchildren's accounts revealed experiences of deep sadness and fear. Their accounts included the deep impact of silence and secrecy within their families including pain and anger. They also observed various reactions towards finding out their Armenian origin including a sense of questioning of their own identity and faith, a sense of freedom, an increased sense of being an Armenian, a sense of richness in having multiple identities and rejecting any naming of a specific identity.

Although there is an increase of social science studies about Muslimized Armenians very few studies exist that are conducted with Armenians who were able to maintain their cultural and religious identities living in Turkey (for an example see Bilal, 2019).

## 1.4 Overview of this study

This study aims to look at the experiences of third generation Armenian women in Turkey and to explore the possible intergenerational consequences of a massive social trauma via a psychoanalytically informed perspective.

Considering the previous review of literature this study aims to focus on female grandchildren of Armenian survivors.

The granddaughters whose survivor grandparent(s) were able to maintain their Christianity and their Armenian identities were chosen as a focus of study because there is a very limited number of academic studies on this population whereas there has been a recent increase in the interest towards grandchildren of Muslimized Armenians (those who converted to Islam and/or changed names and concealed their Armenian backgrounds) living in Turkey (e.g. Altınay & Çetin, 2009).

The lack of studies that shed light on the psychological picture of Armenian survivors of 1915 and their offspring in Turkey necessitates an explorative qualitative approach that is intended to inform further qualitative and quantitative and larger scale studies.

As discussed in previous sections the psychoanalytic contributions emphasize the effect of traumatic experiences on the psyche, by acknowledging its debilitating effect on the capacity to represent and symbolize the experience and the overwhelming emotions associated with the experience. The psychoanalytic lens can provide a way to look at how experiences that cannot be represented and symbolized, can be transmitted through generations and have influences on identities of second and third generation individuals, through its understanding of unconscious dynamics,

subjectivity, transference-countertransference, defense mechanisms and sense of agency.

This exploratory study based on the literature and research findings intends to find answers to some questions and expectations:

i. The data is expected to draw a picture of what was transmitted and narrated to the granddaughters with regard to their grandparents' experiences of 1915 and in what ways these narrations occurred.

- It is expected that some of the participants' accounts might reflect a family environment in which the grandparents' experiences of 1915 were kept largely in secret and not explicitly talked about or may have been hinted and just mentioned in oblique ways. An associated question to this expectation is how this tendency for silence and secrecy may have operated.
- It is also anticipated that some of the accounts would reveal a family context in which the grandparents' 1915 experiences were more explicitly shared and talked about. Nevertheless, it was also a point of interest whether this supposedly open communication was truly open, in other words, whether the narrations involved certain aspects of experiences but left out certain other aspects, such as the emotional dimension of experiences.

ii. The data is expected to present a range of responses of granddaughters in reaction to their grandparents' experiences and to a developed awareness about their own families' and community's past. These responses are expected to reveal traces of intergenerational trauma. In other words, the accounts are expected to reflect on some level a range of potentially overwhelming emotions such as sorrow/sadness, anxiety and fear, anger, guilt, and glimpses of feelings of intense helplessness.

- The data is expected to reveal potentially contradictory findings representing a tension between the need to be heard and recognized, and an experience of burden with overwhelming feelings, fear of external threat, and betrayal associated with a sense of helplessness.

iii. As mentioned before the social and political currents shifted in Turkey over the last 20-30 years which impacted the atmosphere of talking about the experiences of minorities and unofficial history. This is expected to have an influence on what the granddaughters were exposed to in their childhood and differentially adulthood years which would coincide with an increase in the interest about the accounts of Armenians and 1915.

- The data is expected to reveal that the denial of 1915 as well as continuation of discriminating and threatening attitudes on the social level might have an impact on the personal and psychological level.

The findings from the granddaughters' accounts will be presented in the results section in terms of the granddaughters' exposure to their grandparents' experiences of 1915 as well as their development of awareness about 1915 both considering their childhood and adulthood periods. The above-mentioned questions and expectations will then be elaborated with a summary of presented findings.

# CHAPTER 2

# METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Participants

The inclusion criteria for the sample were being a third-generation female, born into and raised by a Christian Armenian family which has member(s) who have survived 1915.

The participants were found through convenience sampling. The participants were found through the Hrant Dink Foundation, Armenian high schools and through personal acquaintances. None of the participants were acquainted by the researcher/interviewer. Only the general topic (that the study would be about the Armenian granddaughters of 1915) was introduced to the volunteers by their acquaintances or the researcher. The participants' contact information was forwarded to the researcher by the personal acquaintances and through Hrant Dink Foundation contacts upon participants' interest in volunteering. The researcher contacted the participants through phone. The participants were informed about the general aim of the study and that their anonymity would be ensured. The interview date for the first interview was arranged according to the participant's suitability during this call. Upon feedback from the first pilot interview the informed consent form (Appendix A) was forwarded to the participants right after the phone conversation so that they could read it before the actual interview. Two pilot study participants and two other participants were referred by personal acquaintances of the researcher, three participants were referred by contacts from the Hrant Dink Foundation. Only one participant who was referred by these contacts refused to volunteer. For three other participants, the researcher was introduced by the high school administrator to

various teachers and the teachers were informed about the general topic of the study. Those who agreed to volunteer were informed about the general aim of the study and that their anonymity would be ensured. An appropriate time was scheduled for each participant for the initial interview during this meeting and the hard copies of the informed consent forms were given for each participant to read it before the actual interview.

## 2.2 Procedure and data collection

The university research ethics committee application for the Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects was formally approved in April 2017 (Appendix B). After receiving the approval, the pilot study phase of the research was completed in one and a half months. Two pilot interviews were conducted for the pilot study with female participants. After evaluation by the supervisory committee and thesis advisor, the interviews for the study were conducted over the course of five months with eight female participants.

The interviews were held in times and locations chosen by the participants where and when they could talk privately and securely. In the beginning of the interviews the informed consent form was reviewed. The researcher took the signed copy, and a copy was given to the participant. After making sure the conditions described in the informed consent form were understood, the interview was initiated. The interviews were voice recorded and transcribed by the researcher/interviewer.

In order to ensure the participants' confidentiality, the actual names of the participants were not included in the voice recordings. Their recordings and transcripts were given code names according to the participants' choosing. The

signed informed consent forms as well as the flash drive containing the voice recordings and transcriptions are kept in the researcher's own locked cabinet.

Two interview sessions were held with all participants except one (the scheduled second interview was repeatedly delayed over the course of 4 months by this participant). The time interval between first and second interviews was five days with a participant, one week with three participants and two pilot participants, two weeks with another participant, three weeks and two days and seven weeks and six days with two other participants. With the first among the latter two participants, the time interval between two interviews was actually scheduled to be one week, however due to the participant's conditions the interview was delayed twice. With the second among the latter two participants, the participant wanted to call to schedule the second interview due to her busy schedule, however no phone call was received. Over the course of seven weeks, she was contacted by the researcher twice and a second interview was scheduled after the second phone call.

The duration of the first interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to one hour. For the two pilot interviews the duration was longer (one hour and twenty-one to one hour and twenty-six minutes). The duration of the second interviews were shorter on average which ranged from thirty-seven minutes to one hour. For the two pilot interviews, one lasted for approximately forty-four minutes and the other for one hour and sixteen minutes.

This procedure of conducting two interview sessions was tried in the pilot phase to see if it helped to reflect on the experience of the initial contact and to enhance the material communicated. Both participants had willingly accepted to meet for the second time and after two interview sessions had given positive feedback with regards to meeting twice. The researcher also felt that the second

meeting allowed space for reflection and enhancement of communicated material as well as for a sense of closure. Thus, this procedure was also used for the main study. However, although they did not verbally express it, it was observed that at least two of the participants may have been reluctant to meet for the second time. These participants repeated various times that they were willing to meet for the second interview. However, with one participant the second interview could only be scheduled approximately two months after the initial interview and with the other participant a second interview could not be scheduled over the course of four months.

The first interview sessions involved two main open-ended questions: “Can you tell me about yourself?” and “How is it like to be a third-generation female grandchild of 1915?” Other questions were aimed at clarifying or probing into the material such as “How was your relationship with…?”, “How did that make you feel?”, “How was that experience for you?”, “Can you tell me more about that?”, “How do/did you deal with …?”, “Why do you think so?” Sometimes rephrasing remarks were made in order to expand the material being discussed. In the pilot interviews such probing questions upon the material presented by the participants were also common and were decided to be used in the other interviews (if not brought up by the participant herself): “How did you learn about your grandparent’s 1915 experiences?”, “When did you first hear about the experiences of 1915?”, “How was/is it talked/not talked about in the family?”, “Why do you think it was talked/not talked the way it was?”, “How do/did you experience knowing/not knowing about it?”, “When did you develop a sense of awareness and consciousness about the experiences of 1915 and how?”.

The second interviews involved mainly three parts however only the initial section was included for this study's analyses. In the initial part the participant was asked to reflect on how the first interview session was experienced and whether there was any other material they would like to share after the initial interview. With most participants, there were a few important issues that were raised or memories that were shared in the second interview that weren't communicated in the first interview. As the second part of the second interview, the participants were presented with their family genograms that were drawn by the researcher (through a genogram software – GenoPro) using the information gathered in the first interview. The participants were informed about this from the initial interview. The participants were asked to bring one or more family photograph(s) to the second interview before finishing the first interview. As the third part of the second interview, the participant and researcher looked at these photographs together to reflect on why that photograph was chosen, what the photograph was about, who the people included in the picture were and what it meant to the participant. These two parts of the interviews were not included in this study's analyses.

## 2.3 Data analysis

The voice recorded first interviews were transcribed by the researcher as well as the second interviews of the two pilot interviews. The second interviews of the other eight participants were transcribed with the help of two psychology undergraduate student volunteers. The transcriptions and first readings of the pilot interviews were completed before conducting interviews with eight participants. Upon completion of the interviews and their transcriptions all transcriptions were read by the researcher and uploaded to the qualitative data analysis program suitable to be used for social

sciences called MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2018 (Version 18.0.5). By taking into consideration the questions of interest in the study and the common themes observed from the initial reading of the interviews similar themes were coded (see Appendix C). All the transcriptions from the first interviews and the sections of the second interviews in which the participants were invited to reflect on their experiences from the first interview were included in the coding process. Due to the limitations of the study the other sections of the second interviews were left out of the analysis process. Upon evaluation by the dissertation committee the pilot interviews were also included in the data analysis as the procedure and content of the interviews were similar.

### 2.4 Participants' reactions to the interview

Overall, the fact that these participants volunteered to be interviewed indicated a positive reaction to the study. However, the reaction to the whole of the interview experience seemed to involve some ambivalences. While some participants were open and interested initially showed reluctancies during the interview process in certain aspects such as answering certain questions, conducting the second interviews (through cancellations), questioning of the technical aspects of and aim of the study. While some other participants were indecisive and reluctant initially seemed to open up during the course of two interviews. With nearly all participants the second interviews involved a more genuine, relaxed, and intimate communication. Some participants expressed appreciative comments about the study while some others were supportive, helpful, kind, curious and interested attitudes toward the interviewer. Additionally, it was observed that some content, especially childhood memories were difficult to share and created some disruptions in some

participants' discourse (such as use of silences, tearful responses, particular shifts in patterns of personal pronouns, confusing and disorienting narrative while speaking of emotionally charged content and/or use of rationalization, generalizations and sudden shifts in subject). However, overall, there was no major disruption in the flow of the participants' discourse and interview process.

# CHAPTER 3

# DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

## 3.1 Demographic background

### 3.1.1 Birth years and places

Eight female participants were all born in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Two of the participants were born in 1970 and 1981.

Nine participants were born in Istanbul, and one was born in Hatay who moved to Istanbul when she was 7-8 years old.

Looking at the available information participants' parents were born after 1915 except for one participant's father who was born in 1914 and passed away when the participant was 3 years old. No information is available for both parents of one participant and for the mothers of two participants. The available information shows that the range of birth years of the participants' parents were between 1922-1953 (except for the one father born in 1914).

Seven participants had both parents that were born in cities (within the borders of Turkey) other than Istanbul, one participant had both parents who were born in Istanbul, one participant had a father who was born in Istanbul and a mother who was born in an Anatolian city. For one participant the mother was reported to have born in an Anatolian city however no information is available for her father.

The birth years of grandparents are not present for all participants however the earliest reported birth year is 1887 and the latest reported birth year is 1921. The most reported birth years corresponded to the beginning of 1900s.

Nearly all of the participants grandparents were reported to have originated from cities other than Istanbul; only one participant's paternal grandparents were from Istanbul.

### 3.1.2 Occupation

Four participants are high school teachers (two participants are chemistry teachers; one participant is a mathematics teacher, and one is a philosophy teacher). Two participants worked at their houses for the majority of their adult life. One of them had a few years of experience as a kindergarten teacher before she had her children and the other had brief experience in giving private lessons to elementary school students. One participant is a nurse, currently working at a nursing home. Two participants are retired and one of them currently works at a non-governmental organization. One participant is currently working in various freelance jobs.

Although information about the occupation of parents is not available for all participants' parents, the available information shows that the parents were tailors, farmers (before migrating to Istanbul), housewives, textile workers, carpenters, grocers, shoemakers, merchants (e.g. Steel appliances). The most frequent occupation reported was tailoring.

The reported occupations of grandparents included farming (if there was a migration history, before migrating to Istanbul), housewife, merchant/dealer (e.g. Tin, rice, carpets/textile), tailor, sexton/verger, construction worker/foreman, shoemaker/mender, miller, carpenter, coppersmith, jeweler, journalist/photographer.

### 3.1.3 Educational background and literacy

Four participants are high school graduates; five participants are university graduates, and one participant has a master's degree. All nine participants went to Armenian schools, at least for a period of time between primary to high school years and have literacy in Armenian. Only one participant went to Turkish schools all throughout her education and received private lessons in Armenian for some period of time during childhood however does not have literacy in Armenian.

### 3.1.4 Migration

Eight participants never migrated to different cities or countries during their lifetime. One participant went abroad to study middle and high school and came back to her hometown and one participant was born in a different city but had to move to Istanbul to get an education in Armenian when she was 7-8 years old. At least four participants experienced migration to a different neighborhood within Istanbul.

All participants had family roots in Anatolia (their parents and/or their grandparents were born in an Anatolian city). The cities included Amasya, Elazığ, Erzincan, Hatay, Kastamonu, Malatya, Samsun, Sinop, Sivas, Tekirdağ, Trabzon, Tokat and Yozgat.

All participants had relatives that had migrated to other countries such as Armenia, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Lebanon, Switzerland, and USA.

Seven participants are married and have children (six participants have two children and one participant has one child). Three participants are single and were never married. All participants can be considered to be in the middle and middle-high range of socio-economic status.

### 3.2 Degree of intimacy with grandparents

Six participants grew up together with their maternal or paternal grandparents. Five of these participants grew up with their paternal grandparents (one participant lived in the same building with her grandparents and four participants lived in the same house with their grandparents). For these five participants, maternal grandparents were either living in different neighborhoods or had passed away. Only one participant grew up with her maternal grandparents in the same building (her paternal grandparents had passed away). One participant grew up in close physical contact with her maternal grandmother (as well as maternal aunts) however did not live together. Three participants did not grow up in in close contact with their grandparents due to physical distances of residence and/or death.

### 3.3 Grandparents who experienced 1915 and some factual information surrounding their experiences

All participants had at least one grandparent known to have experienced 1915. Five participants reported to have had grandparents from both maternal and paternal sides who had experienced 1915 and three of these participants had all four grandparents who had experienced 1915. One participant had grandparents from her father's side who experienced 1915 and although her grandparents from her mother's side did not experience 1915, their parents (the participant's great grandparents) had experienced 1915. Two participants reported to have had two grandparents (a grandfather and grandmother) from either maternal or paternal side of her family and two participants reported to have had only one grandmother or grandfather who had experienced 1915.

Among the total of twenty-six grandparents that were reported and known to have experienced 1915, thirteen grandparents were children or adolescents in 1915, two grandparents were in their adolescence or young adulthood period and eleven grandparents were adults. Among the thirteen grandparents who were known to be children or adolescents in 1915 only three grandparents were known to have had parents who survived the events surrounding 1915; the rest of them had lost at least one first degree relative (four of the grandparents were reported to have lost their whole family including parents and siblings) or were separated from their families. Among the eleven adult grandparents ten of them were known to be married in 1915 and only two of these grandparents were married to each other in 1915. Eight known grandparents were married and lost their spouses in 1915 and remarried later on. Among ten of the grandparents who were known to be married in 1915 at least nine of them had child(ren) (two of these grandparents were married to each other and had a child) and six of these grandparents are known to have lost their children during the events surrounding 1915. In summary, nineteen out of twenty-six grandparents who were known to have experienced the events surrounding 1915 were reported to have had losses from their first-degree family (such as parents, siblings, spouses, children). Some of them had witnessed their relatives' death, some had been informed about their relatives' death, some never heard back from the relatives they were separated from. Overall, all nine participants reported to have had at least one grandparent who had lost at least one first degree relative. One remaining participant had grandparents who experienced the events surrounding 1915 however did not suffer losses from the first degree however her grandmother had lost second degree relatives.

The participants' received information about 1915 from different sources in their family or from outside sources. Seven participants reported that the events and experiences surrounding 1915 were either never (to a certain point in time) or rarely (in fragmented forms) talked about in the household. Three participants on the other hand reported that the experiences of 1915 were talked about in the household and that the questions asked by the following generations would be answered.

Whether the participants reported having a household talking about experiences associated with 1915 in a rare or frequent fashion, overall, seven participants reported hearing about the events and experiences surrounding 1915 when they were in their childhood. One participant heard about it from her mother (because her paternal grandparents and father was already dead, and her maternal grandparents were living in another city). Five participants had heard from one or more grandparent and three of these participants had also heard from other relatives or acquaintances from the first generation. One participant however had her first contact with 1915 experiences from a distant acquaintance from the neighborhood in her early childhood and later heard about her grandmother's experience from her paternal grandmother in her adulthood.

Three participants, who had reported that experiences surrounding 1915 were never or rarely talked about in the household during their childhood and adolescence, expressed having heard about experiences surrounding 1915 in their adulthood. One of the participants heard her grandparent's experience mainly from her father, one of the participants heard about experiences of 1915 mostly from her husband's uncle in family gatherings and her grandparent's experience from her mother. And one participant heard about her family's 1915 history mainly from her mother.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS

In this section experiences of the participants regarding their exposures to the accounts of 1915 will be presented. These accounts will be presented according to exposures during childhood and adulthood. According to the participants' accounts the type of communication of the survivor grandparents' experiences differed as it was expected prior to the interviews. Three participants were exposed to direct communication of their grandparents' experiences of 1915 whereas seven other participants were exposed to implicit and indirect communications during childhood. Therefore, the accounts of each participant and their responses to the exposures are presented according to direct and indirect exposures during childhood. All of the participants reported to have developed a sense of awareness about their grandparents' 1915 experiences as well as 1915 in general during adulthood. Thus, the accounts of each participant and their responses to the exposures during adulthood is presented under the section exposures during adulthood. Finally, the findings are summarized in association with the questions and expectations presented in the overview of the study section.

## 4.1 Granddaughters' experiences in response to direct exposure in childhood

Three participants reported having been exposed to the accounts of 1915 when they were children and considered their families as families that talked about 1915. In Mardiryan's case, her mother had directly talked about her family's experience to her children. In Hayganuş's and Yeraz's case the first-generation grandparents, relatives and peers talked among themselves within the household; however, in various ways

they were also given pieces of the accounts directly from their grandparents and parents.

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Mardiryan who presented herself as part of a community and family that experienced 1915 differently when asked about her experience of being a granddaughter, expressed that she was exposed to the stories of her family's experiences (especially her maternal side) when she was a child by her mother (whom she was in close contact with until her death), who communicated what she had heard from her own mother.

> I was most probably 9-10 years old. I knew about this going up to the mountains issue. My mother used to tell us. She would convey from what her mother told her…. But my mother had not told too much about what was experienced up there… Well, she would talk about climbing up the mountain, the challenges of living there, how they were out of food and how the women would secretly go down and get some from the village, these kinds of things. She would say they were saved by the French navy ships at the end of forty days.

Mardiryan's grandparents were part of a small community of Armenians that were able to survive after forty days of hiding on top of a mountain. According to Mardiryan, not only in her childhood but in her adulthood as well, her mother's narrative did not involve much information about the details and difficulties experienced by her grandparents while they were in the mountains when survival threat was the greatest, but consisted more of the details of experiences and life after their survival such as how they were saved by the French, what their lives were like in the English camps, how her grandparents got married after their return from the camps and the rich environment provided for women and children including opportunities for education.

Mardiryan reports that as a child she listened to and perceived these stories as if they were fairy tales that told a story of resistance and survival:

> How did I experience it? … In my childhood it felt like a fairy tale. To be honest. Felt like a fairy tale. Perhaps because there weren't too many casualties. Maybe I wouldn't perceive it that way if there were many losses. But, well, ours resisted like this, were not defeated, survived and such, I always perceived it like this.

However, she remembers an account which was told by her grandmother that had a deep impact on her in her childhood. Later in her accounts she reports that her mother was influenced by this account as well and that the reason why her mother was untrusting with people, especially Kurds, was associated with this influence. Mardiryan was able to make meaning of her mother's warnings and this account in her adulthood after a disappointing experience with a Kurdish friend which has resulted in mistrust towards people in general.

> There, according to my grandmother, I wasn't very close with my grandmother because the neighborhoods we lived in were far apart, I couldn't visit often. And then afterwards I wasn't even in the village so I couldn't talk with her. My grandmother talked about the pregnant women, that has affected me a lot, the arrival of pregnant women, their embarrassment and such. These have stayed in my mind. A song, she would sing a song, maybe it is reminiscent from that; called "Barzirahpir." It is a folk song sung by women. It refers to what Kurds did, in that song. Those have remained in my memories.

According to her narrative she was able to reflect on these experiences and develop an awareness and meaning only after she was able to gather more information about her family's and others' experiences surrounding 1915 as an adult.

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Hayganuş had heard about her family's 1915 stories mostly and directly from her paternal grandparents, with whom she grew up in the same house. However, she also heard about their narratives from her father. She was also exposed to other stories from other elders such as a neighbor as well as stories about others within the neighborhood that had experienced 1915. What she narrated from the stories that she knew from her family included her grandfather's discontinued education due to the

decimation of schools and due to exiles and the loss of her grandfather's relatives during 1915 who were educated, had literacy in Armenian and were teachers and doctors. Her grandfather was able to learn how to speak Armenian from his family and was self-taught in Turkish literacy. According to Hayganuş this loss was associated with her grandfather's encouragement for his grandchildren to be educated and become teachers: "…my grandfather used to tell it. Two of the great aunts were teachers. …But all of it is ravaged during the *kesim* (slaughter). My grandfather always said, he wanted us to be teachers… They always encouraged being a teacher."

Hayganuş who presented her experience as growing up in a family context that talked about experiences surrounding 1915 describes the evolution of her exposure since her childhood years. She describes that as a child, she was inevitably (mostly due to the living conditions) exposed to conversations among adults as well as to pieces of information regarding experiences of others from the neighborhood. She expresses how difficult it was for her to make sense, name and understand the content of what was being communicated with feelings of shock, confusion, curiosity and helplessness. She states that initially she heard "those stories and at first they perhaps feel like fairy tales" at the age of 6-7 and that an awareness emerged when she was 8-9 years old as she was able to name what the stories were about.

> When we were children, these were only talked about within families at least in the beginning you indirectly in other words they don't tell directly to you one and one. In time you become aware of certain things. Of course, when you hear it for the first time you cannot put a name on it … They tell and talk about things, for example my grandmother's two brothers are killed during these events. For example, my grandmother would always cry when she was talking about it to my father or among themselves. Now you are a child 6 years old 7 years old… you go out and you come in and there she is crying, or you happen to encounter it incidentally… Of course, naturally you are affected by it. You try to understand what it is. You can't put a name. In time you fit things into place. …You hear it from people around of course they don't tell you… You learn these slowly and of course at first you feel

> shocked. You feel puzzled what to do… It would sit in you and stay there. You didn't have the chance to talk … When these people came together, they would talk about these past events. Well of course you are in the same environment, and you hear certain things but… you can't make sense, at first you can't until you are at a certain age.

In her accounts she also refers to her experience that these conversations were restricted to inside the borders of her house and that a silence around the subject dominated in the outside world: "It just stayed in the house. I am sure it stayed within in a lot of homes." She explains this as partly due to being distracted with play in the outside world as a child, partly due to being expected and warned by her family not to talk about these things as a means of protection, partly due to the denial of presence of this past within the context of social relationships, and partly due to living in relatively more protected environment compared to living in other Anatolian cities.

As she reflects on this experience as a child, she argues that "perhaps you get over it more quickly… you know such things happened but maybe you just go out and you play you go to school I mean the childhood mentality is a little bit different." However, she explains that as she grew older and became more informed and aware about the past, she became more sensitive about the pain and suffering involved.

Reflecting on what she was exposed to as a child she also considers and identifies with her grandparents' and their peers' "difficult" experiences. She considers that perhaps they attempted to protect the offspring however also felt the need to talk and share experiences among each other.

> Those were difficult times when I look back there was nothing else those people could do. … Those people who shared the same periods … may be in the beginning they tried to protect us from certain things but at least they felt the need to speak and talk within the family or among themselves, so of course it was talked about, it was difficult. Difficult, difficult. I mean especially if you think about what they saw… they lived through those experiences directly themselves. Of course, from their perspective I mean, …

> I don't know how it could be said, how to find words. But it was difficult. I'll say difficult. I mean difficult but I don't know if this word is enough or not.

She expresses that as a child she responded to seeing her grandmother cry with curiosity, confusion and sadness because the reasons behind it were not revealed. Only in time as she collects more information is she able to understand the reason behind the tears and pain.

> Now you try to understand what's going on of course you feel sad, why is she crying, what's going on? Why is she crying, what happened? They don't explain it in the beginning, you become upset and sad, and you ask "what happened? Did something happen? Is she sick? What is it?" Well may be because you are a child may be you just came inside may be you just came in to get a piece of bread and may be you just ask "why are you crying?" and she says "never mind I just remembered my brother, my such and such" and then maybe you leave and go outside After a while you understand how deep her suffering is… of course you become sad. "Why did such a thing happen" you say. … perhaps I cannot even tell it to you now. I mean what it is like I mean that there in that moment [short silence] you say to yourself how could this have happened.

As these exposures triggered curiosity and questioning as a child her various questions about the family past, which were not only associated with 1915, were answered in her family which allowed her to integrate traces of information to form a narrative. According to her, her grandparents answered the offspring's questions such as "do you or don't you have any siblings ," "where are they," "what happened to them ," "why did you migrate from the village to the city and don't we have a place in the village"  and started talking about their experiences, explaining what had happened "because they believed now you could carry this."

She associates this tendency of curiosity and questioning to an environment that expected and encouraged a sense of maturity from early on.

> It begins with a childish curiosity… May be there is the effect of maturing early on. …being the first generation to migrate from Anatolia is difficult in every aspect…. There is nothing the first generation can do they just move to find jobs and to protect the family. And during that time, they expect certain things from you. For you to help the family to mature early because moving

> here and settling down involves great difficulties. I guess because of this you mature early.

In her accounts she refers to both positive and negative aspects of this early maturity. On the one hand it gave her a different perspective and ability to empathize with others. However, on the other hand it contributed to a sense of alienation among peers, and she could only form friendships with those who were similarly mature.

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Yeraz considers herself as having been exposed to the tales regarding 1915 since she can remember herself through her paternal and maternal grandmothers, their relatives and their peers but especially through her paternal grandmother with whom she grew up until sometime before she was an adolescent.

> I am … the grandchild of a grandmother who directly experienced 1915. We lived in the same house with my paternal grandmother. Well, she for example well lost her mother father and siblings. Therefore, mmm from firsthand relationships I both know the whole incident and felt her emotions and such from very close.
> …I don't remember exactly the first time I heard about those stories, but I am around this since I am aware of myself, I mean for example some families hid them… Ours did not hide I mean ours talked. My grandmother herself used to tell. …everyone talked. In fact, there was such a thing for example whenever all women came together all they talked about was this… I mean it never ended… When my paternal grandmother saw someone around her age or if someone came over for dinner or something this was the topic of conversation.

She expresses how these tales were told and received in a normalized fashion: "because it was told so often, we had normalized it… from a pedagogic perspective and such it seems horrible for a child to hear these but at that time well it was normalized everybody was talking."

She narrates the tales from both maternal and paternal sides of her family as well as other stories that she had heard in detail. Her narrative included references to in her own words "tragic stories" that included how people's houses were invaded and raided, how people were captured, how children were thrown into the Fırat

River, how some were murdered and killed, how some went to exile and returned and how some didn't, how the ones who survived were able to escape, hide and survive. She tells how her paternal grandfather's father was hidden in an attic dressed up as a woman for a year; how her mother's grandfather, who was a graduate of an American school in an Anatolian city, had lost all of his family, hid in a village departing from the exile convoy and was hidden by the villagers because of his educational background; how her maternal grandmother's grandfather who was a significant Ottoman officer was hidden by a Turkish friend and later how both of them were executed in an Anatolian city square. Among these stories she narrates the story of her paternal grandmother whose brother was left behind while being saved with her sister by a family business partner with great emotional intensity:

> For example my grandmother's… the last thing before she sends her mother she says "we were walking with my mom" she says "she was taking me" she says and then I guess she won't see her ever again. "Then we came to a place" "don't look" said her mother and closed her eyes. But she says "I somehow survived and looked suddenly everywhere is full of dead" [her voice trembles]. [short silence and her eyes tear up] … I mean these are of course very intense things. I mean generally events and what happened and such. Deaths, … How they survived, for instance she survives but she doesn't know if her child lives or not. All her life for example she asks about her child to whomever comes and goes [her voice trembles].

Yeraz, in response to her exposure to her family's stories and especially to her grandmother's expressions (verbal and non-verbal) recalls feeling sad, pensive, and confused accompanied by her childhood attempts to identify with her grandmother's experiences. She, for example, remembers crying as a child every once in a while: "…I remember when I cried but it is not like you cry sobbing every day." She expresses her inner responses to her grandmother's verbal and non-verbal (tears) expressions:

> My grandmother had this if we didn't attend to our chores and such had these things like "I grew up without a mother look you have your mother your father why don't you do it" … afterwards I would seriously think about it…

> "how did she grow up without a mother", "how did she" "what a difficult life" and such I would find myself lucky.
> I mean thinking about her life… for example sometimes once or twice her eyes tear... because my grandmother was a tough woman for example as she was talking once or twice, I remember her eyes teared up [her voice trembles]. I said "wow, my grandmother's eyes teared up". Because I mean ultimately in a house… she served as a maid in that house and such, so those life conditions had toughened her up. Otherwise, it is difficult I mean if she was too emotional it is difficult to live and survive under those circumstances. But a few times I remember her eyes tearing up. When she was telling her story.

Her account suggests that she felt helpless, confused and curious as a child who identified with her grandmother's experiences and felt sad and felt lucky for not having gone through what her grandmother had. This experience of Yeraz could also be considered as an imposed attempt to empathize and identify with her grandmother's experiences from an early age. Perhaps a reflection of this identification and empathy is also observed in her adult narrative where she feels and expresses her sadness both verbally and non-verbally while she was narrating her grandmother's experiences: "Well all these kinds of things that were told. Yes, one feels sad. [short silence]"

As Yeraz reflects on her childhood experience of having been exposed to these accounts, she recalls her fearful dreams of invasion which were overwhelming and which she reveals were apparently dreams thematically similar to her father's dreams of invasion.

> I had seen our house being invaded. Our house is invaded… but I don't die. It was apparently my last day before I die, I woke up crying. As I was telling what I saw… I was crying. I never forget that dream of mine I was so sad.
> My father too saw a dream like that… he would talk about it. Their house was being invaded, they were being killed, everyone was being killed. Then apparently my father said to himself in the dream that if I had a gun now, I would at least shoot at these.

She suspects that she had such a dream due to the context in which she was growing up and to the stories she was being exposed to, suggesting that they had a

fear and sadness inducing impact on her which was probably overwhelming and traumatic: “well of course you guess I mean in the end one sees such a dream because of those kind of things because of such an environment… as I said because I heard about them since I was very little.”

She implies that her experience was traumatic by stating that she has not yet shared these accounts with her children in order to avoid traumatic effects. She does not want her children to hear adversities about humans and wants them to know and think about people as good in general, because otherwise she assumes that they may have fearful dreams or may not be able to contain overwhelming emotions like she did as a child: “Now for example I have not yet told my own children; when I was at their age I knew. I am waiting for them to grow a little older to tell them. To avoid these kinds of traumatic things.”

> I mean these are very horrific things I mean hearing this much adversity about humans at this little age is it not? She/He might not be able to bear it, might see bad dreams like I did. It is not necessary; I mean let him/her know people as good for now. Let them know … overall think about better things.

As a child she combined her experience of discrimination, such as having been made fun of by the children on her street because she calls her mother “*mama,”* with the horrific and tragic stories she was exposed to which added to her feeling of insecurity and fear: “Those kinds of things have an impact of course. You combine that with the continuation of the past somehow. There is always a fear following you.”

As an adult reflecting on her and others’ experiences of insecurity and fear she wonders and questions how much fear guides her and those around her. She describes the fearlessness of her grandfather and father and the environment it provided for her when she was growing up and considers herself lucky because she views other Armenian families as guided by fear that creates a traumatic

environment for their offspring. She suspects that her family's relative fearlessness and ease was associated with their tendency to talk about their 1915 past and a context of normalization through talking. However, she also questions herself and her experience since she expresses fear as dominating her childhood (e.g. through her nightmares) and adulthood and prefers to hide her family history from her children until they reach a certain age to avoid traumatic effects. The fearful dreams that she had as a child which were similar in content to her father's dreams also suggest that although there was an environment that encouraged fearlessness, a sense of fear, insecurity and trauma was somehow transmitted non-verbally.

### 4.2 Granddaughters' experiences in response to indirect exposures in childhood

A group of participants reported having heard about their grandparents' experiences and stories mostly in their adulthood either directly from their grandparents or parents or other relatives such as Mişuş, Tanya, Peruz, Pilot 001 and Pilot 002 or for the first time from their parents such as Liya and Dzağig. A majority of these participants expressed that, experiences associated with 1915 were never or rarely talked about in the family during their childhood (Liya, Dzağig, Mişuş, Peruz, Pilot 001, Pilot 002). Yet as children they were somehow exposed to either verbal or non-verbal expressions that indirectly implied the presence of 1915 related experiences which they were able to associate after having gained information in their adulthood.

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Liya is a participant who heard about her family's 1915 past fort the first time in her adult years expresses that as a child and adolescent, she used to observe her parents' silence and sadness surrounding the subject of her paternal grandmother, whom she never knew, and used to question their silence.

> I never met my grandmother. … they rarely talked and like sometimes they would say something about the past and I would be like all ears, and I would ask something, and they would immediately become silent. … or sometimes when I asked something my father would turn red and like he would never smile never laugh. They grew up with those traumas maybe they did not want us to know and be sad.

Liya, as a child who was completely uninformed about the *kesim* (slaughter)- as she calls it,- had thought that this silence was because her mother and paternal grandmother could not get along with each other because her "cantankerous," "unhappy," and "sad" mother had her own traumatic past having lost her father as a young child, having been adopted by a family in which she felt mistreated by her step-mother and not having been sent to school despite her intellectual capacities.

She also remembers visiting a man, who turned out to be her mother's relative, at a mental hospital and describes her childhood experience of how influenced she was by his looks and how confused she was about his presence at a mental hospital. The story behind this man was kept unspoken by her mother until Liya was an adult. Only when her mother told the tragic story of this man was, she able to connect the fragmented pieces of information and make meaning: "Well when you tell this event you understand why the man had gone insane"

> I recall that man for instance… I can never forget that sorrow in his eyes. I was so deeply affected by that. It is still in front of my eyes s/he told me about it much later for instance. S/he did not tell me that such a thing happened when I was a child… in fact I would be like how calm this man is how beautiful eyes he has. I mean I would wonder why they had locked this man here.

Looking back on her past, she reflects and views the silence of her parents as stemming from growing up in a traumatic environment and attempts to protect the offspring from that same environment, from the knowledge and associated feelings of suffering. She also views her parents' attitude to conceal themselves as a result of an environment of prejudice and discrimination.

> I mean how can I interpret this people suffered. There is nothing to comment on. Think about it… you live in that fear you are constantly being mistreated "infidel, infidel". Now, my father for instance had customers… A man would say "I stepped on infidels and came to you," look! You have to always conceal yourself… You are constantly insulted, despised and pushed aside.

She also reports a significant childhood memory which she describes as terrorizing and traumatic and involves an exposure to information about the events surrounding 1915 during her primary school education which she could never get it out of her mind ("Armenians stabbed us in the back, we threw the Greeks into the sea") and which motivated her to insist on continuing her education abroad with a sense of protest.

> I was terrorized. You teach this to a 10-year-old. I mean this is what trauma is… Now I imagine, they pushed these men to the sea and what happened to them and such… why do they think bad about us… So, we are the others I mean you realize it at that age…. The discriminative stuff in the history books affected me very much. I cannot forget that sentence for instance. These need to be replaced from the history books.

She expresses that this exposure about her identity and history made her aware of discrimination and prejudice. Looking back on this experience she reflects on her opinion that these discriminating attitudes should be eliminated, and that history should reflect a more comprehensive perspective along with her feelings of resentment and protest.

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Mişuş who reported that experiences surrounding 1915 were not talked about in the household was exposed indirectly to pieces of information associated with her family's 1915 past.

She for example was curious and confused about why her paternal grandmother called her maternal grandmother *nene* [granny] when she was a child. She was able to make meaning of this confusing situation only after she was able to

put historical pieces together upon her exposure to accumulation of information and her inquiries as she grew older.

> There was an age difference between my paternal grandparents and maternal grandparents. To myself, of course you are a kid, and you can't question, my paternal grandmother would call my maternal grandmother *nene*. Of course, later when I learned certain things I said, "why does she call her *nene*?" Then later on I said, "of course she is going to call her *nene.*"
> At first, I couldn't make sense. Then later suddenly as if someone …poked me I mean I said "are you that stupid why wouldn't she call her *nene* …that is the reason why there is such an age difference" … and I learned this much later all this thing about my maternal grandmother and grandfather's marriage being their second.

Mişuş reflects on and views the silence surrounding the experiences associated with 1915 as a way to protect the offspring from overwhelming emotions, fears and trauma. However, parallel to the silence surrounding this subject the sustenance of Armenian identity was very important and explicit in the environment she grew up. She explains that her family had migrated to Istanbul so that the offspring developed and maintained a sense of Armenian identity through the accessibility to Armenian schools and churches and how her mother insistently attempted to speak in Armenian with the few words she knew. She views this sense of identity was passed on from her family and that she also feels responsible to pass it on to her child and students.

Other pieces of information that she recalls from her childhood and adolescence came from her paternal grandfather who she describes as having given very limited information without getting into details such as " very bad things happened they did this and that to us," "we were attempted to be annihilated," "we were destroyed, banished, we vanished," "When I was at the age of elementary school just as I was going to start school suddenly everything was ruined," "I learned a few words from some people… only a few letters for my education."

According to her account she had reacted to her grandfather's narrative as an adolescent with confrontation: "but grandfather you are telling us all this but like what is my Muslim Turkish friends', current generation's fault? I mean if their grandfathers or fathers did such a thing … what is their fault?!" She views this adolescent reaction as a way to distinguish her own experiences from his, also partly because she was unaware of the scale of experiences behind her grandfather's verbal narrative: "Now as I am saying this I am like 'how ignorant were you!' Because there are things that happened afterwards. 6-7 September, *Varlık Vergisi* [wealth tax] and others…" It is only later when she learns the truth about her grandparents' as well as others' experiences that she is capable of making meaning. With this developed awareness later as an adult, she views her adolescent reaction as "ignorant" and empathizes with her grandfather's position with her adult knowledge of his (and others') experiences and history.

As she reflects on her childhood experience of listening to the pieces of information she was indirectly exposed to, she provides a description of the evolution of her perspective and consciousness. Initially the stories seemed fictional, like "figments of imagination," as the content of the material was too intense and overwhelming for her child mind to grasp and make meaning. However, as her capacities matured and pieces of information that supported the material she was exposed to accumulated, the stories became real. And that recognition seems to have triggered a sense of insecurity and caution.

> You hear it both as a fairy tale, I mean we would listen to these as fairy tales. Like there are accounts that we have heard from other grannies like this torture and that torture was done… Then you read about the things you heard as fairy tales… I mean they are real! I mean these are things that are supposed to happen in horror movies, but they are real. Things that seem like fairy tales… first you are like "no, it can't be this much" or like "could this be?" I mean at that age your consciousness is not suitable for it. But on the other hand, you record it in other words you don't forget it. When the time

> comes or when your awareness is developed you are like “oh, this is more than you assume. Anything can happen anytime”. I mean now I am a mother, and I didn’t raise my son with these fears but when it is appropriate, I tell him “Son, we have our share of lived experiences” in other words “don’t talk about everything everywhere”. I have to give this to him. Because I live in this geography.

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Dzağig reported that she did not know about her family’s 1915 past until she was an adult: “to tell you the truth …I have no idea in other words no information about this subject. Things that we’ve heard from second-hand as a matter of fact these kinds of things were really never talked about in our childhood.”

Although she does not have the adequate information to tell whether her maternal grandmother experienced 1915, she suspects that at least she might have heard others’ experiences or have had relatives who had experienced 1915 considering her age and place of origin. She remembers her maternal grandmother talking about her family before marriage, the wealth and comfort she grew up in, and her impoverished life after marriage but never about experiences associated with 1915 as she was growing up.

As she was reflecting on her childhood experiences associated with being the granddaughter of 1915, she reported having been exposed to cautious and restraining warnings, that she never questioned and obeyed, from her mother with attempts to conceal their identity in public such as not to speak in Armenian and not to wear a cross necklace in public.

> What my mother used to tell us was … « call me mother not *mama* when we are outside » like « call me mother not *mama* on the bus »… and actually we never asked. I mean we would not ask why we should call you like that. I guess we were also a little ignorant.

In her accounts while acknowledging her unquestioning attitude as a child and adolescent, she is unable to remember and reflect on what it might have felt like.

Instead, she adopts a narrative that conveys she was not affected by her mother's behaviors perhaps because she did not know the motivation behind it. However, she also admits that as an adult she continues her mother's practice due to fear of possible external threat.

> I wasn't affected, I wasn't affected I mean I say it too often I mean maybe I wasn't affected because I don't know any details. Ok my mother said don't call me mama call me mother, but I wasn't affected. But then with that fear even today I cannot wear a cross on my neck.

At the end of her interview Dzağig recalled a significant memory about her paternal grandmother from her childhood when she was younger than 5-6 years old.

> My grandmother… the only thing about her that I remember. …On a record player a folk song for some reason has always stayed in my mind. She would ask my mother to put it on saying "won't you play this?" …she would cry while listening to it. Called "I lost my baby along the banks of a flood." She lost two of her children during that period. That two children from her first husband. That's what I heard from my mother years later…I remember her crying while listening to this song and this line has been stuck in my mind. … of course, when you're a kid you don't understand it but because she cried when that line played somehow it stuck in my brain and my mother said "yes she would make us play that song and listened to it and cried because she had lost her children" … I remember her crying but I am a child right so at that time it never occurred to me to ask such a question like "why is she crying?" But then years later when my mother told the story well then, I mean I understood I mean I recognized that she was crying for that reason. That scene just came in front of my eyes.

She expresses how she couldn't make sense of her grandmother's crying and never questioned it and how that scene as well as the striking title of the song was engraved into her memory. However, later when her mother told her the story of her grandmother, she was able to connect that memory with her story. She also reports that her mother had revealed to her that her father had searched a lot for his half-siblings when Dzağig was a child and that these were talked about only in secrecy. As an adult she views this secrecy and silence as stemming from a fear of external threat based on past traumatic experiences.

> They never told anything. Why they did not I do not know but they didn't. Well, I assume may be because so many bad things happened during those times. Maybe they were afraid that some people would hear about it could be misunderstood. Maybe they were afraid to get hurt otherwise why would someone hide it. I think perhaps that's why.

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Tanya, whose main knowledge about her family's and her surrounding's 1915 history consists of exposures during her adulthood, reported that experiences associated with 1915 were sometimes talked about in the household as she was asked about her childhood and adolescence exposure.

> Sometimes it was talked about what they did and like why should it be like this that's it. Not every minute. But I mean of course things have happened of course … some talks would happen like what they did and such I mean our elders know more I mean that period.

She only talked about one memory that referred to her childhood experience around 4-5 years of age which involved an experience that came from an outside source, someone from her neighborhood who claimed to have committed crimes during 1915.

> We had a neighbor; I mean an old man ... a rooster a chicken was being cut. Right across our street they are cutting chicken… and he knows we are the grandchildren of a *madam* … then "look girl you see" he said. … "I" he said "always beheaded Armenians' heads like this" he said. … that has had a big I mean effect from that man … I mean at the time I am an infant like 3-4 years 5 years old he is showing me that there. ... Blood and cutting he is saying "look girl" "do you see" he said "I slaughtered Armenians like this" "their throats" he said. … When I heard it, I was a child I went along but see it has nested in me I don't know my reaction at that time … but I did tell "look mommy and daddy" "this man this neighbor said such a thing" … During that time among friends for example in the neighborhood they always would play with me as like I mean the infidel Armenian. So apparently there were ignorant at the time… it had become like a habit shouting "Armenian! Armenian!" … I would sometimes get angry and say, "what are you saying?!" "You go ahead and look at your game what is this Armenian every minute?" So those kinds of things happened I mean.

Although her account does not reflect directly what she felt as a child perhaps because she was too young to verbalize her feelings, her narrative as an adult, which

is followed by a childhood experience of discrimination and involving Tanya's reaction of anger and protest, suggests that it was a very significant experience that had an intense and overwhelming effects.

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Peruz, grew up in close proximity with her maternal grandmother and aunts, reports that talking about the experiences regarding 1915 were a taboo in her family until she and her generation were adults. In her childhood she was exposed to pieces of information regarding her maternal grandmother's experiences from her grandmother which were interfered with by her aunts when she was growing up.

> In our childhood these things would not really be talked about. I mean actually we never knew until a certain age; all these were taboo. It was never talked about. My grandmother would constantly talk and say things, but my aunts would silence her because that fear had penetrated them. I mean they would not let her talk with the worry that some trouble would happen again.

She was exposed to an environment in which her second-generation aunts intervened to silence and prevent her grandmother with anger and fears of possible external threat: "My aunts would get angry at my grandmother…'enough mom already' like 'don't be this hostile' … 'not all Turks did this!'"

Her experience as a child was a grandmother who was strict, rigid, cold and distant towards her grandchildren, who was cantankerous, demanding, complaining and in constant distress and who lived with intense hatred especially towards Turkish people.

> But my grandmother would always say this thing, there was this thing that never left her mouth…. [in Armenian] meaning "there is no sweet onion". I mean mmm really, she was in this great hatred [her voice starts to tremble]. Mmm but of course it is very possible to understand her [voice trembles]. We of course did not understand her at that age I mean we still don't of course hatred is such a bad feeling but uuhhh it is very difficult I mean impossible of course not to grant her the right. … she didn't want any Turk to enter her house… like my aunt would say "mom look don't be like this s/he is a good person" and such. "No!" like "Don't let that person in this house" like "when I was dependent on a piece of bread nobody gave me that piece of bread".

> Like “Don’t give him/her food” or anything constantly her biggest thing problem was this. … we see in the movies and so on like those women who never smile… my grandmother was like that she was a very tough woman. I mean never did she take us and caress or show love I mean I am sure she loved from the inside, but we never experienced such a thing like come on my girl and like caress and show love or share something … she never did such a thing … she always had a demand always had something to be angry about always had a problem.

Peruz remembers her grandmother also as frequently complaining and expressing her anger about the people involved in her survival process: the Armenian family that took her from another soldier’s family and the soldier’s family in which she was physically and emotionally abused by the stepmother. She also recalls her grandmother talking about her contentedness and happiness in her own family before 1915. She however also remembers a significant story that she heard from her grandmother that involved a tragic loss:

> She would talk about this thing I remember look what she would say uhh her sibling well on her back uhh while she was walking her own little sibling and she is like 11 or something. Uhh while walking well her sibling asks for water and there, they see a mud puddle and she bends over well to give her sibling water uhh and someone approaches from behind and stabs her sibling with a bayonet. Her sibling dies there … she would tell this.

In this confusing environment Peruz remembers not being able to understand and make sense of her grandmother’s attitude and being indifferent to her when she was a child. As an adult she expresses that she still doesn’t understand her grandmother because “hatred is a very bad feeling” however identifying with her grandmother’s feelings she feels that her grandmother had the right to feel that way.

> I was a child. When my grandmother died, I was 17 actually but as I said my grandmother was not someone who would communicate with us much. I mean may be if it was like this like if she had taken us to her side and was like “come on my child” and then if she would start to tell us then maybe we would have been more like … she did not share these things with us. …she would sit in her chair, and she would talk to herself and say things. As a matter of fact, we didn’t care for what she said … we question ourselves. … but at the time we did not have this awareness and we really didn’t know… because my grandmother did not talk much and share with us, I always remember my grandmother as this woman this cranky woman, ill-tempered

> like always angry … and we would always be like shy away from her … we never shared that thing I mean she did not form that love bond.

She also questions herself as an adult for being indifferent and unaware as a child and expresses her regretful feelings; however also expresses her opinion that perhaps this attitude was partially due to the lack of connection and warmth with her grandmother, partially due to the limited capacities of being a child, in other words if she was older before her grandmother passed away, she would have been more aware. She also refers to the fact that the silence of her family with regards to the history of 1915 contributed to her childhood confusion and indifference about her grandmother. Yet she expresses her indecisiveness associated with sharing the history of 1915 to children as she views her children to have been influenced traumatically because they were exposed to the stories from a very early age.

> I remember more about her until I was 14. I mean it is not a very small age of course but I mean it is also not an age where I would be conscious enough to hear her out. But we would understand and know that there was something against Turks… that my grandmother had this anger this hatred but would not know the reason and such. I mean nobody told us that this kind of a genocide happened like this and that happened to your grandmother nobody. Much later. I mean I guess it was about 20 years ago that these were talked about for the first time. But our children's situation is more traumatic. For example, now my daughter … She has been hearing about these since 3 years of age. I don't know if it's better or worse. How good is it to grow up with these? I mean I don't know. Only a psychologist can figure these out [laughs] It's difficult for us to figure out.

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Pilot 002 who learned about her family's 1915 past mostly during her adulthood recalls a sense of a past that was supposed to be talked about in her adolescence due to the gaps she felt in the family narrative as well as pieces of material that were related to the family's 1915 that came to the surface: "I don't remember how it started. I mean there was always this thing in the background, I mean something that was meant to be talked about."

> I mean the gaps about my grandmother and grandfather. Then well there is this dowry stuff and then… I mean I saw it later and it's a very painful thing. My grandmother's aunt's dowry. There is no one from my grandmother's father's family because they deny converting to Islam and after Samsun … I mean they are gone, and they cease to exist from then on. This 17-year-old aunt as she is leaving there is this thing that she embroidered in her dowry. She embroidered a girl with a severed I mean she embroidered severed her own head and such and then an embroidery. She embroidered the Ottoman crest I mean as a dowry and all. Very very strange. I mean I guess as these things surfaced what happened and how it happened started to be talked about a little bit more. I didn't pick on it much.

She expresses a lack of interest and inquiry when these pieces of information surfaced in her family. She however refers to her pain in response to seeing a piece of her grandmother's aunt's dowery later in her adulthood.

Pilot 002 also recalls being exposed to certain attitudes and warnings that were related to her family's past however was not aware of the reasons behind these until she was an adult when she was more informed and able to make connections: "I wasn't aware as I was growing up."

Her mother had strongly told her to be silent about her boredom and dissatisfaction about not learning anything else about history other than Atatürk's life when she was in primary school. She later associated her mother's intense reaction to her tendency to hide herself and identity by remaining withdrawn and silent. Pilot 002 perceives this attitude as imposed on her by her mother, as an attitude that was passed on to her mother from her own family with a past of having survived as the single family in an Anatolian village with a continuous sense of insecurity and fear especially on Pilot 002's maternal grandfather side who remained Muslim after 1915 (contrary to her maternal grandmother's side who eventually maintained their Christian identity).She thinks that the secretive attitude of her mother's family was also a result of a "protective instinct" to protect the offspring from feelings of hatred towards Turks and Kurds and living in this country.

4.3 Granddaughters' experiences in response to exposures in adulthood

All of the participants expressed a form of adult exposure associated with their family's 1915 past. Some questioned and explored their family past on their own initiative, some were told about their grandparents' experiences by their parents, grandparents or other relatives following a specific triggering event. Some participants heard about their family's 1915 past for the first time in their adulthood whereas others enhanced their knowledge of their family past with exposure during their adulthood. All participants also reported exposures to other Armenians' experiences and stories, especially through published books and encounters with other Armenians (partners and their families, friends, community members). The participants' narratives also consisted of other types of experiences such as personal losses, personal encounters with friends, colleagues, neighbors, as well as observations and/or witnessing of social and political responses that were associated with 1915.

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Mardiryan, who had learned her family's survival story surrounding 1915 from her mother when she was a child, revealed that she learned more about the experiences associated with 1915 as an adult through reading books, through encounters with others and asking questions to her mother. She expresses that she became aware of the events surrounding 1915 after her 20s and developed further awareness during her 30s when more books were published. Until that time she remembers not being informed due to the lack of published books or lack of people who have had similar family histories. She states: "Then I realized that these exiles

happened from all over Anatolia from all over Turkey and that we were very lucky. Because only eighteen people died in the resistance."

According to Mardiryan she was able to develop an awareness about her family's and her community's experience in relation to the others' experiences during 1915 as she was exposed to more information especially through her readings. She revealed that this consciousness developed a sense of gratitude for not having experienced as much loss as others did. When she reflected on how she experienced this awareness, she expressed responses associated with suffering and loss that she was not aware before. Especially with regards to the book that described her family's and community's survival story she expressed her opinion that it was "a very intense book" which she learned that: "The occurrences, actually, what has been transmitted; we learn that they are true. The tongue cutting, ear cutting… we now know that they are all true." For that reason, she did not want her child to read it until he was 25 years old. These accounts suggest that her reaction to the truth behind the experiences she partially heard from her mother since her childhood can be considered to involve overwhelming and intense feelings.

Mardiryan also communicated another type of exposure as an adult in her relationship with her mother that provided her with another level of meaning of what was passed on from her grandmother's experience through her mother. She was able to make meaning of her mother's mistrust in relationships especially with people from Kurdish descent and her warnings not to trust them after a disappointing experience with a Kurdish friend who called her "a foreigner" when she was forty years old. She describes the experience as "too overwhelming" and finds herself agreeing with her mother:

> I realized my mother was right. And until this day I am a little distant… to all people now. … As I said I think the women that came pregnant, and all had

> affected her very much… She thought that the Kurds had done a lot of evil… I guess that had affected her a lot. She never trusted the Kurds. She didn't trust people much in general.

Mardiryan's development of awareness seems to have both developed as a result of her curiosity and willingness to learn and educate herself about her past and resulted in further research and willingness to communicate her knowledge to others and offspring by facilitating her mother to talk around her children. She finds it important that her children "know their past," "know that they have such a history. So that they can build their personalities accordingly."

She continues to search for the missing pieces of her family narrative especially the narrative of her father's side of the family which she knows very little about since she lost her father at a very early age and because her mother never talked about her father. She knows from her paternal uncle that her paternal grandmother's family did not join others who went to the mountains because they said that they trusted the government and they would go wherever they were directed. No contact was re-established with that side of the family. She also reports knowing that her paternal grandfather was captured initially, however he managed to escape and hide in the streets and later went to the mountains.

Within the context of her interest in collecting information about her family past she expressed her sense of remorse and loss with regard to not having recorded her mother's narratives: "I look back and wish that I had recorded these. It is such a great loss for me"

Overall, when asked about her experience about being the granddaughter of grandparents that witnessed 1915, she reflects on her opinions and experiences. Her reflection seems to include an acknowledgement of the hardships of being a third generation Armenian as well as a distinction between her family's and community's

experience from others'. Based on that distinction she emphasizes a humanistic approach, significance of resistance and sense of community.

> To be the grandchild of those who experienced great suffering … I think it is very difficult. …We love our country. We resent the fact that we have to leave. But it is such a difficult thing to live here. For Armenians I mean… Because women are more resilient, they can confront difficulties more. I believe women are the reason behind how they reached this day. Because they resisted. … As I said because we didn't experience that suffering that way, I guess we can look at it more differently… we don't feel hatred much like others do. …We approach more humanely. We know again that the same potential exists in this country. But yet we are the people of this place, and we argue that we are going to stay here. Perhaps I will be one of those who will resist. Of course, we would not want to be in such a position because it will be too difficult for our country, but we need to stay.

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Liya is one of the participants who heard about her own family's 1915 past when she was an adult. She was exposed to information about her paternal grandparents from her father after a coincidental experience and some information from her mother. She learned from her father that her grandmother's husband was taken away, her mother was killed violently by a gendarme's assault and that she had to give away her two children, a two-year-old son and an eight-year-old daughter, separately during exile so that they had a chance to survive and that she never heard back from any of them ever again. Although she was thought dead and left to herself by the convoy, she was taken by a woman who took care of her.

> She didn't eat for days. They just gave her water from her mouth. … She was apparently a very faithful woman she didn't turn away from her religion. My father had told, she said 'I saw Jesus. I saw a very bright light. Jesus came and said I will save you and then I woke up.'

Her paternal grandfather on the other hand had travelled to Istanbul to go to the United States to work where he was captured, put into a train to Anatolia. He was able to escape the convoy during a layover, blinded by attacks while he was trying to escape through the border, managed to seek refuge in a farm across the border where

he was hidden and taken care of. He had also lost his wife and daughter whom he never heard from.

As her father never talked about his family's 1915 past Liya's first exposure to her family past from her father was triggered by a coincidental event during her 20s when some young man asked her whether she was from a city in Anatolia and told her that she looked like someone from there. Liya described her father's reaction as she talked about the conversation to her father: "… my father turned purple. He said, "go find that man!" Upon her confusion and inquiry, he told her about his mother's story that "during *çart* period' in other words during the slaughter" she had left her two-year-old son to her neighbors. That was the first time he talked about this past. Liya describes the effect of this exposure as "it was a huge trauma for me", "I was 20 years old. Can you imagine what I felt?! I cried for days and days." Although she tried to find the man who approached her, she was unsuccessful because of the circumstances that led to the 1980 military coup. She describes feeling regret because she couldn't find him and that "It never occurred to me… maybe if they had told me about it, I would have made an association."

According to her narrative her responses at the time of exposure included a sense of shock, sadness, remorse, guilt and helplessness as well as a sense of resentment in response to her father's silence as she asks him "Why didn't you tell?" and tells him "We would have found him." However, her reflection on this experience later suggests an understanding of her father's approach of silence about the past.

> These people have seen the slaughter, have seen *Varlık Vergisi*… but on the other hand my father used to talk to mediums and fortune tellers. He couldn't find his siblings; he gave up hope. On the other hand, he said let them at least live a comfortable life. I mean it is one thing for him to find them, another thing for him to not find them. I mean to be an Armenian here in Turkey is like a curse.

She expressed after the coincidental experience that allowed for her father to talk about his family past, a social environment was also formed as a result of the actions of ASALA and murder of Hrant Dink that allowed more free communication about the issue. She also expressed her curiosity and inquisitiveness regarding her past. However, her knowledge about her own family's past remained limited both because her parents sustained their silence because they showed indications of sadness and suffering which Liya was respectful towards and made it difficult for her to question further.

Although she acknowledges that her parents' observable sadness and unhappiness and her grandparents' suffering have made a deep impact on her she views that these experiences also made her "a stronger person". She describes this influence through an emphasis on her paternal grandmother's strong capacity for survival and resilience in the face of great loss. Her identification with her grandmother's struggles allows her to look beyond her own troubles.

> They have encountered great suffering. I wish they hadn't, but now what my *yaya* went through, she lost her husband, her family, her children, she came back from the dead but at some point, she remarried and held onto life, had children and grandchildren lost a son due to cancer… still she was able to stand tall… for example whenever I encounter a problem what she experienced makes me strong. For example, when I am in distress, I tell myself 'Are you an idiot?!' … 'This is not even a problem compared to what she went through.'

On the other hand, she also expresses intense sadness in response to events and experiences that remind her of her grandparents' experiences of trauma, loss and suffering as the downside of being a granddaughter.

> I mean yes there is also a downside of being her granddaughter… For example, I cry every night. What did those children experience. I don't know for example I see Syrians begging on the streets …. In that moment I recall what those people experienced in the past. I feel it in my skin. My *yaya* gave her children away to save them from dying and starvation.

As Liya reflects on her experience of encountering people who are the offspring of individuals who have experienced 1915 and in search for their lost family members due to the nature of her work she expresses her feelings of intense helplessness and how these encounters "trigger a great trauma for" her associated with her own family history of suffering and loss:

> When I go to bed at night, I also ask who took those children, did they love them or abuse them? Did they use them as slaves, with whom did they marry, did they have children or not? Have they become a Turk and an enemy to us? We don't know a thing.

Other types of social exposures, such as a friend telling her "You stabbed us" referring to the past, seem to trigger a sense of anger, protest and a sense of responsibility to communicate information "to new generations without falling into hatred. This is partly why I accepted to have this interview."

Despite these deep influences that seem to affect her daily life she repeatedly expresses her preference to look beyond her family's and community's experiences and sufferings because "there is so much evil in these current times." She does not want to put the 1915 past and her experience as a granddaughter into the center of her approach: "My life is not made up of a feeling of 'I am a granddaughter of a victim of genocide'." She expresses to prefer a rational, analytical, active, responsible and future oriented approach in the face of personal and social distress and trouble.

Alongside this preference, she expresses feelings of resentment, anger and protest associated with Turkish and world politics that promote hatred, discrimination, wars and suffering with a sense of responsibility, activism and request for change, viewing the 1915 history and current dynamics associated with 1915 and Armenians as only a small piece of a greater world problem: "Everybody hates each other. What's the point? There is place for everyone. It's a huge country."

However, she also adds her desire for the Turkish government to acknowledge and apologize for the 1915 past: “I would at least want for the government to express that they feel sorry…Love your people love them!!”

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Mişuş reported that experiences surrounding 1915 were not talked about in the household however she was also indirectly exposed to pieces of information about her family’s 1915 past. Her own inquiries and research allowed her to access information about her family past and to integrate pieces to form a family narrative. One of the resources of information was her maternal uncle’s wife upon her inquiries and the other was her relatives from her maternal grandfather’s sister’s lineage which she was able to find out and reunite in Armenia years later.

> My mother’s parents in 1915, during genocide or *tehcir* or whatever you call it, during that time both are married, and they face exile. Both lose their spouses and children; it is their second marriage for both. From this second marriage my mother, my aunts and my uncles are born. Naturally the age difference between my paternal grandmother and maternal grandmother is due to this. … with more awareness and questioning it became apparent.

She learns the story of her maternal grandfather’s sisters from her relatives in Armenia who were separated during 1915 and reunited in Armenia during late 1960s. Their separation after a six-month union was, according to her account, re-traumatizing. She also learns the background of certain names of family members that were given by her grandfather and his sister to offspring with attempts to keep those names “alive.”

According to Mişuş, reunion with her relatives in Armenia has evoked mixed feelings. On the one hand it has triggered a sense of fulfillment, connection and warmth. On the other hand, it evoked a sense of alienation, disconnection and pain.

> Very different feelings. I mean relative? Yes… A relative acquired recently. We are sincerely connected. …But still I question ‘who was he/she again’ …

> I mean there is a blood connection but not a heart connection … I mean there is no effort in the relationship yet.

Mişuş expresses the sadness she felt upon hearing the stories of her maternal grandparents for the first time as a result of her inquiries:

> I was so sad, so so very sad. I was very sad. ... I learned that one of my aunts' name was actually my grandfather's mother's name. It is a very interesting name; it is not a common name. … I always used to question what kind of a name this is and such, it is a very old name and today in the community … the name doesn't exist. Apparently, it was my grandfather's mother's name.

She also acknowledges the "matter-of-fact" quality in which the stories were told as she was questioning as an adult:

> Because I questioned. …I had asked I heard something what the truth behind it is. They told it not in a like this was a traumatic event kind of manner but as an ordinary thing. … There is a taken for granted attitude.

She also expresses her mixed feelings associated with her mother's silence on her own family history. She feels angry and resentful but at the same time empathizes with her mother's possible feelings and silence in response to the difficult life conditions - such as migration and integration to a new city and social environment, being a bride in a crowded family, being responsible of all the housework of a crowded house- she lived in as a woman and mother.

> I heard it from my uncle's wife. I can say that I heard about ten years ago I mean my mother didn't talk… Think about it is not communicated… On the one hand I get angry but then I am like what kind of a feeling it must be.

According to her view her family's limited communication of the first generation's experiences stemmed from attempts to protect the offspring from growing up with fear.

> So that we don't grow up with that fear… It is a bad thing to live with such things like all that fear like this is going to happen to me I am also going to experience genocide I am going to face discrimination my neighbors are going to harm me. …I think it is a defense mechanism. I mean it was in the moderate amount even if such adversities were experienced, they were expressed in a moderate amount.

As she reflects on what she has learned about her family history she expresses her opinions and feelings of resentment associated with the sudden discontinuity of a cultural and social heritage including education, language and history.

> For example, my paternal grandmother was illiterate, she did not know her mother, but her granny was a college graduate. She spoke both Armenian and English, she was literate. But my grandmother was illiterate, can you imagine? As generations progress the education level is supposed to improve. You have a grandparent who speaks in more than one language, but you have nothing, you are not even literate. … Because all the schools and so on were destroyed. … my paternal grandmother's father or grandfather… goes to the US and works there… He comes back and builds a school in … Can you imagine that building was built by one of my relatives however it is now called by somebody else's name.

She also expresses her regret on not having had the chance to record the experiences of individuals from the first generation: "It is sad really. …'they are gone' destroyed gone to grave."

As an adult Mişuş reflects on the experience of being the granddaughter of 1915 and reveals that this experience involves a sense of insecurity, caution as well as feelings of sadness, suffering and anger through identification and empathy with those who have experienced 1915. As a mother she feels the need to warn her son to be cautious and measured about his public presentation of himself because of the insecurity she feels associated with living in a country where "everything can happen any moment." On the other hand, while doing so she doesn't want to interfere with his developing sense of identity.

Mişuş views that being the grandchild growing up with the exposure to the experiences of 1915 is in itself traumatic. And that the traumatic effect shifts its form as awareness and knowledge about the experiences associated with 1915 grows in which identifying herself and empathizing with the women who experienced 1915

becomes overwhelmingly painful so much that she becomes tearful as she is talking about it during the interview.

> Inevitably you grow up with this trauma. Even if you don't experience it one on one you have this "anything can happen any minute" in your mind. And I am so sad for the women. … Imagine you have your baby in your arms, you are supposed to breast feed… you are going to menstruate. And you have *çarık* on your feet not Nike sports shoes and such like you have today. [becomes tearful]. And somebody is going to … I mean in front of other people is going to rape you, I mean when you think about these things one experiences a different kind of trauma. I mean you become like, it could have happened to me [trembling voice, crying]. [silence]. … even if it didn't happen to me still I can under… I mean you empathize. It never had occurred to me. One day I said to myself… how could a menstruating woman walk that road! What did she do?! I mean in this city life we are like "which kind of sanitary pad should I use?" … on the one hand with people that you don't know what to do with fear of death, threat of rape all the time… on the other hand you have left your home, your everything behind. Imagine… [tearful, short silence]

As she reflects on this account in her second interview, she also adds the effects of motherhood on her awareness as well as her feelings of anger and rage.

> When individuals become more aware, experiences things more intensely like before and after motherhood… These kinds of things change one's assessment of events, emotions and thoughts. …Motherhood you think about children. You think about the trauma they experienced I mean the parents. Imagine that you are being raped, in front of your children or they take away your children or you are forced to leave your children. Because you can't feed them breast feed them… After you become a mother, you internalize these differently. That's why this awareness or the anger and rage you feel about the incidents is carried to a different level.

Mişuş's effortful inquiries during her adulthood expands beyond the family context as she maintains her contact through written materials and community relations. These encounters have contributed to her development of awareness and consciousness as well as a sense of responsibility: "I was always inside the community inside my culture. Maybe that's why both because I am a woman and have an awareness in this sense, I have a different point of view."

Reflecting on her sense of responsibility to hold onto her culture and language as well as to pass on this culture and language, to promote a sense of

belongingness to younger generations Mişuş expresses her ambivalent feelings. On the one hand she feels fulfilled because it gives her a sense of belongingness and a role in her community. However, on the other hand she sometimes experiences it as a burden, as a role she can never quit.

> It gives you something else like it always gives you a sense of holding onto something. But at the same time it is a burden. …Do I have to carry this?... It is like a mission to me; you feel like a task is given to you. …I don't only perform this task professionally; I live according to these feelings. It is like volunteering … it creates a different lifestyle. You can't just ignore things. … You care for things other people don't care for. … And that is how you function within the community.

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Dzağig who considered herself as having "no" knowledge about the experiences surrounding 1915 and as having grown up in a family in which these experiences were never talked about, reported in her accounts information that she heard from her husband and husband's uncle in family dinners after her marriage and information that she had heard about her own family's 1915 past for the first time from her mother. Her mother who had remained silent on the subject for years told Dzağig the accounts she heard from her mother-in-law (Dzağig's paternal grandmother) within the context created after the murder of Hrant Dink.

> She would tell, sit down and cry. … There her husband died. Then she lost her children while she was escaping with them. Then of course years later after the incidents she married my father[1]. She told this story to my mother but that's it. … I heard it from my mother.

She adds that the awareness about the existence of experiences surrounding 1915 developed through her encounters with accounts from other people around her, including her husband and his family, especially his uncle.

[1] Dzağig says "father" here but during the interview she corrects this as "grandfather."

As an adult she suspects that her grandmother and family was silent about these experiences because they felt silenced, insecure and afraid of external threat.

> But none of them talked as if silenced. They didn't talk for years I mean. My maternal grandmother would tell things but not those incidents… nothing about 1915. Perhaps what happened during that period scared them? I think they did not talk to us as if they were silenced.
> I ask if it is fear. I associate perhaps being silenced, and fear I mean. Just like how my mother says "don't call me *mama* call me *anne"* … why would say something like that, right? Perhaps with the fear of external threat. Nothing comes to my mind other than fear.

When she was asked about her response to the information she was exposed to in her adulthood, she conveys mixed feelings. On the one hand she acknowledges being affected and saddened by the stories. On the other hand, she refers to hearing the stories as if they don't belong to her and expresses a questioning attitude with regards to the truth of the stories. Within this context she also expresses her current experience as distress free and happy which she distinguishes from the experiences conveyed in the stories.

> Of course, you get affected. It is impossible not to be affected. But because we didn't experience it in person you listen to it like a story. Actually, now because we didn't experience it, I don't know the truth behind it. … Surely of course there is truth to it. I mean of course if someone is telling something one must have experienced it… Of course, they are painful things these are sad… but in actuality we are in no distress. … There is nothing bothering us here. We have never experienced such a thing up until now. For that reason, we are happy about our lives.

She states that in her opinion what is lived in the past should be left in the past and forgotten because there is nothing to do about it, that they should be forgotten, and these things should not be reflected on, thought about or talked about: "There is nothing to be done… we live in this country, how far can you go thinking the depths of the issue? One shouldn't think." She also expresses her discomfort when these topics are publicly spoken or even when spoken on television programs.

In her accounts she reflects cautiousness not to accuse today's society for what happened in the past and conveys her worry that talking about these issues may offend some people who in reaction might pose a threat.

However, she also questions and wonders about her previous unquestioning attitude in relation to the relative curiosity and inquisitiveness of the following generation she refers to her "matter-of-fact" attitude: "… it wasn't a current subject like it is today back then for that reason we didn't feel the need to dig out this incident. We thought of it as something that happened and passed."

Her questioning attitude seems to have also been triggered in response to her participation in the study although accompanied by feelings of distress, considering her accounts in the beginning of the second interview.

> I started thinking about the past after our previous meeting. Did I perhaps take it more seriously now? maybe because it wasn't talked about in our home? … Perhaps I am thinking more about the past now… about that subject… I have never thought about it until this age. … After our interview I guess I was preoccupied with that subject… but it bothered me a little perhaps. It bothered me because as I said we live in this country. I still think that way, one shouldn't poke the past much. I mean there is no need. And we really love the country, I mean this country.

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Tanya grew up in a family where some talking occurred in the household as she was growing up. But most of the information about her family's 1915 heritage accumulated during her adulthood. Her paternal grandmother, whom she grew up and had a warm relationship with and stayed in close contact with after her marriage, had told her granddaughter Tanya about her experiences from the past including her relationship with her mother-in-law but also her experiences during 1915 especially after Tanya was married. According to her grandmother's accounts she was given to a distant relative and married when she was around 14 years of age.

> Grandmother was a child apparently… she would say to me… that's all she said… 'They took all the men and that was it. They never came back.' That's all my grandmother said. She said, 'They lined up all the men, tied their hands, and took them away, there was no more of my father after that.' …That I heard a few times from her.

She was also exposed to some knowledge about the survival experiences of her maternal grandfather, whom she never knew. She was told by her mother that her grandfather was a soldier and that he survived by the warnings of his Turkish friends to disguise his name and to use instead a Turkish name.

She conveys other brief information associated with experiences surrounding 1915, such as people being forced to exile in deserts, people killed by bayonets, children given to others by their mothers, women thrown off from cliffs, that she knows through her parents, other family members and other acquaintances and books with an acknowledgement of the extent of events that occurred at the time.

Tanya expresses that her knowledge is limited and that what was communicated to her consisted of "a few words": "…there is nothing else I mean I don't know. Just a few of these words from my *yaya* and parents." However, she also conveys that these experiences were talked within the family every once in a while, and what she narrates seems to be more than the knowledge she devalues as "a few words".

As Tanya is asked to reflect on her reactions upon hearing about her family's (particularly her paternal grandmother's) experiences surrounding 1915 for the first time she mentions her shock and denial followed by a realization and acknowledgement of the extent of events and experience with a sense of regret and helplessness.

> We were like 'how could this have happened' … of course you cannot … what they experienced I mean it is written in books and shown in movies. The elders know better but you know you read and such, but a lot of things happened.

> I mean one would wish these never happened, but they happened back then. … I mean there is nothing to be done. But everyone has a lived experienced in their families they might not know but I mean there is proof that something happened to the elders.

Tanya, perhaps through identifying with her grandmother's experiences, seems to express some interest with regards to the story behind the partial information she had about her grandmother who had married at a very young age, which was associated with her experiences regarding 1915, and who complained in her conversations about her mother-in-law and her house responsibilities: "I would say 'why did you marry that early when you were 13 years old.' She hadn't started menstruating yet and they make her marry I mean she had children after 2-3 years."

Upon reflection she seems to acknowledge that her grandmother must have been affected and traumatized by her experiences: "… there are experiences I mean as a child my grandmother was apparently influenced, she says 'they tied them, and I was a kid then I looked, and my father was gone.'" Referring to her grandmother's father's deportation and experience of having been given to distant relatives for marriage by her mother for protection she explains: "…all of them apparently experienced trauma … they saved their daughters I mean what thirteen or twelve… she would say 'they made me marry when I was thirteen, I didn't know anything' ... her mother was worried during that time as her husband had disappeared."

As she is asked to reflect on feelings in response to being exposed to the stories coming from various resources, she conveys mixed emotions. On the one hand she expresses feelings of regret, helplessness, anger, resentment, and insecurity. However, on the other hand within the context of talking about her feelings regarding the effects of having been exposed to such stories and experiences she repeats her current experience of contentedness in her relationships with non-Armenians and about living in this country.

> We get along fine we are good but of course we say, 'wish it didn't happen'. …I mean these things happened… but there is nothing to be done so we get along fine now but it did happen back in the day. Wish it didn't happen I mean why did they do such a thing? Well so there can be anger at some point. But we get along, so now we are fine.
> We get along but to a certain point. Like I don't have any bad feelings but I mean why was such a thing done of course you get angry at some point but there is nothing to do about it. We get along… we are Turkish citizens here; all of our things are conducted well.

Yet she also expresses that the relational accord has its limits, and that limit comes as close as being neighbors but not as close as joining families through marriage. She considers herself as a fanatic with regards to internal affairs for protection.

Within this context she also expresses her critical attitude towards Armenians that attempt to conceal their public identities (such as using Turkish names in public) and reveals her preference to be open about her own identity in public but according to her account public presentation also should have a limitation due to the insecurities of living in this country giving Hrant Dink's murder as an example.

> There is this nervousness within the Armenian people… there has always been a timidness you can't be totally comfortable… you can't just come out and talk you can live here but you cannot be very comfortable.

In her accounts it is evident that although she feels angry especially with regards to the past traumas, discrimination and denial of the 1915 past she prefers not to let those feelings become explicit in her relationships and turn into hatred.

> Of course, I get angry to certain things, but I never let myself to evil you should always be good with the good. I mean of course you get emotional sometimes … even if someone does something bad, I will not give them the chance.

Additionally, according to her accounts there is a pattern in her mixed feelings. Feelings of regret, anger, resentment and insecurity associated with the past traumas come and go as life goes on and feelings of contentedness come to the foreground: "…you wish they didn't happen. Why did such thing happen? But then

you forget and get along with life I mean otherwise we are comfortable now what can I say I am content living in Turkey."

> Well of course there are memories from our past but there is no point in doing… of course they never pass they happened. Of course, I didn't see in person I am referring to what I heard. … Every family has it… but there is nothing to do about it. I mean it is in the past wish those things never happened, they will never be erased from memories. But life goes on. … Armenian people definitely have a lot of traumas.

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Peruz, who was exposed to pieces of information regarding her maternal grandmother's experience when she was growing up, learned and heard mostly about the 1915 past when she was in her adulthood years. She was informed about her family narrative of the maternal side of her family mostly from one of her four aunts who told about the stories she had heard from her own father and whose narrative was recorded within the family suggesting an interest about the family past.

Peruz narrates the story of her maternal grandfather and grandmother in detail with sadness and in tears. Her maternal grandmother was a daughter of a wealthy family in one of the northern cities before 1915. During 1915 her father and brother was taken away never to be heard from again. She is forced to take the road with her mother, aunt and cousins. She is the only survivor with a cousin. When she attempts to come back during 1918 when she is 13-14 years old, she was first taken by a soldier however she is mistreated by the soldier's wife. So she wants to escape and finds refuge in an Armenian family.

> She goes to live with that family, and she considers as siblings but never did my grandmother mmm [tearful and crying and silence] … she always felt that I mean mmm she would say 'they treated me like a sibling but' she would say 'they always made me feel my difference' [trembling voice, crying].

Peruz' grandfather was far from the village when incidents happened in 1915 and when he returned, he is unable to find his wife and his two sons. Witnesses had told

him that his wife was killed. He never found out what happened to his sons. Despite the age difference he is introduced to Peruz' grandmother to marry her for protection.

> [my grandmother] marries my grandfather at least without being mistreated. They have a child a daughter. Second girl, third girl and my grandfather is always in expectation of a boy, in expectation to replace his lost children. They try until five children. They have five daughters.

She expresses that she knows much less about her father's side of the family since she never knew her paternal parents and her father never talked about his family past. She knows that her paternal grandmother's family was Catholic. When her husband, whose family was also Catholic, was taken away in 1915 as well as her sister-in-law, she was left alone with a child and ended up marrying her sister-in-law's husband. She recalls a paternal aunt whom she learned to be a step-aunt later in her adulthood when she was informed about this background story.

Peruz's adulthood exposure to and awareness of the experiences associated with 1915 also came from books. She states that an awareness of the extent of the experiences emerged "very very late" near her 30s and developed through reading these books and that she was especially and deeply affected by one particular book, *Nenemin Masalları* (*My Granny's Fairy Tales)* which she read three times consecutively and had a hard time freeing herself from its influence. She considers this book to have initiated an awakening especially in her family. She also expresses her limitation in reading and being exposed to the stories regarding 1915 compared to her husband who reads every book that is published on the subject.

As she reflects back on these accounts, she shares her experience of sadness and suffering, both verbally and non-verbally, with regards to the experiences of the first generation and how the pain has grown throughout the years especially with the fact of having lost family members from the first and second generation.

> These stories hurt us even more now. Maybe mmm it is combined with the pain of having lost them [trembling voice, difficulty speaking, tearful and short silence]. And one cannot [trembling voice] … I did not use to get affected like this before but as years go by with the effect of growing age one questions why they experienced such a thing [crying].

From her adult perspective having been exposed to the stories from her paternal and maternal side of the family and having been informed about other facts and experiences associated with 1915 she expresses her reflections on how the financial and social difficulties and insecurities of in her family history as a minority were as a result of the continuation of discriminating attitudes and policies that were similar to those that caused the experiences associated with 1915 and how these caused a "cultural massacre" and a sense of discontinuity due to factors such as forced migration, to a lack of access to education and other resources. While explaining how education and language was cut off in her father's generation, she describes her surprise and resentment in learning how the "cultural massacre" operated as a continuation of 1915:

> They weren't transmitted due to fear not transmitted. … it is a cultural massacre really; I mean that genocide was not over by slaughtering people… They would mention about the existence of a rich culture but today reading about it I mean unbelievable things like having a piano in every house in Trabzon, the people's love for theatre, I don't know all the cultural activities… as you read about it you become like 'I would not have imagined this much really' but now our situation is nothing like that I mean we are in a very bad shape.

She also narrates how after her maternal grandfather's death her grandmother and older aunts had to work and how government policies to settle other groups to their residential areas caused insecurity and distress for her maternal family which forced them to migrate to Istanbul where they also had to struggle for years in order to establish a financially and socially stable life. Although in her reflections, she acknowledges their resilience in the face of their struggles, she describes how this sense of loss of the previous generations evokes a sense of trauma, pain and sadness

and a depressive state in her through an identification with their experiences: "…the past I mean why did they put them through these experiences. Because it wasn't over with the killings. The ones who lived after that, their lives were ruined as well."

> One thinks about them and is saddened for them…. They experienced so much pain. To be sad for them maybe that's what makes me a little like that's what it is under the emotional side… you try to guess what he [grandfather] might have felt. All of these are indeed traumatic and somehow it scars you too, it definitely takes away from certain parts of you diminishes you.

According to her being exposed to this family history and having identified with their loss is traumatic, leaving her generation with a further sense of loss and hurt.

When she is asked to reflect on her experience as being the granddaughter of 1915, she describes her experience as traumatic and pathological being triggered with emotional reactions, experiencing sadness and pain in the face of reminders (including talking about it in the interview):

> I think about it now for example it is a traumatic thing for us to be influenced this much I mean the fact that I get so emotional right now for example. All of these are a consequence of not having had the chance to get rid of certain things in our heads. Because it is not just crying with the pain of 'I lost my mother my father.' It is what they had to endure that makes me sad and emotional [trembling voice] and it makes us pathological… but I don't know if it is possible to overcome this.

She reflects on her ambivalence on talking about these issues: "I thought about whether talking about these issues are good for me or bad. Then I realized it is actually not good for me. Somewhere inside it starts bleeding again and again." On the other hand, in her point of view, they should somehow be freed of this trauma because it keeps on being passed to further generations. The way she offers to alleviate this condition and their "difficult life" is through a social acknowledgement and awakening that includes an official apology and reparations, an official history including multiple sides. Then again she reflects on how her hope emerged through a

democratization process in the last decade which triggered a sense of social awakening and interest (with the influence of Agos and Hrant Dink) with good intentions however how the collapse of that process caused great disappointment, pain and hopelessness so much that she wishes that what was already in the dark had never seen the light of day that "the awakening never happened" and maybe they would now feel more at peace although she acknowledges that what she expresses is "very ironic" or "not a right thing to say"

She expresses the hurtful feelings aroused in the face of the denial of the experiences and past associated with 1915 (both by Turkish and Armenian groups) in groups that do not believe in what happened in the past: "Our ancestors would not have done such a thing." An example of these painful and hurtful feelings in response to others' disbelieving, devaluing and dismissing attitude is evident in her expression of an unsettling personal experience with a close friend while recalling the tragic story told by her grandmother and how she had lost her sibling while carrying her on her back: "I told this incident to a close friend of mine and she said 'did all of these same things happen to all of these Armenians?!'… this is so wrong…"

This sense of betrayal and resentment seems to also surface as she refers to the heterogeneity of Armenians and to those Armenians that are in denial or dismissal of their past or have accommodated with the given official history and finds it "unbelievable."

She also describes feelings of fear and insecurity as well as avoidance behaviors (for example avoiding police stations) associated with threatening messages such as "we'll do it again if necessary" coming from groups that would act and easily provoke similar events such as 6-7 September. In addition to this sense of

fear and insecurity she adds the feeling of anger and opposition associated with the discriminating attitudes in governmental and judiciary structures.

This sense of insecurity is especially difficult because there is an accompanying a sense of belongingness and attachment to where she calls 'home' and experiences a level of emotional satisfaction.

Her mistrust and feeling of insecurity seem to have resulted in a limitation of and boundary setting in relationships with Turks. She describes that although she has good Turkish friends there is a threshold of distance where she feels comfortable and beyond that threshold (for example she does not support the idea of marrying someone Turkish) she only feels secure and comfortable with Armenians. She thinks that what happened in the past has had an inevitable influence on how she views people and her relationships and views this as an unfortunate impact that creates a problematic and even traumatic situation partly because it conflicts with her humanistic and egalitarian worldview: "…to consider someone this is my Armenian friend this is my Turkish friend; this in itself a very traumatic situation."

She also adds that coming from a generation who experienced genocide and massive suffering and how it creates a sense of sensitivity to those with similar experiences and a sense of a worldview that advocates for human rights, she questions her role and responsibility associated with more recent and current events that cause suffering to other minorities around the world due to a sense of inevitable preoccupation with her own experiences and ongoing difficulties.

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Hayganuş who was exposed to various stories both from her family and surrounding individuals since her childhood reflects on her experiences as an adult that are associated with 1915, which includes attempts to record the narratives from

her parents (since her grandparents have passed away) with her older sister, enhanced awareness through books, reactions to personal losses, responses to social encounters as an Armenian.

She explains that her sister's attempt to build a family tree was too late and expresses her feelings of regret for not having thought of recording the family narratives from their grandparents before they died.

As she reflects on the effects of exposure, she refers to how being more informed and aware of the scope of experiences and events, through for example books, makes her more sensitive to pain and suffering and creates difficulty to distance oneself from those feelings (which according to her was perhaps easier as a child) and makes her want to distance herself from that exposure through avoiding reading books for example:

> This is such great pain inside of you… how should I describe this I don't know I cannot describe this… with age you see things from a different perspective, you read books…. When you read them, you jump off from your seat. And sometimes you don't want to read those books. It gets under your skin more as you age.

Her reflection upon the first interview and upon her family photograph on the second interview also suggests that these reminders evoke a sense of loss and pain that was attempted to be suppressed and avoided:

> You remember things that you have forgotten here. Some nights I couldn't sleep. …the daily routine naturally forces you to put certain things in the background. … Our talk evoked certain things. You remember them again. You remember what you have lost like I remembered my great grandmother, my grandmother, my grandfather. They come to your mind.
> [looking at photographs] remind you of them. Sometimes I never want to look at them for example I don't like it… I used to love looking at them but perhaps with age one doesn't want to look much at photographs.

As she is asked to reflect on her experience as the granddaughter of 1915, she describes her adulthood experience of talking about 1915 in public and in social

relationships. She states that currently it is different and better than how it was in the past when topics surrounding 1915 could not be talked about in public. However, she also expresses the limitations in which these topics can be talked about: "Although you can't share with everyone at least you can share certain things with certain people."

As being the granddaughter of 1915, she expressed that she had not been exposed to any difficulties as an Armenian and that she had been in a more protected environment however with the acknowledgement of difficulties that she was aware of from her surroundings she had felt the necessity to hold herself back, hide her identity in certain situations.

> It is already difficult being a woman in this country but to live as an Armenian woman is twice as difficult. … I did not experience such difficulties as a kid in the region I lived in…we were in a perhaps more protected place. …but maybe for a long-time people couldn't even say they were Armenians. Or if you say it then you have to be careful to your surroundings. For a long time being an Armenian has been considered as blasphemy. … I couldn't tell I was Armenian with everyone… only with people I trusted and sometimes I would be oppositional, and I would be like 'I am Armenian whatever may be let it happen.' But sometimes you have to step back a few.

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Yeraz, who was exposed to various detailed stories of her grandparents and even her grandparents' parents since her childhood, expressed and reflected on her adulthood experiences associated with exposures that are related to 1915 experiences. She describes her responses to the discriminating attitudes on social and political domains as a reminder of the 1915 past, dismissal and denial of the 1915 past within the social and political context, reminders of her family's experiences associated with 1915, developed awareness about financial difficulties of her family past as a continuation of experiences surrounding 1915.

As she reflects on her adulthood experience of a discriminating social environment, she describes the limitations she feels on freedom of expression and presentation of identity. She expresses a sense of fear and insecurity:

> It is not easy to be a minority in this country… we worry if we can still stay here. …you want to live in your own country, your father's grave is here, you want to be buried here when you die, but you always consider the possibility of dangerous situations.

She describes that as a result she withdrew from social relations especially with Turkish people and reports that in time she became more and more involved in relationships with Armenians.

She expresses a sense of resentment and disappointment for the injustices and human rights violations done to the minorities, especially Christians, including 1915. She views that current problems are related to the denial of 1915 within social and political domains and thus views it necessary to come face to face with the history: "…the main issue about our current troubles is not confronting with 1915. Because that's where the lies began, it penetrates everywhere. …confrontation is needed with that place."

Her resentment and criticism to those who attempt to dismiss and deny the facts and experiences surrounding 1915 is evident in her account: "…us, all of us Armenians are already documents that have evidential value, each one of us. It is funny to hear things like … what document?!...I mean everyone around you, your relatives, neighbors, loved ones, they all experienced these."

She also expresses her feelings of disappointment, unhappiness and disappearance of her hopes with regards to a desired awareness and acknowledgement especially in association with the decline of a democratic context: "This society has a long way to go in order to come to a certain level. People are already fleeing … not just us there is hopelessness everywhere."

She expresses her surprise when she learned as an adult contrary to her own family experience that other Armenian families did not talk about their 1915 past. She suspects that they might have kept their stories secret because it was too overwhelming to talk. But she also views those families that prefer silence as too fearful and as creating traumatic generations.

Her experience as an adult narrating the stories she was exposed to as a child during the interview was also significant. She expressed her feelings of sadness both verbally and non-verbally (with trembling voice and tears) in reaction to especially narrating her grandmother's tragic experiences of witnessing loss and mass death. As she reflects on her saddened response, she describes the distinction between a more passive listening position and a more active narrating position: "…of course listening and narrating are different things. Because for instance as you can notice I get emotional. …But when you listen of course you get affected … but not like when you talk about it. Narrating is more difficult."

She elaborates on her experience further in the second interview:

> After our last interview I felt myself weirdly heavy I did not feel very good. I was exhausted… For instance, before, I used to tell about what happened to my paternal grandmother like this happened and that. Saying two, three sentences about it is a different thing but otherwise talking about it in detail was apparently a very exhausting thing.
> I used to talk about it shortly I mean I never talked about it at this length all at once, it was more superficial…you literally collapse, it feels very intense… as I said when you don't do in detail may be in that moment without noticing one doesn't get engaged much because it is difficult to bear. … so you just pass by superficially… It is very difficult to handle when it is this lengthy.

Talking in detail about her experiences as a granddaughter and narrating the experiences of her grandparents within the context of the interview evoked intense, overwhelming and exhausting emotions. In her account she also reveals the tendency to avoid going too deep into these experiences and to keep them superficial when talking about them in her daily life. This tendency to avoid thinking and talking

about them further was also her experience after the first interview with an attempt to protect herself from the overwhelming feelings evoked: "…I was demoralized that day… You want to protect yourself. …when you think about it you feel bad, so you inevitably avoid it."

Perhaps this tendency to distance herself and avoid material that function as a reminder of the past is also evident in her expressed lack of interest in knowing further as an adult stating that what she knows is sufficient for her and that there is no meaning in knowing further unless she has a purpose. Yet she also reveals that elders' experiences should be recorded as oral history and that she had once attempted writing pieces of her own family history implying her perception of significance in recording and transmitting experiences.

As an adult she was also exposed to some facts about her grandfather's father from her grandfather when she was studying in college which evoked more pleasant feelings. Her grandfather had told her that one of the important academicians in her field was a student of his father. She recalls her shock and pleasure upon hearing this fact about a distant relative who had social significance: "…I was shocked… Very interesting I mean I was so pleased. For him to have taught him."

Her enhanced consciousness through written material about other difficulties and losses such as financial adversities that people, including her family members had to endure is associated with feelings of shock and pain: "You really feel shocked. Very very serious things. …just like they destroyed people they also took away their properties and possessions. These are also very painful."

In connection with her family story of financial difficulties and poverty including the effects of the events surrounding 1915 she emphasizes how being resilient and resourceful allowed them to build a new life: "…they experience great

poverty. …but they recover. The reason why they recover so quickly is because they are resourceful and know how to do things. …because they were more equipped people, somehow, they were able to build a life again."

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Pilot 001 had heard pieces of information from her grandmother but considers herself as having developed an awareness about the 1915 past when she was in her young adulthood years.

In her accounts she describes that a sense of interest toward what had happened in the past was awakened during when ASALA was active. She had asked her father and had learned from him that his family had not experienced 1915 but that her maternal grandfather had. She recalls the response of her grandfather when she asked him about what had happened in detail.

> He said, "we are citizens of this country" he said, "there is no need for unhappiness and hatred". "Besides" he said, "a Turk is responsible for me being alive right now" he said "so, you also have to think about this so let it go". "What's going to happen even if you learn?" he said. We couldn't insist back then. … Also you feel scared to upset them. Because my grandfather … He was there in Anatolia when everything happened. …The hid him during 15-19…Someone helped him come here.

Her grandfather seems to have kept his experiences to himself in order to avoid unhappiness and hatred. Pilot 001 in response expresses how she was unable to insist asking further and afraid to make him sad through making him talk about his experiences. She thinks that he kept his silence because he did not want to talk about his experiences. But she also adds that she also was hesitant to go further because she felt like she would not like what she might hear: "I thought he did not want to talk about it. Maybe I thought I wouldn't like what I was going to hear. I mean I thought about it like this back then. It was convenient for me that he didn't talk. I already don't read much about these things." Later in the interview she also questions her

grandfather's silence and considers that she might have been a different person if he had talked about his past: "It would have been different if he had talked. Maybe I would have been a different person. Maybe it's his fault not to talk about it. But generally, people did not talk."

In response to the awareness of what happened in the past she reveals her preference to avoid coming in contact with reminders of that past such as books on this topic or visiting museums because they remind her of the pain and suffering people had to endure and that identification triggers a lot of pain. Even talking about this during the interview seems to have evoked that feeling which was observed in her non-verbal expression (of tearfulness).

> I don't like it. I mean that that just feels so painful. I mean that pain those people had to endure. I mean really who did what and why is not important. The pain that they had to experience is just overwhelming. Because nobody deserves such a thing [eyes tearing up and short silence].

Within the context of Remembrance Day, she expresses her preference to remember the lost ones in a more personal and intimate social context rather than a politicized public context.

She expresses a sense of ambivalence with regards to what kind of attitude to adopt within a social context in response to the Remembrance Day or expressing political opinions. While she wants to express freely her opinions, she feels she needs to think about what others, especially her Turkish friends, might think.

She also reflects on being a granddaughter and expresses the difficulties associated with it. She describes the experience of being part of a group that shares the experience of 1915 using the analogy of a woman survivor of physical abuse and domestic violence who on the one hand knows what is done to her is unjust and that she doesn't deserve it but on the other hand feels self-conscious, inadequate and guilty. She views this experience of the woman as traumatic and finds it similar to

the Armenian community's experience. She also argues that the state of the husband is also desperate and helpless that drives him to violence. With regards to her experience however she expresses a lowered sense of self-confidence, agency guided by a need for self-protection and withdrawal. She argues that if the experiences of 1915 had not been experienced, she would live a different, more free and comfortable life for example less worried about securing a financially and socially stable and protected life.

Her family's, especially her maternal side, frequent messages such as "keep yourself secure," "marriage is not everything," "have enough money enough power so that you can survive on your own whatever the cost is" which according to her accounts are associated with the financial difficulties experienced within the family in the past, seems to have also contributed to her sense of insecurity.

Upon her inquiries about the aim of the study she reveals the possible contribution of the study to her self-development but also the inevitable sense of prejudice and insecurity she feels. However, she also argues against that feeling of prejudice because she views that the current generation of individuals cannot be held responsible for what the crimes their ancestors might have committed.

She also proposes that a normalization of relationships and living is possible through a politics that respects and acknowledges the experiences of 1915.

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Pilot 002 reveals having learnt most of her family's 1915 past from her mother and an awareness of the 1915 past in her adult years. Other than her conversations with her mother and some recollections of information from family dialogues from her early adult years her exposures associated with a development of awareness about 1915 consist of discriminating experiences in her academic and

social life, the murder of Hrant Dink which also serves as a reminder of her other major losses.

She explains that although her maternal side of the family had started talking about certain things after some items from the past such as her maternal grandmother's aunt's (who was gone after 1915) dowery surfaced her interest and inquiries had not awakened in her young adulthood. She reveals that she had inquired about her family past from time to time over the years and that interest was awakened again with her participation in the study.

> Perhaps when those things surfaced maybe more about what and how have been talked about. I didn't inquire much. Then we spoke about it from time to time but as with you, things have come up again and we started talking about these issues once again. On a trip… I had said with a notebook and pen "let's look at the family genogram" It has been several years. …Then yesterday we sat down again with that notebook. So, thank you!

She describes that the reason behind not talking and being inquisitive about the past that is associated with loss and suffering both for her and mother is a tendency to avoid feelings especially pain and suffering.

> To avoid emotions. I mean I can say this about myself and my mother. As I said three painful losses from our recent past, I include Hrant, after these one constantly escapes pain. Thus, inquiring causes to open up many wounds unknown wounds, unknown drawers; to start to associate and integrate things and such. They are difficult things, difficult processes.

She expresses her ambivalent feelings about becoming more informed about her family past in her recent years. On the one hand she feels regret and pain about having developed an awareness that feels late. On the other hand, knowing more about her family narrative creates a sense of belongingness.

> I mean knowing about it this late … evokes some amount of regret but it is both very painful but also it brings a sense of belongingness like knowing some things about the family brings a sense of belonging and existing I mean it makes you feel good and feel bad at the same time, it has both sides.

Pilot 002 reflecting on her mother's and her family's silencing and restricting attitude to hide from public attention as well as being raised in an "apolitical" environment outside of the Armenian community she expresses her growing feelings of resentment and anger towards her mother and her family. She feels that she developed an awareness of being a granddaughter too late and that this creates a burden. She thinks that having been kept in the dark about the family's past was unjust to her and that pieces of information could have been delivered slowly. However, she also acknowledges the fact that perhaps there was no time to talk about the experiences and losses associated with 1915 because there were other major and traumatic losses in the family during her lifetime. She feels that she would have been different and had more self-confidence if she were raised in a family that was in touch with its identity and thus was more involved with its community.

As she narrates the story of how her maternal grandparents' families met when they were exiled to a different city and lived in the same house for a year and a half while her grandparents were children, how both families had converted to Islam and upon their return to their hometowns while her grandfather's family stayed Muslim her grandmother's family converted back to Christianity a few times each time there was a threat however ended up staying Christian, she expresses her resentment about her mother's passivity about not converting to Christianity as she is the only Muslim in her nuclear family.

She describes a number of her difficult experiences that involved discriminating attitudes from instructors in her university years especially with regards to the history classes she was required to take in college. For example, she explains her mixed feelings that consisted of great distress and suffering in response to a question asked in an exam about her opinions on Armenian related events. Her

mixed feelings involved a sense of mistrust, fear and insecurity on the one hand, a desire to express herself, her identity and political opinions freely on the other hand with a sense of opposition and protest.

She considers the murder of Hrant Dink as one of the turning points in her life. She views it as a continuation of 1915 and as a painful triggering event that allowed for a stronger sense of identity and a context in which that identity could be more freely experienced, expressed and talked about. However, on a personal level the aftermath of his murder also consisted of traumatic experiences. A series of disappointments in her relationships evoked feelings of intense anger, sadness, pain, withdrawal as well as betrayal and regret due to the responses they gave to his death. For example, when an instructor whom she worked in close contact stated his opinion "he had better not say such a thing" she felt intense rage and pain followed by a withdrawal from social relationships. She also accounted her rage, shock, disappointment and sense of betrayal in response to a close Kurdish friend, whom she identified with through a shared experience of being a minority, when she felt that her pain and sadness was dismissed through his expressions such as "why are you crying, look at this crowd we are all together" or "our grandfathers slaughtered yours pretty bad" in a joking manner. In response to these experiences, she describes a triggered sense of loss and grievance, loneliness and withdrawal: "I couldn't go to school for a while or see anyone. Because nobody around me experiences this the way I do. … I stopped seeing people because I mean I couldn't because everybody moved on and I couldn't."

## 4.4 Summary of results

The accounts obtained from this study, which aimed to look at an uncharted territory, has revealed a very complex and multi-dimensional picture. The findings presented above perhaps give only a partial view of a complex situation. Nevertheless, they may shed some light and understanding on some of the questions of the intergenerational transmission of 1915 related to the questions and expectations presented earlier. In this section the findings will be summarized according to these questions and expectations.

The findings were expected to draw a picture of what was transmitted and narrated to the granddaughters with regard to their grandparents' experiences of 1915 and in what ways these narrations occurred. The accounts presented above draw a picture of what was transmitted and narrated to the granddaughters with regard to their grandparents' experiences of 1915 and how. Seven participants reported that their grandparents' experiences were either never (until a certain point in time) or rarely (in fragmented form) talked about in the household when they were children. Three participants on the other hand reported that the experiences were talked about within the household, during their childhood, among adults and sometimes directly to the offspring by the elders. Whether the talking occurred in a rare or frequent, implicit or explicit, fashion, overall, seven participants reported having at least some notion of their grandparents' 1915 experiences when they were children. These accounts came either from parents or from one or more grandparent/s or from other relatives or survivor acquaintances. On the other hand, three participants learned about their grandparents' accounts of 1915 from a parent only when they were adults.

Nine of the participants reported to have had at least one grandparent who had lost at least one first degree relative (parents, siblings, spouses, children). Some of them had witnessed their relatives' death, some had been informed about their relatives' death, some never heard back from the separated relatives. Overall, what the participants heard about their grandparents' experiences did not involve only the tragic facts about their grandparents' losses, but also involved accounts on how they survived the life-threatening conditions during the 1915-1918 period and how they faced the difficulties in returning back to building a new life. Thus, we find in this sample that experiences of 1915 were transmitted to the third-generation granddaughters largely in the two forms (implicit or explicit, indirect or direct) described above.

It was expected that some of the participants' accounts might reflect a family environment in which the grandparents' experiences of 1915 were kept largely in secret and not explicitly talked about or may have been hinted and just mentioned in oblique ways. An associated question to this expectation was how this tendency for silence and secrecy may have operated. The results indicated that the majority of the participants reported having been exposed to limited and superficial information, especially during childhood, about their grandparents' experiences of 1915, suggesting an environment governed more by silences and secrecies than explicit telling. Some of the participants reported explicit communication of their grandparents' experiences by their elders that may at first suggest an environment of open communication. However, these participants' accounts also contained examples of exposures that were confusing during their childhood but were only understood later as implicit expressions of their grandparents' painful experiences surrounding 1915, which indicated that they were not provided with complete and coherent

narratives. Overall, nearly all of the participants' accounts contain examples of childhood exposures to implicit and non-verbal expressions of their grandparents' experiences. These included awkward silences surrounding certain topics, confusing warnings and unexplained restrictions, or unexpected tears in response to certain triggers that hinted at the existence of some kind of painful experience that created an environment fraught with trepidation, silences, and secrets.

The participants who expressed being exposed to partial information (either through limited direct communication of experiences mixed with indirect expressions or only through indirect expressions) surmised that their families preferred silence and secrecy for various reasons. One explanation proposed by the participants was that their family members were overwhelmed with loss and suffering, saddened, terrorized, traumatized by the stories themselves and did not want their offspring to be affected. A second explanation was because the elders wanted to protect and conceal themselves, their identities and histories from the public, associated with a sense of fear, insecurity and mistrust. Finally, they did not want to communicate a sense of negativity, hatred and resentment especially towards the external society to their offspring.

It was also anticipated that some of the accounts would reveal a family context in which the grandparents' 1915 experiences were more explicitly shared and talked about. Nevertheless, it was also a point of interest whether this supposedly open communication was truly open, in other words, whether the narrations involved certain aspects of experiences but left out certain other aspects, such as the emotional dimension of experiences. Three participants' accounts indicated that there were family contexts in which the grandparents' 1915 experiences were more explicitly

shared and talked about. Some of the participants expressed that they were inevitably exposed to the accounts of their grandparents as they were spoken about among grandparents, relatives, and their peers within the household. Some of these participants were also told about the accounts directly by their grandparents or parents at some point when they were children. These participants expressed viewing their family's inclination to talk about their 1915 past as an attempt at normalization of experience or the traumatic and intense need to talk and share experiences with each other.

However, these participants' accounts indicated that what were spoken did not contain some of the details of their grandparents' experiences. They also presented some examples of experiences that indicated transmission of emotional experiences through implicit communication rather than an explicit description. Therefore, the accounts that these participants were exposed to contained sometimes partial, sometimes more detailed factual, information. Although they contained some emotional experiences that formed an initial narrative in their earlier lives, it also left out a great deal of the emotional content.

The data was expected to present a range of responses of granddaughters in reaction to their grandparents' experiences and to a developed awareness about their own families' and community's past. These responses were expected to reveal traces of intergenerational trauma. In other words, the accounts were expected to reflect on some level a range of potentially overwhelming emotions such as sorrow/sadness, anxiety and fear, anger, guilt, and glimpses of feelings of intense helplessness. Most of the participants expressed that as children a sense of confusion dominated their experience of explicit and/or implicit communications of their grandparents'

experiences of 1915. For some participants this confusion evoked curiosity. And while a few expressed that they had a family environment in which their questions would be answered, others felt constraints in asking. For some other participants confusion was associated with a sense of indifference and disinterest. Among the participants who felt curious and questioning as children, some continued to be interested in their families' and community's past and developed a feeling of responsibility to promote a sense of identity and history as they grew older. However, some others became uninterested in further exploring their family past or any other information associated with 1915. Among the participants who were indifferent and unquestioning as children, some became interested while others maintained their apparent lack of interest at least until the point of the study.

As expected, the participants' accounts reflected a range of emotions in response to their grandparents' experiences both for their childhood and adulthood periods.

Sadness, during childhood, was expressed as a response especially in reaction to the grandparents' non-verbal expressions of suffering such as crying. Some of the participants also explained that seeing their grandparents' sadness during childhood evoked a sense of confusion about the reasons behind this feeling while some expressed strong identification with their grandparents' painful experiences and suffering. As described by some participants, the sadness got more painful and difficult in time with a developed awareness in adulthood. For some the pain and suffering associated with the 1915 past was triggered with every major loss (either within the family or within the community such as Hrant Dink). According to some participants such pain and sadness led to a need to avoid and distance oneself from any reminders or triggers, such as talking to family members or others (in some

accounts including the interviewer), reading materials on the subject, and looking at old family pictures. Some accounts that reflected adulthood sadness were also associated with feeling remorse and guilt for being unaware and indifferent to the grandparents' experiences. Some participants also mentioned a preference to experience these feelings in more private and secure contexts. The expression of sadness was not only verbal but also evident in some participants' non-verbal behaviors (tears, looks, voice changes, silences) while talking about their grandparents' suffering during the interviews.

Fear and insecurity that pervaded their childhood and adulthood periods were expressed widely among participants. Participants' accounts indicated that the fear and insecurity they felt as children was mostly associated with their exposures to warnings and protective attitudes from their elders about their relationships and behaviors in public. Some participants also expressed that discriminatory and verbally violent attitudes they encountered outside as children, created a sense of fear and insecurity (even terror and trauma for some), a sense that these experiences signaled a threat that the accounts they heard (partially or in detail) could turn into reality. Having developed an awareness of family and community history during adulthood years the majority of the participants attributed their current sense of insecurity to being the granddaughter of 1915 and to living in an environment of ongoing threat.

Some socio-political developments and societal attitudes towards 1915 and Armenians as well as towards the murder of Hrant Dink that was considered as a continuation and a strong reminder of the 1915 past were presented as reasons for a sense of fear and insecurity. Mistrust, according to most participants, pervaded interpersonal and social contexts. The participants' accounts indicate that their

feelings of fear, insecurity and mistrust have contributed to avoidance in becoming interested and claiming their past, to silence or caution about 1915 within family or interpersonal relations, or within the public sphere, as well as to being more withdrawn in interpersonal relationships (other than members of their families and community) and in the social domain.

Anger and resentment were another emotional response the participants provided in their accounts. According to the participants' accounts discriminatory experiences they faced as children from outside sources (neighborhood or school) as well as the incompleteness of the information on 1915 they were exposed to both within and outside of the household triggered feelings of resentment. With increased awareness in adulthood participants expressed feelings of anger and resentment mostly in response to silences surrounding the experiences of 1915 and to the long-term effects, including the emotional effects, on further generations. At the same time some of the participants' accounts involved wanting to avoid hatred and anger as much as possible as it entails threats living in a continuing social context of prejudice, discrimination and denial.

Guilt and regret were expressed by some participants mostly associated with a sense of sadness for being indifferent and ignorant to their grandparents' experiences before they became aware of them. This entailed some associations of what they would have done differently had they been aware, such as keeping a record of the grandparents' oral accounts. The participants understood their seeming "indifference" as a result of not being aware of the grandparents' experiences due to the silence, not having the capacity to comprehend the significance of their grandparents' emotions when they were children and, in some cases, due to a lack of an intimate relationship with them.

The feeling of helplessness is expressed in some way in all of the participants' accounts. Helplessness is implicated through the participants' comments on the overwhelming and traumatic quality of the exposures they encountered, both as children and adults, such as witnessing of grandparents' intense emotional expressions (such as crying and the like), unexplained silences and obscure statements, or hearing the details of their grandparents' accounts for the first time.

A sense of helplessness expressed by the majority of the participants had to do with personal or familial encounters of prejudicial and discriminatory experiences as well as the self-imposed or family-imposed restrictions and warnings for protection against external threat due to living in an insecure context where threat (towards Armenians and minorities in general) and denial of the past experience is ongoing.

A range of responses that possibly attempt to deal with a sense of intense helplessness included premature "maturation," over-identification with the grandparents' experiences. In some accounts, indifference, dismissal and avoidance in others disappointment, betrayal, hopelessness and withdrawal was expressed. In some cases, this sense of helplessness was implicated through comments and experiences indicating a confusion whether the experiences and events surrounding 1915 are "real," such as the childhood experience of viewing the grandparents' accounts as "fairy tales" expressed by a few participants. Anger and protest were also a response expressed by the participants in reaction to a sense of helplessness.

In addition to what was anticipated in this study some participants' accounts indicate attempts at dealing with a sense of helplessness through collecting facts and information about their families' and community's past and understanding,

empathizing and identifying with their grandparents' experiences some others attempt to resort to a sense of gratitude, responsibility and/or emphasize resistance and resilience.

A few participants expressed a sense of gratitude associated with living under better circumstances compared to their grandparents' or to the other families' painful experiences. Some of the participants' accounts also included an emphasis on resistance and resilience in the face of overwhelming and painful experiences. While some of these participants presented an internalization of these qualities in their own personalities and views, others presented an attribution of these qualities to their families and community accompanied with a sense of pride. For some participants the sense of pride was also evident in an open attitude with regards to publicly revealing their identities.

A developed sense of "responsibility" was also evident in many of the participants. The responsibility taking included promotion of a sense of Armenian culture and identity, contribution to oral and unofficial history, and support to justice, humanism, democracy, and human rights efforts.

The data was expected to reveal potentially contradictory findings representing a tension between the need to be heard and recognized, and an experience of burden with overwhelming feelings, fear of external threat, and betrayal associated with a sense of helplessness. The participants accounts did indicate some seemingly contradictory states, representing the tension stated above in various ways. The tension was apparent in the participants' accounts that revealed their experiences - as granddaughters of 1915 - of both becoming aware of the grandparents' experiences and the community's past through various exposures, and the need/motivation to share (personal, family, and community) accounts were

associated with contradictory responses. Some accounts indicated the integrating and fulfilling impact of a developing awareness and knowledge as well as opening up to others, such as to future generations and the public. However, associated with these, the accounts also revealed overwhelming, painful and burdensome feelings including fears and worries of external threat that in some cases led to withdrawal and avoidance in various ways.

The social and political currents that shifted in the last decades in Turkey was expected to have an influence on what the granddaughters were exposed to in their childhood and differentially adulthood years which would coincide with an increase in the interest about the accounts of Armenians and 1915. All participants referred to the influence of the shift in social and political currents in Turkey on the increase in the interest in learning and talking about accounts of Armenians and 1915 when they reached adulthood. The childhood period was more associated with silence around the issue of 1915 both within and outside the household and in some cases where talking occurred within the household, silencing was experienced outside. The silence about 1915 in the external social environment was accompanied by exposure to discriminatory and sometimes verbally violent attitudes during childhood (in the neighborhood, in school) as expressed by most of the participants. Social developments allowed these adult women participants a context in which experiences and facts were more freely shared compared to the periods of their childhood and adolescence. For example, the acts of ASALA, the murder of Hrant Dink, the increase in the number of books published on the topic of 1915 including testimonials, autobiographies, academic studies, the publishing of AGOS, and socio-political contexts during certain periods are viewed as having created and sustained a

social context that allowed the participants to inquire and become interested or families to share and talk about the family's 1915 past.

Some personal turning points also contributed to an interest and initiation of inquiries; a transformed awareness or the context of a more freely shared past experiences within families, such as entering motherhood, surfacing of items that belong to people who have been lost during 1915, coincidental events that carry the possibility of finding lost family members, and even participating in this study. Some questioned and explored their family past on their own initiative, some were told about their grandparents' experiences by their parents, grandparents or other relatives following a specific triggering event. The participants' exposures in their adult years also included accounts of other Armenians' experiences and stories, especially through published books and encounters with other Armenians (partners and their families, friends, community members). Yet, some personal encounters with friends, colleagues, neighbors, as well as observations and/or witnessing of social and political responses that were associated with 1915 (which also shifted and oscillated in the last decades), reported by the participants indicate insecurities in talking freely about and/or opening up about their histories and identities in more recent years.

The data was expected to reveal that the denial of 1915 as well as continuation of discriminating and threatening attitudes on the social and political level might have an impact on the personal and psychological level. According to the participants' accounts the denial of the experiences associated with 1915, as well as ongoing discriminatory and threatening attitudes, were encountered in personal, social and political relations. The accounts indicate a range of responses including a sense of mistrust, insecurity, betrayal, disappointment as well as anger, resentment, and criticism. In most accounts these responses were associated with a sense of

helpless withdrawal and/or avoidance in varying degrees (in some cases from certain interpersonal relations, in other cases from any relations outside of the family and/or community, and in yet other instances from social and political structures). Nevertheless, the accounts also involved implication of actions toward healing such as recognition and acknowledgement of past experiences and efforts at reconciliation and justice.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter. The findings will be discussed in two sections. The first section consists of a discussion of the findings coordinated with the expectations prior to data collection, and the relevant literature. The second section involves a discussion of some of the unexpected findings that may lead to further research.

## 5.1 Findings consonant with research and understandings of trauma and intergenerational transmission of trauma

As described earlier this study was intended to follow the suggestions for more in depth and narrative based studies to look at a more nuanced picture of intergenerational consequences and transmission trauma (Braga, Mello, & Fiks, 2012; Danieli, 1998; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Wiseman, 2008). The accounts of the participants in this study, as expected, give a complex and intricate picture on the intergenerational consequences in the granddaughters of 1915 as well as about various modes of possible transmission.

### 5.1.1 Intergenerational consequences

#### 5.1.1.1 What is transmitted is "trauma"

One of the expectations of this study was to gather a nuanced impression of what was transmitted to Christian Armenian granddaughters of 1915 living in Turkey. The findings demonstrate that the transmissions occurred both in implicit or explicit

fashion, sometimes frequent or rare, sometimes gradual or immediate, sometimes during childhood or adulthood, but that, in whichever way, the accounts the granddaughters were exposed to contained intense pain, suffering, loss, and trauma.

These findings are in line with the accumulation of information gained through oral and written accounts and academic studies on the experiences of Armenians post-1915 and other groups where there has been an experience of group or generational trauma. Most of the academic studies on the survivors and second, third generation Armenians come from diaspora populations. Studies showed that suffering of first-generation survivors were associated with loss of family member(s), forced deportation, relocation, physical harm, loss of property, and loss of status (Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian, & Saraydarian, 1996). A similar picture is presented in this study's accounts. Additionally, difficulties of building a new life while experiencing a variety of adversities in an ongoingly threatening and discriminatory context, associated with the fact that they continued living in Turkey, were also expressed by some participants as sources of their grandparents' suffering and trauma. Thus, based on the findings from studies on Armenians living in the diaspora as well as from this study, it can be suggested that the offspring were exposed to communication of trauma involving major devastation, suffering and loss. Nevertheless, there also seem to be differences in the extent and in the nuances of the trauma transmission depending on the differing contexts (such as living in Turkey or diaspora) in which the grandparents built a new life.

#### 5.1.1.2 Disrupted intergenerational and familial communication in the context of trauma

As presented in the literature review, ordinary intergenerational and familial communications can get disrupted especially within the context of traumatic experiences that leads to adverse intergenerational consequences in the offspring (see Braga, Mello, Fiks, 2012; Danieli, 1998). The findings of this study, indicate that ordinary intergenerational and familial communications and coherence was disrupted and replaced by implicit expressions, incomplete, incoherent and "whispered" (Çetin, 2009) stories, fraught silences and secrecies through which the trauma was transmitted. Similarly, studies on three generations of Armenian women and on grandchildren of Muslimized Armenians living in Turkey, and diaspora Armenians living in the US demonstrate that survivor grandparents either kept their painful experiences to themselves and did not talk about them to anyone or only "whispered" them to their peers and/or fellow Armenians (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016; Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian & Saraydarian, 1996). In this study too some of the accounts indicated family contexts in which the elders talked among themselves or sometimes directly to the offspring. However, a deeper look at these accounts indicated that certain aspects, at least some of the intense emotional aspect of experiences, were left out. This disrupted the narrations and stripped them of their potentially multi-dimensional quality. Thus, it can be argued that the disruption of familial and intergenerational communication due to a major intergenerational trauma seems to be correlated with a strong inclination toward various forms of silencing and significant adverse consequences even in the third-generation offspring. This will be further discussed in the following section.

#### 5.1.1.3 Silenced voices

A question of interest of this study, among others, was also what the granddaughters' experiences of silences and secrecies associated with the experiences of 1915, were. In this study the participants revealed having been exposed to silences and secrecies on various levels. As argued by Danieli (1998) silence is both a result of the nature of trauma that cuts the link to verbal expression, symbolization, and representation as well as a kind of defense mechanism in a particular social context that constitutes another trauma following the initial/original trauma. Along this perspective the participants' accounts in this study showed both aspects of silence. They talked about how, when, and why their grandparents and families silenced themselves, how they witnessed the silences in the social world, how that silencing affected their worlds, and how, when, and why they silenced themselves. According to the participants' accounts their grandparents and families as well as the participants themselves became silent sometimes about their family history of 1915 and associated experiences, sometimes about their identities, and sometimes about their intense emotions. The contexts of such silences were sometimes with their offspring, sometimes in their interpersonal relations, sometimes with members outside of their community, and/or in their public existence.

The apparent explanations found in the participants' accounts for their own and families' silences were associated with protecting themselves, their offspring and their family in some way (from overwhelming and traumatic emotions, with fear of external threat, from developing hatred and anger). Similar explanations for silence as protection are demonstrated in other studies of Armenian offspring in Turkey (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016; Yayloyan, 2015). This function of silence can be argued to be in line with Danieli's (1998) argument that silence can also

function as a kind of defense mechanism, especially in a particular social context and constitute a trauma in itself other than the initial trauma. As exemplified in this study's accounts, the need for defense and protection is put into action against intense and overwhelming emotions that are considered as a "threat" on a psychological level as well as against potential attacks that may come in interpersonal and social contexts. Thus, a pervasive mode of defense which may even be described as a state of hypervigilance, can be considered to be traumatic.

The other aspect of silence, argued by Danieli (1998), is that it is an inevitable result of interruptions in verbalization, symbolization, and representation due to a traumatic experience. The accounts of this study show the existence of intense emotional states of the grandparents through their implicit expressions (such as crying in response to a certain trigger) that were usually not put into words. This finding is in line with the literature on how intense and overwhelming emotional states, which may sometimes become virtually "dissociative states", are evoked due to an experience of a major trauma that cuts access to representation and verbalization (Bromberg, 1998). The silence created by the great trauma of the first generation seems to have intergenerational consequences and trauma engendering effects on the offspring. These consequences and effects are indicated in this study's accounts, it is in fact one of the major findings. This finding of the consequences of silence, as well as in other studies on Armenian offspring in Turkey (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016) reveal a range of strong emotional experiences (such as confusion, helplessness, sadness and pain, fear and anxiety, self-guilt, anger and resentment) of the granddaughters in response to the silences they were exposed to, that coincide with the sequelae of trauma. This trauma engendering effect on the

granddaughters, in turn, can be argued to account for the silencing tendencies of the participant granddaughters themselves.

#### 5.1.1.4 Shattered emotional worlds

One major interest of this study was to look into the range of responses of the granddaughters to their grandparents' experiences as well as developing an awareness about their family's and community's past. Based on our understanding of trauma and its sequelae it was expected that a range of intense and overwhelming emotions would be present. Indeed, the participants' accounts revealed emotional responses of great sadness and pain, fear and insecurity, anger and resentment, guilt, helplessness, and confusion which are in line with the responses observed in other studies on Armenian offspring living in Turkey (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016).

Sadness in response to grandparents' losses, suffering and pain was common in the participants' childhood and adulthood accounts and which, for most, seem to have intensified growing into adulthood with increased awareness. This feeling of deep sorrow was also reported to have been transmitted across generations in Marazyan's (2016) small sample of three generations of Armenian women living in Turkey. In this study, some participants reported how pain and suffering associated with 1915 was triggered with each major loss indicating an unresolved grief that is passed on through generations associated with strong feelings of remorse and guilt as well as inclinations of avoidance of triggers, withdrawal and of isolation. All of these manifestations of are indicative of intergenerational transmission of trauma as previously cited in the literature.

It can be argued that sadness is not only a response to the intense suffering and loss of grandparents associated with the events of 1915 but also about how those experiences were dealt with problematically (or not dealt with) post-1915 such as needing to keep the painful experiences secret. Similarly, the grandparents' experiences being kept as "family secrets," not being able to talk about the experiences and the fear of the secret being out were argued by Altınay & Çetin (2009) to be the most emphasized and saddening aspect revealed in the interviews with a sample of grandchildren of Muslimized Armenians (Altınay & Çetin, 2009). The participants' explicit and implicit expressions of sadness and suffering (such as tears or trembling voices while talking about their grandparents' experiences) are consistent with other findings and suggest that the pain and sadness is still fresh and unresolved especially in reaction to their grandparents' traumatic experiences.

Another major intense and emotional response revealed in this study's accounts was the current feeling of fear, anxiety, and insecurity which was indicated to be quite pervasive and associated with being a "granddaughter of 1915." This finding points toward the existence of transmission of trauma associated fear, anxiety and insecurity from previous generations. Some of the fear and anxiety response was associated with unexplained warnings and restrictions regarding their public appearance as well as talking about 1915, and non-verbal cues within the family context that suggested an ever-present external threat. Some other responses of fear, anxiety and insecurity was associated with the participants' own experiences and relations outside of their families which consisted of prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes, violent acts, and an ongoing sense of threat both within interpersonal, social and political contexts. Whatever the type of exposure, the participants' accounts indicated the pervasiveness of the sense of anxiety and insecurity that is

associated with ever-present anticipations of helplessness (trauma) in the face of a dangerous environment. Inevitably the consequences involved avoidance, withdrawal and in some cases tendencies of silence about 1915 according to this study's accounts and others (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016).

The emotional response of anger and resentment presented in some of the accounts were associated with discriminatory experiences, silences surrounding and denial of 1915 experiences, and long-term effects of 1915. The response of anger in diaspora studies on the offspring of survivors was common and was in response to the denial of 1915 within the international and political sphere (Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian & Saraydarian, 1996; Kalayjian & Shahinian, 1998; Kalayjian & Weisberg, 2002). This study's accounts showed that the response of anger was not restricted to the denial of 1915 within the international and political spheres but included denial on the personal and interpersonal level. The accounts showed that anger and resentment also existed towards fellow Armenians who deny the experiences of 1915. One finding that seems to be significantly different from the diaspora offspring generations' experience of anger involved a suppressing or ambivalent discourse towards their own and others' anger and hatred as it may constitute a threat, making oneself and/or the family and community a target in an environment of ongoing threat.

According to these narratives, as well as another set of accounts from a study on Armenian women and offspring living in Turkey (Marazyan, 2016), anger and hatred must be suppressed, hidden from the public domain but inevitably sometimes from themselves. This finding can be argued to be significant in that anger, within the context of living in Turkey as an Armenian offspring, cannot be employed as a functional defense for survival, since one needs to keep oneself hidden and away

from becoming a potential target. This finding also suggests how the feeling of anger is associated with a sense of helplessness which is reflected in the participants' ambivalent narratives.

Confusion, especially during childhood was a response commonly reported by the participants of this study. The participants were either directly told of the experiences of their grandparents or exposed to partial clues and information or witnessed non-verbal expressions associated with 1915 during their childhood. Their responses ranged from a sense of confusion saturated with questions and curiosity to indifference and disinterest. Similarly, Danieli (1998) based on observations and studies on Holocaust survivors' offspring, explains the sense of confusion and "painful bewilderment" in response to the inexplicable pain, pervasive sense of self-guilt in reaction to the prevalent silence, and a sense of "everything is alright" within the family contexts due to fears that traumatic memories would corrode family lives and children. This pervasive sense of self-guilt in response to prevalent silence presented by Danieli also seems to apply to the participants of this study where self-guilt was associated with a sense of being seemingly indifferent to the grandparents' experiences before learning the truths about and developing an awareness of the past. The prevalence of this experience of confusion suggests that whatever the type of familial communication they were exposed to, the transmission of their elders' trauma is reflected in their loss of a sense of what is real, what really happened and a sense of a loss of confidence in their stories and memories.

As the results of this study have shown, the feeling of a sense of helplessness was directly expressed or implicated pervasively in the participants' accounts. Helplessness was indicated by the participants in reaction to the overwhelming and traumatic quality of the exposures they encountered. These exposures included

verbal and non-verbal expressions of elders about their 1915 experiences of loss and suffering, the prejudicial, discriminatory and sometimes violent attitudes and behaviors within the social and political realm, and protective attitudes of their families and communities associated with intense fear and insecurity/threat. Helplessness was associated with either attempts at unachievable expectations (such as over-identification with grandparents, premature "maturation"), or tendencies for dismissal and avoidance, or feelings of hopelessness and tendencies to withdraw/isolate oneself, or feelings of anger and protest. The experience of helplessness of the offspring of Armenians living in Turkey as reviewed in this study's results and presented in other studies (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016) can be eloquently summed up in of the statements of one of the participants interviewed by Altınay & Çetin (2009): "I get goose bumps when I think about it. Think about it: there is nothing out there. You are going on with your life. And suddenly you wake up one morning and you are walking towards death. What kind of an explanation can you make?" (p. 96) Therefore the pervasive and intense sense of helplessness reflected in these studies on Armenian offspring living in Turkey seem to be an ongoing and intergenerationally transmitted state. It can also be argued that because helplessness is at the core of any trauma - which was put forth first by Freud (1926, 1936) and will be discussed below - be it an individual and/or group or massive trauma, the granddaughters of 1915 as reflected in this sample experienced a traumatic struggle with the sense of having lost the ability to do anything about the past and current suffering, to have an impact or to feel recognized in other words having lost a sense of agency (see Slavin, 2007).

#### 5.1.1.5 Interruption of a sense of cohesion and continuity of culture, identity, and history

Findings from intergenerational Armenian diaspora studies presented in the introduction section as well as studies about Armenian offspring in Turkey (e.g. Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016) including this study suggest that, although in differing ways, the past trauma was so intense that the need and responsibility to preserve a sense of culture, identity and history that was interrupted is still strong and dominant even in third generation offspring. The diaspora studies presented in the literature review emphasized first and second generations' internalized efforts to maintain cohesion and to transmit a sense of identity and culture to future generations as well as third generations' tendency to more externalized political efforts for human rights and justice (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998). Somewhat differently the participants' accounts in this study, show that psychological, social, and political pressures have made it very difficult across generations to maintain cohesion and continuity of identity and culture. One participant describes their experience as "cultural massacre." This difficulty may be argued to be even more intense in the grandchildren of Muslimized Armenians as a questioning of self and identity is observed in Altınay & Çetin's (2009) sample. With regard to the externalized political efforts for human rights and justice that was observed to be common in third generation offspring in the diaspora studies, some third-generation participants in this study talked about these efforts and responsibilities, however mostly associated with contradictory feelings of hopelessness, helplessness (thus withdrawal, avoidance) or denial of certain other aspects of experience.

### 5.1.2 Modes of transmission

#### 5.1.2.1 Non-verbal communication patterns

As discussed earlier, non-verbal communication patterns are studied and observed as an important mode of intergenerational transmission of trauma. These provide important information on how dysregulated affect and behavior (through touching, holding, facial expressions, rhythm and tone of voice) due to traumatic experiences of the parent can impact the infant's inner world, affect and behavior (Beebe et al., 2010; Lebovici as cited in Lassman, 2013; Tisseron, 2009 as cited in Lassman, 2013). Some of the accounts in this study showed examples of how the participants, especially as children, were sensitive, observant and affected by their grandparents' implicit, non-verbal emotional expressions through their looks, facial expressions such as crying in reaction to a certain trigger, that were not explained and/or verbalized but that leaked intense feelings of suffering and sadness related to their past traumatic loss. As similar observations were also made in Altınay & Çetin's (2009) interviews with the grandchildren of Muslimized Armenians in Turkey, it can be argued that what goes on is beyond a simple non-verbal communication of intense emotions. It is the traumatic experience that makes the emotional expression associated with it non-verbal, unsymbolized and unrepresented (Bromberg, 1998). Being exposed to this kind of expression as in the case of the granddaughters in this study, is traumatic in itself as they are left with a sense of confusion, helplessness, being alone in trying to figure out what it is that was transmitted. This transmitted trauma that seems to infiltrate into the current state of experience was articulated eloquently by one of the interviewees from Altınay & Çetin's (2009) study: "I did not understand but I could feel it. I mean it felt like there was suffering and pain.

Now I can really feel it" (p.122). Thus, non-verbal communication patterns within the context of trauma can be suggested to become a channel through which the trauma is transmitted intergenerationally.

5.1.2.2 Psychoanalytic concepts and intergenerational transmission of trauma

Some of the psychoanalytic contributions on how intergenerational transmissions occur that were presented in the literature review section also seem to apply to the accounts that reveal intergenerational transmission in this study. It is known that traumatic experiences can overwhelm the capacity for representation and symbolization (Bromberg, 1998). Thus, the emotions and experiences that are overwhelming, unfathomable, and unbearable cannot be directly communicated but can be transmitted through various forms of silences. As Pisano (2012) suggests from her observations of a sample of granddaughters of Holocaust survivors: "silence only further communicates unimaginable suffering" (p.17). Similarly, according to the accounts of this study, whatever the emotion was (sadness, suffering, sense of loss, fear, anger and hatred), the overwhelming quality of the emotions of the elders contributed to their tendencies for silence and secrecy.

As previously discussed in the literature review section, psychoanalytic concepts and work can shed light on how transmissions occur. One of the participants of this study, Dzağig for example learned about her grandparents' experiences when she was in her forties. However, she recalls a childhood memory where she witnessed her grandmother crying in response to a specific song repeatedly. In this scene where there is no verbal communication, Dzağig can be considered to be exposed to a non-verbal but behavioral expression charged with intense emotions of sadness and grief. Through this experience, in Bollas' (1987)

term of the “unthought known”, she knew something about her grandmother however she was not able to process it in thought and consequently not in words. From the perspective of Bromberg’s (1998) conceptualization of trauma and dissociation, Dzağig’s grandmother was so overwhelmed by grief that her emotion could not be represented or symbolized in words, perhaps only through the lyrics of a song and music. Thus, her emotional state was dissociated, disavowed (not owned as “me”) and only emerged behaviorally in rare instances such as while listening to a specific song. For Dzağig, seeing her grandmother in an unusual state only in a specific context was perhaps helplessly confusing. She was overwhelmed by the experience of being alone at witnessing her grandmother’s intense emotion, not being provided with regulating, soothing mechanisms or a coherent narrative. Thus, she was also left as a child with a split-off memory of intense sadness and grief which she was unable to integrate as a coherent account until she became an adult. Thus, a mechanism of a dissociated self-state that involves intense grief and sadness can be suggested as being transmitted from grandmother to granddaughter. What is transmitted is not the actual experience. The grandmother’s dissociated experience involves witnessing the loss of her child with feelings of suffering and helplessness. Dzağig’s dissociated memory is of witnessing an important interpersonal figure in intense suffering and helplessness which evoked in her intense feelings of isolation, as well as helplessness and pain that were parallel to her grandmother’s experience. Inevitably these experiences were left unacknowledged, unmirrored, and unregulated.

### 5.1.3 The consequences of a "traumatogenic" social context for the granddaughters

The accounts of this study reveal traces of intergenerational transmission of trauma as presented and discussed above. However, the accounts also reveal that the participants' overwhelmed emotional worlds are not only a consequence of intergenerationally transmitted trauma. They also seem to be a consequence of being embedded in a "traumatogenic" social context (see Hollander, 2008) that consists of the omission and denial of their experiences as well as prejudicial and discriminatory (sometimes violent) attitudes and practices (see Altınay, 2009).

As presented in the literature review section the social, cultural and political currents shifted over the last decades. These changes influenced the gradual surfacing of experiences of minorities and unofficial stories in Turkey (see Altınay, 2009). This partial dissolution of silence, according to the participants in this study, had an impact on their experiences of exposures to their families' and community's past during their childhood and adulthood, however also in their act of telling their stories for instance through this study. Unfortunately, this atmosphere shifted in the last decade and this shift was expressed by the participants with feelings of helplessness and loss of hope (once again), betrayal and disappointment, anger and resentment, fear and anxiety as well as insecurities in talking freely about and/or opening up about their histories and identities. This shifting trend of "opening" and "closing" up has been argued by Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian's (1998) as a survival strategy to "close up" to the outside world and to temporarily "open up" when acute danger passes. However, as presented in this study's accounts, the experiences of Armenians living in Turkey may be different from Armenians living in diaspora in that danger seems to be more of an ongoing experience rather than temporary. In addition, the denial and lack of acknowledgement of the history of

1915 and associated experiences not only within the social context but also by governments can also be considered as a contribution to the ongoing nature of the experiences of Armenians as demonstrated in diaspora studies (Kupelian, Kalayjian & Kassabian, 1998) and by the accounts in this study. This raises the question of the potential differences in experiences of the offspring of Holocaust survivors where the past experiences are more commonly and generally acknowledged internationally.

The ongoing danger according to the accounts of the participants seem to involve both the dismissing, silencing, and denying as well as discriminating, violating social environment (see Altınay, 2009 on a discussion on the operation of this double mechanism of "selective forgetting" and "remembering" through discriminatory practices). This kind of a social environment is described as a "traumatogenic" environment by Hollander (2006, 2008) who argues, using social contexts created during Argentinian Dirty War and post 9/11 America as examples, that social contexts and realities affect the subjective worlds of individuals. Within the case of traumatogenic environments, social mechanisms of disavowal, denial and imposition of threat contribute to create a sense of ongoing threat, fear, anxiety, vigilance and to the employment of defense mechanisms of splitting and dissociation. Considering the findings from this study's accounts that reveal a prevalent sense of helplessness, fear, anxiety, insecurity and ongoing threat as well as other overwhelming emotions in response to interpersonal and social experiences of dismissal, denial, prejudice, discrimination and violence the question of whether and how the participants' inner worlds are overwhelmed not only through a familial and intergenerational transmission of trauma but perhaps through being embedded (personally, as a family, as a community) in a traumatogenic social context can be asked and further studied.

## 5.2 Findings that suggest a disruption of and attempts to regain a sense of personal agency

As presented in the discussion above the sense of helplessness is quite pervasive in the experiences of granddaughters of 1915 in this study. Helplessness is present in their personal and emotional worlds as well as in their relations with others and with society as a whole. The accounts in this study reveal that what is primarily transmitted across generations is not the unspeakable trauma itself, but the utter helplessness in the face of trauma.

Freud (1926, 1936) was the one to first put forth that helplessness is at the core of trauma and that anxiety is a response to the helplessness in trauma. It is the experience of not being able to do anything about or have an impact on the context, the experience in one's own mind, of not being able to feel oneself as an agent.

It is argued that personal agency is a capacity developed through recognition and experience of having an impact on the other (Slavin, 2007; Slavin & Pollock, 1997, 1998) and is the "capacity to experience one's self as an agent of one's actions, feelings, and interpersonal relationships" (Slavin, 2007, p.307). When one is exposed to being helpless, deprived of the capacity to have an impact in the context of a trauma, a sense of agency is disrupted. People lose the experience of agency in their interpersonal relations as well as in the experience of their own minds. Within the interpersonal world, a sense that one matters is disrupted. Losing agency in the mind leads to dissociation as well as interruption of cognitive capacities such as memory, language, perception (Gentile, 2014). Confidence in one's own mind, a sense of reality and a cohesive and coherent sense of self is shaken. The experience of trauma is so confusingly devastating that while a part of the mind knows what is

remembered is real, that what happened actually happened another part of the mind disbelieves it, that it couldn't have happened (Davies & Frawley, 1994; Slavin, 2007). Thus, individuals' confidence in perceiving the world and themselves in a reliable way is disrupted and memory becomes unstable. What is real what is fantasy, what is true what is false becomes an overwhelming struggle. Within this conceptual context it is only when individuals feel that they matter and feel recognized, that they regain a sense of agency. Then, what is dissociated can be brought back to the self, memory can become stable, a cohesive and coherent narrative can be told, a coherent and cohesive sense of self as well as the capacity to trust one's own mind can be recovered (Davies & Frawley, 1994; Gentile, 2014; Slavin, 2007, Slavin & Pollock, 1997, 1998).

From the perspective of personal agency, the accounts of this study can be considered to reflect the granddaughters' experiences of loss of personal agency, a frequent sequel of any kind of trauma. The experiences of the participants in the accounts of this study suggest that within various contexts they felt that they were not recognized as deserving a full account of their family history and their experiences. It was as if what they have to say or do won't matter or won't be accepted by others and/or the larger community. It can be argued that within their interpersonal and social worlds their sense of mattering thus personal agency was disrupted. As discussed above and presented in the findings, the accounts also indicate how coherent and cohesive narratives were interrupted.

One of the important findings was that the majority of the participants' expressed a sense of confusion. As an extension of this sense of confusion, a few participants shared their childhood experiences of considering their grandparents'

stories as “fairy tales” (“masal”)[2]. The apparent explanation implicated in the accounts was that “fairy tales” functioned as a way to make meaning and comprehending the scope of experiences in a child’s maturing mind, with its limitations. For these participants the stories became “real” as they grew into adolescence and young adulthood as they were able to develop awareness about themselves, others and stories.

This explanation, perhaps, can be expanded from the perspective of trauma, personal agency and dissociation. Fairy tales implicate something that’s between truth and fantasy, between what’s real and what’s not. The fact that the grandparents’ stories were understood as “fairy tales” and the prevalent experience of confusion dominating childhood may suggest that the realness of the stories were left unacknowledged, unvalidated, and unconfirmed. Therefore, the participants’ minds involved questions of whether the stories they were exposed to really happened or not, how they happened and how they did not, especially during childhood. All participants expressed a gradual development of awareness on the stories of 1915, thus at least some of the “realness” of the stories were “known” by a part of themselves. However considering some of the participants’ adulthood narratives implicating confusion, ambivalence and a search for uncovering unknown facts about the stories, and considering the early discussions on trauma, agency and dissociation, a question for further study and discussion can be proposed: perhaps a split off, dissociated or disavowed part of themselves is in confusion about what is real and what is not, still searching for the truth of the stories and for validation as if

[2]The word “masal” has its roots in the Arabic word “masal” that is thought to have evolved from the word “mashal” in Hebrew which means a short parable that has a moral lesson and used to designate fables as well. Other words that have the same roots include “mesela” (“for example”), “temsil” (“representation”) as well as the French originated word “assimilation.”

the stories still carry an oscillating quality between truth and fantasy, just like in "fairy tales" since the experiences, stories and the "truth" continue to be unrecognized, unconfirmed, unvalidated and denied within various contexts of relations. It is evident from the accounts of this study that the participants were exposed to various levels unrecognition on personal, interpersonal, and social dimensions. Thus, it is worth asking what the participants' experiences may be in a context where there is not much place to validate one's own mind, story and memory.

Nevertheless, in all of these accounts revealing intense helplessness, loss of agency and intergenerational trauma there were relatively surprising findings that suggested attempts to regain, repair and resurrect a sense of agency, and to recover and heal the trauma. The accounts, both from this study as well as from others on the offspring of Armenians in Turkey (Altınay & Çetin, 2009; Marazyan, 2016) indicate that despite all the pressures of silencing discussed above, both first generation survivors' and the granddaughters' attempted to "whisper" (Çetin, 2009) their experiences and stories whenever and wherever they felt relatively safe (among peers, within family, within neighborhood or community). In contexts where they felt they could be heard, where they could matter, they wanted to make their past and stories known and remembered (see also Pisano, 2012 for comparable findings among granddaughters of the Holocaust), although in "whispers" most of the time. Perhaps volunteering to participate in this study can also be considered as an attempt to be heard. In other words, they quietly attempted to be recognized by close ones as well as the rest of society, in order to regain a sense of disrupted agency.

Not only did the granddaughters, as reflected in this study, told their stories but they also talked about their interest in building coherent and cohesive narratives

through attempts in learning and talking about their own family's as well as others' and their community's past, and reconnecting with lost family members sometimes associated with a sense of resilience, sometimes gratitude and sometimes pride. This process was facilitated by socio-political contexts that allowed it for at least a period of time. Although in limited ways, these were contexts and relations in which they could feel recognized as agents and in which they could feel they could have an impact through their stories and narratives. Only within these, although limited, contexts where they could feel that they matter and therefore make attempts at resurrecting their agencies they could start building their narratives (Slavin, 2007; Slavin & Pollock, 1998). Similarly, only within these contexts could they make attempts to build and maintain a sense of continuity of culture, language and identity. Within these contexts efforts for human rights and justice, as reflected in some of the participants' accounts, suggests ways of trying to have an impact in society and to prevent further suffering.

Yet again, it is important to note that all of these attempts at re-creating and resurrecting a sense of agency, having an impact and being recognized are paired with an intense struggle. The accounts of this study reveal that these strong efforts are mostly coupled with a struggle with feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that in the end what they do may not matter, they may be betrayed again, they may be unrecognized once again, and they are still vulnerable and open to threat.

## 5.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

This study was designed for explorative purposes using open-ended and in-depth interviews. The length and depth of content in consideration with the time limitations of a dissertation study allowed a sample size of ten granddaughters. This sample size

only gives a cross-sectional view of the experiences of Armenian granddaughters living in Turkey and mostly Istanbul. As such, a more detailed analysis requires more extensive inquiry with a larger sample of participants.

The intense and traumatic content of the interviews may have left certain material unsaid purposefully or unconsciously which is difficult to pinpoint due to the limitation of language in communicating overwhelming and intense experiences (see also Pisano, 2012). Similarly, the accounts suggested aspects of the topic that could be more extensively studied than was possible in this research; future research can explore such aspects.

The open-ended nature of this study may also have left certain material out of the scope of analysis which may have been included if specified questions were asked directly perhaps in a semi-structured interview or questionnaire format. However, the aim of the study was to explore an uncharted territory and become a starting point for further research.

From the time the idea of the dissertation emerged to the time this dissertation was finalized in a written report in nearly a decade, the socio-political context in Turkey shifted radically. Thus, different socio-political contexts may have impacted the choices in methodology (such as choice of questions, sensitivities regarding privacy and confidentiality), the narratives of the participants and the contexts in which the interviews were conducted.

More interviews with third and fourth generation members of the Armenian community are needed in order to get a wider understanding of their experiences as this study aimed to be an exploratory study with a limited sample size. Some of the findings in this study such as how silence and secrecy operates, the range of emotional responses associated with intergenerationally transmitted trauma, the

question of a loss of personal agency can be explored in comparative studies involving the offspring of diaspora Armenians, Muslimized Armenians, other minorities living in Turkey, and of survivors of individual and/or social traumas (for example torture survivors).The question of how social contexts shape the inner world of trauma survivors and their offspring, that also emerged from this study, could also be investigated comparatively with these samples. Comparative studies can also look at the different contexts in which the trauma is generally acknowledged, recognized and validated and in which the trauma is unrecognized, dismissed and denied within the social context. Semi-structured interviews with more specific content would also help in order to look at various issues observed in this sample (for example the range of emotional responses of the offspring) in a wider population. The concept of personal agency and how it is disrupted, and the mechanism of dissociation can be more specifically investigated in various populations that have an experience of intergenerational transmission of trauma. As it was discussed above the efforts to regain and resurrect a sense of agency, attempts to build coherent and cohesive narratives, as well as resilience in the face of such trauma should be more specifically and explored in further studies.

## 5.4 Clinical implications

This study's findings suggest that third generation members of a family that has a past with traumatic losses and experiences can show traces of the traumatic impact. Relying on the psychoanalytic literature and literature on clinical observations that suggest the presence of various forms of impact on further generations there is a need to look more in depth into the accounts and experiences of specific individuals. This study thus proposes the importance of exploring the experiences and emotions of

individuals who are descendants of Armenian elders as well as descendants of members that have suffered various traumatic events especially within clinical contexts such as psychotherapy. This study also suggests that beyond personal/intrapsychic and interpersonal and familial dynamics the socio-cultural and socio-political dynamics associated with a traumatic event should be considered while working with patients. The impact of non-verbal communication should be explored within the context of interpersonal, family dynamics as well as within the context of therapeutic relationship. As how silence operates within the context of trauma and intergenerational trauma is discussed in the earlier sections it is also important to consider the function of silences, how it may function in the transference and countertransference as well as areas of unrepresented and unsymbolized areas of experiences within the clinical context. The concept of agency, as this study also demonstrates, is important in the fact that it is destroyed within the context of trauma and resurrecting it is necessary for processing and healing traumas, be it individual, group or intergenerational. The clinical setting is argued to have significant power to enable survivors to regain a sense of agency through recognition and experience of having an impact.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The trails of intergenerational trauma can be observed in the third-generation Armenian women who are the descendants of survivors of 1915 who live in Turkey. Each interviewees' experience is very different and unique however all of them present intense emotions and areas of difficulty as well as struggles to regain and resurrect a sense of agency and for healing.

This study was an attempt to contribute to the process of acknowledging and talking about a collective experience that has influenced millions of Armenians by enabling a space, although small, for the Christian Armenian granddaughters of 1915 who still live in Turkey and to hear their voices. Çetin (2009) eloquently describes this process as "building bridges from stories" referring also to her own experience as being a granddaughter of a survivor. To reiterate Çetin's (2009) grandmother's words "let those days be gone, never to come back" (p.18). For her wish to come true we need to hear the ancestors' voices that pass through a vacuum of silence within the stories of their descendants. "What cannot be talked about can also not be put to rest; and if it is not, the wounds continue to fester from generation to generation" (Bettelheim, 1984, p. 166 as cited in Danieli, 1998, p.5).

APPENDIX A

INAREK ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

**T.C.**
**BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ**
**İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu**

Sayı: 2017/15 7 Nisan 2017

Berrak Karahoda Okcebe
Psikoloji Bölümü

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"1915'in Ermeni Kadın Torunları" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2017/17 sayılı başvuru İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 7 Nisan 2017 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Saygılarımızla,

İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Yrd. Doç. Dr. İnci Ayhan

Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mehmet Nafi Artemel

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Bengü Börkan

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

KATILIMCI BİLGİ ve ONAM FORMU

Araştırmayı destekleyen kurum: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi
Araştırmanın adı: 1915'in Ermeni Kadın Torunları
Araştırmacının adı: Berrak Karahoda Okcebe
E-mail adresi: [redacted]
Telefon: [redacted]
Tez danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Güler Okman Fişek, Doç.Dr. Serra Müderrisoğlu
E-mail adresi: [redacted]
Telefonu: [redacted]

Sayın katılımcı,

"1915'in Ermeni Kadın Torunları" adlı bu bilimsel çalışma Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Doktora Programı öğrencisi Berrak Karahoda Okcebe tarafından doktora tezi kapsamında Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü öğretim üyeleri Prof. Dr. Güler Okman Fişek ve Doç.Dr. Serra Müderrisoğlu danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir. Bu araştırma çalışmasının amacı 1915'te yaşananların üçüncü kuşak kadınlar tarafından nasıl deneyimlenmiş olduğuna ışık tutmaktır.

Bu çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmak istediğinizi iletmeniz üzerine bu formla size çalışma hakkında bilgi vermeyi amaçlıyoruz. Buradaki bilgiler ışığında çalışmaya katılmak istediğinize karar verirseniz formun sonunda yer alan bilgileri doldurup formu imzalamanızı rica ediyoruz. Bu çalışmaya katılmak tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir açıklama yapmadan çalışmadan çekilme ve görüşmeleri durdurma hakkına sahipsiniz.

Çalışmaya katılmak istediğinizi onayladığınız takdirde sizin belirleyeceğiniz güvenli ve rahatsız edilmeyeceğinizi bildiğiniz bir ortamda gerçekleşecek görüşmenin gün ve saatini araştırmacı Berrak Karahoda Okcebe ile kararlaştıracaksınız. Görüşmeler 1,5-2 saat sürecektir. Görüşme süresinin uzaması durumunda ve/veya ihtiyaç halinde araştırmacı ile belirleyeceğiniz zamanlarda birden fazla görüşme yapılabilecektir.

Araştırmacı ile yapacağınız görüşmeler analiz edilmek üzere ses kaydına alınacaktır. Araştırmada kullanılmak üzere bu ses kayıtları yine araştırmacı tarafından doğrudan yazıya aktarılacaktır.

Bu çalışma bilimsel bir amaçla yürütülmekte olduğundan kimliğinizi açığa çıkarabilecek bilgiler gizli tutulacaktır. Ses kayıtlarında kimlik bilgileriniz kayıt altına alınmayacaktır ancak kaydınızı diğerlerinden ayırt etmek adına sizin belirleyeceğiniz bir kod veya takma ad ile kodlanacaktır. Araştırma bulgularının sunumlarında, raporlandırılmasında ve yayınlarda, kimlik bilgilerinizi açığa çıkarabilecek bilgiler gizli tutulacak, görüşmeler sırasında geçebilecek yer ve kişi isimleri baş harfleriyle kısaltılarak kodlanacak ve görüşmelerden kullanılabilecek alıntılar kimlik bilgilerinizin gizli tutulması esasına dayanarak belirlediğiniz kod veya takma ad ile aktarılacaktır. Görüşmelerin ses kayıtları, ses kayıtlarının aktarıldığı yazılı dosyalar,

notlar, görüşme verilerine yardımcı olması açısından paylaşabileceğiniz malzemeler şifrelendirilmiş dosyalar olarak harici bir bellekte saklanacak ve ad ve soyad bilgilerinizi içeren bilgi ve onam formunuz ile birlikte sadece araştırmacının erişimi olan kilitli bir dolapta muhafaza edilecektir.

Çalışmaya katılmak istediğinizi onaylıyorsanız lütfen aşağıda boş bırakılan kısımları doldurarak formu imzalayınız. Araştırmayla ilgili ek bilgi almak istediğiniz takdirde araştırmacı Berrak Karahoda Okcebe ile temasa geçebilirsiniz (berrak.karahoda@gmail.com, Cep tel: 0543 977 71 14). Araştırmayla ilgili sorularınız için tez danışmanları Prof. Güler Okman Fişek (fisekgul@boun.edu.tr, Ofis tel: 0212 359 70 53) veya Doç. Serra Müderrisoğlu (serra@boun.edu.tr , Ofis tel: 0212 359 73 24) ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz. Araştırmayla ilgili haklarınız konusunda Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu'na (İNAREK) danışabilirsiniz.

Ben, ……, yukarıdaki bilgileri okumuş ve mevcut çalışmanın kapsamını, amacını; çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmanın koşullarını ve haklarımı tamamen anlamış bulunmaktayım. Çalışma hakkında bilgi alma ve soru sorma imkânım oldu. Bu çalışmayı istediğim zaman, herhangi bir açıklama yapmak zorunda olmadan bırakabileceğimi ve bıraktığım takdirde herhangi olumsuz bir durumla karşılaşmayacağımı anladım.
Bu koşullar altında söz konusu çalışmaya kendi isteğimle, hiçbir baskı ve zorlamaya maruz kalmaksızın katılmayı kabul ediyorum.
Formun bir örneğini aldım/almak istemiyorum (bu durumda araştırmacı bu kopyayı saklayacaktır)

Katılımcı
Ad – Soyad:
İmza:

Tarih (Gün/ay/yıl):

# APPENDIX C

## CODING

Table 1

| Codes |
|---|
| Demographics |
| Participant |
| Birth date |
| Birth place |
| Educational background\Graduate school |
| Educational background\University |
| Educational background\High school |
| Educational background\Middle school |
| Educational background\Elementary school |
| Occupational background |
| Marital status |
| Children |
| Socio-economic status |
| Language history of participant |
| Migration history of participant |
| Familial |
| Demographics of Mother |
| Demographics of father |
| Demographics of maternal grandmother |
| Demographics of maternal grandfather |
| Demographics of paternal grandmother |
| Demographics of paternal grandfather |
| Siblings |
| Anatolian roots |
| Educational history of family |
| Language history of family |
| Migration history of family |
| Familial SES history |
| Faith and religion |
| Degree of intimacy with grandparents |
| Losses in family except 1915 |
| 1915 related items |
| Family members who experienced 1915 |
| Lost family members during 1915 |
| Family members who died |

Family members who were killed

Family members who were lost and not found

Reunion with family members after 1915

Facts and knowledge about grandparents' experiences

How 1915 experiences were communicated within the family

Knowledge and experiences about 1915 that were not communicated within the family

Participant's first knowledge about 1915

Participant's awareness and consciousness development about 1915

Participant's attitude towards awareness and knowledge about 1915

Whether and how 1915 experiences were communicated to participant's child(ren)

Participant's experience/emotional state about 1915

Parents' experience/emotional states about 1915

Grandparents' experience/emotional states about 1915

Non-1915 related items

Memories and past experiences

Worldview/comments

Self-identification

Experience of being Armenian

Experience of being a woman

Repeating themes/trends within family

Differing themes/trends within family

Experiences/facts communicated within family

Experiences/facts not communicated within family

Non-1915 related experiences/emotional states of participant

Non-1915 related experiences/emotional states of parents

Non-1915 related experiences/emotional states of grandparents

Narrative and interview related

Emotional expressions and reactions during interview

Reflections on the interview experience

Comments to the interviewer

Comments/reactions to the interview

Confusion of words

Confusion of naming people

Confusing/illogical narrative

Repetition of words/phrases

Shifts in point of view (first, second, third person, singular, plural)

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