

VIEWS FROM THE VARZHARAN:
NEGOTIATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES
THROUGH ARMENIAN SCHOOLS

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2019

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Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Critical and Cultural Studies

by
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2019

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Minji Lee, 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;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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Date27.06.19.....

ABSTRACT

Views From the Varzharan:

Negotiation of Social Identities Through Armenian Schools

Armenians in Turkey are an officially recognized minority group; however, they are unofficially (self-)regarded as ‘semi-citizens’ due to religious and linguistic differences from the majority of the population. There exist imagined boundaries between private Armenian and public Turkish spaces. There also exist institutions and members that occupy strategic positions ‘between’ them. Armenian schools and students represent one such case study. While the schools hold distinct spatial positions under the private/public binary, its students navigate complicated socio-spatial positions. This thesis argued that Armenian students negotiate their identities differently based on their socio-spatial positions, and these differences could be measured through their language attitudes and practices within the Armenian school. Ethnographic data was collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observations at one Armenian high school in Istanbul. The main themes represented the Armenian school as a private, community-centered ‘safe space’ and ‘second home’, and Armenian students as holding variant socio-spatial identities. I discussed the school’s mechanisms of symbolic power that promote a socialized habitus, as well as the students’ (in)consistent language attitudes and practices that presented themselves as paradoxes in their complicated negotiations of social identity within these conditions.

ÖZET

Varzharan’a İlişkin Görüşler:

Ermeni Okulları Aracılığıyla Toplumsal Kimliklerin Müzakere Edilmesi

Türkiye’deki Ermeniler, resmi açıdan azınlık grubu olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Fakat gayri resmi olarak, nüfusun çoğuyla aralarındaki din ve dil farkları bakımından, ‘yarı vatandaş’ olarak görülmektedirler (kendilerini de öyle görmektedirler). Böylelikle, özel Ermeni alanları ve kamusal Türk alanları arasında hayali sınırlar meydana gelmektedir. Özel alan, Ermeniliğin belli başlı ilkelerini korumaya yönelik bir amaç taşıırken, kamusal alan ise eğitim yoluyla ‘Türk normlarına’ benzeşmeye zorlamaktadır. Yarı-özel ve yarı-kamusal alanlarda stratejik konumlara sahip kurumlar ve bunların mensupları da söz konusudur; Ermeni okulları ve öğrenciler bunları temsil etmektedirler. Bu çalışma, Ermeni gençliğinin toplumsal kimliklerinin Ermeni okulları aracılığıyla ve, daha geniş anlamda, kimlik politikaları bağlamında nasıl müzakere edildiğini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. İstanbul’da lise düzeyindeki bir Ermeni okulunda, yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar ile etnografik veri toplanmış ve katılımcı gözlem gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ortaya çıkan ana temalar, Ermeni okulunu özel bir ‘güvenli alan’ ve ‘ikinci ev’ olarak ve Ermeni öğrencileri de karışık dilsel tutumlar ve pratikler içeren çeşitli toplumsal-mekansal kimlikler taşıy biçimde temsil etmektedir. Okulun özel ve komünite merkezli bir habitusu pekiştiren sosyalleşme mekanizmalarını ve öğrencilerin bu habitus içinde birer paradoksal mevcudiyet gösteren devamlı/değişken dilsel tutumlarını ve pratiklerini tartışım.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I extend my gratitude to the members of my thesis panel. I thank my thesis advisor, Pilar Milagros, for teaching me that methodology makes the core of a strong project, for patiently encouraging my ethnographic pursuits in this attempt, and for reminding me of the importance of keeping one's personal passion tied to an academic project. I thank Hülya Adak for connecting me with Armenian educators in intercultural settings from whom I garnered diverse perspectives about my topic. I thank Tolga Cora for offering a historian's perspective on the Armenian community in Turkish history, for clarifying specific terminology in Western Armenian, and for combing through my footnotes with a critical eye.

Within the Armenian school setting, I thank the five student participants for being eager to investigate this complex topic with me through their lived experiences. I thank my colleagues who took time from their busy schedules to support me in this project. Beyond the academic setting, I thank members of the Hrant Dink Foundation for providing me with a travel grant to spend a summer in Armenia, where I forged lasting relationships with youth in Dilijan. I thank Sevan Deyirmenjian, my Western Armenian language teacher, with whom I could discuss language learning and identity construction. I thank my classmate and dear friend, Bengi Çakmak, for assisting with translations and transcriptions of the interviews.

Lastly, I thank my multiple families in America, Armenia, and Turkey, who have helped me negotiate my deep personal sense of belonging while writing a thesis at once familiar and foreign to me. With your support, this work has maintained its passion, which I am enthusiastic to share with my readers.

Thank you, Շնորհակալություն, and çok teşekkürler!

Dedicated to my “students” at the Armenian schools,
who have taught me about identities
beyond those constructed within classroom walls.

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Transference

*My ancestors talk
to me in dangling
myths.*

*Each word a riddle
each dream
heirless.*

*On sunny days
I bury
words.*

*They put out roots
and coil around
forgotten syntax.*

*Next spring a full
blown anecdote
will sprout.*

—Diana Der Hovanessian, “Learning an Ancestral Tongue

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On a normal school day during the academic year, my morning commute through Istanbul is accompanied by views of a historical Ottoman palace and a mosque built by Nigoğos Balyan. I read poems such as Diana Der Hovanessian's "Learning an Ancestral Tongue" on the crowded bus. After walking down the narrow cobblestone path toward the church across the street, Hagop Dayı-dayı buzzes me into the school. Atilla Bey, the young security guard, enthusiastically expresses, "Merhaba, parev, hello!", and I wave back with a smile. Upon stepping into the Armenian school, the first conversation I have with my colleagues at the Armenian *varzharan* (pronounced "varz-jar-an") is a mental exercise in code-switching:

-“Բարի լյու (pari luys), günaydın, good morning! Ի՞նչպէս էս (inch bes es?)”

-“Շատ լաւ (shat lav), very good, thank you. Kahve ister misin? Coffee?”

-“Mersi, ama şekersiz, please.”

-“İyi dersler! Enjoy your lessons.”

-“Շնորհալաւութիւն (shnorhagalootyoon), görüşürüz!”

Coffee in hand, I exit the teacher's room and head toward the classrooms to give my first English lesson. On my way up the stairwell, I pass by Atatürk's portrait and photography by Ara Güler. Bulletin boards with student projects are decoratively displayed in Armenian, Turkish, and English. My students are running up the stairs in their uniforms, the school logo neatly stitched onto their sweaters. They shout out, "Good morning, Minji Teacher!" to me, a softer "*Pari lyoos, Oryort* Mari!" to their Armenian teacher nearby, and gossip in Turkish amongst themselves before entering

the classroom, seconds before an Armenian folk song chimes, for the start of the school day.

In addition to my role as an English teacher at Armenian schools in Istanbul, social interactions such as these have shaped my academic positions as a graduate student, researcher, and amateur ethnographer in the field of Critical and Cultural Studies. In the context of this thesis, I seek to understand how Armenian youth negotiate their social identities through Armenian schools, specifically through their (meta-)language processes. The word I use to refer to Armenians in Istanbul, both in terms of the collective community as well as an individual, is *Bolsahay* (pronounced “Bol-sa-hay”). *Bolsahayutiun* (the suffix is pronounced “ootyoon”) is a term that refers to the condition of being a Bolsahay, which is the term I use for the Armenian community in Istanbul.

This complex process of social identity negotiation for Armenian youth, which is an inductive process of learning, questioning, and (re)imagining knowledge, is directly connected with the school’s socio-spatial position as an Armenian property of the Armenian community, which is positioned on the topographical territory of Turkey. Throughout the thesis, I use the term “socio-spatial” to indicate how a space (such as a school, neighborhood, city, or country), and both its tangible and intangible parts, can influence the way individuals interact with others, and negotiate their social identities, within this space.

What complicates this process, and what Armenian youth learn from an early age and in their school settings, is that Armenians in Turkey have, for centuries and still today, not been given full entitlements to social membership due to differences from those of the majority of the Turkish population (Rumelili & Keyman, 2015). Though the majority of Armenians in Turkey hold Turkish citizenship, they are not

(self-)considered ‘true Turks’ in the ethno-religious sense of the term (Kadıoğlu, 2007). As an officially recognized *azınlık*, or (religious) minority group in Turkey that unofficially assumes a self-defined ‘semi-citizen’ status as such (Okutan, 2004, Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012), Armenians in Turkey cannot hold their “sub-national rights and identity” as a pair, which has resulted in the necessity to “endure second-class treatment as national citizens” (Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012, p. 68). This fragility in attempting to hold rights and identity in the same hand may lead to complications in their identities, especially for youth who are only just beginning to engage in civic discourse in unofficial ways. Under these complicated circumstances, the question that guides this thesis is how Armenian youth are negotiating the complexities of their social identities, and if their positions at Armenian schools have influenced them to construct their identity politics under a specific membership discourse, which may influence their notions of belonging to a given group.

1.1 Researcher’s position

One crucial aspect of this academic undertaking is the critical articulation of the researcher’s position in the subject of study, of which mine was multifaceted. My position shares characteristics with the role of the “outsider within” (Collins, 1986) in that my personal experiences, values, and identities garner a standpoint epistemology that was not neutral, but can contribute to qualitative research in unique ways. Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) wrote, “The most admirable scholars ... do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other” (p. 195). During the research process, I took on the position of a cultural anthropologist who interacted directly with members of Armenian schools with the

stated motive to explore how their participation within these institutions contributed to the construction of social identities. In these same settings, I fulfilled my formal role as an English teacher as well as my informal roles as a language learner and participant of the Armenian community. My process of bringing my experiences and academic interests together as a part of the research inquiry process is an important part of this thesis, which I will refer back to at certain points.

It is also important to regard my position as an outsider with a different background from that of my students. Firstly, the most critical difference to articulate is my position as a non-Armenian English speaker with limited knowledge of the Turkish and Armenian language. The level to which my invitation for involvement with the Armenian schools and students may have been limited due to these language barriers, as well as my non-Armenian background. However, the majority of academic work related to Bolsahayutun has been undertaken by Armenians or Turks, which is reason why this thesis, coming from the academic standpoint of a researcher outside of these categories, occupies a unique place in academia. Secondly, as a graduate student in the field of Critical and Cultural Studies, the questions I posed and theories I applied in my attempts to make sense of these topics come from a specific academic position. The ways in which I provide context on the Armenian community in the following chapters, as well as the ways in which I analyzed the data, are steeped in this standpoint of critical inquiry. While there are some gaps in understanding due to these outsider positions, it is important for me to have stood in this space, one that is neither completely inside nor outside, public nor private, in attempting to understand the lived experiences of Armenian youth from a researcher's standpoint. It is my hope that these outsider perspectives allowed the

participants to engage more critically with their negotiation of social identities through the Armenian school.

1.2 Private and public spaces of membership

To begin to clarify this broad question of social identity negotiation, it is essential to contextualize terms related to membership within the private Armenian sphere and the public Turkish sphere. Following Durkheim's (1912) views on the structure of society, communities are defined by their internal segmentation as much as by their external perimeters. Simply stated, they are defined by boundaries. Though there are some rigidities between what and whom constitutes inside(r) and outside(r), there are also fluidities in the extent to which place, culture, and nation hold their space within these communities (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Thus, these dynamic processes of negotiation between private and public help constitute interpersonal or collective social identities. In the scope of this thesis, I refer to the "public space" as a site where interaction between all members of Turkish society occurs, and where the apparatus of the Turkish state and its associated instruments acts as the surveyor of these members. I refer to the "private space" as a site where a majority of Armenians interact with each other without the need to 'censor' parts of their Armenian-specific identifications, such as within the Armenian home, school, and church.

The "private" space, or the Armenian community, defines its collective membership under an ethno-religious framework. The ways in which Armenians in Istanbul define their identity is largely due to their reaction against the religious emphasis of the Turkish national identity (Örs & Komsuoğlu, 2007). Today, the Armenian community as a private ingroup accentuates its religious and linguistic difference from the outgroup, or the Turkish public society. There exist lines of

separation drawn within their “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983). Anderson (1983) claims that communities and nations are both “imagined” entities in that “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 49); however, Armenians in Turkey may hold onto the idea that their ethno-religious identity is fixed (Bal, 2006). The purpose of such a community is to “insulate” itself from the “outer world”, or the Turkish public sphere, which “provide[s] the only devices for Turkey’s Armenians to continue their existence within the hegemony of the Turkish nation” (Komsuoğlu & Örs, 2009, p. 332). This discourse leads to the question of who is included and excluded from this imagined private community. I hope this thesis can contribute in the act of questioning the boundaries of what is deemed private and public for young members of the “Armenian community”. One of the most important actors in this regard, in its roles of interacting in both public and private spheres, is the Armenian school.

The Armenian school is distinct in that it occupies a semi-private, semi-public space in between Armenian and Turkish spheres. However, Armenian schools straddle boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, both in their own ideologies of private/public and in their spatial positioning under the state. Ekmekçioğlu (2016) writes, “This was a spherical imagination in which the borders of concentric circles were formed according to the existence and intensity of the *state’s interference*” (p. 13, emphasis added). These concentric circles have been drawn by the state, and they have also been accepted and internalized by the Armenian community. These state-imposed boundaries have, for many decades, confined Armenians to spaces that are not an appropriate fit. This, in turn, had an effect on the ways by which people categorized themselves as ‘unfit’. Therefore, for Bolsahayutian, identity has a complicated history that does not easily fit under the state’s framework of such.

Moving away from the state's interpretation of identity, and more toward how Armenian youth (self-)define their identities, specifically through their Armenian schools, is what this thesis aims to push.

1.3 The spatial position of Armenian schools

This thesis assumes a top-down approach toward how a school's spatial position influences its students' socio-spatial positions. Though the spatial position of the Armenian school will be explored in detail throughout this thesis, it is essential to recognize how complicated its position is in public Turkish and private Armenian spheres. In the Turkish sphere, the 'Armenian school', with an emphasis on the latter part of the term, is an educational institution with specific mechanisms to prepare its students to become productive members of a larger Turkish society. In the Armenian sphere, the Armenian school, with an emphasis on the former, is an important institution with mechanisms to prepare its youth to become productive members of the Armenian community. The ways in which the Armenian school assumes its spatial position in one or both of these domains may provide a clue to how Armenian students negotiate their identity positions within them.

1.3.1 Education and socialization

It is essential to provide some critical context on the "school" part of the term "Armenian school". Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1971) and his concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) classifies schools as one of the institutions that structure the ways individuals understand and represent themselves in society. The Armenian school is an ISA with specific mechanisms for socialization to the Armenian ideal, or the process by which students learn how to be 'members' of a

specific ‘community’. Sociologist Pinar Selek (2015) states, “The educational mechanism is one of utmost importance to the [Turkish] State. It is an ideological mechanism which creates hegemony in the society, trying to engrave ideas of the State in the brains and bodies of the people”. The function of the Armenian school is to be allegiant to both the Turkish state and MNE as well as to the Armenian community. In this tricky position, the Armenian school is a “contact zone”, or a “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt, 2000, p. 487).

In addition to navigating relations of power within themselves, in sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s (1987) terms, Armenian schools also hold a “symbolic power” over its students in their roles as ISAs. Specifically, Armenian schools play an important role in contributing to the legitimacy, prestige, and reputation of its members, its students, within the social world of the wider Armenian community. These members hold rankings in their imagined communities with their inevitably associated social hierarchies, all of which connect to the concept of power. This power translates into a conceptualized social reality, creating a “habitus” (1987) for its members with specific mechanisms that regulate its structure. In this thesis, habitus can be broadly regarded as an abstract notion of ‘place’, with prerequisites for its constituents, (un)willingly constructed by all participants of a given social space. To give an example of how symbolic power and habitus function together, it is generally assumed that within the Armenian community, having linguistic competence in the Western Armenian language is viewed as a capacity for production in a ‘market’. This production might symbolize contribution back to the Armenian community, which may symbolize a marketplace for ‘symbolic capital’, a sociological term for the (in)tangible assets an individual can give to a group order to

establish social mobility within the group. The way in which I use “symbolic capital” is by re-appropriating this economic term beyond the material goods; rather, it can be interpreted as how representative they were of their wider Armenian community, with this group in itself being an imagined community concept. While Bourdieu examined entire social structures and practices, from his ethnographic studies with the Kabyle population in Algeria to his more theoretical studies on the entire French education system (Albright & Luke, 2008), I use his broad framework in this microanalysis of Armenian youth and their social worlds, specifically garnered through the Armenian schools. This Bourdieusian framework, which I will refer to throughout the entire thesis, allows me to relate individuals’ thoughts and actions about identity, and in this case, framed through meta-language, as products directly related to particular ‘markets’ in the school setting. The ways in which these marketing strategies and products, which might be framed under socialization, influence the identities of Armenian youth is important to consider.

In a general sense, groups socialize children through the use of language in various institutions such as schools. As children acquire language and culture together, the Armenian school is perhaps the primary zone for early age socialization. All of the Armenian primary schools in Istanbul begin kindergarten education at the age of three. In addition to preparing their students for primary school in terms of behavior and basic skills, the kindergarten teachers’ main aims are to teach the Armenian language. In learning about their ‘culture’ through language, children may be socialized to believe that holding Armenian culture is directly coordinated with being knowledgeable of the Armenian language. This socialization process is encouraged in unofficial and official ways throughout the school space.

1.3.2 The teaching and learning of Armenian language

Given the focus of this thesis on the link between social identity and language, it is important to provide a brief history of the Western Armenian language and how various communities utilize it in the present day. The Armenian language is a member of the Indo-European language family, and it refers to two main varieties, Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian. Modern Eastern Armenian is used in present-day Armenia as well as in Armenian communities in Azerbaijan and Iran. Modern Western Armenian is spoken by Armenians in present-day Turkey, most notably in Istanbul, as well as in Armenian communities in countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq. A large number of Western Armenian speakers are also in diaspora in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and South America. The most distinctive feature of Western Armenian in contrast to Eastern Armenian is that it has undergone several phonetic mergers, which may be due to its speakers' proximity to Arabic- and Turkish-speaking communities. Although some may consider these languages to be similar with dialectical differences, others may consider them separate languages with different histories. Western Armenian was based on the dialect spoken by people in then-Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), and it was widely used by all Armenians in Ottoman regions at the time. Language has served as one of two main pillars of Armenian identity for Bolsahayutian; specifically, language has been regarded as the most direct link to an Armenian's historical heritage, much of which is considered to have been lost in the violent events in the years surrounding 1915. Language is not only a direct link to historical heritage but also an affective mechanism, laced with stories, songs, and memories, which bond Armenians to their community, whether real or imagined (Bilal, 2004).

Before 1915, there existed about 50 dialects of the Armenian language. However, throughout the difficulties of the 20th century, topographical spaces were split into nation-states and territories, and languages followed suit. In the present day, there are two officially recognized languages: Western and Eastern Armenian. In 2010, Western Armenian was placed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) “endangered languages” list. Western Armenian is considered a “definitely endangered language”, which is the third degree on a six-point scale between “safe” and “extinct”. A language is placed on this level when children do not learn it as a mother tongue in their home environment, thus reiterating a discourse around loss, survival, and sustainability. Boundary-specific demarcations of language are articulated by Armenians that live near the Middle East (Bakalian, 1993). Accordingly, language-specific notions of belonging continue to serve as the main discourse of what it means to be a Bolsahay.

As the Armenian language is regarded as “a vehicle of perpetuation of Armenian identity” (Örs & Komsuoğlu, 2007, p. 421), one of the main tools the Armenian school communities use to “perpetuate” the Armenian identity is through pushing for the teaching and learning of the language. However, this official (such as UNESCO classifications) and unofficial (such as conversations about the topic) discourse about Armenian cultural preservation through language may differ from the ways in which Armenians actually practice their language in various spaces. This leads to the big question of where Armenian youth place their social identities if one of the main instruments that determines their ‘identity’, their language, is getting lost in contemporary society.

1.4 The socio-spatial position of Armenian students and the influence of language

At this point, I bring in the “social” aspect of the topic in turning the focus to Armenian youth. The specific way I examine the broad notion of “social identity” is through the Western Armenian language. Identity and language are connected at the intersection of social belonging. For many people, their intention to learn a language is the following to construct identities they desire and join communities they value in order to engage in social life (Canagarajah, 2004). The process of learning a language and constructing an identity gives people access to community. For Armenian youth, this ‘community’ is informed under the minority discourse. Echoing a common strategy of many minority groups in majority settings, the two defining characteristics of ‘Armenianness’, as a stark juxtaposition to ‘Turkness’, are religion and language. Broadly speaking, the Armenian community as an institution has difficulties acknowledging Armenians who are not Christian, or who do not identify with the Armenian Apostolic Church, which the majority of the pan-Armenian community associates with. Numerous political tensions have caused religious divides in the Armenian community, which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, I focus on the characteristic of language, specifically Western Armenian, as a unifying component of Armenianness, to investigate how Armenian youth utilize this tool to construct their sense of social identities under various spheres of membership.

I use Western Armenian language practices and attitudes as a lens for the negotiation of Armenian youth social identity. I believe in the power of language to shape one’s critical knowledge about social belonging, both in the sense of the self and the social groups one affiliates with. As human interactions are conducted through the means of spoken communication, language is central to the negotiation

of identity. On a deeper level, linguistic discourse constitutes an intermingled, shifting process of scripts, grammatical structures, and visual icons, which tie back to their construction and representation of social identities to others. This negotiation process implies a constantly shifting sense of identity. This sense of identity through the Western Armenian language is beginning to be fostered exclusively in the Armenian school setting.

The Western Armenian language is deeply intertwined with layers of historical violence, power relations and social dissonance that Armenians in Turkey have faced for centuries, and construct their identities through, today. The historical roots of Western Armenian can be traced back to prominent Ottoman-Armenian intellectuals who lived in then-Bolis, present-day Istanbul; as such, its historical ‘legacy’ is an extremely important concept for Armenians to uphold. Just as many factors of a minority group identity, such as religion, traditions, and language, are connected with the sustainability of the group, Western Armenian, and the expectation to preserve and pass it on with each generation, is the main pillar the Armenian community aims to uphold. This language, then, acts as a binding agent that connects the school to the students, or at least in theory. The question of how the students’ attitudes toward and practices of the Armenian language sculpts the identities of its learners, and in ways that extend beyond singular identity classifications of language and identity, is important to consider.

1.5 Aims and approaches

In this section, I introduce the frameworks of space, place, and position in the context of this thesis. I utilize the Lefebvre/Soja tradition of (re-)conceptualizations of space and place to probe deeper into the socio-spatial position of the Armenian

school and how its position influences its members. Spaces are imagined zones with real-life implications in the ways that individuals interact with people and places around them through the symbolic meanings they carry (Lefebvre, 1974, Soja, 1980, 1989). In this case, “space” is conceptualized as an imagined private or public zone that members within it reside, interact, and negotiate their identities within. In the framework of structuralism, space was understood to be static; however, in deconstructive thought, which is a framework this thesis leans more toward, space emerges as a “holistic construct that includes geography, history and society... it is self-generating and self-regulating, with things shaping each other and other beings, including humans” (Canagarajah, 2017, p. 33). “Place” is broadly conceptualized as a tangible entity that occupies a physical presence. The Armenian school is a place, as it is a physical property that takes on a topographical character. Place is also symbolic, and it holds relations to symbolic power and belonging. Canagarajah (2017), whose work I will detail in Chapter Three, further states the dialectical relationship between place and space as follows: “If place is space ascribed with social meaning and shaping, as in bounded constructs, such as nations, communities, and cities, we must also hold places in dynamic tension with space as an expansive material construct, providing possibilities for reconstruction” (p. 33). The idea of negotiating one’s “place” in a group or society has social implications; this is where “position”, the dialectical interplay between space and place (Merrifield, 1993), comes into the mix, with the idea that these “bounded constructs” are also in “dynamic tension” with each other, and in need to constantly be reconstructing each other in the process.

Given this complicated interplay between private and public space, place, social identity, and language, the main argument of this thesis is as follows:

Armenian youth negotiate their social identities differently based on their socio-spatial positions. To unpack the term “socio-spatial” position, “socio” refers to perceptions of collective identity or interpersonal relationships; “spatial” refers to the private Armenian or public Turkish space. I further argue that these variant negotiations are demonstrated through their articulations about their language attitudes and practices. I define language attitudes as the ways participants consider specific language(s) they should use; I define language practices as the main language(s) they use to communicate with each other. These language attitudes and practices are to be regarded in the context of a specific socio-spatial position. The investigation focus is on the Armenian school as a semi-private, semi-public space where individuals’ collective identities take shape and interpersonal relationships occur. The action plan is two-fold: 1) to investigate if the Armenian school has a specific position along the socio-spatial spectrum, and 2) to see how the members negotiate their social identities through this specific position of the school. The following research questions will be investigated, as a part of an inductive process, throughout this thesis:

- How does the position of the Armenian school influence the social identities of its students?
- How do these students negotiate their social identities from their Armenian language attitudes and practices from the position of the Armenian school?
- How might Armenian students’ socio-spatial position influence their identity politics of membership in the wider society?

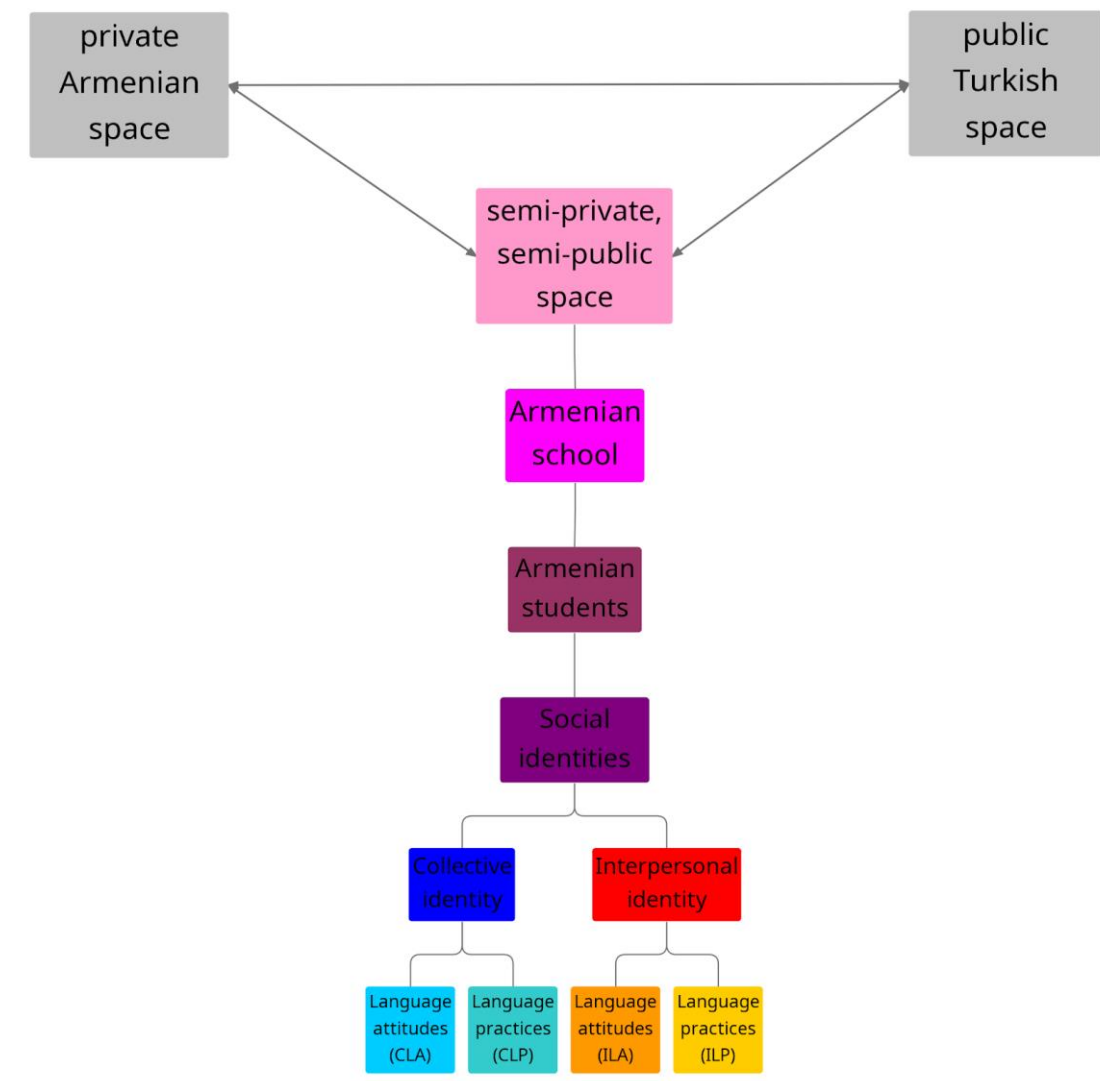


Figure 1. Investigation map: From spaces to social identities

When referring to social identities in the context of this thesis, it is crucial to maintain the idea that these conceptions of identity are constantly in flux, and the ways in which Armenian youth negotiate these identities depends on their local encounters. In Barthian (1971) terms, the ‘cultural stuff’ is the dialectical social processes, the blend of categories such as language, nationality, or religion, all of which create, organize, and sustain notions of identification. This thesis specifically focuses on Armenian youth social identity through the lens of Armenian schools and through meta-language, which is only one element of the ‘cultural stuff’ in the wider

Bolsahay world. Despite its narrow context of study and participant population, I posit that this thesis contributes to the academic literature because of its interest in Armenian youth and their contemporary formations of social identity. While previous academic dissertations on Armenians in Turkey have mostly focused on an analysis of older generations from the community speaking about their memories through discourses of memory and loss (Bilal, 2004, Bal, 2006, Özden, 2014, Salamer, 2014), this study focuses on Armenian youth and their contemporary social and cultural conditions. Furthermore, this thesis is a multi-disciplinary project that aims to blur boundaries between academic fields such as sociology, psychology, sociolinguistics, and critical and cultural studies. It also intends to incorporate my critical positions as firstly, a qualitative researcher, and secondly, a member of the Armenian school community, which follows the aim of ethnography to immerse oneself and one's research in the study of people and cultures.

The order of the following chapters is laid out as follows: Chapter Two provides a brief historical background of the Armenian community, with a focus on Armenian schools, from the Ottoman era to present-day Turkey. It contextualizes and complicates the status of Armenians in Turkey regarded as 'millet', 'minority', 'member' and 'mediator'. Chapter Three provides a literature review from empirical studies and theoretical frameworks to situate this topic in both a real-world context and in academia. Chapter Four explains the methodology and research design that were used to design, collect, and analyze the data. Chapter Five presents the main patterns and themes gathered as results from the data collection. Chapter Six discusses the findings from the data through an in-depth analysis of the results. Chapter Seven concludes with the study's limitations, suggestions for future research, and strategies for applying the research topic in different contexts.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History means an exploration of the past through a collective, supra-individual subject... in short, for the subjects which refer to a collective history; on the other hand, ‘remembering’ corresponds to those things in the past that have been marginalized by the collective.

—Frank Ankersmit

A lived experience is shaped by a critical remembrance of one’s “collective history”.

It is essential to unpack how a collective, whether an abstract subject or concrete institution, has conditioned this type of remembrance. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a backdrop for Armenians and their educational institutions in Turkey—from the final phase the Ottoman Empire, through the period of nation-building within the Turkish Republic, to the contemporary state of affairs in present-day Turkey—from a framework of critical remembrance. In this chapter, critical remembrance points to historical events of (self-)marginalization that have created, and continue to propagate, boundary-specific discourse of social inclusion and exclusion. I intend for the reader to gain a critical understanding of how the Turkish state’s act of labeling, and the Armenian community’s passive propagation of such labels, has led to the position of Armenian schools in Istanbul in the present day. Furthermore, the question of how this position of these schools, rooted in history, have fared for Armenian youth in their own socio-spatial positionings in public and private spaces, is what this chapter attempts to answer.

The sections to follow are segmented into parts with four “M” keywords to frame each section: the first section situates Armenians in Turkey from the late Ottoman era to the beginning stages of the nation-building period as a “millet”. The second section, set in the timeframe of Turkey’s nation-building period from the end

of World War I until the mid-20th century, discusses Armenians and their schooling institutions through the “minority” framework. The third section, set in 21st-century Turkish society, complicates the nation-state concept of citizenship with a focus on Armenian students’ socialization processes under Turkey’s *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*, or the Turkish Ministry of Education (MNE), from a postnational perspective of “membership.” The fourth section, set in present-day Istanbul, situates Armenian schools in their attempted role as “mediator” in its semi-private, semi-public space, addressing various aims, activities, and issues they face. The final section of this chapter replaces the phrase “Armenian school” with “Armenian youth”, discussing various historical events, trends in education, and issues in their schools that may have influenced their social identity negotiation processes.

2.1 Armenians as “millet” during the late Ottoman period

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire constituted distinct non-Muslim *millets*.¹ The term “millet” comes from the Arabic term *milla*, which was used to define a religious community in the Ottoman Empire (Gibb & Bowen, 1969, Davison, 1982, Braude & Lewis, 1982, Aviv, 2016). There were three officially-recognized millets under the Ottoman authority: the first constituted the *Rum*, or Greek Orthodox, millet, which also embodied other European Christians including the Bulgarians, Serbians, Romanians, Macedonians, and Vlachs. The Armenians formed the second millet, and they were reorganized as separate Catholic and Protestant sub-millets in the 19th century. The Jewish community constituted the

¹ In the 19th century Tanzimat Reforms, the millet system was developed with the intention to impose uniform administrative systems upon all non-Muslim communities. Tanzimat referred to the drive toward centralization of all spheres of influence, including over the millet communities. There was no Ottoman Turkish equivalent of “minority”, and the millet system was the framework for Turkey’s eventual “minority” definition and status.

third millet (Braude & Lewis, 1982). Members of these three groups were called *dhimmi*, an Arabic term meaning “protected person”. These officially recognized non-Muslim dhimmis were allowed to live under the Muslim arrangement of the Empire with protection for life, property, and freedom of religion and worship, as long as they abided by a different set of regulations for state membership, such as paying the capital tax (Aviv, 2016). The millet system existed between the 19th and 20th centuries; under this system, dhimmis engaged in their community’s religious and linguistic practices in both private and public spheres.² However, the state’s agenda for supervision over its millet group began to restrict the levels of social engagement the dhimmis could participate in.

As a part of the Tanzimat drive, in 1856, *Hatt-i Humayun*, or the Reform Decree, called for uniform taxation and educational equality within all members of the Ottoman Empire, with the message of equality and no race- or religion-based distinction (Hurewitz, 1975). However, these prospects of equality were merely a guise, especially in the education field: “[the Reform Decree] was not so much equality being offered but rather a mechanism for controlling the learning process” (Hurewitz, 1975). Further reforms in 1869, framed under the mask of secularized education, gave the state the right to supervise non-state and foreign schools by providing certification for the curricula, lessons, and textbooks. In the early 20th century, the state’s more active involvement in education through the Tanzimat Reforms paved a way in which state identification was exemplified, even in millet institutions such as Armenian schools.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, in the early-to-mid-20th century, a new political party, The Young Turks, brought about hopes for the millet groups, as they

² Today, the term “millet” roughly translates from Turkish to English as ‘nation’ or ‘people’, and it also retains its use as a religious and ethnic classification.

advocated religious tolerance through secularization. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, the former-Empire aimed to take on characteristics of a modernizing, centralizing state. The Young Turks had a worldview described as “a complicated amalgam of the old Ottoman and the new Pan-Turkic” (Suny, Göçek & Naimark, 2015, xv). That is, they could not separate themselves from the discourse of dhimmis, as protected people of different religions, being a feature, but perhaps also a threat, to the new Turkish nation. By 1912, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), under the leadership of Ziya Gökalp, focused on a pan-Turkish nationalism framed under the ideologies of religious, cultural, and ethnic homogeneity. From their political perspective, Armenians as dhimmis were a threat to the imagined structure of the up-and-coming Turkish nation. Under the CUP, the dominant discourse of Turkish nationalization began to affect Armenian schools as well. In 1913, primary education guidelines were introduced to promote ‘Turkification’. New regulations required teacher-training programs to follow a state-approved curriculum and an increased number of hours of Turkish language instruction was enforced in all schools (Young, 2001).

Between the years 1915 and 1922, these ideologies were exemplified through violent massacres against Armenians throughout the Anatolia provinces, as well as in parts of Constantinople. This state-sponsored Turkification campaign that took place from 1915 to 1922, which included a Turkification of the economy, land, and population, is what some countries refer to as “The Armenian Genocide”, and which I follow in Marc Nichanian’s (2014) specific discourse in terming it “Catastrophe”.³

³ The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin during World War II, and it was positioned in a framework of international law. It explicitly included the Armenian events along with the Nazi extermination of European Jews (Suny, Göçek & Naimark, 2015); however, there is still international debate over this word being used to refer to events that took place before its official legal phrasing. Additional readings on this important question can be found in Suny et al.’s (2015) *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press).

In the events of these catastrophes, many Armenian properties were destroyed or confiscated. Armenian schools throughout Turkey were closed, the majority of which were never reopened again. Ironically, these catastrophes created a more coherent sense of Armenian identity in Armenian communities, both in the diaspora and in Istanbul: “the greatest misfortune that had befallen Armenians, ironically, became the source of shared *national consciousness*...” (Suny et al., 2015, p. 24, emphasis added). In Istanbul, the Armenian schools assumed a large responsibility in preserving the Armenian culture and language, as well as in promoting it to children, who would presumably be the future leaders of the Armenian community. In the following section, I will discuss the presence of the Armenian schools in Turkey and their contribution to the shared Armenian “national consciousness”.

2.1.1 A brief history of Armenian schools

Since the opening of the first Armenian schools in the Ottoman Empire in the late 18th century and even today, these sites have served as vital institutions for upholding Armenian culture in the private sphere while, at the same time, preserving its position as an official educational institution under the Turkish public sphere. During these times, numerous Armenian schools were opened throughout villages and towns across Anatolian provinces as well as in Constantinople. While only a small percentage of Armenians resided in Constantinople, this city served as the intellectual center of the entire Armenian community, and many of the schools, this study’s research site included, were important sites of learning and teaching for the Ottoman Armenian community (Young, 2001). Between 1901 and 1902, there were 803 Armenian schools in the Ottoman Empire, with 439 of them located in the

eastern region of Anatolia and the rest in the western regions of Turkey (Bryce, 1916). During the catastrophic events, the majority of these schools were destroyed or utilized for state purposes. In the present day, there are 16 Armenian schools in Turkey. All of them are located in Istanbul (see Appendix A).

2.1.2 Promoting the Armenian national ethos through religion and language

In the mid-1800s, Armenian schools as millet institutions emphasized the Armenian national ethos as distinct markers of the Armenian community. Historically, Armenian institutions in Istanbul, such as schools, churches, and foundations have been interlinked as a means of maintaining each other's spatial and social existence in the Ottoman-Turkish society (as I will later discuss, the socio-spatial linkages between the church and school are still prominent in present-day society). *Din*, or "Religion" remained a part of the Ottoman Armenian curriculum. Departing from the theological use of the term, as an unofficial part of the academic agenda, "religion" courses intended to teach its students Armenian national consciousness: "through religious study (including the music and church history), the idea was that students would develop a deeper awareness and understanding of the national ethos" (Young, 2001, p. 80). Thus, the presence of the church served to help maintain specific Armenian traditions, framed under the educational umbrella that attempted to resist the state's increasingly Turkish-nationalistic hold over these institutions.

The religious presence of various church institutions is active in the Armenian schools. According to the Turkish Armenian Patriarchate website, Armenian schools in Istanbul are split into two types: *cemaat okulları* ("community schools") and *Ermeni Katolik okulları* ("Armenian Catholic schools"). Getronagan High School, the research site of this study, belongs to the former category

(“Getronagan Ermeni Lisesi, Türkiye Ermenileri Patrikliği,” 2019). One of the teachers whom I interviewed, Ms. Talin, provided me with important information about the labels of different Armenian schools. Generally speaking, ‘community schools’ are Armenian schools connected to the Armenian patriarchate in the district of Kumkapı, Istanbul and the Armenian Apostolic Church; Armenian Catholic schools are connected to the Catholic Pope in the Vatican and the Armenian Catholic church. These separate institutions provide private support for Armenians in Istanbul, including Armenian schools in the present day.

Throughout history, the Armenian schools’ broad plans “focused first and foremost on the development of national ideals,” which were primarily taught in the Armenian language classes (Young, 2001, p. 169). In these classes, Armenian teachers catered their Ottoman curricula toward Armenian-specific figures and their works: “instead of using already published textbooks in the Ottoman Turkish language, educators felt it was important for students to learn from Armenian works”, with the most widely used Ottoman history textbook being Krikor Markarian’s *Osmanian Badm ut’iun* (Young, 2001, p. 227). Markarian’s textbook gave summaries of various episodes in Ottoman history that had opinionated views on various events such as the rise of Abdulhamid, the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, and the Armenian massacres in 1895-1896. Supplemental history materials also included cultural influences such as Ottoman literature, the establishment of the theater, and music. Young (2001) states, “although these textbooks encouraged the Armenian students to develop a passive knowledge of Ottoman culture and history, it was clear much more attention should be given to the study of national (i.e. Armenian) history” (p. 229). During these times, the millet system allowed Armenians to maintain a segregated educational regime, which bolstered a separatist

collective mentality. Masters (2009) stated, “The children of the communities were educated separately from Muslims and primarily in the language of their community... It is this separate education that many believe inspired these groups to see themselves as separate peoples” (p. 384). This separatist discourse held strong under the millet term that the Armenian community and schools classified themselves under.

This separatist discourse, which started with early Armenian educational institutions in the Ottoman times, continues to have ramifications in the present day. The rules for admission, textbook use, and language instruction have since changed under the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE), but the Armenian schools’ hopes that its students would hold strongly to their Armenian background, in the form of religion and language, remain. Though Armenian schools are much more restricted in their teaching of Armenian history today, they have (un)official mechanisms of continuing to pursue their educational agendas in alignment with Armenian community ideals. The following section lists a number of specific events in the post-WWI era that have led to the further (self-)marginalization of the Armenian community and their educational institutions. Though the “millet” label was replaced with its *azınlık* (“minority”) counterpart, under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, this affiliation, sustained in both the private Armenian community and in the public Turkish sphere, continues to have social ramifications for Armenians under their contemporary minority label.

2.2 Armenians as “minority” during Turkey’s nation-building period

If the building blocks of the Turkish Republic were laid upon a framework of secularism, it may seem contradictory to state that Armenians were further excluded

from the public sphere because of their religion. However, during the nation-building process, the question that plagued the institutions and people was who the Turks were going to be (Oprea, 2014). In 1904, ‘Turkism’ was introduced as a political project by Yusuf Akcura. Turkism was pushed as a means of preserving the identity of the Ottoman Empire within the Turkish sphere at the expense of quelling “ethnic disturbances” that might aim to disturb the unity of the Empire (Kadioğlu, 2017, p. 286). Though secularism was one of the pillars of the newly-established Republic of Turkey, a religious citizenship discourse formed the base. (Re-)constructions of educational institutions, especially those that did not fit into the religious and national structure of the Republic, were no exception to this new discourse. In the following sections, I will discuss a number of specific circumstances that have placed Armenians along these “minority” lines.

2.2.1 Minority schools as defined by the Treaty of Lausanne

The term “minority”⁴ refers to a legally defined category subject to differential treatment, the conditions of which were set for Armenians, Greeks, and Jews in Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (“Lausanne Peace Treaty”, 1923).⁵ During the post-WWI 1919 Paris Peace Conference negotiations, the former Ottoman Empire and the Allied Powers concluded that multi-ethnic coexistence should be regulated, which would be achieved through either an unmixed population (which would occur via an exchange of populations) or an experienced state to supervise its bodies of nations. Under Articles 37-45 of the Treaty of Lausanne, the concept of

⁴ The Merriam-Webster legal definition of “minority” terms it as “a part of a population differing especially from the dominant group in some characteristics (as race, sex, or national origin). If a minority group lies in one category, then a “majority” group must lie in another, and both of these groups are intimately bound by power relations related to, and which separate, each other.

⁵ The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne was signed between “Turkey” (previously the Ottoman Empire) and “the Allied Powers”, which consisted of the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State.

“minorities” was engraved into the national and international legal order, indicating ‘equality’ and ‘protection’ for religious sub-groups of the new nation. Specifically, Article 39 established that Turkish citizens from non-Muslim “minorities” would enjoy the same civil and political rights as Muslims, and that all inhabitants of Turkey, regardless of religion, would be ‘equal’ of the law.⁶ Despite Article 39 and its recognition of minority status, the fact that religion was used to differentiate groups signified a politics of inclusion and exclusion. According to Ekmekçioğlu (2014), this term “signified misplacedness, thus secondary status” (p. 665). This “misplacedness” and the legal recognition of Armenians as a “minority” were one in the same status. Two separate branches of Turkness were classified: real or authentic Turks and citizen-Turks (Ekmekçioğlu, 2014). Under this mentality, Armenian minorities were classified in the latter group of citizen-Turks.⁷ The Treaty of Lausanne was a figurehead document without proper standing in Turkish civil society and its treatment of minorities.

2.2.2 The transference of minority educational rights

Although the treaty’s minority classification gave Armenians, Greeks, and Jews the ‘right’ to build their own schools, with the increasingly centralized power of the Turkish MNE, the ‘rights’ of minority education were transferred from the minority communities to the state.⁸ Turkey’s Penal Code seems to take precedence over the Treaty of Lausanne: “where it serves the interest of the [Turkish] state, elements of

⁶ Ironically, only “official” non-Muslim communities were recognized as ‘equal’ minorities, with equality broadly defined as equal with Muslims and equal amongst themselves; however, many other minority groups that were not previously a part of the millet system were not given proper acknowledgement in this treaty drafting process.

⁷ For further reading on Armenian minorities in Turkey, see Rumelili & Keyman’s (2015) “Enacting multi-layered citizenship: Turkey’s Armenians’ struggle for justice and equality”.

⁸ For further reading on the history of minority schools from the Ottoman Empire through present-day Turkey, see Vahapoğlu’s (1992) *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Azınlık ve Yabancı Okulları* (Boğaziçi Yayınları).

the millet system are preserved” (Tchilingirian, 2016). This reiteration of the seemingly extinguished millet system was resurrected under the minority framework. In all of the rights pertaining to the fabric of the minority community, including elections, administration of endowments, and schooling processes, the communities’ rights have been strictly monitored, undermined, or restricted (Tchilingirian, 2016). The Turkish government overrode the provisions made in 1923 to protect minorities in Turkey; consequently, the minority schools were negatively affected. One result of this is that the minority community began to take on more self-protective measures, such as through emphasizing distinctions in religion, in order to define their unstable societal status.

By 1923, in the first year of the Turkish Republic, the process of nation-building was in full swing, with the driving force of religious homogeneity as of the main instruments in play. Starting in the 1960s, and throughout the 70s and 80s, the relationship between religious doctrine and educational authorities grew stronger. As an example, influential political elite members such as the *Aydınlar Ocağı* (“The Intellectuals’ Hearth”) and their 1962 Turkish-Islamic Synthesis Doctrine deemed the Islamic faith as central to the formation of the Turkish identity (Inal & Akkaymak, 2012). Since these times, religion has been used as a tool in the national curriculum to mold students’ ideas about their membership to the Turkish state. Religion has also been used as a tool by the Armenian schools to influence its members’ ideas about their membership to the Armenian community.

Religious differences are one clear defining feature of inclusionary and exclusionary characteristics of a community (Anderson, 1983). The Apostolic Christian religious affiliation of the Armenian community is another tool for setting

boundaries of exclusion against the ‘Muslim-Turk’ (Komsuoğlu and Örs, 2009).⁹ For the Armenian community in Turkey, the idea of nationality has been more closely tied to religion than it was to citizenship in a country. Many members of the Armenian community in Istanbul consider Armenianness as an ethno-religious identity rather than a purely ethnic affiliation (Papazian, 2016), not only impacting their political and national consciousness but also their interactions in daily life in various social spaces. Although the “minority” term, framed in legal and political terms, led to the marginalization of Armenians to the outskirts of the Turkish public sphere, Armenians also accepted this categorization, therefore contributing to the passive propagation of their minority status. In the following section, this minority status will be complicated through the concept of membership, as well as its various inclusions and exclusions, in the scope of the ‘nation’.

2.3 Armenians as “member” in present-day Turkey

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Turkey underwent major upheavals with shifts in civil society that remapped the prerequisites for membership.¹⁰ Throughout history, Armenians in Turkey have been referred to in official Turkish publications as *yabancı vatandaş*, which translates to ‘foreign citizen’ (Akçam, 2004, p. 221). The fact that Armenians are not a ‘normal’ type of citizen in Turkey, neither in the public nor private sphere, stirs up complicated identity politics of membership. Despite the present ruling party’s agenda to harness both a nationalist and Islamic ideology in its education system, I argue that this postnational era we are living in has critically

⁹ In present-day Turkey, more than 99% of the population is Muslim (Komsuoğlu & Örs, 2009). In Turkey, being a part of a non-Muslim community has historically come with the association of being an ‘other’.

¹⁰ The general definition for “member” is an individual who is a part of larger group, which is formed by shared characteristics or values. These shared attributes become the unifying force that comprises an ingroup, or a closed community.

shaped the ways in which Turkey's members, and in the context of this project, Armenian youth in Istanbul, have come to self-identify, perhaps in ways that affirm the Armenian community's self-designation of "semi-citizen".¹¹ In the sections to follow, I will situate the membership in Turkey, both as a student within the Turkish education system and as a 'member' of Turkish society, as a precarious status.

2.3.1 The influence of the Turkish Ministry of Education

The establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 emphasized education as a vital part of the modernization efforts of the country's nation-building process. One of the (un)intended consequences of this nation-building process was the 'unification' of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, religions, and languages under the homogenizing umbrella of education. In 1920, the Turkish Ministry of Education was established (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2019). In order to adhere to these principles of the newly formed Turkish Republic, the MNE issued the Law on Unification of Education in 1924, which brought all educational institutions under its wing, including foreign and minority schools, under one centralized power (Gözübüyük & Sezgin, 1957, Gök, 2007). The purpose of this unification was to indoctrinate loyalty to the Republican principles under the emerging Turkish nation.

After the 1924 Unification of Education Law was passed, the Turkish MNE took control of many aspects of the Armenian schools (Ekmekçioğlu, 2014). From that point on and in the present-day, the Turkish MNE acts as the central body that makes all decisions regarding schools, administrators, teachers, students, and textbooks (Kaya, 2009). Though nationalized education is a feature in most nation-states today, the degree of control in the Turkish education system is especially

¹¹ For further readings on postnationalism, citizenship, and identity, I recommend Sassen's (2003) "Towards Post-national and Denationalized Citizenship".

heavy. In the present day, the aims of the Turkish MNE, which contain keywords promoting allegiance to the Turkish nation and adherence to the Turkish Constitution, reflect the MNE's central authority in contemporary Turkish society. Furthermore, it has utilized various legal instruments to promote a nationalistic sense of identity for students (Kaplan, 2006). As an example, from 1933 to 2013, all primary school students in Turkey were required to recite the "Student's Pledge" every morning, as follows (in its translated form):

I am a Turk, I am righteous, I am hardworking. My principle is to protect my juniors, to respect my elders, and to love my country and my nation more than my own self. My motto is to rise, progress, and go forward. I commit my being to the existence of the Turks.¹²

Though this Student's Pledge stopped being recited in 2013, there exists a paradox in the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that the Turkish state designated for minority student citizens. Other official mechanisms enforced by the MNE, such as the content in Turkish history textbooks, have played an important role in the social identity formation of such students.

2.3.2 Social biases in Turkish history textbooks

Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, minority schools have been restricted in the types of textbooks they can use to teach certain courses such as history and language. They have been obliged to teach these courses through ministry-issued textbooks, which contained pointed information about membership.¹³

¹² The original text, written by Afet İnan, is as follows: Türküm, doğrucum, çalışkanım. / Yasam, küçüklerimi korumak, büyüklerimi saymak, / yurdumu, budunumu özümden çok sevmektir. / Ülküm, yükselmek, ileri gitmektir. / Varlığım Türk varlığına armağan olsun.

¹³ For further reading on Turkish state-imposed textbooks and their influence on the educational system, schools, and students in Turkey, I recommend Sam Kaplan's (2006) *The pedagogical state: Education and the politics of national culture in post-1980 Turkey* (Stanford University Press).

In Turkish history textbooks, minorities are considered to be enemies of the Turks (Ekmekçioğlu, 2014). Scholar Taner Akçam (2004) writes, “[Turkish history textbooks] direct their own citizens to view a specific citizen group (Armenians) as the enemy.” In these textbooks, key concepts such as Armenian threats against Turkey in the form of violent uprisings and terrorist attacks reinforce prejudice and discrimination against Armenians for its student citizens. State-mandated history textbooks and its contents have offered little space for critical thinking about the country’s history other than the ‘objective facts’, or slanted realities, laid out in the text.¹⁴ Othering discourse is exemplified in these textbooks, which may impacts interactions between Armenian youth and their peers both inside and outside their school spaces. Armenian schools are given the right to structure their own religion courses, and students are not obliged to take the Religion section of the national exams.¹⁵ However, Armenian schools and students are still affected by these biases. There is a clear division between Turk and Armenian, Armenian and Turk. For Armenians, this division, steeped in violent, unresolved histories, has contributed to their self-perceived “otherness” in contemporary Turkey; they are self-considered as partial members. Echoing this partial perspective, Armenian schools exist on the margins of the mainstream educational society, which renders them (self-)excluded from MNE-sponsored, and thus, the majority, of the Turkish public sphere.

¹⁴ For further reading on the influence of Turkish history textbooks on its students in both Armenian and Turkish contexts, I recommend Dixon’s (2010) “Education and National Narratives: Changing Representations of the Armenian Genocide in History Textbooks in Turkey” and Aylin Akpinar’s (2007) “The Making of a Good Citizen and Conscious Muslim through Public Education: The Case of Imam Hatip Schools”.

¹⁵ In 2014, The SEÇBİR and the History Foundation of Turkey carried out the Human Rights in Textbooks Project No. III to explore how the “citizen” as represented in Turkish textbooks led to students’ construction of national identity and citizenship. According to Çayır (2014), the “citizen” concept as represented in these textbooks is ethnically associated with Turkness and religiously associated with Islam. It is evident that hierarchies of separation between ‘real’ Turks and ‘foreign’ citizens continue to be steeped in religion.

2.4 Armenian schools as ‘mediators’ in a semi-private, semi-public space

Up to this point in the chapter, I have demonstrated how various systems have aimed to keep Armenians in their relegated ‘spaces’ with a degree of separation placed between them and the Turkish society through societal discourse such as “millet”, “minority”, and partial “member”. Simply stated, Armenian schools are located in an uncomfortable space between the private Armenian and public Turkish space. While the schools aim to balance their position in heeding to both the Turkish MNE, framed as a public sphere, as well as the private Armenian community, they face difficulties in negotiating their position between them. Therefore, I characterize them as intending “mediators” between private and public spaces.

2.4.1 Aims and activities of Armenian schools¹⁶

The Armenian schools attempt to instill in their students a collective sense of Armenian culture and language through the offering of clubs, activities, and field trips that promote the Armenian heritage. Here, I have drawn from informal interviews with teachers and administrators at two Armenian schools to provide examples for how Armenian schools instill this collective sense of community. The photography club at one Armenian primary and secondary school promotes cultural visits to various sites around the city, such as Armenian gravesites. Music and dance classes incorporate Armenian folk songs and dances into their curricula, and students are able to showcase their learned skills for holiday performances during Christmas and Easter, and at end-of-the-year ceremonies. One specific week in October, in

¹⁶Some of these Armenian schools have the word *surp* in their institution names, which means they were once religious institutions. The majority of them termed *özel* (“private”) in the Turkish version of their school names. A number of these schools functioned as orphanages for Armenian children in the past, as did some historical sites such as Camp Armen and Kuleli Military High School, during the times of the Catastrophe and around WWI.

celebration of the date of the founding of the Armenian alphabet, is deemed as Armenian Culture Week. During this time, students at Armenian schools around the city participate in cultural events together. During Armenian Culture Week at Tarkmanças Armenian School in 2017, author and chef Takuhi Tovmasyan came to teach the students the special means of preparing foods like *irmik helvası* and *topik*, both of which are cherished foods in Armenian-Turkish cuisine. According to Tovmasyan's (2008) autobiographical recipe book, foods like these hold special memories of family members who have passed.¹⁷ In their attempts to encourage social engagement between students at the Armenian schools, there are frequent intramural (with an emphasis the "intra" part of the term) events held between the schools. These types of shared cultural and social events between the Armenian schools are intended to strengthen the relationships between its members, and perhaps to foster the Armenian 'ethos' in ways that are appealing to Armenian youth.¹⁸ This Armenian appeal is garnered amongst the schools, but it is done at the expense of separating themselves further away from the public Turkish space. There are also a number of issues within these schools, which they struggle to negotiate without help from the 'outside'.

2.4.2 Issues within the Armenian schools

The key problems that Armenian schools in Istanbul face within their own sphere are declining school enrollment and a decline in Western Armenian language teaching

¹⁷ Tovmasyan's (2008) *Sofranız Şen Olsun* is an important resource for a reader to learn about the Armenian identity through the shared practice of cooking. This Turkish-language cookbook, which is also an autobiography, is laden with photos and family stories to accompany the recipes. Another recommended reading that intimately integrates the (Turkish) writer's voice with her (Armenian) past is Fethiye Çetin's (2008) *My Grandmother: An Armenian-Turkish Memoir* (Verso).

¹⁸ It is important to remember that Armenian schools in Istanbul are diverse in scope, offering their members and students different approaches toward teaching, learning, and participating in the Armenian community.

and learning. In the last 40 years, there has been an approximately 50% decrease in the number of Armenian schools and a 60% decrease in the number of students attending them. There are between 50,000 and 70,000 Armenian-identifying citizens of Turkey, but only about 3,000 student citizens (see Appendix A) receive their education at Armenian schools (Özkan, 2017).¹⁹ However, the number of students that attend these schools, despite their active existence, declines with each passing year. It is predicted that these numbers will continue to drop with the increasing privatization of education.

The declining enrollment of students at the Armenian schools is partnered with the declining number of Armenian-speaking classroom teachers. The majority of teachers within these Armenian schools opt to teach in Turkish, as their Western Armenian language is not adequate, and neither is their students' Armenian language, to effectively administer academic knowledge about subjects such as math, science, and general education in Armenian. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to find appropriate textbooks to teach the Western Armenian language, and the current textbooks in use are scarce and outdated (Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012). One of the MNE rules regarding the Western Armenian language is that they are not allowed to use Armenian-language books from abroad, which makes the process especially exhausting for teachers: "The moral pressure and the feeling of discrimination caused by this situation, combined with the practical difficulties, can make [Armenian teachers and administrators] reluctant to organize any events in the Armenian language" (Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012, p. 41). These pressures certainly have an impact on students and their families, which may lead to questions of why

¹⁹ This figure does not include the estimated 10,000 Armenians scattered in regions of Turkey outside of Istanbul nor the tens of thousands of Armenian migrants who, due to their undocumented or illegal status in Turkey, are unable to receive education at these Armenian schools.

they should attend an Armenian school at all. Given these circumstances, Armenian schools are struggling to preserve not only their Armenian language focus but also their spatial positions in the Turkish education system.

Armenian schools also face issues when dealing with prejudice and discrimination targeted against the Armenian community. Armenian schools in particular have been the target of nationalistically or religiously motivated attacks in the form of property destruction. In July 1997, the Dadyan School in Bakırköy was targeted with two explosive-related incidents, as well as with graffiti referring to ASALA, a former Armenian underground military and terrorist organization. In 2016, three Armenian schools were targeted with racist writing on their building walls (Bulut, 2016). The perpetrators of these attacks were never found. This has led to feelings of fear and suspicion, as well as strategies of security, against potential ‘outsiders’.

2.5 Social and educational experiences of Armenian youth in present-day Turkey

This section turns the reader’s attention to the social and educational conditions for Armenian youth in Istanbul. I use one major event, Hrant Dink’s assassination in 2007, as well a general overview of Armenian language teaching at Armenian schools, to provide this overview.

2.5.1 Hrant Dink’s death and its influence on the Armenian community

In January 2007, journalist Hrant Dink, an influential spokesperson for the Armenian community in Turkey, was shot dead in front of the *Ağos* newspaper office. In response to Dink’s assassination, nearly 200,000 people held protests in Istanbul, marching and carrying signs such as “We are all Hrant Dink” and “We are all

Armenians”. These mass public protests suggested that boundaries between Armenian and Turk, could be blurred, and that dialogue about sensitive unresolved historical topics could be a possibility (Neyzi et al., 2010). Despite the surge of support, this peak inevitably had a downfall. However, Hrant Dink’s assassination, amongst many other acts of violence committed against specific Armenian figures in the present day, is actively remembered by members of the Armenian community; specifically, the discourse of loss, mourning, and melancholy are used as devices for this remembrance (Tataryan, 2011). Although the demographic of Armenian youth most significantly impacted by Hrant Dink’s assassination were likely university, not high school, students, this event is significant because of the strong potential for intergenerational experiences, and feelings derived from them, to be shared amongst siblings, friends, and schoolmates amongst the contemporary Bolsahay community.

Five years after Dink’s assassination, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), paired with researchers Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı (2012), conducted a series of workshops to talk about their experiences as Armenians in Turkey. From TESEV’s report, a prominent theme was that being an Armenian in Turkey was “full of contradictions”, which has led to bouts of silence as the best means to (not) deal with the issue (Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı, 2012, p. 28). Researchers Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı (2012) found that Armenians have undertaken contradictory strategies to avoid “trauma” or “difficulty” in the public Turkish domain (p. 27). They have undertaken strategies, such as giving their children names fitting for both Turkish and Armenian cultures, abstaining from speaking Armenian on the streets, or even making up false names for their Armenian schools. Armenians in Turkey have been conditioned to believe that they should not draw attention to themselves as individuals or to the Armenian society in Turkey in general, should avoid behaviors

that may escalate the negative prejudices on Armenians, while at the same time being successful in their professional and social lives despite all of the difficulties of living in the country. The question of how this (in)visibility translates in the Armenian school setting, and for Armenian youth, is what begs further investigation.

2.5.2 Armenian students and language issues in the present-day

Following in line with the semi-private, semi-public space that their school straddles, Armenian youth, too, have difficulties negotiating their figurative ‘place’ in various spheres, even within the space of their school. I provide some numerical values to provide concrete information for these struggles. These percentages come from anonymous student surveys conducted as part of an informal research project; the surveys were collected from 58 students between 9th and 12th grades at Getronagan High School (see Appendix B).

The survey results revealed large discrepancies between two categories: 1) Armenian school attendance, social circles and religious affiliation, and 2) Armenian language practices. From the survey results, 92% of the students had been attending an Armenian school for more than 10 years; only 3% stated that they had attended an Armenian school for less than 5 years. On a similar level, 93% of students expressed that the majority of their friends were Armenian. As a side note, 76% identified with a religion; as a subsequent answer, all but one identified with the Christian religion. 81% expressed that they celebrated Christian religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Despite most of these students having attended Armenian schools, having Armenian friends, and affiliating with the Christian religion, their Armenian language practices did not match up with the majority. 43% of those surveyed expressed that they utilized (in terms of speaking, listening, reading, and writing)

between zero to four hours of Armenian in their homes on a weekly basis; this was in comparison to 90% of students that stated they used Turkish as their primary language in their homes. These discrepancies signal a wide gap in how contemporary Armenians regard their identities and the languages they use in daily life.

Given the lack of Armenian language used in the students' daily lives, the teaching and learning of Western Armenian at the Armenian schools is becoming more difficult with each passing academic year. Younger generations of students attending Armenian schools are not motivated to learn Armenian, especially since there is little practical use for the language outside of the classroom context.

Armenian has become a 'textbook language' that rarely used in social interactions outside of the classroom environment. For some students, the Armenian language is regarded as an informal, 'off-the-records'-type class that takes away from their main academic focus, which is to succeed on their national exams. In the classroom setting, young speakers need abstract and advanced concepts explained in Turkish; outside of this setting, they communicate with their friends and family in Turkish. This leads to the question of where Armenian youth place their social identities if one of the main instruments that determines their sustainability, their language, is not being practiced as it was in the past. It also brings up the question of how Armenian schools are influencing the sculpting of these social identities given their attempts to teach their students the Armenian 'textbook language' in contemporary Turkish society, which might be met with acceptance or resistance.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter situated Armenians in Turkey and their educational institutions under four "M" keywords. In doing so, it reiterated the various categorizations that the state

apparatus and the people within it have used to classify each other. Turkey's education system has been directly tied to the country's dramatic shifts in social and political representation since the late Ottoman times to the present day. These shifts have affected Armenians in Turkey and their educational institutions. The regulations and restrictions placed upon the Armenian institutions, with little more than the figurehead Treaty of Lausanne to 'protect' them, has caused the state, and its affiliated collective public, to place unfitting labels such as "millet", "minority", partial "member", and roles of "mediator" upon them; furthermore, these labels have been accepted by the Armenians in their inability to think of a better solution. In contemporary society, Armenian students are directly impacted by Turkish MNE directives, not only in terms of their academic achievements and future professional successes but also in terms of their identity development processes and their perceptions of membership, whether it is to an Armenian school or to the Turkish state, which lie in different spheres of private and public membership. The following chapter will seek to answer the difficult question of how Armenian youth negotiate their identities in these overlapping, and sometimes contradictory, spaces from a critical theory perspective.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The strategies instrumental in attempts to change or preserve the status quo must be taken into account as a fundamental issue in theories and research. None of this can be properly understood without considering the interplay between the creation or diffusion of social myths and the processes of social influence as they operate in the setting of intergroup relations and group affiliations.

—Henri Tajfel

In this literature review, I draw upon research models and critical theories to discuss how Armenian students are situated under various institutions, both tangible (i.e. the Turkish state, the Armenian school) and intangible (i.e. systems of power, socialization processes, private/public spaces). In Tajfel's (2004) words, it is crucial to remember the "interplay" of social myths, social influences, and the (socio-spatial) settings in which they operate to gain a critical understanding of social identities. This discussion offers initial ideas for how the participants' collective and interpersonal social identities are negotiated through their schools.

3.1 Research models

This section illustrates research models, in the form of empirical studies and survey findings, to situate this topic in existing research. The areas of focus are minority group language practices in various geographic and educational settings and perceptions of Armenian identity from the viewpoint of Armenians in Istanbul.

3.1.1 Language practices of Sephardic Jews in Turkey

A qualitative study by Seloni and Sarfati (2012) proves useful in providing a close cultural comparison between two minority groups in Turkey whose Judeo-Spanish

and Western Armenian languages are minority languages being assimilated into the majority Turkish culture. The focus on Judeo-Spanish language (mis-)use revealed that the practices of code-meshing and code-switching, spoken acts of mixing and alternating between languages in communicating to others (Moyer, 1997), are increasingly being utilized amongst younger generations in this group (Seloni & Sarfati, 2012). More specifically, they found that the use of Judeo-Spanish has been dramatically reduced in the domestic setting, and Turkish has been replaced as the primary language in these settings. Judeo-Spanish was only used in specific communicative strategies in family interactions (e.g., jokes, gossip) and amongst elders in the community. Therefore, code-meshing and code-switching served as important markers of the Turkish Jews' ethnic and linguistic identity, especially amongst the younger members of this group. The linguistic strategies that have been adopted by the Jewish community demonstrate that these younger Sephardic Jews are leaning more toward multilingualism instead of a mastery of their heritage language. From this, the question of whether the Armenian community has adopted similar sociolinguistic strategies, and the implications this may have for their collective and interpersonal identities, is brought to the forefront of discussion.

3.1.2 The role of language schools in the support of social identities

In this section, I present an overview of three studies that illustrate the importance of a school's position in the negotiation of its students' identities. In this thesis, I regard the school as a social space, a place in which an individual's "social world" is constructed through multiple positionings, whether in language or in identity. Furthermore, I regard the school as a place that (in)directly creates mechanisms of difference: "to speak of a social space means that one cannot group just anyone with

anyone while ignoring the fundamental differences” (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 726). This Bourdieusian perspective and how it relates the social space of the school and the identities and students forge within these spaces is important to keep in mind for the sections to follow.

3.1.2.1 Armenian day schools and multilingual Armenian-French youth

In a study carried out on Armenian-French youth at an Armenian heritage language day school in Montreal, researcher Hourig Attarian (2001) found close connections between Armenian language, culture, and youth identities. The student participants were able to comfortably express themselves in more than one language and/or dialect in speaking different languages with their teachers, parents, and friends. In this regard, they held multilingual positionings. In this case, as well as in the scope of this thesis, a multilingual speaker is defined as, “anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading)” (Wei & Moyer, 2008, p. 4). Attarian (2001) concluded that the children were able to discover their own means of being ‘Armenian’, and multilinguistically so, when they were given “space” in their learning process, both inside and outside the classroom, to create their own stories about their experiences. The researcher further concluded that the presence of the Armenian school played an important role in the students’ multilingual processes, which may not have reached potential had the school not created ‘space’ for its students to discover their own ways of being Armenian. The question of the Armenian school’s influence, and how it informs their ‘Armenianness’, is important to keep in mind in this present study.

In his ethnographic research on Chinese-British youth in London, researcher Li Wei (2010) surveyed Chinese-British students on their experiences at a Chinese complementary school. The role of the Chinese complementary school as a “safe space”, which lacked in other domains of their social worlds, proved as a crucial point of the participants’ identities. Furthermore, it led to multicompetent identity associations. The concept of multicompetence is utilized in sociolinguistics “in a holistic way, by accounting for all of the languages he or she knows, as well as knowledge of the norms for using the languages in context... in producing well-formed, contextually appropriate mixed-code utterances” (Wei, 2010, p. 371). In these multicompetent identities, Wei (2010) found that these mixed-code utterances, also deemed as code-switching (Moyer, 1997), were symbolic manifestations of how the students formed their identities and represented them to people outside of the Chinese complementary school setting. These identities were first formed within a specific space: “The expression of the children’s multicompetence does require a *special space*, which seems to be provided in the complementary schools” (Wei, 2010, p. 372, emphasis added). However, the schools’ One Language at a Time (OLAT) ideology, as well as their lack of interaction with other educational institutions, was met with active resistance by the participants. From this study, the question of how Armenian youth partake in similar processes of identity negotiation through their schools, and in resistance to some of their schools’ policies, is a critical matter this thesis intends to investigate from a similar sociolinguistic framework.

3.1.2.2 Hidden curricula by Tibetan minority students

Researcher Zhu Zhiyong (2007) conducted a study on the ethnic identity construction of Tibetan minority students who received their secondary school

education at a Tibetan *Neidi* boarding school, which, like Armenian schools, are subject under the authority of the state government. In this case, these boarding schools are described as, “a product of the [Chinese] state’s preferential educational policy for Tibetans” (Zhiyong, 2007, p. 41). From this study, the researcher concluded that the assigned identities of the Tibetan students by the state and school were consistent with state ideologies, and that the schooling environment played a large role in assigning a specific ethnic identity on the students. However, there were stark differences between the formal curricula imposed by the Chinese government at the school and the subjective ‘real history’ the students learned outside of their classroom environment (Zhiyong, 2007). This ‘real history’ was learned through a “hidden curriculum” in which the students were able to critically build up their ethnic Tibetan heritage in their respective ingroup, which was reflective of a ‘secret society’ of Tibetan youth, whose assigned allegiance to their Chinese curricula caused a hidden resistance. This act of resisting the state-imposed curriculum and forging stronger ethnic identity affiliations as a reaction is important to consider in the context of this study. It may have important relations in investigating how Armenian students accept or reject the knowledge they receive from their formal curricula in their Armenian schools, which remain under the authority of the Turkish MNE, and how these perspectives impact the ways they negotiate their identities.

3.1.3 Armenian language and identity in cross-country contexts

In her studies of Armenian-Americans attending Armenian schools and the formation of their identities through language practices, researcher Bakalian (1993) found that younger generations of Armenians born in the US foster their collective ethnic identities around the idea of a voluntary “symbolic identity”. Symbolic

Armenians develop and uphold their Armenian identity through Armenian folk music, dances, cuisine, and family gatherings. Rather than using language as the only tool for upholding their identities, symbolic Armenians maintain the viewpoint that “knowledge of language is not a necessary precondition to claiming Armenian identity or commitment to Armenianness” (Bakalian, 1993, p. 253).

Taking her study one step further, in using the spatial setting of Armenian day schools to analyze different ‘types’ of Armenian students based on ethnicity, she found that there is a difference between ascribed identity and voluntary identity, with Armenians in the latter group having a limited liability or an “easier” time negotiating their identities without the linguistic knowledge; this is in contrast to Armenians in the former group, who she also terms as “traditional”, who believe that knowledge of the Armenian language is a prerequisite for being a legitimate member of the Armenian community. Bakalian (1993) stated that these differing views of fluency in speaking Armenian to uphold identity is a boundary marker that not only separates Armenians from other ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups but also fellow Armenians from each other. Given that this project’s focus is on Armenian youth, I am interested to see if they adhere more to a “symbolic identity” or to a “traditional identity”, and how their language practices fare in the process. While Bakalian might classify the collective group of Armenians in Istanbul as traditional Armenians with ascribed identities, this remains a hypothetical condition that needs more empirical support from research on Armenians in Istanbul.

3.1.4 Survey findings of Armenian(-Turkish) identity

In the search for local and quantitative findings on this topic related to Bolsahayutun, I discovered two survey studies that discussed the Armenian

community in Turkey and its members' perceptions of identity. These studies were conducted in the form of surveys, one by a group of researchers affiliated outside the Istanbul Armenian community (Der-Karabetian & Balian, 1992), and another by an Armenian political and human rights organization (Nar Zartonk, 2007) in Istanbul.

Researchers Der-Karabetian and Balian (1992) surveyed 70 Turkish-Armenians in Istanbul on their self-evaluations of ingroup (Armenian) and outgroup (Turkish). These self-evaluations were based on four factors: age, gender, nature (affiliated with an Armenian school or not) and level of education, and involvement in Armenian ethnic organizations. Two significant results related to this thesis involved age²⁰ and whether or not the participants attended an Armenian school. Firstly, there were differences in identity between younger and older groups. The younger group scored significantly lower than the older group in terms of Armenian identity; the younger group scored significantly higher than the older group in terms of Turkish identity. Secondly, there were differences in identity between Armenian-educated and non-Armenian-educated individuals. The non-Armenian-educated group scored significantly lower than the Armenian-educated group in terms of Armenian identification. The non-Armenian-educated group scored significantly higher than the Armenian-educated group in terms of Turkish identification. The correlation between age and type of educational institution provided contradictory predictors for my thesis in terms of Armenian and/or Turkish identification. Given that my target participants were both young and educated at Armenian schools, I was curious to see how the results from my study would compare to the ones in this survey. A few limitations, such as the fact that it was conducted about 30 years ago, as well as the fact that a topic as complex as identity was conducted on the basis of a

²⁰ The younger group was characterized as individuals under 40 years old, with an average age of 28, and the older group was characterized as individuals over 40 years old, with an average age of 58.

questionnaire, validates the importance of this thesis; it sculpted the qualitative framework from which to base my participants' perceptions of identity (details will be provided in Chapter Four).

The second survey, which was conducted by Nor Zartonk, an Armenian activist group, in 2007, is called "Being a minority in Turkey". In a questionnaire, 459 Armenian-identifying participants in Istanbul were surveyed on various sub-topics related to their Armenian identity such as language and education.²¹ Though a broad set of topics were covered, the ones examined here are the ones relevant to the topics of Armenian language use and categorizations of membership. Regarding Armenian schools and language, 81% of surveyed participants attended an Armenian school, 67% used Armenian when talking with family at home, and 46% used Armenian when chatting with friends. It is apparent that the majority of surveyed Armenians attended an Armenian school and were able to communicate, in the Armenian language; however, these percentages also revealed that conversations in Armenian are mostly conducted in the family setting. This begs the question of how the Armenian language is utilized in different spatial settings, such as in the private, domestic setting or in the public setting. Only 7% of participants surveyed were under 20 years of age, which proportionally made up the smallest age group in the total distribution. This small representation gives credence to the idea that the findings from this thesis will contribute to literature related to Armenian youth in Istanbul, which is presently lacking.

In sum, the first part of this chapter provided a variety of research models related to the topic of social identities through language. They were multicultural in scope, but they were not specific enough to the present group of Armenian youth in

²¹ The entirety of the survey utilized other sample distributions such as those based on marital status, income group, political affiliation, and highest level of education completed.

Istanbul; furthermore, they did not provide much differentiation between collective and interpersonal social identities or between language attitudes and practices. In the following section, I will present a number of theories that continue to inform the literature review in more specific ways related to this thesis.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This interdisciplinary theoretical framework draws from the academic fields of sociology, psychology, sociolinguistics, and critical and cultural studies. It addresses the complex dynamics between the visible and invisible actors in a complex web of Armenian youth and their social spaces. This section is broadly divided into three parts. Firstly, I use sociological theory to frame the social and spatial habitus of Armenians in Turkey, which largely constitutes their symbolized private and public spaces. Next, I use a sociological and psychological framework of social identity and their corresponding theories. Lastly, I use an anthropological framework of social identity and corresponding sociolinguistic theories related to the idea of “multi” in terms of linguistic ability and social identities.

3.2.1 The social and spatial habitus of Armenians in Turkey

As discussed in the previous chapter, Armenians in Turkey are categorized on varying degrees of membership; thus, they occupy different positions in their private and public spaces. I use Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of “habitus” and Talin Suciyan’s (2016) “post-genocidal habitus of denial” to discuss how the Turkish state considers Armenians in Turkey, as well as how Armenians in Turkey consider themselves (p. 21).

3.2.1.1 Symbolic power and habitus

This section illustrates the relationships of power between the state, institutions, and individuals. I draw from Bourdieu's (2003) conception of power relations between institutions (such as schools) and people (such as students), as well as the symbolic meanings that underlie them. Bourdieu's conception of symbolic power is in line with the neo-Kantian rationalist tradition, which supposes that the world is structured by categories of perception, which result in actions for or against others. For Bourdieu, the State is a space where 'legitimate identities' are produced and justify procedures of inclusion and exclusion (1987). The State is defined as a place where the 'public' and 'official' are created, maintaining the power to universalize certain practices. It produces the taxonomies and hierarchies that are internalized by the individuals it governs. Symbolic power between a state and individual is observed, as an example, in linguistic exchanges, which result from an encounter between a linguistic habitus and a market that places meaning upon them (Bourdieu, 1986). Language is used as a classic example because it is both a medium of communication and a vehicle for the exercise of domination via power. A market fixes a price and determines the value for a linguistic product. In a given habitus, individuals inevitably succumb to the effects of symbolic power. Symbolic power is internalized in bodies, in the form of dispositions that constitute the Space.

According to Bourdieu (1986), symbolic power is culturally and symbolically created. The domain in which this re-legitimization takes place, and takes on the form of socially constructed realities, is called "habitus". It is created through a structured, conditioned, social process, which leads to unconscious patterns of behavior in human interactions. Broadly speaking, "habitus" refers to the ways in which individuals in society perceive the world around them—perceptions largely

shaped by biased discourse from dominant institutions—and react to these in their thoughts and actions. As I will be utilizing this word at length in the Discussion chapter, I will present Bourdieu’s explanation of habitus (1986) verbatim here:

The habitus, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions... Moreover, by habitus the Scholastics also meant something like a property, a capital. And indeed, the habitus is a capital, but one which, because it is embodied, appears as innate. (p. 86)

One of the fundamental effects of the habitus is the production of a ‘common sense’, or a consensus on a meaning of the world and its practices, which is consumed and exchanged as a symbolic capital.

The ramifications of symbolic power are ever relevant in our postnational society. Talin Suciyan’s reconceptualization of Bourdieu’s habitus offers one perspective of how it can be applied in our contemporary context. In applying Bourdieu’s “habitus” concept in her own work, Suciyan (2016) discusses the “social habitus of post-genocide Turkey” (p. 3).²² As detailed in Chapter Two, the Turkish Republic was founded on the social habitus of self-defense in its scramble from empire to nation-state. This compilation of social relations and experiences of the people under this social habitus are collectively regarded as the “Sèvres Syndrome” (Jung, 2003).²³ This social habitus is characterized by a constant self-defense as well as an attack against “others”. Minority groups in Turkey have historically been classified as the ‘other’ in these attacks. The “habitus of denial” has manifested itself in concrete forms, such as in the “*Vatandaş, Türkçe Konuş!*” or “Citizen, Speak

²² Suciyan does not refer to the term “post-genocide” in accordance with a time period, but the social conditions that have become normalized through the Turkish state’s implementation of genocidal policies and mechanisms of denial.

²³ The term originates from the Treaty of Sèvres in the 1920s, which was signed by the Allied forces after their victory in World War I. The land between the Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, British, French, and Italy was separated. Though this partitioning never became a reality due to Turkey’s victory in the Turkish War of Independence, the mentality with the “Sèvres Syndrome” is that there is a constant need to protect one’s territory against neighboring forces that intend to cause harm.

Turkish!” campaigns. This habitus also manifests itself in daily public life, such as when the media and press continue to make discriminatory comments against non-Muslim groups, or such as when main streets in Kurtuluş (a district in Istanbul with the largest concentration of Armenians) are named after leaders who directly participated in the violent affairs of 1915 (Suciyan, 2016).

Suciyan (2016) also claims that it was not only the Turks but also the Armenians that contributed to a “habitus of denial”, both in terms of not articulating past violent events and in (self-)rejecting their full participation in society. Despite the violence committed against Armenians during the final phases of the Ottoman Empire, “Armenians continued to operate as loyal subjects of the empire” (Suny et al., 2015, p. 28). Suciyan (2016) states that Armenians in Turkey have, too, taken part in this discourse by “actively propagat[ing] denialism” (p. 48). Therefore, this denialist discourse was not only undertaken by the Turkish public civil society but also by Armenians in the public eye. In the years following the catastrophes, Armenian intellectuals and the press in Istanbul used hostile language and denialist discourse in separating themselves from their distant families that became diasporic. By being a part of this habitus, and in an act of willing complicity, they attempted to gain bargaining capital with the Turkish state, such as the confiscation of properties or laws regulating their communal life. These complicit (in)actions reflected their hopes for gaining symbolic capital in the complicated habitus they found themselves in (Suciyan, 2016). However, this capital never turned into profit.

Suciyan (2016) further argues that this reproduction of denialism became a matter of ‘common sense’ in the collective Turkish habitus, which involved the private Armenian sphere; it became a social norm to abstain from active participation in the public sphere, which further propagated the semi-citizenship discourse that

Armenians still abide by today. From an outsider's perspective, in the public sphere, their (in)actions are regarded as passively accepted; from an insider's perspective, in the private sphere, it becomes apparent that some Armenians harbor negative feelings about the ways in which they have been denied full participation in Turkish society. However, the lines drawn here between public/private become blurry when it comes to the extent to which they interact with those 'inside' and 'outside' their circle. The following section discusses how Armenians have contributed to their socio-spatial habitus in their own actions of classifying the 'other' through the symbolic drawing of their private and public spaces.

Extending this line of thought one step further, I utilize Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain's (1998) "figured world" concept in connecting these frameworks of habitus back to the school setting. Building on the work of Bourdieu, Foucault, Leontiev, and Vygotsky, amongst others, Holland et al. (1998) described a "figured world" as a "socially produced and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (p. 52). In the school setting, two specific examples of "figured worlds" may be classrooms and common areas, each with different sets of goals, such as completing assignments or relaxing between lessons, or labels, such as "good student", "bad student", "classmate", or "friend". The relationship between students' social identities and their figured worlds is complex and in constant flux. All members of a school collaboratively construct and inhabit these figured worlds, which places meaning and value on certain activities, practices, and values. As will be detailed in the following chapter, the participants all stemmed from a figured world in which they took on stereotypical characteristics of a "good" or "successful" student. It is important to

keep these labels, as well as the ways in which they tie back to the “figured world” of the Armenian school, and the habitus of the private and public space, in mind.

3.2.1.2 Symbolic boundaries between private and public spaces

Imaginary boundaries have been drawn between private and public spheres, and their symbols of inclusion and exclusion make them seem more rigid than they actually are. Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions used by social actors to categorize people, practices, and objects, which allow them to agree upon certain definitions of their subjective reality (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). They also serve to separate people into groups, thus generating feelings of similarity with some and dissimilarity with others, thus creating distinct ingroups and outgroups (Epstein, 1992). When symbolic boundaries are agreed upon, they take on characteristics of social boundaries. Social boundaries are forms of social differences that are manifested in unequal access to and distribution of material and nonmaterial resources (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Symbolic boundaries are a necessary but insufficient condition for the existence of social boundaries, and both serve to create borders between groups of people through inclusionary and exclusionary acts. Simply stated, symbolic boundaries reiterate the “us-versus-them” trope through othering discourse.

In social psychology, the concept of the ‘other’ is constructed as a separate, negative entity in order to construct positive and self-protective beliefs about oneself and/or one’s collective group (Goffman, 2014). This othering process functions as an arbiter in the encounters between the imagined ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’, which places stigma on the latter outgroup. In textbooks and even on the streets in present-day Turkey, phrases such as “barbaric Turks” and “Armenian traitors” have

frequently been employed to connote the other (Akçam, 2004, Tchilingirian, 2016). Even without the descriptive terms, the labels “Turk” and “Armenian” have been regarded as separate, (self-)othering entities. In this process, the collective ‘we’ identity becomes more pronounced as a means of self-defense against the other. Furthermore, this ‘we’ idea may hold significant value in how individuals define themselves in terms of their relationships to others and to various social groups (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). As I will explain in the section on collective and interpersonal identities, because of the burden of group representation, it is difficult for members in these groups to see each other as individuals apart from a group differentiation mentality.

The social and symbolic boundaries that have been agreed upon between the private Armenian and public Turkish groups have led to tangible and intangible manifestations of social difference and inequality. Furthermore, the Armenians’ passive propagation of partial membership is the social habitus that Armenians live in, with rigid borders defining the habitus boundaries. Though this spatial habitus is difficult to penetrate, echoing Bourdieu’s (1986) words once more, spatial habitus is not fixed; its boundaries can be crossed. According to historian David Thelen (1999), “borders became not sites for the division of people into separate spheres and opposing identities and groups, but sites for interaction between individuals from many backgrounds, hybridization, creolization, and negotiation” (p. 441). In this perspective, boundaries are not meant to divide people, but rather to give them (a) space, in both the literal and figurative sense, to meet, interact, and negotiate their positions. Therefore, a habitus is not only social; it is socio-spatial. The following section will delve into the “social” aspect of the topic with its focus on social identity theories.

3.2.2 Social identity theories

As the main topic of this thesis revolves around social identities, the following sections seek to contextualize the multi-faceted ways in which I theorize the broad topic of identity. I assume a social constructivist approach here: social identity is analyzed in its relation to oneself and the collectivity in which the self is located. Starting with social and psychological frameworks of identities, then moving toward anthropological and sociolinguistic frameworks of identities, I intend to provide a diverse academic perspective on this theory, which sits at the core of this project.

3.2.2.1 Sociological framework of identities

Tajfel and Turner's (2004) Social Identity Theory (SIT) describes the social concept of 'membership' an individual forms for oneself based on the groups he/she affiliates with. These groups may be differentiated based on social categorizations such as nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and language, amongst many others. The need for these social categories comes from one's desire to belong, to have defining characteristics that make one feel closely connected to a community. The broad term "belonging" is related to an individual striving to be a 'good representative' of an ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). This 'good representative' term is an important concept I will explain in the chapters to follow. As social beings with a strong sense of 'belonging' to a group(s), people associate themselves with certain (in)groups and disassociate themselves from other (out)groups. Therefore, in its most basic terms, SIT is a theory of group differentiation between an imagined ingroup and an imagined outgroup. SIT places emphasis on intergroup relations and the role of the outgroup (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995), both interpretations of which are based on

prototypes. The two main subtypes of social identity that this thesis explores, which will be highlighted in Chapters Five and Six, are interpersonal and collective identities. Interpersonal identities are derived from one's membership within networks of intimate relationships, usually formed in small group and face-to-face interactions (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Collective identity is defined as a dialectic interplay of processes of internal and external definition (Jenkins, 1996), which results in a shared sense of belonging to a specific group.

When a particular social identity is made salient, individuals are likely to think of themselves as having characteristics that are representative of the social category (Hogg et al., 1995). Placing emphasis on any social identity category leads to self-stereotyping (Hogg & Williams, 2000); this behavior reflects back on the participants' beliefs of what is representative of their ingroup. Based on theoretical indications with minority groups, Armenians in Turkey are more likely to succumb to perceptions of ingroup homogeneity and enhanced ingroup identification. There are a number of self-associated identities that are connected to social identities. The 'social self' comes into play when similarities to others within an ingroup become central (Taylor & Dubé, 1986). This is symbolically represented by the pronoun shift from "I" to "we" as a term of self-reference (Taylor & Dubé, 1986, Hogg & Williams, 2000); this notion of the collective "we" has been shown to carry positive emotional significance that is activated automatically and unconsciously (Perdue et al., 1990). Self-categorization is the assignment of group-specific characteristics of the self and others to groups, which may lead to biases in the ways an individual presents oneself to others (Hogg & Williams, 2000). From this, the self-associated identities they carry may be formed from their ingroup affiliation. The interplay between Armenian student, school, and group, framed in SIT theories as individual,

institution, and Armenian community, is important to keep in mind for the negotiation of social identities. These sociological terms related to belonging, representation, ingroup/outgroup, and collective/interpersonal identities are crucial starting points that begin to build up the theoretical foundation for this thesis.

3.2.2.2 Anthropological framework of identities

At this point, it is crucial to mention that there are serious issues with social-psychological approaches to social identity through the concept of inter- and intra-group identifications. Whilst sociological approaches emphasize identity in affiliation, which focus more on language attitudes, there are other types of social identities that can inform the present study, and which can perhaps place equal importance on language practices. Armenians in Istanbul have distinct ingroup and outgroup labels they affiliate with, such as their imagined private and public spaces. However, movement between these spaces is also possible. Since Armenians in Turkey straddle multiple lines of identification in the national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic sense (amongst possible others),²⁴ it is necessary to extend the theoretical framework beyond these binaries.

As of now, I have explained SIT from a sociological framework. Classical SIT posits that ingroup members perceive each other as having high levels of trust, interaction, and support; outgroup members are perceived by ingroup members with negative attitudes (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). While the majority of studies on SIT, many of which are from decades past, perceive the link between identity and language to be linear, more contemporary theories draw from disciplines outside of

²⁴ Here is an example, taken as a direct quote from Papazian's (2016) ethnographic study of Armenians in Istanbul, about the multi-faceted nature of this identity: "Being an Armenian in Turkey means to belong and not belong at the same time. Our roots are in these lands, we're not outsiders in reality, but we are outed by the state, we are outsiders politically" (p. 4).

sociology and psychology. With the advent of globalization, the links between social identity and language have begun to incorporate more “multi” perspectives, such as multiculturalism and multilingualism, which inevitably involve multiple modes of communication between individuals. These perspectives capitalize on concepts such as communication and interaction between members of same and different groups; simply stated, social identity practices become an important focus, which shifts the focus away from group affiliation.

This is where I turn to anthropological perspectives on SIT, which I deem as social identity in interaction. Luring’s (2008) anthropological approach in studying the language interactions between participants of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds offers one key strategy for stretching SIT theory one step further. Luring’s approach in combining categories such as nationality, ethnicity, and language allows for them to, together, make up an individual’s stance on group formation and self-identity: “identifications are contextual and situated, deriving from social negotiations that do not necessarily build on objective criteria or observable traits” (p. 347). These contextual identifications emphasize an identity that is negotiated in interaction. The act of observing participant language practices is a single way, out of many, to measure identity in interaction. This anthropological addition to the SIT framework assumes social identity as a blend of group dynamics and individual interactions from not singular, but multiple, markers of identity.

3.2.2.3 Sociolinguistic framework of identities

The aforementioned theories provided the framework for social identity negotiation through the interplay of Armenian school and students. Now, I turn to the specific sociolinguistic strategies that characterize the Armenian student under the framework

of social identity in interaction. Given the importance of the Armenian language as one of the two main tenets of the Armenian identity, these sociolinguistic theories are fitting for this topic.

Early sociolinguistic theories proposed that fixed identifications, whether ethnic, national, or different forms of such, were linked with fixed languages. More contemporary scholars (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2004, Riley, 2007, Wei & Moyer, 2008) take on an interdisciplinary framework in positing language as an instrument for meaning-making.²⁵ Language is a mechanism through which people collectively create a social reality (Austin, 1962, Vygotskiĭ, Cole, Stein & Sekula, 1978). People make positionality on the topic, which posits that language is not fixed; rather, it is a fluimeaning in their lives through shared symbol systems for representing objects, actions, and other people (Hall, 1996). Language plays a central role in the interaction between individuals and their social identities: “Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (Hall, 1996, p. 21). This interplay of social and political consequences, as well as constructions of ourselves through subjective experiences, is how language actively contributes to the complicated construction of social identities.

For the Armenian community, language plays a prominent role in providing its members with a sense of unity and belonging (Özdoğan, et al., 2009). Bringing the focus back to the contemporary Armenian student, their acts of communicating in multiple languages may also contribute to their sense of belonging. As Le Page and

²⁵ One recommended reading that offers many contemporary perspectives on identity and language is Wei and Moyer’s (2008) *The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism*.

Tabouret-Keller (1985) write, “for the multilingual speaker, language choice is not only an effective means of communication but also an act of identity” (from Wei & Moyer, 2008). Furthermore, through language choice, individuals maintain and change their various group boundaries and personal relationships, which also change the ways in which they define concepts such as “self” and “other” within the wider social sphere (Peirce, 1995, Riley, 2007).

Canagarajah’s (2017) work on translanguaging, as “a way of looking at communicative practices as transcending autonomous languages” is a useful sociolinguistic framework to adopt when attempting to expand beyond structuralist orientations of language and identity for Armenian youth (p. 1). This act of “transcending autonomous languages”, and in this particular case, the act of using multiple languages in different contexts, but within the space of the school, requires that these mechanisms of language and communication be taken as pieces of a whole ‘identity’: “we have to also treat meaning making ability as distributed, accommodating the role of social networks, things, and bodies, beyond mind and grammar...” (Canagarajah, 2017, p. 22). In this sense, the act of regarding Armenian students as multilinguals or translanguagers, and being conscious of the ways in which they form their social identity, through interaction and communication, might be able to point to specific ways in which they negotiate their social identities. This final addition of sociolinguistic theory highlights the importance of language, taken as a meaning-making process of communication and interaction, as a focal point for framing social identity in the context of this thesis.

3.3 Filling in the gaps

There exist a number of research and theoretical gaps this thesis aims to fill in for the purpose of contributing to the existing academic literature. The first section of this chapter provided a number of research models related to the present research topic, all of which fortified the tension between a broader community or institution's goals of linguistic preservation and the younger members' intentions of multilingual practices. I am curious to see how the lived experiences of Armenian youth, with a focus on their language practices within their schools, may contribute to this discussion. Though there has been academic research focusing on Armenians in Turkey, social identity, the schooling process, and multilingual practices as independent topics, there are no known studies that bring these topics together under the framework of a single project. The interplay of these communications is where the crux of Armenian students' social identities may be positioned, and which will reveal themselves accordingly, in the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

Ethnography is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races, and genders. Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion.

—James Clifford and George E. Marcus

This chapter describes the methodology and research design for this study, which was based on qualitative data from student and adult participants at Özel Getronagan Ermeni Lisesi, or Getronagan Armenian High School, located in Istanbul, Turkey. Ethnographic data was collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observations to inform the research topic of social identity negotiation through the Armenian schooling process with a focus on meta-language. In this chapter, I discuss the descriptive case study approach of selecting sites and participants as well as the grounded theory research design that provided the framework for data collection and analysis. I will also discuss some predicted limitations, potential validity concerns, and intended strategies to counter these issues in the overall methodology process.

4.1 Ethnographic qualitative research

An ethnographic methodology was employed in my research intent to understand how Armenian youth negotiate their social identities through Armenian schools. In the present, ethnography can be found in many academic realms, from its starting point in anthropology to its contemporary usage in fields such as sociology, psychology, linguistics, economics, and cultural studies, to name a few.

Ethnography's strength lies in its "active" role in telling a series of experiences from

the perspective of multiple voices. The voices represented by ethnography may also be those underrepresented in a community, institution, or society. In the context of this thesis, the voices represented are those of Armenian students in Istanbul, which have not had a strong presence in neither mainstream Turkish nor Armenian society nor in academic literature.

Furthermore, ethnography goes beyond singular academic disciplines and structured frameworks. Its intention to go beyond this singularity is what gives this methodology its valuable place in my research, much of which critically questions the multiple social spaces, both real and imagined, that my participants are positioned in. Through ethnographic fieldwork, it is possible to chart how participants talk about and perceive their own group, as well as other groups, and how their implicit understandings of the situation are created, maintained, and/or contested in their speech (Eriksen, 2002). Given its active position “between” systems and institutions, ethnography is a powerful method to “decode and recode” lived experiences. This subjective method of de- and re-coding can be done through discourse analysis.²⁶ From this ethnographic stance with a focus on discourse analysis, I aimed to observe, then to critically make sense of, my participants’ daily interactions, behaviors, and articulated experiences, in order to see how their social identities were shaped by the Armenian school.

Apart from this ethnographic stance, a qualitative research methodology was utilized to investigate my research questions. The qualitative method is fitting for topics that are exploratory or descriptive, places value on context, and probes for deeper understanding of the participants’ lived experiences as students at Armenian

²⁶ Lived experiences are formed by a network of interconnected webs characterized by systems of power, struggle, and socialization (to name only a few). Discourse analysis rejects the possibility of producing a single, coherent description of the data; the researcher is assuming a critical, subjective, reflexive position within this network.

schools and articulations of such (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Given that my research assumes an investigative approach toward how Armenian youth negotiate their social identities, its intention to utilize inductive reasoning to draw patterns in the data fits well with qualitative research.

The specific aims for this qualitative research were framed in broad alignment with my main argument, which I reiterate as follows: Armenian students negotiate their identities differently based on their socio-spatial positions, and these negotiations can be demonstrated in their variant language attitudes and practices. This negotiation was to be observed in-depth in the spatial setting of the Armenian schools. Through engaging the participants in semi-structured interviews, which will be explained in detail in sections to follow, I asked broad questions about their schooling experiences, language processes, and perception of identities, leaving room for the participants' answers to lead the direction of our conversation (See Appendix C). I sought to maintain the mentality that our points of discussion would lead to "deeper perspectives" about specific topics such as social identity formation, which would eventually lead to meaningful themes and patterns in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 52). In short, following in the format of ethnographic work, I sought to compile a "thick description" of data that would lead to preliminary results and interpretations about the research topic under the umbrella of qualitative research (Geertz, 1973). This thick description process was my attempt to gather details about the participants' lived experiences in order to make meaning of social identity through language from their gestures, words, and actions (specific details of this thick description can be found in Appendices E, F, G, and in Chapter Five).

4.2 Research design

The aforementioned strategies of ethnography and qualitative research are what framed the research methodology. The sections to follow elaborate on the research design of the study, which entails the specific ways I sought to investigate my research questions through inductive reasoning, which involved a three-step structure of research description, analysis, and interpretation. I utilized a grounded theory (GT) research design, which is a research design strategy that situates, or “grounds”, a theory in the context under which the phenomenon under study occurs (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, Glaser & Strauss, 2017). In the context of this thesis, the phenomena under study were the connections between schools and social identities. I relied on the GT research design and its flexibility in the empirical research process (Glaser, 1978), which would allow me to develop interpretations of my research questions *during* (and even after) the data analysis process, which pointed back to my inductive process. In my ethnographic research process, I entered into the “field” with a few conceptual questions and keywords in mind, some of which were abstract in scope; with each successive interview and observation, I left the field with more specific concepts to guide the research.

4.2.1 Single-sited case study design

I utilized a single-sited case study design as the primary framework for collecting data. A case study design, though oftentimes employed with a limited number of participants in a contained geographical area, enables a researcher to provide a detailed analysis of a specific group (Zainal, 2007, Yin, 2014). Under this framework, I focused on five participants’ lived experiences as students at the Armenian schools. As I later added the topic of language to my thesis, this case study

turned into an instrumental case study, which is a study in which a small group of subjects is selected to examine specific patterns of thought and/or behavior (Zainal, 2007), which consisted of language attitudes and practices.

Before getting to know individual participants, as a preliminary step of my research at the Armenian schools, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, I distributed an anonymous questionnaire to 58 high school students at Getronagan Armenian High School, all of whom were between the 9th and 12th grades. They comprised of about a quarter of the student body, and their random distribution to various classes aided with the representativeness of the sample. I used these surveys to better understand their basic demographics related to their student experiences at the Armenian schools. During the time of survey distribution, I was broadly interested in learning about the relation between Armenian students and their language education; thus, the questions were formed around this interaction. Specifically, there were questions related to the participants' background, personal life, school life, language usage, extracurricular activities, and post-graduation plans. Though my thesis took on a different focus, this survey proved useful in providing information on how many years the students had attended the Armenian schools, how many hours they practiced their known languages inside and outside of the classrooms, and other key concepts that helped situate the position of the Armenian school according to the students' experiences. After obtaining formal approval from the Boğaziçi University Social Sciences Ethics Review Committee (see Appendix D), I began to conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants. I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with five student participants, which will be thoroughly explained in the sections to follow. Through up-close, in-depth interactions with these participants through this interview format, I was able to get to

know the specific details of these individuals' families and social groups, schooling processes, and negotiation of identities.

One of the main advantages of the descriptive case study method is its detailed focus on the complex lived experiences of the participants, which oftentimes cannot be captured through research that is more structured in form (Zainal, 2007, Yin, 2014). As I aimed to gather information about many aspects of my participants, including but not limited to their thought processes, interactions with others, and articulations of their experiences, the case study advantage in presenting data of real-life situations was the best fit for this thesis. Assuming a Weberian view that humans are like animals suspended in "webs of significance" they themselves have spun (Geertz, 1973, p. 311), my intention with this method was to detect, but not necessarily to untangle, interconnected threads of significance that point to preliminary patterns in the participants' negotiations of social identity.

The most common criticism of the descriptive case study method is its 'microscopic' focus, which may point to its lack of generalizability (Hussein, Hirst, Salyers & Osuji, 2014). The intention of my thesis was not to make generalized conclusions about the entire body of individuals who identify as Armenian youth in Istanbul. Rather, my intention was to compile lived experiences from the student participants and to draw predictive patterns from them. Being aware of the participants' specific contexts, especially the context of the Armenian school as a non-neutral zone for identity-building and -shaping, was extremely important to consider during the data collection and analysis process. Therefore, in aiming to adhere closely to validity, I accepted to treat this as a case study about specific Armenian youth in Istanbul and their social identities, not as a generalization for all Armenian youth in Istanbul and/or Turkey. Therefore, its microscopic focus that

might be taken as a methodological weakness is an advantage for thick description, with detailed interpretations to be garnered from the data.

Aside from the focus on Armenian youth, and to better inform the generalizability of the overall research topic, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators associated to the Armenian school and their interpretations of how the position of the Armenian school influences its members (this will be described in detail in the following section). This extra step renders it a collective case study, or a study that is coordinated from several sources, not just from the target sample (Yin, 2014). As a collective case study gives the researcher a wider range of access, this methodological addition provided space for a more holistic understanding of the research topic.

4.2.2 Research site and participants

I utilized the method of purposeful selection as the main research design strategy for obtaining the research site and participants. Purposeful selection is a strategy used to deliberately select particular settings, persons, and activities in order to provide information that is relevant to the research questions and goals (Maxwell, 2013). I deliberately selected places and people who could provide information based on the criteria of my research. The primary setting for data collection took place at the Armenian school during school hours because of my intention to situate the context in its most natural state. I utilized teachers at the Armenian school as “panels”, or people who are uniquely informative given their expertise in an area (Maxwell, 2013, p. 92). These teachers also served as mediators between myself as a researcher and the adults and students as participants. According to Maxwell (2013), one main goal of purposeful selection is to select participants with whom there is potential for

establishing the most productive relationships in the context of the study. However, this purposeful selection can lead to a lack of representation for the larger population outside of the sample pool. One criticism for this research design is the risk of key informant bias, or the reliance on a small number of informants to construct the majority of the data (Maxwell, 2013). It is important to recognize that the teachers at the Armenian high school who connected me with the student participants may have served as a risk for key informant bias. I recognized the non-neutral positions of these participants, as well as my non-neutral position. With this said, I aimed to adhere to the case study design of offering a detailed analysis of a specific group, which turned out to be ‘successful’ students at Armenian schools (details on this focus group will be elaborated on in Chapters Five and Six).

This purposeful selection design came with a set of exclusions and inclusions.²⁷ My intention to select a specific type of participant excluded large portions of the Armenian population that did not fit certain demographics of the study (this topic will be discussed in Chapter Seven). As mentioned in previous sections, this lack of representation made me unable to draw conclusions beyond the patterns gathered from the selected participant pool. I do not consider the students as ‘representatives’ of the Armenian community in Turkey, but a focused sample of five individuals amongst a diverse group of people. It is not my project’s intention to draw generalized conclusions about the Armenian community, but rather, to point to specific preliminary patterns, which could serve for future studies that take on a much larger sample size of participants, which would lead to more representativeness.

²⁷ My multiple roles as a teacher at the Armenian schools and a participant of the Armenian community were the most crucial access points for the purposeful selection and the level of inclusion offered to me at these schools. The maintenance of daily close interactions with the students, teachers, and administration assisted in alleviating potential sensitivities the participants may have had during the data collection process.

4.2.2.1 Research site

The primary research site involved in the data collection process was Getronagan Armenian High School. Getronagan is a currently active Armenian educational institution founded in Constantinople in 1886. It is located in a historical complex that is situated along Kemeraltı Caddesi in Karaköy, a part of the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul. Getronagan High School's architectural layout is distinct in that it occupies the same complex with Saint Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church. The church itself holds several Armenian-specific architectural characteristics, such as its pointed domes that sit on a cylindrical drum, with tall, narrow windows along the angled edges of the vertical structure. Given the neighboring proximity of the school and church, a passerby would notice the church's two domes, pastel blue with bright gold crosses on top, and the stone composition of the whole structure, before seeing the rectangular structure of the school behind it. This type of socio-spatial presence it holds, with Ottoman Armenian touches set against the backdrop of contemporary Istanbul, makes it a charismatic and interesting institution to conduct research in (see Appendices E and F for details of the research site). Today, Getronagan High School caters to 226 students between the 9th to 12th grades (Turkish-Armenian Teachers Association, 2018).

Throughout history, Getronagan has been regarded as a school that many prominent Ottoman Armenian intellectuals, artists, writers, and scientists attended in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is known as a school with a rigorous academic curriculum that focuses on Science, Math, and promoting Armenian culture and values in addition to establishing itself as a prominent academic institution in

Istanbul and Turkey. Getronagan High School's educational philosophy is stated (in its translated form) as follows:

The understanding we embrace as all staff is to comprehend the dynamism of education, be able to give to our students what is contemporary without losing the traditional beauties... Along with this mentality, we make effort to provide an education in which: Cultural activities play an important role in students' education...[and] Students are prepared for higher education in the best way for every field they have [in their] talents and abilities... ("Özel Getronagan Ermeni Lisesi", 2018).

Before choosing Getronagan High School as my main research site, I conducted research on all the Armenian schools in Turkey. As previously mentioned, there are 16 officially recognized Armenian schools in Turkey, all of which are located in Istanbul. In the 2018-2019 academic school year, 3,016 students out of a capacity of 5,871 were attending these schools (Turkish-Armenian Teachers Association, 2018). In my first attempts to gather fieldwork, I sent an email to principals and teachers at all Armenian high schools, including the three Armenian high school principals. In this email, I briefly explained the scope of the project and asked to meet with them in person for further details. I was given initial approval to conduct research at two schools, one of which was a primary/secondary school (grades K-8) and the other which was a high school (grades 9-12);²⁸ however, my research focus shifted to Armenian youth over 18 years of age for a number of reasons I will later explain. Therefore, my focus turned to the Armenian high schools. The principal at Getronagan, Silva Kuyumcuyan, responded to my email with enthusiasm and connected me with English teachers who could help me gain access to student participants. When we met in person, after I explained my project to her, she gave me permission to conduct participant observations in addition to interviews with

²⁸ In the beginning stages of data collection, I conducted interviews and participant observations at the Armenian primary/secondary school where I have worked as an English teacher for three years. However, as the focus of my study shifted to Armenian youth who were at least 18 years of age, the information from this data collection was not included in the final data analysis.

students and teachers. I did not receive a response from the other two high school principals, and I did not attempt to send follow-up emails. My rationale was that, after initiating my fieldwork at Getronagan with the intention to obtain thick descriptions of this research site, I concluded that the data collection from this single site were enough for my research topic and case study method. Given the case study design of this thesis, and keeping its limitations in mind, I structured my thesis aims and methodology around what this data pool could realistically represent. I aimed to focus on the lived experiences of the specific participants from this single research site, and to draw patterns between their individual articulations.

4.2.2.2 Research participants

I conducted semi-structured interviews with two groups of participants: student participants and adult participants at Getronagan High School. The reasons for interviewing the student participant group was to gain an understanding of how they perceived the Armenian school's position in their lives, and to make meaning out of the influence of the school on their social identities. The reason for interviewing the adult participants affiliated with the Armenian schools, the majority of them teachers who have been with these schools for more than a decade, was to gain information about the position of the Armenian schools. It is important to remember that all of the interviews with the student participants, and the majority of interviewees with the adult participants, were with a group of members who have undergone the Armenian schooling process themselves.²⁹ All of the participants were expected to represent the

²⁹ One component of the initial data collection process involved interviews with adults who were not associated with the Armenian schools. These individuals were involved with the wider Armenian community such as various nonprofit organizations and activist groups. However, as the research topic assumed a more specific angle toward the social identities of Armenian students through the school, these interviews were not utilized in the final data set.

Armenian schools, and the students were expected to talk about their positions within the school, with a positive bias. My research position with these groups of participants remained as neutral as possible; however, I admit that my position within the Armenian community as a teacher may have altered the ways in which the participants expressed their opinions and experiences to me.

As the main component of my descriptive case study sampling group, three-step semi-structured interviews were conducted with five 12th grade students at Getronagan: Alex, Anoush, Artin, Julia, and Aren.³⁰ In total, fifteen interviews were conducted with these student participants over the course of three months, from April to June 2018. There are a number of factors why I ultimately chose this sample group in terms of demographics and size. Firstly, I opted to conduct interviews with participants who could sign the consent form on their own behalf. The idea of involving a parent figure in these interviews may have negotiated the students' ability to articulate some of their answers, especially when it came to topics that involved their experiences at their schools. Furthermore, this parental involvement may have complicated my intention for the students to undergo a reflection period over the three-step interview process, which could have led to biased answers if they were discussing these topics with their parents outside of the school setting. Secondly, I desired to interview students who had experience the typical full-range experience at the Armenian schools, from kindergarten through the 12th grade, which is why I opted to interview those in their final year. Lastly, I intended to interview students with a level of maturity who would be willing to reflect on complicated concepts such as identity and membership.

³⁰ The names of the participants have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

After considerable deliberation at the possibility of interviewing minors under the age of 18, and after further discussion with colleagues at the Armenian schools, I decided to restrict the sample size to participants that did not require their parents' consent. At this point, I will articulate some obvious limitations in terms of this sample size: during the time of this study, there are three Armenian high schools in Istanbul and Turkey, with approximately 442 high school students for the 2018-2019 school year (see Appendix A). I did not come into direct contact with high school seniors at the other two Armenian high schools in Istanbul, and I was only allowed access to a limited number of participants at Getronagan. Given this limited sample size of participants, which is fitting for a case study but not for other types of research designs, this thesis requires further research in order to establish a more sizable representative sample that can help generate more representative results.

English language teachers at Getronagan guided the selection of student participants. Acting as gatekeepers on my behalf, they were more easily able to find interested students who could contribute to this thesis. It is important to know that this gatekeeping process was also a filtering process, which drew in more academically successful students in the class, which perhaps did not indicate an 'average' Armenian student. Although I originally planned to conduct interviews with a larger sample size, the students' busy school schedules and periodic absences due to test-taking and extracurricular activities would have interrupted the timing and flow of the three-step interview process. Therefore, I opted to establish a strong connection with each of the five student participants and to use our interview times in a productive way. Each interview took between 45 minutes and one hour. The interviews were conducted in the weekday afternoons after the school day had ended, and they took place in face-to-face, one-on-one settings in private rooms around the

school. For those who requested for a Turkish-to-English translator to mediate the conversation, the interviews were conducted in the English language teacher's room with a language teacher who served as a translator. I ensured the participant was comfortable speaking through a mediator before proceeding with the interview.

During the entire semi-structured interview process, I emphasized clarification when I thought it was necessary, which was often. Each successive interview honed in on the participants' personal lived experiences, both in terms of self and their various group affiliations. One important limitation to mention is the third-party intervention for the purpose of translation. When a student requested for a translator to be present, I found an English language teacher to serve the role on an informal basis. Although I briefed the teachers about the task of a translator to relay the interviewees' words verbatim in their translated forms, they did not have formal translation training. This third-party process could have resulted in a breach of articulation on the part of the interviewee, translator, or both parties.

Table 1 provides a brief summary of the demographic information of the participants. These points constructed my impressions of their social identity negotiation throughout the course of our semi-structured interviews, which were important for contextualizing the data as a descriptive process before I began the data analysis. Participant names indicated with an asterisk asked for a translator to be present during the interviews.

Table 1. Student Participant Demographics

	Alex	Anoush	Artin	Julia*	Aren*
Age	18	18	18	18	18
Department	Languages/ Literatures	Languages/ Literatures	Math/ Science	History	History
Regional/city affiliation	Istanbul, Kurtuluş, Maltepe	Istanbul, Bakırköy	Istanbul, Kurtuluş	Istanbul, Kurtuluş, Feriköy	Istanbul, Kurtuluş
Parents' regional/city affiliation	Sivas, Istanbul, Ankara	Mardin	Istanbul, Hatay	Yozgat	Diyarbakır, Amasya, Sivas
Religious affiliation	Not indicated	Christian	Christian	Deist	Christian
Years of attendance at Armenian schools	Since kindergarten	Since kindergarten	Since kindergarten	Since kindergarten	Since kindergarten
School activities	Theater	Music club	Theater	Theater	Not indicated
Languages spoken	Turkish Armenian Greek English	Turkish Armenian English	Armenian Turkish English	Turkish Armenian	Turkish Armenian
Languages spoken at home	Turkish Armenian English	Turkish Armenian	Turkish Armenian	Armenian Turkish	Turkish Armenian
Hours/week of Armenian language used (outside school)	9-12	0-4	More than 12	More than 12	9-12
Self-assessed fluency level of Armenian	Limited proficiency	Limited proficiency	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent
Most enjoyable language to learn at school	Turkish Armenian English Other	Armenian English	Armenian Other	Armenian	Armenian
Most personally important language	Turkish Armenian English	Armenian Turkish	Armenian Turkish	Armenian	Armenian Turkish
Most professionally important language	English	Turkish English Other	Turkish English	English	English
Plans for future study	Abroad	Not sure	Not sure	Abroad	Not sure

The second participant group consisted of teachers and administrators at the Armenian schools. I interviewed 10 adults at Getronagan High School who currently hold active roles as teachers and administrative members. The adult participants I interviewed were English language and Western Armenian language/literature teachers who could provide information on the position of the Armenian schools through their personal and professional experiences. A snowball sampling method was chosen for these participants; this method was limited because I only interviewed those whose English proficiency level was high enough for them to communicate comfortably. The majority of the selected adult participants had been affiliated with the Armenian schools for at least five years, sometimes spanning a few decades. Through the form of both informal and formal interviews, the teachers provided me with information about the aims and activities of the school as well as the general student demographic. These interviews were used to better understand the social and spatial position of the Armenian schools, not to provide substantive information about the social identity negotiation process for the students.

4.2.3 Data collection methods

In this section, I will describe the primary means through which I collected data for this research study. At the time of this writing, I have spent almost three consecutive years as an English language teacher at three Armenian schools, which have led to a plethora of observations and experiences with Armenian students in an informal sense. However, I reiterate my position as an amateur ethnographer and researcher as my foremost role in the scope of this thesis; therefore, the following methods are what I gathered in this more formal role as a researcher.

4.2.3.1 Semi-structured interviews³¹

My perspective on conducting a successful semi-structured interview is borrowed from oral historian Valerie Janesick's (2010) statement: "Interviewing is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic" (p. 44). I encouraged my participants to share as little or as much information as they felt comfortable in the form of short answers and personal anecdotes. I hoped this process would contribute to the "joint construction of meaning" about the topic of identity negotiation, which is a largely dialectical process. I adopted Maxwell's (2013) interactive approach that research questions do not need to adhere to a linear relationship, but rather a dialectical one, to provide valuable information for the data collection. In specifying the types of questions to ask, the emphasis on asking interviewees real questions—the types of questions participants are genuinely interested to answer, instead of contrived questions that may lead to biased answers—was emphasized. The content of the semi-structured interviews affirmed my mentality of building a collaborative relationship with the participants.

For the semi-structured interviews with the student participants, three-step interviews (Schuman, 1982) were conducted with the purpose of understanding the lived experiences of the participant in a deeper context than could be obtained in a single meeting (see Appendix C). This "series of three" design by Dolbeare and Schuman (1982) allows the interviewer and participant to "plumb the experience and to place it in context" (Seidman, 2013). The first interview establishes the context of

³¹ Before initiating the semi-structured interviews, I openly explained my research purpose and goals to participants before they agreed to participate. This explanation was laid out in detail through a consent form, written in both English and Turkish, giving the participants a summary of my research topic without giving them leaning information about my questions. If the participants agreed to participate, they signed the participant consent form.

the participants' experience; the second allows the participant to reconstruct the concrete details of their experiences within the topic area of study; the third encourages the participant to reflect on the meaning the experience holds for them. The first interview posed questions about the participant's general background, such as their family life, social life, and general personal and professional interests. The second interview posed questions about concrete details of the participants' experience at the Armenian school.

The third interview, which was the most important of the set, posed questions about the intellectual and emotional connections the participants might make about the concept of their social identities. This last interview was more interactive and involved my participants creating "identity charts" as visual depictions of their identities, and then taking the lead in explaining the content of their identity charts instead of answering a series of linear questions. This activity was adopted from Facing History, an international educational platform that seeks to engage students on topics such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice. I modified Facing History's "Identity Charts" activity (2018) by simplifying the language on the webpage and reframing the questions in order to suit my research topic. In this activity, the participants were asked to write their name in the middle of a piece of paper, draw lines extending out from their names, and to write and circle word and/or phrases they used to describe themselves, their communities, and their subjective positions, or roles, in society. I utilized this interactive and visual exercise for the last semi-structured interview with the idea that it could be difficult for my students to articulate, and sometimes in their non-native language, their experiences related to identity. It was a successful attempt, as these last interviews led to the richest answers from which I could obtain the most descriptive data (see Appendix G).

For the semi-structured interviews with the adult participants, I utilized a single interview format (see Appendix C). Questions about the participants' background, involvement in the Armenian community, professional experience with the Armenian schools, and perspectives on language teaching and learning were asked. Broadly, their answers to these questions were primarily used to frame the position of the Armenian school within various spaces, including but not limited to the private Armenian space and the public Turkish space. The adult participants also talked about their teaching content and materials, their personal and professional attachments to the Armenian school, and their perspectives on the overall vision of the Armenian schools for the community. The data collected during these interviews with the adult participants helped me to gain a broad yet personal understanding of the position of the Armenian school from an insider's perspective.

In order to preserve the data content, audio recordings were utilized during the interviews; transcriptions were made in the post-interview process. The participants read transcripts of each interview after they were drafted in which they could modify the transcript by correcting certain words, phrases, or sections to better fit their original intent. The only modifications that were made were corrections in the spelling of certain Turkish or Armenian words.

4.2.3.2 Participant observations

The way in which I accessed information about the position of the Armenian schools, as well as to record the students' interactions with each other, was through participant observations (O'Reilly, 2005). O'Donoghue (2007) described school spaces outside the classroom as "spaces and places for performance and display, control and surveillance... that embody specific values, beliefs and traditions

constructed, regulated and constituted through various constituting forces” (p. 63). These firsthand observations outside of the classroom provided me with real-life insight about the physical and symbolic structure of the Armenian high school and a typical day in the life of an Armenian student. I spent a period of time during each site visit strolling through the hallways, classrooms, and common areas of the Armenian schools and recording the details of the school. I took extensive field notes (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995) during each observation session (see Appendix E).

The field notes spanned the architectural layout of the school, the positioning and popularity of various classrooms and common areas, and decorative paraphernalia and student projects displayed around the building. I also took notes of conversations between students and teachers apart from the classroom setting, during breaktimes, with the intention of tracing patterns in their means of communication and spoken topics; these might point to patterns in their social identities negotiation in casual settings that were situated on the sidelines of, but still within, the Armenian school. When my note-taking activities were inquired about during these participant observations, I made it clear to individuals that I was conducting research unrelated to my teaching position, but rather to my thesis project. Maintaining the word “observation”, I did not ask the participants questions related to any of the phenomena I observed during the participant observation process. This fieldwork helped create the foundational framework for the position of the school. It also served as an additional means of understanding the students’ social identities through observations of their specific interpersonal interactions.

The main findings from the participant observations were condensed into a school sampling plan (See Appendix F). During my participant observations at Getronagan, I had the privilege of entering into classrooms, eating at the canteen

with faculty and staff, and navigating the labyrinth-like architecture of this historical building with a pen and paper for field notes and a camera for taking photographs. This sampling plan was useful for me to understand the position of the school as a semi-private, semi-public space on an objective level, and to help me later probe into the position of the school on a more subjective level in the data analysis process. Some of the most important observations I conducted were on the decorations (such as Ara Güler's photographs of Istanbul), on the artifacts (such as the collection of books in the library in a variety of languages and the trophies from competitions amongst the Armenian schools), and on the architecture of the school (such as the prominent church dome visible from nearly every classroom). The questions of how these characteristics translated into symbolic meanings, which could be translated into specific discourse, was my intention with this specific methodology.

4.2.4 Methods of data analysis

I began my data analysis process with a qualitative approach. Unlike data analysis procedures in quantitative research that may utilize software programs to generate statistical results, qualitative data analysis is more reliant on the researcher's critical thinking and analytical skills to understand the latent meanings in the content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative data analysis is utilized to reveal patterns and themes from the data, with the intention of rendering an explanation on the research topic.

I utilized a blended strategy of thematic content analysis and critical discourse analysis as the main strategies for data analysis. I also use the term "discourse" in considering the way people communicate themselves as patterns of belief, habitual action, and patterns of language. Firstly, I used the strategy of coding in order to "fracture" (Strauss, 1987) the data rendered from interviews and

rearrange them into theoretical categories. After arranging and rearranging these categories, I used thematic content analysis to analyze the data for the purpose of identifying semantic and interpretive themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) from the participants' responses. Semantic analysis focuses on the content of surface-level data: "the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Going one step further into the data analysis, latent (also known as interpretive) analysis focuses on the deeper meanings of the data: "[the researcher] starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). The semantic analysis provided me with a basic demographic understanding of the student participants as well as their overall attitudes about their social identities as members of the Armenian school; the latent analysis honed in on what may have been communicated 'in between the lines' of their articulations, which may have started to lead into the more complex negotiations of their social identities.

I also utilized critical discourse analysis (CDA) to probe even deeper into the latent analysis procedure. This type of analysis utilizes a linguistic framework toward analyzing data, seeking to expose connections between language, power, and ideology (De Fina, 2011, Fairclough, 2015). CDA coding firstly establishes a relationship between the discourse and historical/social context. In this type of coding, the researcher aims to provide details of the process through which the power of a discourse has had demonstrable effects in the articulation of a message, or the process through which the meaning is produced, and interpellation, or acceptance of this subject position. I utilized the technique of CDA because of the interplays of power between the Turkish state, Armenian schools, and its members, the ideologies

transmitted through each actor, and the instrument of language that is used to transmit power and ideology. States have discursive power over schools, as do schools over students. All of these factors may shape the students' ways of negotiating their social identities. The difficulties to be mindful about here are the lack of a common first language between researcher and participants. Therefore, the CDA analysis component bears in mind the limited vocabulary and means of communication between the participants and myself. During the interviews, I made sure that certain words or phrases that potentially signaled a specific discourse were clarified in order to ascertain the closest meaning, which could provide empirical data to draw patterns from.

For the data analysis procedure, I utilized Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. I firstly familiarized myself with the data by transcribing the interviews, reading the content, and taking down notes. I generated initial codes, by reducing the content from the data into smaller chunks of meaning. This process involved identifying patterns between the participants' responses and words. Following the methodology of Maguire & Delahunt (2017), I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive one, which involved highlighting segments of data that were relevant to the research questions instead of coding every piece of text. I searched for themes within the patterns, reviewed the themes, and considered how supportive the data were to these themes. Throughout this process, I checked if the themes matched up with the coded extracts, or the participants' words, and the general meaning that the participants intended to state. Afterwards, I aimed to define and name the themes, or to identify the "essence" of what the themes were about (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). After this, I proceeded to select exemplifying extracts

that related to my research questions. The final step, the write-up, is the content of the following chapter.

Though these are the six steps in conducting a thematic analysis, this is not a linear process; qualitative researchers are encouraged to repeat, retrace, and rework the steps for as long as it takes to come up with clear themes. It required many attempts to (re)arrange the themes in a way that fit into the context of my research topic that would also hold reliability and validity from the data set. The main themes that emerged which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

4.3 Validity

An important question that qualitative research must face is if the findings from the data collection can accurately point to the phenomena that the research intends to measure. Unlike in quantitative research, validity in qualitative research does not intend to reveal an “objective truth” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 114). Rather, adherence to validity means finding a set of patterns that have been decoded from the data collection, checking them for correctness or credibility from the participants, and approved between the researcher and participants. I used Maxwell’s (2013) perspective on validity, situated in the “correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p. 122) to establish validity, noting that “correctness” or “credibility” are dependent on the collaborative conclusions that the researcher and participant can construct together.

The most susceptible validity concerns were 1) researcher bias, or interpreting data that already fits the researcher’s predictions, 2) reactivity, or the researcher’s influence on the setting or individuals being studied, and 3) reflexivity, or the researcher’s specific influence during an interview setting (Maxwell, 2013). I

utilized a number of strategies to curb these validity threats. Firstly, I intended to collect rich data with audio recordings of interviews and participant observations, as well as detailed memos from fieldwork. Secondly, I intended to gather “respondent validation”, or the solicitation of feedback about data and preliminary conclusions gathered from participants. I did this by thoroughly transcribing the interviews and sending these transcriptions to the participants for validation of the scripts. Lastly, I intended to make use of reflexive intervention, or the self-recognition of the researcher’s positionality in the setting (Maxwell, 2013). Given my multi-faceted position as a researcher, teacher, and participant in the Armenian schools, I admit that these validity concerns posed themselves as issues during the data analysis process. It required several attempts for me to comb through the data and separate the content from my subjective interpretations. However, I aimed to adhere to the idea of critical ethnographic inquiry and its take on immersive research in order to gather thick descriptions of the data and present them in meaningful ways.

4.4 Conclusion

One of the most important aspects of a case study design in qualitative research is its in-depth, holistic approach (Zainal, 2007). One role I maintained was that of a researcher with daily interactions with Armenian students, which I believe assisted in upholding my participants’ trust to spend time in their school space, interacting with them and observing their surroundings. Another role I maintained in was that of a graduate student with an academic background of critical and cultural theory and a learned knowledge of ethnographic research. Therefore, the ways in which I structured the methodology and interview questions were informed by theories, which ushered the participants to think about their identities on a deeper level than

they may have in the past. Finally, the most important role I assumed in this thesis project is that of a witness. I believe that a conscientious refinement of skills in “bearing witness” is the most important characteristic a qualitative researcher can have (Laub, 1992, p. 71).

In the sensitivities and complexities of this topic, the process of formulating research questions, gathering data, and analyzing the data were intertwined, they themselves tangled up in Weberian webs of significance. The themes and patterns I will present in the subsequent chapter may not have led to “objective truths” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 113), but I emphasize that this was not the intent of the methodology and design. The subjective ‘truths’ that the participants reiterated to me about their views from the Armenian school, which hold validity in their case study design, will be presented in the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The contents leading up to this chapter laid the groundwork for the Armenian school as a semi-private, semi-public space in Armenian and Turkish spheres. It situated the Armenian school as a space where its students' social identities are negotiated through language attitudes and practices in their collective and interpersonal identifications. The main argument was that Armenian youth negotiate their social identities differently given their socio-spatial positions in collective/interpersonal interactions and in the private/public sphere. The results partially supported the main argument; this partial support was contingent on the spatial position of the school as perceived by the participants. The main themes that emerged as the results from the data were 1) the Armenian school perceived by its members as a private space and 2) the variant negotiation of socio-spatial identities, as demonstrated by variant language attitudes and practices. Following the action plan of investigating how the students negotiated themselves through the specific position of the Armenian school, this chapter will reveal the 'significant' results of the students' negotiation of collective and interpersonal identities, in the private space, through their language attitudes and practices. To review, participant language attitudes are the languages they consider they should be using, and participant language practices are the actual language(s) they use to communicate, both of which are dependent on socio-spatial position. Table 2 shows the interaction between these conditions, which I have abbreviated with the following terms: collective identity attitude as CLA, collective identity practice as CLP, interpersonal identity attitude as ILA, and interpersonal language practice as ILP.

Table 2. Social Identities Table³²

PRIVATE SPACE		
	Collective Identity	Interpersonal Identity
Language	CLA	ILA
Attitudes	<div>Armenian community member</div> <div>Armenian speaker</div> <div>Armenian church attendee</div> <div>Student</div> <div>Armenian student</div> <div>Student in Turkey</div> <div>Turkish history classes</div>	<div>Classmate</div> <div>School Exams</div> <div>University Preparations</div> <div>Friend</div> <div>Daily Topics</div>
Language	CLP	ILP
Practices	<div>Theater performances</div> <div>Religious celebrations</div>	<div>Armenian classroom</div> <div>Other school spaces</div> <div>Teacher's rooms</div> <div>Common areas</div>

Note: The categories are color-coded based on language. The blue boxes indicate Armenian language attitudes and practices; the red boxes indicate Turkish attitudes and practices; the purple boxes indicate mixed language attitudes and practices.

5.1 The Armenian school as a private community space

Getronagan High School is a property of the private Armenian community that follows the rules and regulations of the Turkish MNE, which located in the public Turkish space (see Appendix E and F for details of the high school). It can be considered as a semi-private, semi-public space in this regard, with the school

³² This table, gathered from qualitative data, is limited in scope. It does not show concrete measures of significance between interactions. Statistical data in the form of interactions between conditions would have provided a more detailed scope of variance between socio-spatial negotiations of identity, which could have rendered more specific results. However, this would have required a quantitative study to render significance for, the methodology of which might be considered for future research.

sampling plan revealing various representations of both Turkish and Armenian association. However, the results from the interviews and participant observations revealed that the participants considered their Armenian school as a private space. Furthermore, their frequent use of the term “community” to refer to school renders it a space for the students as ‘active members’ of the Armenian community. Under this theme, the sub-themes of ‘safe space’ and ‘second home’ appeared as prevalent.

5.1.1 A ‘safe space’

The Armenian school is perceived as a ‘safe space’ to promote a sense of security for its members, teachers and students included. As a school in Turkey, there were symbolic cues of being a school in Turkey, such as Atatürk’s portrait and the Istiklal Marşı, or the lyrics of the Turkish national anthem, on every classroom wall; however, the majority of banners, decorations, and architecture reflected Armenian-specific characteristics. These characteristics translated into feelings of safety between students and teachers who also identified as Armenian. The most recurring words used to refer to the Armenian school were “community”, “close”, “family”, “safe”, “secure”, and “comfortable”. Ms. Serli talked about how the priority of the school, as well as her personal goal with her students, is to promote a sense of peace, security, and community. Bringing in the experiences of the students, Alex stated, “I’m comfortable because people can understand what we live *because they’re Armenian too*” (personal communication, April 13, 2018, emphasis added). Artin stated, “I feel safe in Getronagan. Because my friends, my teachers, they are all respectful. So like 100% we are Armenian in this school but Muslim teachers are very respectful too” (personal communication, June 11, 2018). In talking about the environment her teachers created for her, Julia stated, “In our school we have Kurds,

Turks, Armenians... lots of people and religions. The teachers are learning Armenian, trying to speak Armenian... They are so near for Armenian and they are like us” (personal communication, April 13, 2018). Julia’s description of these teachers as “so near” (implying closeness in relationship) and “like us” (implying similarity) implies a close relationship, but not full membership. The critical question that arises from this ‘safe space’ discourse is its prerequisites for inclusion and exclusion, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.1.2 A ‘second home’

The second sub-theme is of the Armenian school as a second home. The spatial characteristics of the school and the relationship between the students and teachers affirm this theme. The spatial topography of the school is complicated, and the school space is concentrated with banners, decorations, and hand-written posters, most of which are about various events related to the Armenian community. When I first began my participant observations at the school, I relied on teachers and students to show me around, as the spatial structure was not easy for me to navigate. In an informal conversation, Artin told me that the school is quite like a labyrinth, but it was impossible to get lost inside, as almost everyone was like a “familiar face”. This regard for close spatial contact and social affinity between the members affirms the ‘second space theme’. However, this familiarity was paired with a lack of personal privacy given the concentrated space of the school—the lack of an outdoor recreation area, the central yet commuting-position of the common lounge, and the closeness of the classrooms to the teacher’s rooms made personal privacy seem lacking. The students’ daily schedules, with their lessons and breaks for the entire school at the same hours, gave them little option for structuring their own schedules

within the school space. Furthermore, they are monitored in the hallways under adult surveillance. All of these factors contribute to the idea of the school as a ‘second home’.

In addition to this environment created within the school space, the relationships between the students and teachers, and the feelings they felt in their interactions, also affirm the ‘second home’ sub-theme.³³ In talking about her relationship with the school, Ms. Lara stated, “This school belongs to me, I think. And I belong to this school. Some kind of... possession, I think” (personal communication, May 15, 2018). In talking about what she wanted the school to reflect for its members, Ms. Serli stated, “It should be like a family. Especially the Armenian community because we are not many in Turkey, in Istanbul. Unfortunately we are not many. So it should be like a family” (personal communication, April 20, 2018). When it comes to relationships between teachers and students, the ways in which the students expressed their relationship with their teachers of Armenian background was familial. The teachers were regarded as mothers, and the students were regarded as children.³⁴ In talking about her classroom teacher, Anoush (personal communication, April 26, 2018) stated, “[She] is like a mother to us. When we [experience] a bad thing, we can tell this to her. She always helps us.” In talking about how he learned about Armenian identity, Alex said that the teachers tell the students, like mothers to children, to “protect your language, speak your language” (personal communication, May 14, 2018). Alex expressed that he gained the most critical knowledge not from time spent in the classroom, but from individual time

³³ One of the most evident gaps in this research, which I realized after the data collection process was finished, was the lack of questions about the school as a gendered space; this important topic will be discussed in my suggestions for future research in the final chapter.

³⁴ Many students here have siblings at various other Armenian schools, and the teachers have children who attend Armenian schools, which adds another layer to the sub-theme of the Armenian school as a second home.

spent with his teachers during break times. Pushing this one step further, the data revealed that the Armenian school plays more of an active role than the participants' families in the teaching and learning of the Armenian language. All participants expressed that the Armenian language should be taught at school due to the trend that they were using it less and less in their home settings, and that Turkish was their primary language means of communication (the anonymous survey conducted with students prior to my official data collection revealed that 43% of them utilized less than four hours of Armenian in their homes on a weekly basis). Two participants, Julia and Anoush, expressed that they used Armenian at home (with certain family members only), and that the school and home should be considered as separate; interestingly, those who claimed they did not use Armenian in their homes did not such a distinction between their home and school, which relegates the latter more toward the private space.

5.1.2.1 A 'special' space: Armenian literature classes

The participants attributed one specific aspect of their schooling process, their Armenian literature classes, as the space where they spoke almost exclusively Armenian, and which they contributed as a significant shaper of their Armenian identity. I was able to sit in on Armenian literature classes as one part of my participant observations. Though I could not understand the content of the topics, I gathered that Armenian was spoken as the exclusive language in these settings, and that the majority of the students were listening carefully, reading with intention, and attempting to speak about the topics with interest. Ms. Talar, one of the Armenian language and literature teachers, stated that in her literature classes, she gave lectures on topics such as the development of Western Armenian in Constantinople, and

“zartonk”, or the Armenian awakening period. Ms. Lara described her Armenian literature class as such: “we talk about Armenian social events such as dance and theater. We also promote certain educational events like ‘Hay Tbrotz,’ the history of Armenian schools during the Ottoman Empire” (personal communication, May 15, 2018). Despite the teachers’ official explanations of the courses, Armenian literature classes were regarded by the participants as a less formal, more ‘special’ space that formed their identities in distinct ways. The student participants expressed disappointment in how these classes were usually the first to be taken away from their academic schedules since the content would not be featured on Turkish national exams, thus signifying their informality. However, the ‘soft skills’ that these classes fostered for students seemed to be their main selling point for all the participants.

5.1.2.2 A “hidden” curriculum

In giving a description of her literature lessons, Ms. Lara (personal communication, May 15, 2018) stated:

“I’m teaching identity in literature classes. It’s a little bit complicated but, generally, in Armenian literature classes, we try to talk about the identity through Armenian history... because there are no lessons about Armenian history. So we do this in a *hidden* way, unfortunately” (emphasis added).

This discourse of specific lessons as ‘hidden’ will be further probed in the following chapter. It can be linked with the teachers’ aims to teach an unofficial curriculum of ‘identity’. Even the teachers who did not give Armenian lessons echoed a similar message: “We’re not only a school, we’re not only teaching languages or maths or sciences. We’re teaching also identity” (Ms. Serli, personal communication, April 20, 2018). Ms. Talin stated that the school holding the title of “Ermeni”, which means “Armenian” in Turkish, obliges the school to teach Armenian identity, be it through official discourses in Armenian grammar and literature classes, special

events, or religious holidays, or in unofficial discourses such as in break time conversations between teachers and students.

The participants regarded their Armenian literature classes as different from their other classes. One tangible way in which this was shown was the separation between the Armenian language and other foreign language teacher's rooms. Anoush stated, "We have Armenian literature class. In that class we learn about our history. We learn about our writers. They write about political things. While we are reading, we can observe the things that happened in the past" (personal communication, May 17, 2018). The content that the students learned in their Armenian literature classes focused on the past, with black-and-white photographs to prove for them. Julia admitted that she is bad at learning foreign languages, but said that her Armenian lessons were different from her foreign language classes because, she learned about being Armenian and Armenian identity in her literature classes, which was her favorite part of her schooling process. Artin stated, "I learned really specific things from Armenian culture. I learned new Armenian things. Words, dances, Armenian cuisine..." (personal communication, June 11, 2018). In addition to teaching Armenian culture in the academic sense, these classes also seemed to be teaching *personal* aspects of the Armenian identity through the relationships that the students had with their Armenian teachers. These relationships seemed to take a parent-child dynamic, almost as if the teachers were imparting knowledge about their family histories and cultural specificities, highlighting the most important people who helped shape the community, the Armenian 'family'. These relationships take on intergenerational upholding of the Armenian language and culture, which the students foster as a personal commitment toward a familial community. To sum up this point with words from one participant: "Not learning the language, not speaking

the language after graduation [would cause] the weakening of the language. And if I forget this language, the children coming after me would never know it” (Aren, personal communication, June 11, 2018).

As was detailed in this section, the Armenian school was interpreted by its members, within their respective collective ingroup, as a private space, taking on dimensions as a ‘safe space’ and a ‘second home’. Specifically, the space of the Armenian literature classroom is an even more exclusive space where their identity is fostered through teachings of culture, history, and identity. The students attributed much of their character development to the school, such as Anoush and her succinct phrase: “I emerge ‘real Anoush’ here. Getronagan is my character. I learn here everything I know” (Anoush, personal conversation, April 13, 2018). The question of how they negotiate their social identities requires further investigation. For this, I turn to the topic of the self-deemed identities of its members, the Armenian students. In the following section, I offer a closer look at the ways in which the student participants negotiated their identities in ways that intertwine their social identities and language.

5.2 The socio-spatial position of Armenian students

The second theme focuses on the participants’ collective and interpersonal negotiation of social identities through language attitudes and practices in the private Armenian school space. As I have explained in the previous section, the Armenian school is perceived by its members as a private space. Since the data collection process only took place at the Armenian schools, the results I will focus on are limited to this private dimension. In the following sections, I will first situate the student participants under different conditions of collective/interpersonal and

language attitudes/practices, then present the discursive patterns that the participants used in presenting their roles under these conditions.

The way in which I distinguished between collective and interpersonal identities was through the participants' mentions of how they associated with a group. Terms commonly mentioned in the collective sense were "member", "community", and "school"; terms commonly mentioned in the interpersonal sense were "with friends" or "with teachers" and were more anecdotal in scope. In a linguistically structural sense, the second person pronouns "we" and "us" were referred to most often in referring back to the multiple members of the group and the first person pronoun "I" referring to interpersonal interactions. The data from the collective language attitudes (CLA) and interpersonal language attitudes (ILA) come from the student interviews. The data from the collective language practices (CLP) and interpersonal language practices (ILP) come from the student interviews in noting the languages they stated to have used with their friends and family, as well as participant observations at the Armenian school when I overheard their conversations as an observing outsider. In these participant observations, though my language abilities were not adequate to understand the content of their language practices, I made use of the socio-spatial context (the setting, relationships between the students and teacher, and body language) in order to see if how their language practices were in Turkish, Armenian, or a mix of the two languages.

5.2.1 Collective identity language attitudes and practices

Out of all the conditions, the participants made the strongest associations with their collective group, assuming the roles of members of the Armenian community and (Armenian) students in Turkey. These roles and corresponding language attitudes

and practices will be explored here.

5.2.1.1 CLAs as members of the Armenian community

The most common collective identity that all participants expressed was as ‘members of the Armenian community’. Here, it is important to recognize that this “community” term directly refers back to the “community schools” label that Getronagan High School holds under the official categorization of the Turkish-Armenian Patriarchate. In this specific identification as a member of the Armenian community, their CLA was mixed. The three identities under which their attitudes corresponding with using Armenian in their collective group were as Armenian speakers, church-going Christians, and students at Armenian schools.

All of the participants (Alex, Anoush, Aren, Artin, and Julia) held strong identifications as members of the Armenian community, using specific discourse related to loss and preservation to show for their membership. This term “community” was related to the way in which Armenian schools are referred to as “cemaat okulları”, or “community schools”, and how its members use these words to refer to their school. This was a constant factor despite their varied self-assessed fluency in the language.³⁵ More importantly, this sense of being a member of an Armenian-specific community was constant despite their mixed CLAs. Upon my asking them what it meant to be a part of the Armenian community, the participants used similar discourse in emphasizing the importance of speaking Western Armenian in order to “not lose the language” (Artin, personal communication, June 11, 2018).

³⁵ In Chapter 4, the Student Participant Demographics table indicated the participants’ self-assessed levels of fluency in Western Armenian (though the questionnaire was originally anonymous, I later received permission from the five participants to record their specific answers). Alex and Anoush self-indicated their level as “limited proficiency”, while Artin, Julia, and Aren self-indicated their level as “fluent”.

The participants' attendance at the Armenian school was closely connected with their ideal to preserve their language; that is, their studentship was closely connected with being a member of the Armenian community. Alex's main reason for coming to Getronagan was related to his continued practice of Armenian. He stated that if he cannot speak the language, then it may well become "extinct" in Turkey (personal communication, June 11, 2018). Aren stated that if people did not continue to use Armenian, it would "disappear" and "be destroyed". He continued, "If a language is vanished, so is the identity" (personal communication, June 11, 2018).

A sub-domain of this intention to not lose the language was the participants' use of the auxiliary verb "should", which provokes a feeling of obligation, in order to protect their Armenian community through their attendance at the Armenian schools. In talking about his responsibility to the community, Aren stated, "If I don't come, and if other Armenian students don't come, then what will happen to our schools, our community? Who will come? I *should* come to these schools" (personal communication, April 13, 2018, emphasis added). Anoush said that her decision to attend Getronagan was because "we are minorities here. I *should* save my culture, our traditions" (personal communication, April 13, 2018, emphasis added). In a similar way, Artin explained, "We are a very little group of people in Turkey, Armenians. Because of that, identity is very important. Culture, identity. We should take them, we *should* save them, for existence" (personal communication, May 18, 2018, emphasis added). The discourse of language preservation was exemplified by some of the participants' assertions that their identities, too, would get lost:

If my culture gets lost, I will get lost. My culture, my language, are the most important things for my Armenian identity. When I lose my culture, I lose my language, [and] *I won't be different from other people in the country*" (personal communication, June 11, 2018, emphasis added).

This personal loss was linked to fears of cultural assimilation. Anoush stated,

“Because in Turkey, some people may want to assimilate the Armenians. I think some Turkish people see themselves like ... superior. And because of this, I think that I should save my character ... In my age, I feel lots of responsibility about this” ((personal communication, May 17, 2018).

This connection between losing a language, losing one’s identity, and cultural assimilation, which were significant and related discourses used by the all participants, will be explained in detail in the following chapter.

Another way in which the participants expressed their membership to the Armenian community was through their condition of attending church. From participant observations on the spatial layout of the school, the prominent church dome with a golden cross at its top could be seen from almost every classroom. Here, I again reference the Student Participant Demographics table from Chapter Four to situate the participants’ self-assessed religious affiliation. Anoush, Artin, and Aren all stated they were Christian. Julia stated that she was a deist, and Alex did not state his religion. They all expressed that they attend an Armenian church on Sundays. Aren closely associated his Armenian identity with the Christian faith. In articulating his religion, Aren (personal communication, June 11, 2018) stated: “Me being Armenian... I think my religion being Christianity is one of the most important parts.” Artin was the most definitive about his Armenian and Christian identity as being interconnected, stating, “Being with other Armenians you *automatically* become... you are Christian” (personal communication, June 11, 2018, emphasis added). Alex did not indicate his religion, but stated that he attended church; however, he also stated that this was more out of obligation than volition, as his uncle was a priest. Alex stated that he speaks exclusively Armenian with his uncle, but that he feels a sense of unease in these interactions. Julia indicated she was Deist, but she attended her church for the obligation and social enjoyment. She said that she enjoyed speaking with people in the Armenian language in this collective setting.

When I asked them about the languages they used in this setting, the participants told me that they listen to the priest's messages in Armenian, but they do not speak Armenian amongst themselves at church. Rather, despite their strong collective membership affiliation as church attendees, their collective language attitudes in these conditions were mixed.

5.2.1.2 CLAs as (Armenian) students in Turkey

The participants also associated their collective identities with two 'types' of student: Armenian students and students in Turkey. Within the realm of the Armenian school, their CLA was mixed between Turkish, Armenian, and some foreign languages. As demonstrated in the section above on the Armenian literature classes, the participants' CLA was Armenian with their classmates and teachers. However, apart from this class, their CLA was Turkish. As detailed in the previous section, identifying as a 'member' of the Armenian community came with mixed CLAs; however, as I will explain in this section, being a 'student' came with strict divides between Armenian and Turkish language attitudes.

Leaving the "Armenian" aspect aside, in the students' roles as students in Turkey, their CLA was mostly Turkish; however, this condition was expressed in negative ways. The participants indicated that exam preparation classes replace other classes, and their Armenian lessons are usually the first ones to be taken from the students' schedules. Furthermore, as exam preparations consume the majority of the students' time, they do not have time to pursue extra-curricular activities, such as Armenian theater or music, that extend beyond their academic aims. Anoush said, "I was in the music club. This year I couldn't join because I prepare for my university exams... We are studying at school. When I go home I relax for an hour, and then I

begin to study” (personal communication, April 26, 2018). This replacement of her music club hours with studying for university exams was considered a negative aspect of being a student in Turkey. Although Armenian students are exempt from the Religion section of the statewide exams, they are still required to take the History section of the national exams. Three out of five students, Aren, Anoush, and Julia, stated that they did not enjoy their Turkish history classes; the other two expressed disinterest. All of them considered the History section of their national exams as something they did not fully trust. In Julia’s words, “the information given to us in classes is not correct, sometimes misinformed” (personal communication, April 26, 2018). Anoush (personal communication, April 26, 2018) said, “In this country, we’re forced to learn Turkish history. I want to learn about my history.” Apart from spending hours on exam preparation in their senior year for their Turkish national exams, Armenian students are required to learn subjects they may harbor negative feelings toward. The participants’ attitudes toward living in Turkey and using Turkish as their main language of communication was perceived as a negative, but necessary, characteristic.

In attempting to add the “Armenian” part back into these student roles, the “Armenian student” identity was not discussed in detail by the participants. In my attempts to ask the participants about their conditions of being an Armenian student in Turkey, the participants automatically referred back to the collective ‘Armenian identity’. Like their tension with the ‘student in Turkey’ identity, pairing the Armenian identity with the Turkish language came with difficulty in terms of their collective language attitudes. These CLAs were either exclusively Armenian (in Armenian classes) or Turkish (in other classes). Anoush (personal communication, May 17, 2018) stated, “I think I have two identities. Because I’m an Armenian, but I

live in Turkey. The oppression of living in Turkey can affect us.” Her mention of having two identities indicates a separation between her Armenian and Turkish sides. Her linguistic turn from using the first person singular to the first person plural form is significant here, illustrating an inability to separate herself from her collective (Armenian) group. In a different interview, she repeated the Armenian-Turkish condition in a different way “Being Armenian is important because in Turkey, I’m proud of being Armenian. And in Turkey, I should save my character” (Anoush, personal communication, April 13, 2018). This term “being Armenian”, which ties back to the collective identity, set against the backdrop of living in Turkey, will be discussed at length in the next chapter. The next section turns the focus to Armenian language practices and membership to a collective group.

5.2.1.3 CLPs in school theater performances and religious celebrations

In this section, I will touch on two collective school activities in which their collective language practices were demonstrated: in theater performances and for religious celebrations. In both of these conditions, the CLPs were mixed.

One varzharan-specific school event is the coordination of theater performances that relate back to Armenian history and culture. Though they are performed in the Armenian language, they are taught and practiced in a mixed language. All of the participants spoke highly about a close affinity with their theater club. Julia, Artin, and Anoush were, at some point in their high school careers, involved in various theater performances. Julia stated, “In 2015, I participated in a kind of ceremony where Taniel Varujan was commemorated. It had an important role in my life” (personal communication, April 26, 2018). Upon asking details about this, she responded, “It was great fun for me and important for me to read his poems

in front of the public. People cried while we were performing the ceremony. This was incredible” (personal communication, May 18, 2018). Artin was also involved in the same theater; he read two poems and acted. In 2017, he was also the acting school director in a cultural play about *Haytbrotz* (“Armenian schools”). These types of theater performances are a way of affirming collective language practices as Armenian students and members of the Armenian community; however, the fact that only the final production is performed in Armenian, and that a mix of languages is involved leading up to this final process, is important to keep in mind.

The celebration of Christian religious holidays and traditions is another important collective activity that the school promotes, and the participants’ language practices were mixed in this condition as well. In speaking about some specific religious activities, Ms. Serli stated, “The male students come to the church at Thursday on Easter Week and they make their feet washed. It’s a cultural ceremony for the Armenian community” (personal communication, April 20, 2018). In these types of ceremonies, the language practice is mostly Armenian; however, in less formal occasions, such as with Christmas and Easter celebrations, the language practice is mostly mixed. They are also connected less to religion and more to festivities, celebrations, and upholding traditions. Anoush, Julia, and Aren recounted to me the most memorable part of her final year in which they prepared and performed a Christmas show for the whole school. The broad way in which she described these Christmas shows demonstrates that there is not an explicitly religious component to these Christian holidays; still, they serve to bring the school members together under their collective private identity. However, as demonstrated, the ways in which their collective identity is practiced through theater performances and religion celebrations is almost always in a mixed language. Moving away from the

collective space of the school and toward the interpersonal interactions between the members, I will explain the language attitudes and practices in this condition.

5.2.2 Interpersonal language attitudes and practices

I now turn the focus to the participants' interpersonal identities, which is smaller in size and less specific than their collective identities. However, it brings up important topic of identity apart from the influence of the Armenian school. Pushing the original argument one step further, I found that the discourse they used to speak about their identities, in language attitudes, differs from the discourse they used when speaking as they are, in individual language practices. In the collective domain, which capitalized on their language attitudes (CLAs), the participants frequently spoke *about* 'being Armenian'; however, in the interpersonal domain, they associated themselves as classmates and friends at the Armenian school, in which their ILAs were mostly Turkish.³⁶ Their ILPs were Armenian in their literature classes, mixed in official school spaces and with adults within the school, and Turkish in the common areas of the school.

5.2.2.1 ILAs as classmates and friends

In their interpersonal relationships as classmates and friends, the language attitudes were mostly Turkish.³⁷ The context for their interpersonal conversations was not about Armenian-specific topics, but rather for topics related to their school or personal lives. Artin told me, "I hate politics! With Kris, I'm a watch-lover. And

³⁶ The students talked at length about their ILAs and ILPs within the context of their families. However, because discourse about family does not maintain the same type of private space as the Armenian school, these mentions have been negated from the data analysis.

³⁷ The exception to this majority-Turkish ILA was Artin. In describing his "funny" communication with his friends, Artin stated, "I mostly speak Armenian with my friends, and they answer me in Turkish" (personal communication, April 26, 2018). When I asked him about how this felt for him, he stated, "it sometimes can be disturbing, but I'm used to it".

pen-lover. We mostly speak about watches, pens, cars, fashion...” (personal communication, May 18, 2018). Julia stated that she felt closer to Armenian language and culture; still, her Turkish was more fluent, and this was how she communicated with her friends. Anoush stated, “Armenian is so important, but we talk Turkish because we can understand each other well when we are talking Turkish” (personal communication, April 13, 2018). Though the participants expressed their desire to speak more Armenian with each other in the school setting, they did not; the reason for this was that they simply understand each other well (or better than their Armenian) when using Turkish to communicate. While it might be normal to use Armenian words to refer to specific holidays or traditions, it was more common for them to communicate their ideas in Turkish. Alex stated the following: “Most people in Turkey can’t speak Armenian. Of course with Armenians I speak Armenian. Like, we communicate, but I have friends who is *[sic]* not Armenian and I can’t speak Armenian with them. So I speak Turkish” (personal communication, May 14, 2018). In attempting to clarify this statement between this strict line of speaking Armenian with Armenians and communicating with his friends, Alex stated that he speaks Turkish with most of his friends within the Armenian school, thereby contradicting his statement that he presumably speaks only Armenian with Armenians. In affirming these participants’ words with her experiences with many students at the Armenian schools, Ms. Serli stated, “They’re Armenian and they should use Armenian first. But unfortunately, they don’t use it... they live in Turkey. It’s normal to use Turkish” (personal communication, April 20, 2018). This contradiction between the terms “should”, “unfortunately”, and “normal” will be expanded in the following chapter. The critical question of the ‘degree’ of Armenianness that participants consider each other and themselves, based on their

interpersonal language practices, will be addressed in the following chapter.

5.2.2.2 ILPs and code-switching

I did not explicitly observe the interpersonal language practices between the participants; therefore, the data in this section touch on meta-language practices more than direct language practices. Despite these majority-Turkish ILAs (with an emphasis on their attitudes) within the school space, my participant observations revealed that their ILPs (with an emphasis on their practices) were extremely variant between Armenian, Turkish, and mixed languages and dependent on which space(s) of the school they occupied. They primarily used Turkish in common areas with their classmates and friends during the break times. They used Armenian in their Armenian literature classes with the official presence of their Armenian teacher. They used a mix of languages in other school areas, such as in teacher's rooms, when conversing with their teachers, which could also be termed as code-switching.

Apart from the participant observations, during the interviews, the students provided examples of code-switching practices, though not termed in this way, with some of their classmates and teachers. While Aren does not code-switch, and mostly uses Turkish except for in Armenian class, Artin, Julia, Alex, and Anoush have been engaging in code-switching practices with their friends and families for many years, almost to the point at which it is second nature. Anoush's account is a good representation of how their code-switching practices flow naturally: "We speak Turkish... and Armenian. It's complicated. <<laughing>> We talk Turkish, but sometimes it turns to Armenian. It's natural. We can't control it" (personal communication, April 13, 2018). Alex and Julia also expressed a strong positive affect in talking about their code-switching practices, which were also regarded as an

unintentional yet uncontrollable occurrence that was “natural” for them.

My participant observations also detailed a large amount of code-switching between Turkish and Armenian taking place within various spaces of the school, both in symbolic and sociolinguistic ways. From my participant observations at the Armenian school, I could gather a variety of languages on display in various rooms, such as the library and in the common lounge, and on the wall, such as in the form of school placards and student posters. These were not only in Turkish, Armenian, and English but also in French and Spanish. In addition to these spaces where code-switching takes place in symbolic ways, there are pockets within the Armenian school that exemplify this model as well, and they are conducted on interpersonal levels. Ms. Lara, who is both a Spanish language and Armenian literature teacher, expressed her love of teaching multiple languages, and of teaching the similarities they all share in her lessons:

In English and Spanish, or in Armenian also, some words are related. For example, sugar. In Espanol, azúcar. In Armenian, shakar. One word, and three versions of this word in different languages. This is very special for me and for the students also. Sometimes they're looking to me like this... oh! Yes! Shakar, sugar, azúcar ... yes! They discover something new... there is a circulation between the languages.

These ILP code-switching examples may open up the possibility for a different type of social identity negotiation, which I will elaborate on in the following chapter.

5.3 Anecdotal negotiations of identity in public spaces

Although the participants talked at length about their interactions in the public Turkish space, I cannot classify them as ‘significant’ results in the research sense because they extend beyond the private position of the Armenian school. However, I

include a small sample here with the intention of exploring their possibilities in the following chapter.

In the public space, the participants' language attitudes and practices were mostly Turkish; however, they were intentionally Armenian when they sought to keep a part of their identities separate from the 'other' people in their vicinity. As gathered from the participants' anecdotes about where they live and hang out, there are neighborhoods in Istanbul that are colored as 'more' or 'less' Armenian, as more or less private/public, than the others,³⁸ which affects the ways in which they speak in Armenian, Turkish, or a mix of both languages. The participants who lived in more Armenian-populated neighborhood of Kurtuluş³⁹ said that they could more openly speak Armenian in public. Alex (personal communication, April 13, 2018) said, "in Kurtuluş, probably most people know I'm speaking Armenian and they don't look. But in Pendik or Maltepe, where I live now, they look." Julia stated that she did not use the Armenian language in Feriköy, but in neighboring Kurtuluş, she used it with freely, without fear. In praxis, however, the collective identity has vulnerabilities that may break down in the interpersonal context in the public setting, which some of the participants indicated in their interactions outside of the Armenian community.

The participants also noted interpersonal interactions in which they exclusively used Armenian or Turkish. In the first condition, they used Armenian as a strategy to gossip about 'others' in public. Alex, Anoush, Julia, and Artin expressed their engagement in gossiping about strangers, presumably those who do not understand Armenian on buses. In the first instance, in discussing specific

³⁸ The neighborhoods of Kurtuluş, Samatya, Yeşilköy, and Bakırköy were emphasized as 'more Armenian' in comparison to other neighborhoods in Istanbul.

³⁹ Around the Kurtuluş neighborhood there are various Armenian theater troupes, the Hrant Dink Foundation, the Agos offices, and the Ara Güler Museum.

instances in which she only speaks Armenian in public, Julia stated, “Especially on buses or in public, I speak Armenian... so other people cannot understand what I say. This makes me feel better.” (personal communication, April 26, 2018). Though Artin was the most adamant about speaking Armenian with his friends in public, he stated that when he is in an isolated situation with someone he does not know, he only uses Turkish. He said, “Sometimes when I’m taking a taxi from [school] to home, they ask me where are you from? What school are you educated in? I say I’m from Saint Benoit”.⁴⁰ These ILPs public space, framed under the discourse of exclusion, will be further explored in the following chapter.

5.4 Other identity negotiations

The participants shared a number of self-deemed identities that do not fit into the classifications I have previously mentioned under the socio-spatial term. One way of negotiating their identities, in more of a linguistic sense, was through their use of the conditional grammar tense; this shows that many aspects of their interpersonal identities could be negotiated in the hypothetical future. Alex stated, “When I go to university, I will have new goals. Maybe I have different hobbies. Maybe different roles” (personal communication, May 14, 2018). As social identities shift with time and space, there were many unknowns in terms of how the students would navigate their social identities outside of the Armenian school setting; however, the prospects of these identity shifts were positive.

Julia, Aren, and Anoush used the “human” identity in describing themselves. The teachers at the school, too, expressed the school’s broad motive as attempting to teach their students how to be “human first, Armenian second” (Ms. Lara, personal

⁴⁰ Saint Benoit High School is a private French school located across the street from Getronagan High School.

communication, April 15, 2018), which emphasizes their desire to extend their connections as far out to the rest of the world. In this idealistic equality, in this endless array of interactions between strangers, this concept of “human first” begins to blur the lines between private and public, Armenian and Turkish, albeit in an abstract way. This ‘human’ trope will be discussed in the following chapter. These ‘other identity’ subthemes demonstrate the ways in which the participants are beginning to question the act of distinguishing themselves apart from their group identity, which gives them space to question their positions beyond the varzharan. In the following chapter, I will raise the most important discussion points related to these results.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

There are numerous socio-spatial factors that influence the ways in which Armenian youth negotiate their social identities; language offers only one means of exploring some of the ways this negotiation is conducted. In the context of this study, the participants articulated that their Armenian language and religion are important markers for their collective identities. These articulations were related to their subjective positioning of the Armenian school in its private space. However, the participants' various language attitudes and practices, which are closely intertwined with the various social roles they hold within the Armenian private space, are mixed. This chapter intends to complicate these relations between the school and student, utilizing language, social identity, and spatial influence as some of the factors involved in this complex inductive process.

Basing this discussion on Bourdieu's (1986) theory of habitus and sociological and sociolinguistic theories on social identity, I will analyze how the students' negotiation of identities within the Armenian school—as members of a collective group and as individuals engaging in interpersonal relationships—are complicated processes. The habitus that the students occupy is not the physical space of the Armenian school, but a symbolic space that has been imprinted onto them in official and unofficial ways. Within this symbolic space, the (in)tangible tokens of 'success', which Bourdieu (1987) regards are “symbolic capital” or “profit”, are determined by the “symbolic power” of the school, which influence a members' understanding of identity in terms of capital gain or social mobility.

However, in differing socio-spatial pockets within the habitus, which are multiple, the currency that make up the “symbolic capital” are prone to shifts. For example, the symbolic capital in the participation of a theater performance or religious ceremony might give an individual a form of capital as a member of the Armenian community, whereas the symbolic capital for high grades on a national exam might give the same individual another form of capital as a student and classmate. The broad question of how these variant socio-spatial positions are applied will be analyzed in this chapter. Following the sequence of the research questions with my preliminary analyses, and situated under various sub-domains of the habitus framework, I will discuss the position of the Armenian school as a space for socialization, as well as the students’ negotiations of social identities as dependent on group affiliation, interpersonal interaction, and the variant language attitudes and practices in each condition.

6.1 The community-centered habitus of Armenian schools

Starting from the top-down social sphere, the Turkish state holds mechanisms of power over its people, which rely on generalized categories such as “public Turkish” space and “private Armenian” space to classify themselves into groups. The Turkish state also holds mechanisms of power over its institutions. Armenian schools are institutions that exist within the meta-field of the State in their ‘official’ semi-private, semi-public positions. At this point, Holland et al.’s (1998) “figured worlds” is important to situate in the social aspect of these spaces. In the figured world of the Turkish state, and in the figured world of the Bolsahayutiun, Armenians are semi-citizens who do not hold the same socio-spatial positions as the majority of the population. As a mechanism of self-protection from this difference, Armenian

schools capitalize on the ‘private’ aspect of their positions and the term “community school”, holding sub-domains of power over its members. In the figured world of the Armenian school, certain acts, such as participation in theater performances and religious ceremonies, garners symbolic capital and social significance. Certain students, as representatives of the Armenian community, are recognized (over others). Particular outcomes, such as upholding Armenianness through language, are valued. As the student participants were all on the “good student” spectrum of the figured world, their understanding of social identity was broadly based in a biased figured world with an emphasis on certain activities, practices, and values.

Taking this “figured world” discourse one step further, following in line with its official term by the Turkish-Armenian patriarchate as a “cemaat okul”, or “community school”, “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity or genuineness, but in the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). Through a “style” of imagination that highlights high emotional regard, the Armenian schools use mechanisms of socialization that contribute what I call the ‘community-centered habitus’ of these people. They uphold a historically imagined Armenian ‘national ethos’. In turn, Armenian students have taken on socially constructed identities that have become naturalized to fit into the position of the Armenian schools. These members are conditioned into a habitus that colors the way in which they perceive themselves, their interpersonal relationships, and the world around them from a collective group lens.

As a ‘safe space’ and ‘second home’, Getronagan High School is affectionately regarded by its members as a private, community-centered space. As the results reveal, the feelings the participants took from their space reflected safety, comfort, and peace, with the underlying factor of ‘being Armenian’ contributing to

these feelings.⁴¹ The sense of safety and comfort can only be felt because the school has created boundaries between its private and public spheres. These boundaries have even been implicitly created within the school, but internalized by its members, as shown in some of the participants' distinctions between their teachers and "Muslim teachers". The mechanisms of symbolic power that the Armenian school upholds to sustain this community-centered habitus is what will be critically analyzed in this section in order to answer the first research question: How does the position of the Armenian school influence the social identities of its students?

6.1.1 Socialized attitudes about language and religion

Under this community-centered habitus, the students' socio-spatial positions are mostly private and collective. The prerequisites for assuming full membership in the private habitus of the Armenian school are to uphold their Armenian language and to attend church, which are socialized conditions that are, as Bourdieu would state, "common sense" for the students at the Armenian schools. Their Armenian lessons and church attendance serve as figurative extensions of the school space in which their Armenianness can be asserted in more active ways; these give the students more symbolic capital to strengthen their membership in the Armenian community.

Speaking the Armenian language was the most significant marker for upholding their collective private identities. Despite the fact that four out of five of them spoke more Turkish than Armenian, they all stated that they felt like they should uphold their Armenian language more, which I restate as a linguistic phrase used to illustrate a feeling or obligation toward something. I posit that this has to do

⁴¹ Bourdieu often used sports metaphors when talking about his habitus concept, sometimes referring to it as a 'feel for the game'. This relates to the idea that individuals have an embodied 'feelings' for the social situations they negotiate themselves within.

with the participants' learned discourse about sustaining the Armenian community in Istanbul, which hinges on another discourse of not losing the language for cultural preservation. Both of these conditions are socialization strategies that the school has embedded onto its students. The ways in which most of the participants posited that their Western Armenian language was vital for "not losing" their culture did not reflect a personal connection with their language, but rather a collective identity affiliation with a communal ideal. Since Armenian students have been socialized toward this collective identity, perhaps they feel the responsibility to learn, practice, and preserve it, even if it has to be done exclusively in the school setting. This responsibility to preserve their language is felt strongly within the school; outside of it, it is not acted upon. This inconsistency brings up questions of why they need to preserve their language, and from whom they need to protect their culture.

Like with language, the influence of the church was embedded onto the students' collective private identities through symbolic socialization. The spatial positioning and architectural layout of the Armenian school, with Christian motifs of the neighboring church visible from almost every classroom, carries symbolic meaning of collective privacy that the students have interpreted in particular ways. The architectural design of this school, with the dome of the Armenian church and its golden cross perched on top, serves a symbolic purpose: to remind the students that they are Christian. Artin's use of the phrase "automatically Christian" implies that the Armenian and Christian identities are unquestioned, taken for granted, and directly connected.⁴² As indicated by Alex's and Julia's anecdotes about attending church despite their lack of affiliation with their Christian religion, if students do not

⁴² During specific lessons at the Armenian school I teach at, the students respond to the sound of the neighboring church bell with a symbolic crossing of their hands across their chest, even in the middle of interacting with their classmates or teacher, reading classroom materials, or taking an exam.

identify with the specific Christian religion, they are still partial participants because they are Armenian; there is little ‘space’, in the literal and figurative sense, to exclude themselves from this identity, at least as long as they are participating members of the Armenian school.

Upholding the language and attending church are the main forms of symbolic capital that Armenian students can earn within the private habitus. Other means of gaining symbolic capital, and in more of a tangible sense, are participating in theater performances or religious ceremonies that affirm that place in the Armenian community. Students do not question the habitus because it feels like a safe space and second home for them. This sense of intimacy affirms a sense of security, community, and family. These affective mechanisms make the habitus feel more like a reality than a socially constructed, subjective existence. In this intimate yet subjective reality, there are a number of unspoken rules to keep the ‘safety’ of the space undisturbed. In the section to follow, I will argue why this community-centered habitus is so strictly enforced at the Armenian schools under the concept of self-protection through isolation.

6.1.2 The habitus of self-protection

The Armenian school is a place where its members ‘feel’ a sense of social belonging to a group of people with the same background. The school utilizes official and unofficial measures to guard its members from outside threats. I posit that this is a specific habitus of self-protection.

One official means of (self-)protecting its members from the outside is through its “hidden” teachings of Armenian history through literature classes. It is solely in these classes when the Armenian language is exclusively used. From this, it

is obvious that these classes hold a significant place for the Armenian school's ideal of communal privacy. These unofficial teachings about Armenian intellectuals, revolutions, and significant periods in Ottoman-Armenian history are hidden from the public sphere for a number of reasons. First, there are logistical difficulties of obtaining permission from the Turkish MNE for Armenian-related curricula, speeches, and events. Tension with the MNE and the risk of censorship leads Armenian literature teachers to create a 'special' means of teaching identity, which the students also internalize as "hidden" but have a high regard for. These classes are considered in contrast against their Turkish history class. The participants did not have a high regard for their Turkish history lessons, and they made the supposition that the information from these classes were "misinformed".

Bringing these two types of classes together, the question that inevitably arises is if the Armenian literature classes are also passing along 'misinformed' knowledge. Given their high regard for these classes, I believe that the students would not question that the information from these classes is 'true'. I argue that these classes shelter the students under a habitus of self-protection, but one that keeps them closed from the public Turkish society, which they color with negative emotions. Furthermore, this intentional separation from the 'outside' was seen in the way the students resisted their Turkish history classes. This relates to Zhiyong's (2007) study on how Tibetan youth resisted the state-imposed curriculum through their "hidden" ethnic identity curricula. However, in Zhiyong's research, the students were the initiators in pushing the hidden curriculum; the crucial difference is that the Armenian schools, not the students, are the initiators of such a hidden curriculum, which may lead to a type of conditioned socialization the students (un)knowingly submit to.

The (in)direct consequences of this habitus can be translated beyond their Armenian literature classes, and in more unofficial ways, when it comes to their varied ways of explicitly showing or hiding their Armenianness in public. The possibilities of being discriminated against, and even beaten up, in the public sphere, have made them fearful against the outsider, which add to their actions of self-stereotyping in positive bias of the ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). When shielded in a habitus self-protection, they are relegated closer to the private sphere, and further away from the public sphere. The socialization strategies used to garner a sense of safety for, and a sense of responsibility to, the schools, are not modern-day inventions for self-protection against the outsider. They have been enforced in Armenian schools since the Ottoman times, with the same mechanisms of language and religious difference to keep them excluded. These official and unofficial mechanisms taught by the school are significant, yet slanted, ways of shaping the social identities of its students. This act of ‘identity-influencing’ through ‘identity-fixing’ has an impact on the ways Armenian youth develop their social identities. Once students understand what is appropriate under various systems of socialization, they begin to negotiate their ‘ideal’ identities in turn.

As of now, I have discussed the discursive strategies the school uses to hold symbolic power over its students; however, I have not yet probed into the language mechanisms of the actual students. However, these ‘ideal’ identities are not the ones assumed by the students in reality, in a space where they take on multiple socio-spatial roles. When moving into the multiplicities of their habitus, and bringing in their language attitudes and practices into the mix, there are a number of contradictions that occur in their social identities, which make their negotiation process even more complicated; in some ways, it is even paradoxical.

6.2 The paradoxical social identities of Armenian students

The private habitus of the Armenian school and its strategies caused the students' social identity negotiations to take on conditioned characteristics. However, it is important to regard Armenian students as individual actors within their habitus. In their individual associations, they negotiated their identities differently based on their socio-spatial positions. Their (un)conscious decisions to utilize their Armenian, Turkish, or a mix of languages depended on which identity they felt more 'fitting' for their habitus, which takes on multiple dimensions when broken into parts. In observing these multiplicities in habitus, and using the framework of social identities as multiple, moving, and constantly in flux, there were discrepancies between their collective/interpersonal identities and language attitudes/practices. The section intends to probe deeper into the meaning of these discrepancies by answering the second research question: How do these students negotiate their social identities from their Armenian language attitudes and practices from the position of the Armenian school?

6.2.1 The paradoxical identity of "being Armenian but living in Turkey"

The two most prominent socio-spatial identifications I will highlight in this chapter are "being Armenian" and "living in Turkey". "Being Armenian" is a category that encapsulates their roles as members of the Armenian community and students at an Armenian school; "living in Turkey" is a category that encapsulates their roles as students in Turkey, classmates, and friends. According to the participant interviews, as well as in many conversations I've had with colleagues and students apart from these, the (dis-)connecting word "but" is used to distinguish "being Armenian" and

“living in Turkey” in separate symbolic spheres. The ways in which they spoke about their identities as members of a collective group differed from the ways they spoke with each other, in interpersonal settings. From the position of the Armenian school as a private space, these variant social identities were not considered as differences to be embraced. Instead, they were regarded as contradictory, almost clashing with each other.

In her description of the “minorities assimilability paradox”, Ekmekçioğlu (2014) states that the Armenian community felt a ‘misplacedness’ in wrestling with a “simultaneous estrangement and invitation to belong” (p. 659). I assert that a similar paradox exists within the Armenian students in the ways they described their identity negotiations as “being Armenian but living in Turkey”. The use of the subtractive “but” conjunction to identify oneself subjectively situates the Armenian identity on a different level than the Turkish identity. The adult participants echoed a similar conflicted sentiment as well, especially in using terms that contradicted each other in the same sentence. I repeat Ms. Serli’s words here: “They’re Armenian and they should use Armenian first. *But unfortunately*, they don’t use it... they live in Turkey. It’s normal to use Turkish” (emphasis added). The majority of the participants made statements that implied that their Armenian and Turkish identities, in the sense of ‘being’, could not be merged. However, when it came to speaking Armenian or Turkish in their day-to-day interactions, it felt “normal” to use Turkish, with an emphasis on ‘feeling’. The questions that arise from this are the following: if it is normal to use Turkish, then why is it unfortunate? If these students live in Turkey, then why should they use Armenian first? These seemingly paradoxical conditions will be explored in the sections to follow.

6.2.1.1 “Being Armenian”

The phrase “I am Armenian” is tied to the condition of ‘being’ Armenian; for the participants, this ‘being Armenian’ identity was unquestionably so. This condition is described by Bakalian (1993) as an ascribed identity: “the identity of Armenians who lived in the Ottoman Empire, as those of the Middle East today, was ascribed by the social and political system they were born into” (p. 10). As detailed in the previous section, the Armenian school habitus can take on, in symbolic ways, a type of “social and political system” that these students have been born into as well, given that most of them started at the Armenian schools since they were three years old. The participants frequently used the terms “save”, “protect”, “duty”, and “responsibility” to reiterate their intention to attend their schools, speak the language, and not lose their culture. Referring back to Ekmekçioğlu’s (2014) perspective on the paradoxical condition in their “invitation to belong”, I argue that the students’ belonging was assigned by actors beyond their control, such as their ethnic background and their family’s decision to send them to these schools. This family decision was further determined by the expectations set in their habitus, which, for many, mainly comprises of the Armenian community. This ‘choice’ presents itself as a paradox in that they had never had the opportunity to not attend an Armenian school. Furthermore, there is an expectation that they will continue to attend the Armenian school by being a member of the community. It is within the confines of the Armenian school as a ‘second home’ where upright Armenians are raised, develop themselves, and leave temporarily, with the motivation to contribute back to their community, presumably by using the same symbolic capital of language and religion that continues to dominate the private habitus of the Armenian community.

6.2.1.2 “But living in Turkey”

Unlike the phrase “I am Armenian”, which is positive in terms of identification, the phrase “but [I] live in Turkey” brought about a negative identification. The participants used words such as “lose” and “disappear” to indicate some of the reasons why they considered it important to hold onto their language and culture. However, when situated apart from the gaze of the Armenian school, such as when students in Turkey, classmates, and friends, they communicated in Turkish, and “naturally” so. Instead of embracing these inconsistencies by positing that these mixed conditions could create a hybrid-type of identity, the participants seemed to resist this notion, which signals the power of symbolic capital and habitus to concentrate their identities on a specific Armenian affiliation, which the school has designated for them. The fact that the participants felt the need (again, emphasizing the affective mechanism) to justify speaking Turkish, paired with feelings of guilt for not speaking more Armenian, indicates a pressure to memorize, recite, and repeat a specific Armenian identity discourse that goes against how they function in their daily lives.

However, their daily lives involve more than ‘being Armenian’, and which encompass their larger habitus of living in Turkey. This reaffirms Seloni and Sarfati’s (2012) study on younger generations of Sephardic Jews in Istanbul whose strategies for being minority-language speakers in Turkey resulted in their code-switching strategies. However, what was not explored in this study is if there was pressure to resist ‘cultural assimilation’. Armenian youth feel resistant to speaking Turkish because they equate it with a loss of their Armenianness. However, I posit this pressure is an imagined push-and-pull between private and public spaces; the Armenian school’s pull away from the public Turkish society is met with the push

toward the private Armenian society. As long as this dynamic exists, it remains difficult to rid oneself of the ‘othering’ private/public, inside/outside discourse mechanisms of isolation and exclusion.

6.2.2 Mixed language and the possibility for symbolic identities

At this point, it is apparent that the Armenian school continues to prove itself as a powerful space where Armenian students navigate their social identities, with language being a main way to sustain their identities. However, the difficult conditions they found themselves in when attempting to assert a singularly Armenian identity beg for an opening of another option of identification. With the exception of in their Armenian classroom practices, they did not contain their Armenian identities into a single category; rather, other socio-spatial positionings involved other aspects of their lives such as being students, friends, and teenagers in Turkey. As members of the collective ingroup, the participants reiterated the discourse of responsibility in order to preserve their culture; in interpersonal interactions, this sense of responsibility was not felt. Despite the majority of the participants’ preference to use Armenian first and foremost in their daily lives, all of them expressed that they used the Turkish language more in their home settings and with their friends, and that it was more “natural” for them to do so. Though they reiterate a discourse of language preservation, their mixed language practices assert for something more.

The participants’ most-common language attitude and practice was mixed between Armenian and Turkish. In this sense, what is the most “natural” for them does not so easily fit into a single Armenian or Turkish sphere, nor does it inhabit a specific identity. Though the participants in this study made claims about “being Armenian”, they made more claims about feeling certain emotions in connection

with their identities. Like with the case of the Sephardic Jewish youth, the participants noted that Western Armenian is increasingly used only in formal settings, such as in Armenian classes, or with certain Armenian superiors in the school, church, or family. Like with the participants in Bakalian's (1993) study, the participants used exclusively Armenian for family events, religious celebrations, and in specific cultural events at the Armenian school. Furthermore, in the theater performances and religious ceremonies, the participants implied that they participated in these activities more for celebration than for personal commitment.

From their mixed language practices, it is possible that these participants identified more with a symbolic Armenianness (Bakalian, 1993). However, this identification may be affiliated with cultural assimilation to the Turkish sphere, which is also met with feelings of discomfort. The participants' fear for losing their language, which was presumably the most significant threat of cultural assimilation, was combated with their intention to use Armenian; in practice, however, this intention was not fulfilled. But, instead of treating their mixed languages as a "normal" phenomenon, it was regarded in an "unfortunate" light by the participants. I refer back to Bakalian (1993) and her categorization of voluntary vs. ascribed identities. Though the boundaries for Armenians with symbolic identities are "self-imposed, shallow, and mutable", with less regard for the us-versus-them trope, the boundaries for Armenians with ascribed identities are more rigid (Bakalian, 1993). Terms used by the participants like "preservation" and "survival" fall back on the discourse of an Armenian culture that is not expected to last in the wider public sphere; supposedly, assimilation to Turkish culture is to blame for this. The sense of responsibility to attend an Armenian school, as well as the notion of being a member of Bolsahayutiun, is a symbolic mechanism that generates symbolic capital, but only

within the realm of the private Armenian sphere. From this, it is essential to complicate the assumption that adopting a symbolic identity means losing symbolic capital within the habitus of the private Armenian space.

Students who oblige by these socialized standards are able to gain symbolic capital. In an idealistic world, this is how power operates, without any paradox. However, in the case of these students, who are navigating multiple habituses and multiple social identities, especially the seemingly contradictory one of being Armenian and living in Turkey, the symbolic power begins to show gaps in its structure. These gaps are best demonstrated through the focal point of language and its relation to belonging, which I will elaborate on in the section to follow. If students are able to break out of the symbolic mechanisms of the school, and perhaps adopt more ‘symbolic identities’ for themselves, they might be able to gain a more complete sense of belonging for themselves, and a better sense of representation for their community.

6.2.3 On representation and belonging

The feelings of safety and comfort that the Armenian schools afforded for its members bring about a positive sense of belonging, which is perhaps the reason why they hold so tightly onto the school space as a determiner for their social identities. The participants’ positive bias in favor of their Armenian ingroup promotes their status as a ‘good representative’. This symbolic status broadly leads to their strong sense of belonging to their Armenian ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Perhaps this socialization mechanism is perceived as a win-win mechanism in order to preserve the position of the school as well as to make Armenian youth to feel like they ‘belong’. These socialization mechanisms, and the struggles for symbolic power

within the school, make up “the very representation of the [students’] social world” (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 723). In pursuit of the best representation, students negotiate their categorizations of themselves and others, as well as the right to claim membership to different social categories, all of which are based on the weight of symbolic capital these categories carry for them. This symbolic capital, and the value of certain representations, is co-constructed by all members of the school, which have an implicitly agreed upon understanding of belonging based on definitions of otherness and difference.

Though this sense of belonging is extremely important to cater to for individuals in a group that has historically felt like they were caught ‘in-between’ Turkish and Armenian spaces, there is a lack of representation, especially in terms of their mixed language attitudes and practices. Furthermore, there was an inconsistency between the students’ roles as representatives of their school and the school’s responsibility to represent its students. Outside of the constructed habitus, when Armenian youth are given the ‘choice’ to speak however they wish, without the surveillance of the Armenian school, their language practices are mixed, and they use both Turkish and Armenian in communication, even within the private school space. Perhaps this mix of languages is more representative of who they are as individuals, not who they are as representatives of the Armenian community or school. However, the Armenian school remains rigid in its need for its ‘good representatives’ to adhere to an Armenian community-centered habitus and discourse. From this inconsistency, I posit that the school’s socialization mechanisms should be reimagined to better cater to its contemporary students’ needs.

6.3 Social identity in interaction

After analyzing the Armenian school's influence on its students' social identities, I now seek to understand how these identities might be applied in a wider social context. It is important to contextualize social identity beyond binary terms such as private/public, collective/interpersonal, and language attitudes/practices. Merging sociological and sociolinguistic theories together, I would like to investigate how social identity can be translated into "identity in interaction" (Lauring, 2008), with the knowledge that identities are contextual and situated, as well as historically and politically constituted (Taussig, 1993). Assuming the anthropological perspective that Armenian students' views from the varzharan are "contextual and situated", overlapping, and in flux, I argue that their social identities are being constructed, and should be understood, as a process of interaction (Lauring, 2008, p. 347). In seeking to present some possibilities of how these students' identities might be negotiated beyond the varzharan, the last research question that I intent to answer is the following: How might Armenian students' socio-spatial position influence their identity politics of membership in the wider society?

6.3.1 Multi-identities through code-switching

Beyond the private/public discourse that the Armenian school is framed under, in the participants' articulated negotiations of their self-deemed identities, they did not regard themselves, nor each other, as only Armenian. As displayed in Table 2, there were many indications of the participants adhering to their mixed language identifications. My observations of the participants' mixed language practices, as well as their own articulations of their mixed languages, revealed that this condition

was more ‘natural’ for them in terms of communication than when they intended to use singularly in Turkish or Armenian.

The gaps between their collective and interpersonal identities, as well as the inconsistencies in their language attitudes and practices, reveal complicated dissatisfactions with, and even paradoxical considerations of, being consolidated to a single private space. The “mixed” languages that Armenian students use in certain socio-spatial contexts might help alleviate these paradoxes. As shown in studies on Chinese-British multilingual youth (Wei, 2010), the participants found a creative means of asserting their own identities, which they primarily did through code-switching practices amongst each other. For the present population, instead of leaning too strongly against the preservation of Armenian, which, admittedly, comes with a large sum of symbolic capital, they might be bold enough to capitalize on their multilingual potentialities. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) state, “identities are relationally constructed through several, often overlapping, aspects of the relationship between self and other, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/delegitimacy” (p. 598). This interaction can be understood in the overlapping aspects of their relations between themselves and ‘others’, which are already evident in their languages and identity affiliations. Therefore, I posit that perhaps Armenian youth are searching for an identification that characterizes a blending of their socio-spatial positions in the context of their wider community.

In this search, and as reaffirmed by scholars and linguists (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2004, Wei & Moyer, 2008, Canagarajah, 2017), perhaps the prefix “multi” could be imagined in terms of how they could utilize their social identities in their interactions with ‘others’. Canagarajah’s (2017) work on moving beyond

structuralist notions of language, and bringing in the spatial dimension of communication in specific places, also highlights identity in interaction: “translingualism looks at verbal resources as interacting synergistically to generate new grammars and meanings, beyond their separate structures” (p. 1). As exemplified with the code-switching practices of the Armenian students, their “synergistic” interactions did create grammars and meanings that did not fit into a single sociolinguistic structure. Furthermore, these interactions may form the foundation for a “new” means of social identification. In these interactions with ‘others’, they can embrace their roles as a combination of Armenian students living in Turkey, classmates and friends, and members of the Armenian community and wider Turkish society, without feeling the need to separate these identities into categories. After all, their mixed language communications were regarded as “natural” and “uncontrollable”, which signifies that the participants regarded these processes as normal, at least in the comfort of their private spaces.

When extended beyond the private space, however, this interaction requires a willingness and reciprocity on both sides of the private/public spectrum, which is much easier in ideology than in practice, and is regarded as “complicated”. Though their mixed languages help to bolster their multiple identities, at this point, this hope might not yet extend beyond theoretical imaginings. Therefore, at this point, although Armenian youth do inhabit multiple identities, these multiplicities are still relegated within their private Armenian sphere. Therefore, as of now, these code-switching practices remain relegated to the private Armenian space. From these points, a subsequent question that arises is this: How might these code-switching practices be applied in the public space?

6.3.2 Possibilities in the public space

The results revealed that the participants reiterated a symbolic, and therefore social, separation between private Armenian and public Turkish spaces. As indicated in Chapter Three, they affirm sociological theories on how people create symbolic boundaries between imagined private and public spaces in order to maintain ingroup and outgroup boundaries (Epstein, 1992, Lamont & Molnár, 2002). The participants' exclusionary discourse in separating themselves from various mechanisms of the public space, such as the school system and people in public, reaffirmed these symbolic boundaries. Though the details of the public space were left vague, a number of important patterns warrant discussion. Outside of the private space, in the scope of the public space, Armenian youth may have difficulties forming interpersonal connections that do not hinge on their 'difference' as Armenians. They may be (self-)regarded as Armenian and encounter negative discrimination in the public space. This may result in what some of the participants expressed as a "fear". This fear may have led them to self-perpetuate an othering discourse, and to draw thicker lines on the symbolic boundaries between their private and public spheres. This fear has them relying on socialization processes of the school to 'protect' them. However, this fear may or may not be warranted.

The public space is a place where 'collective history' takes precedence, and where Armenian students' habitus may be negatively shaped by unresolved Armenian-Turkish catastrophes of violence, which have left scars that are not properly healed for the people, institutions, and Turkish-Armenian community. However, Suciyan (2016) states that Armenians abided by a denialist discourse of their own histories, which have been shown in their invisibility and lack of interaction in the public space. They have propagated this discourse in the form of

creating boundaries between their private Armenian space and the public Turkish space, both in the past and in the present day. However, their mixed language practices might signal instances of opposition against this separatist mentality, which the participants negatively regarded as cultural assimilation. The critical question that arises is if there is a tangible means of blending these spaces together in a productive way that does not ‘assimilate’ the Armenians in the ways the participants feared. In the following section, I will explain how the Armenian school may serve as a space that offers some creative strategies for this socio-spatial blending. I pose the final critical question here: is the Armenian school a productive place that equips its members with tools for negotiating their social identities in the public space?

6.3.3 The Armenian school as a possible interspace

The final section of this chapter brings the Armenian school back into the focus, attempting to articulate possibilities for how the Armenian school might serve as an interspace to help its members negotiate their social identities. Echoing Wei’s (2010) findings on Chinese-British youth, their Chinese complementary schools were regarded as a ‘safe space’ and a positive contributor in the development of their multilingual social identities; however, they were also resisted in their One Language at a Time policies, which seemed to come off as a lack of interaction with the wider social sphere. In a similar light, though Armenian schools are considered as ‘safe spaces’, their current mechanisms for socialization, especially undertaken through language, do not match up with the mixed language attitudes and practices of the students. The exclusively ‘private’ space of the Armenian school might be standing on shaky ground when considering how social identity might be cultivated in interaction, which involves a blend of language attitudes and practices.

There are sites within the Armenian school that hold potential for students to use their mixed language in productive ways. Though the students tended to use Turkish when communicating with each other, when speaking with their teachers, they were able to utilize their multilingual abilities. From this, I argue that the school, and particularly the teachers within the school, may play an important role in encouraging these multiple identifications that do not lead to cultural assimilation. There is potential for Armenian schools to promote more productive interactions when it comes to negotiations of social identities and all of its sub-domains. Pushing this one step further, I posit that Armenian schools can be more multi-sited in this regard, taking advantage of their positions as semi-private and semi-public institutions. In the school's multi-sited position, the students might dwell in a habitus that encourages their collective and interpersonal identities, not only within the Armenian community but also in their interactions outside of the school.

Within the school setting, classrooms are target sites for symbolic struggles; in these sites, "what is at stake is the very representation... of the social world" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 723). The social world co-created by teachers and students are sites for symbolic struggles, and for power and capital to be (re-)imagined in creative ways. Given this new framework of social identity in interaction, perhaps teachers can work on readapting their curricula to position students as critical agents in their class and school space, not as passive recipients of 'knowledge'. This agency would entail in students a self-awareness in their struggles to adapt their positions in their social spaces, and to represent themselves accordingly in their wider social worlds (Albright & Luke, 2008). If students are given the opportunity to make meaning from their experiences, perhaps they can more critically think about their identification and categorization choices, both within and beyond their school

settings. The most critical, yet difficult, aspect of this shift in position is that it requires a shift in discourse, an opening up of the private toward the public, and a habitus of ‘safe space’ that does not hinge on a habitus of self-protection.

Although this possibility is simple in ideology, it is difficult in practice. Given the precarious membership between private and public that Armenian schools precariously hold, and the fact that they have sided with the former for measures of self-protection, it is not easy for them to assume ‘multiple’ memberships. They continue to hold onto their minority status, still defined by religion and language. However, the ‘other’ identities the participants briefly mentioned, such as the conditional identities and the human identities, seem to create a wedge within this discourse of insider and outsider, as well as potential for how identities can be (re)imagined in the near future. Though the ‘human first’ idea is common amongst youngers today, such a trope indexes the participants’ awareness of living in a social world that transcends national and ethnic boundaries. It nourishes their curiosity to begin to explore the diversity of the world. This diversity, which calls for a mix of language and culture, is something that has already begun to be cultivated in their language attitudes and practices. In order for this cultivation to continue, the ‘safe space’ of the school is needed for the students, as they need to feel a strong sense of belonging to a specific place—even if in a symbolic habitus—in order to gain self-confidence for interacting in different spaces.

As a school is an important institution to teach and engage students in concepts such as membership in a civic society, the position of a school and its ideologies may lead to a lasting impact for the students and for the people they interact with in the wider social sphere. Going one step further from the results of the Armenian school as a private space, and in referring back to the concept of the

Armenian school as a semi-private, semi-public space, I posit that the Armenian school has potential for creating a socio-spatial habitus, which assumes more of an interspace, that is more sustainable for its members. This interspace concept starts with the ‘safe space’ of the school, and with Armenian higher-ups whom I deem as mentors, to motivate and support students, to encourage their Armenianness without overly emphasizing a fixed or conditioned identity through its socialization strategies. I believe that it is in these moments of interpersonal interaction within the collective space, with members and non-members alike, where social shifts become an imagined possibility, and where habitus, in its multiplicities, can serve as a ‘better fit’ for those that inhabit them.

Armenian schools in Istanbul occupy sixteen physical spaces, but their symbolic, socio-spatial topography is spread across both private Armenian and public Turkish spaces, which its members embody through their own renderings of these spaces. In a phenomenological sense, Armenian youth occupy one physical body, but their socio-spatial interactions with the school, neighborhood, country, and world are constantly changing; that is, their identities shift in accordance with conditions outside of their Armenian school habitus. Therefore, the multiple habitus they embody extend beyond those of the varzharan. If their school habitus can align itself with the multi-faceted ones of the participants, a new ‘space’ for the topics of social identity to be considered in a multi-faceted scope might be forged in productive ways.

CHAPTER 7

BEYOND BORDERS⁴³

One objective and ambition is for a new generation of scholars, thinkers, social activists, and journalists to stop thinking of borders in fetishized terms... especially in the age of globalization, the internet, and cyberspace. There is an infinite number of cosmopolitan worldliness commonalities connecting people together.

—Hamid Dabashi

This thesis has been an ethnographic study of how Armenian youth in Istanbul negotiate their social identities through Armenian schools. I have investigated how Armenian schools hold a strategic semi-private, semi-public position, which influences the ways its students navigate their collective and interpersonal identities. The participants' identities continue to rely on boundary-specific discourse to differentiate inside(r) and outside(r). Dabashi's gesture at the "new" generations of people as catalysts for change, for bridging people and their commonalities, and to stop thinking about borders between communities as markers of identity, is the message with which I conclude this thesis.

7.1 Chapter summaries

Chapter One introduced the reader to the Armenian schools and the students who attend them as partial members of society due to imagined boundaries between their private and public spheres. It presented the dialectical interplay of Western Armenian language, identity, and social membership in the process of negotiating one's society identity as an Armenian youth. I posed three research questions related

⁴³ This title is adapted from the Hrant Dink Foundation "Beyond Borders Turkey-Armenia" program, which promotes civil service projects between Turkey and Armenia. Through this scholarship, in the summer of 2018, I worked as a summer program counselor in Dilijan, Armenia, and conducted creative workshops for Armenian youth from different regional and national backgrounds.

to the position of the Armenian school, the negotiation of social identities through language practices, and the identity politics of membership for Armenian youth in contemporary Turkey.

Chapter Two provided a historical context into Armenians in Turkey and their educational institutions from the late Ottoman times to the present day. It classified the Armenian community under the terms “millet”, “minority”, “member”, and the Armenian school as “mediator”, discussing the ways in which various legal and political measures set by the Ottoman Empire and Turkish state have led to these (self-)categorizations. The mechanisms of linguistic and religious divisions between the Armenian and Turkish spheres were used as tools to (self-)segregate these two groups throughout the course of history. The history and position of the Armenian schools were also discussed, focusing on the how Armenian schools attempt to navigate their position under the public Turkish MNE regulations and the private Armenian community ideals, and the precarious positions of socially constructed space they occupy.

Chapter Three provided a literature review and an overview of critical theories that positioned the topic in the academic sphere. The key topics that informed the empirical framework were minority group language practices, multilingual identifications, and survey findings of Armenian(-Turkish) identity. The main theoretical concepts were related to socio-spatial habitus and symbolic boundaries. Different types of social identities were explored as hypothetical identities for the present study, including interpersonal and collective social identities and multilingual identities.

Chapter Four provided information about the methodology and research that was utilized in this study. Through ethnographic qualitative data collection in the

form of interviews and participant observations, I intended to gain specific insights into the self-negotiation of social identity for Armenian youth through the Armenian schooling process. I also utilized a descriptive case study research design with a specific focus on one Armenian school with five student participants and various adult participants.

Chapter Five provided a detailed scope of the preliminary findings from the data collection. The two main themes were the Armenian school as a collective private space and the variant negotiation of the students' collective and interpersonal identities through their language attitudes and practices. Chapter Six analyzed the results, using Pierre Bourdieu's (1987) theories of habitus and symbolic power to uphold socialization processes, which sometimes create contradictory negotiations of social identity for its members given their various socio-spatial positions in the private and public sphere. It also presented a number of possibilities through which social identity can be theorized in interaction, with the school's position serving as the space from which to begin.

7.2 Limitations

The three main limitations I encountered during the data collection process were the following: 1) the sample size and similar demographic of student participants, 2) the spatial proximity of the interview settings, and 3) the language barriers between myself and the participants. The sample size of five students was selected after a number of gatekeeping processes. Although I originally intended to conduct semi-structured interviews with at least 15 students, due to time constraints between the start of data collection and the end of the academic school year, I did not hold interviews with more than these five participants. The fact that these participants

were chosen by the teachers introduced a number of representation issues, especially given the possibility that the teachers wanted to provide a positive display of the school through these students, which were selected by them. I was connected to students who had high levels of English-speaking ability or an enthusiasm to participate in the project. Still, the primary use of the English language, which was none of the participants' first language, was a limitation in the extent of depth and complexity the participants could express their answers to me. The five students that I interviewed were considered 'good' students; they generally performed well in the school setting, and they had positive associations with the Armenian school. Having access to students that spanned the Armenian school spectrum in terms of academic success and attitudes toward their schooling process could have led to different results. If I had made a more general advertisement of my thesis project to the student body, without the gatekeeper intervention, I would have been connected to a more diverse student sample, which could have led to different results that could have been generalized beyond the private dimension of the Armenian school.

Secondly, the fact that the interviews took place in the spatial setting of the Armenian school may have led to unconscious biases in which the participants talked about the position of their school. Given that I was conducting these interviews at an Armenian high school in which we were surrounded by Armenian students, teachers, accessories, as well as the Armenian language being widely spoken around us, I recognize that the space was a biased one, and one that leaned too heavily on the student identity rather than social identities. Had we conducted the interview in different settings, such as in a public cafe outside of the school, perhaps the participants' strong associations with their school's near-direct influence as a primary marker of their collective social identities would have been different.

Lastly, there were language barriers between the participants and myself. It would have been better if the interviews were conducted in Turkish in order to probe into more complex topics, which there were barriers to discussing due to the participants' English abilities, which were limited when attempting to articulate complicated topics such as social identity negotiation. It is important to note that these limitations placed restrictions on some of the ways in which the participants could most effectively communicate their processes to me. However, I aimed to be mindful of these limitations, to work within these confines, and to adapt my research process in alignment with the circumstances. In future adaptations of this study, it would be extremely helpful to adapt the methodology to counter these limitations.

In terms of methodology, the qualitative case study design presented a number of insufficiencies. In such a design, the researcher holds no control over independent variables, which may limit the internal validity of any conclusions. Though links between variables may be drawn, they cannot always indicate the direction of causation (Cavaye, 1996). Throughout the course of this research, many independent variables such as gender, family, and socioeconomic status, emerged; however, the constraints of my methodology did not allow me to pursue them in detail. This led to many gaps in the research. The most important variable that surely deserves more study is gender. The Armenian school, both as a schooling institution and as a private space, holds gender biases. This bias may have significantly influenced the ways in which Armenian students negotiate their social identities, which I only obtained a glimpse of through the two female participants' experiences. My interviews and participant observations were not enough to gain access to these individual variables, which may have influenced the social identity negotiation

process in other significant ways, and which can only, regrettably, be regarded as potential for future research with a stronger methodology.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

This project is an ongoing work in progress that harbors space for future research in many different academic fields. Different types of methodologies and research designs could be adapted for future studies. The semi-structured interview style led to conditioned answers in the data collection; the student participants did not engage so actively in the meaning-making process through this interview style. With this said, an alternative methodology that could have led to deeper answers is oral history. When orality is given a space in history, the lived experiences of people articulated through speech can help negotiate the historicization of one's present and past (Sloan, 2012).⁴⁴ Oral history provides a significant context through which important theoretical concepts, such as the construction of identity or the negotiation of membership, can be interpreted in the present whilst being connected to one's past (Friedman, 1992, Hewitt, 1994, Somers, 1994). In future research, it would be beneficial to conduct oral history interviews with both individuals (as narrators of their history) and groups of individuals. This type of structure would usher in a slow process of negotiating membership in wider ways, which would bring together the participants' past histories, present experiences, and imagined futures instead of focusing solely on their current lived experiences.

As the concepts of membership and belonging differ greatly with age, gender, social class, and socioeconomic status, amongst many other characteristics, it would be beneficial to conduct studies with larger sample sizes of participants with diverse

⁴⁴ For further reading on the potential of personal stories to serve as instruments in negotiation with state discourse, see Kasbarian's (2016) "The Istanbul Armenians: Negotiating Coexistence".

demographics. There are many comparative research possibilities that could extend from this present study. Future studies in the present geographical context could focus on unofficial schools and students for unofficially recognized members of Turkish society, such as the Hrant Dink School in Kumkapı, Istanbul.

Another possibility for future research related to this topic could be conducting a longitudinal study of Armenian youth from their primary school through their high school processes to see how their concepts of membership and belonging shift with time, both in relation to their age and how many years they have attended an Armenian school. It is a possibility that the time in which the interviews took place, just a few weeks before the participants' graduation, was a crucial moment of transitioning to the next chapter of their lives. The numerous limitations and suggestions for future research indicated here signal the potential for future work in many academic disciplines and research-related studies. I am curious to see how future research, both qualitative and quantitative, might push the preliminary findings of this study even further.

The final limitation has to do with the important concepts of space, place, and position. The participants' spatial positioning of the Armenian school as a private space posed serious limitations in how I could investigate their identities and interactions in the public space. For future studies, it would be beneficial to interview Armenian youth in Istanbul who do not attend Armenian schools, but perhaps Turkish public and/or international private schools; this comparison between Western Armenian language speakers and (potentially) non-Armenian speakers in the investigation of their identity would be valuable.⁴⁵ More specifically, it would be

⁴⁵ A recommended reading about the non-Armenian speakers in the Armenian community in Istanbul is Kaya's (2015) paper entitled, "Etnik Dil ve Etnik Kimlik: Ermenice Bilmeyen Ermeniler (Ethnic Language and Ethnic Identity: The Non-Armenian Speakers of the Armenian Society)".

interesting to see similarities and differences in how different groups of students negotiate their social identities depending on if they attend an Armenian or non-Armenian primary school, middle school, or high school.⁴⁶

I admit that positioning Armenians in Turkey, as well as positioning them in the private/public space, in this double binary background falls victim to an anthropological pitfall of essentialistic dualisms. In these regards, expanding beyond the scope of Istanbul and touching on different Armenian communities, such as those in Armenia, in the diasporic communities, in the Middle East, and other countries and cities might bring up diverse negotiations of social identity, which I gained informal exposure to in my connections with one Armenian school in California and another in Dilijan, Armenia. As these communities have diverse perceptions of membership, which vary on levels related to their families, schools, communities, and countries, it would be extremely interesting to compare the ways in which the youth negotiate their identities in this regard. The intention to understand social identities in its plural form should, in future studies, call attention to the Armenian communities in various parts of the world.

7.4 Final recommendations

In our postnational contemporary society, though Armenians in Istanbul are able to claim for ‘expanded inclusions’ (Sassen, 2003), the drawing board is riddled with differing directions for what this ‘inclusion’ means in their real-world context. The question of whether this inclusion means integration or isolation, and the larger question of what this means for cultural assimilation, have only begun to be explored

⁴⁶ Two additional readings on the negotiation of identities in school settings are Samkian’s (2007) “Constructing Identities, Perceiving Lives: Armenian High School Students’ Perceptions of Identity and Education” and Tupper et al.’s (2008) “Building Place: Students’ Negotiations of Spaces and Citizenship in Schools”.

in this project. The intention of this thesis was not to untangle this complicated web but to understand how those directly affected by this web's presence construct their social identities from these pieces. The intimate connections between the physical and nonphysical world, the concrete and abstract, places and 'spaces' and people, need to be considered holistically in order to grasp deeper meanings of identity.

I believe in the power of language as a means of mobilizing people beyond the private/public discourse; it may give voice to people willing to step beyond their imagined boundaries. An increased awareness and exposure to an interdependent global society has begun to bring about the idea of different frameworks of socio-spatial belonging, not ones that are structured on a singular, monolingual membership to institutions such as schools or states. In the present day, it may be up to individuals in interaction to re-imagine what it means to 'be Armenian'.⁴⁷ Perhaps breaking away from the rigidity of "being", and moving more toward a discourse of "feeling", is one starting point. In line with this, it may be time for the Armenian 'community' to think more critically about how to posit their members' sense of belonging in more than their private positions; they may more closely examine what their mixed language attitudes and practices mean for their collective and interpersonal identities. Furthermore, they may critically consider how to interact with these identities, both inside and outside—and perhaps, eventually beyond—their views from the varzharan.

⁴⁷ My final recommended reading, which frames Armenian and Turkish relations through interpersonal dialogues and lived experiences, is Neyzi et al.'s *Speaking to One Another: Personal Memories of the Past in Armenia and Turkey* (DVV International).

APPENDIX A

ARMENIAN SCHOOLS IN ISTANBUL

List of Armenian schools in Istanbul for the 2018-2019 academic year

(Turkish-Armenian Teachers Association, 2018)

Name	Level	Location	Student Enrollment	Capacity
Surp Haç Tbravank	High school	Üsküdar	75	209
Getronagan	High school	Karaköy	226	272
Esayan	High school, primary/secondary	Beyoğlu	257	531
Pangaltı Mkhitaryan	High school, primary/secondary	Şişli	272	606
Sahakyan	High school, primary/secondary	Samatya	381	790
Kalfayan	Primary/secondary	Üsküdar	60	176
Feriköy Merametsiyan	Primary/secondary	Şişli	165	663
Karagözyan	Primary/secondary	Şişli	205	357
Anarad Hıgutyun Samatya	Primary/secondary	Samatya	68	139
Aramyan Uncuyan	Primary/secondary	Kadıköy	181	321
Tarkmanças	Primary/secondary	Ortaköy	162	240
Bezciyan	Primary/secondary	Kumkapı	111	354
Dadyan	Primary/secondary	Bakırköy	384	476

Yeşilköy	Primary/secondary	Yeşilköy	274	331
Bomonti Mhitaryan	Primary/secondary	Şişli	99	202
Levon Vartuhyan	Primary/secondary	Topkapı	96	204
			3016	5871

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant Questionnaire
(Katılımcı Anketi)

The purpose of this questionnaire is for the researcher to gain a better understanding of Armenian students and their language education in Istanbul. This survey is conducted as a part of a Master's Degree dissertation for Critical and Cultural Studies at Boğaziçi University. In this survey, you may answer as little or as many questions as you would like. For some of the questions, you may choose more than one answer if it applies. You may use the back of the paper if you need additional space.

(Ankete katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim. Anketim amacı araştırmacının İstanbuldaki Ermeni öğrencilerinin aldıkları eğitimi daha iyi anlamasını sağlamaktır. Bu anket Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eleştirel ve Kültürel Çalışmalar biriminin master programının bir parçası olarak yürütülmektedir. Anketteki istediğiniz soruları yanıtlayabilirsiniz. Bazı sorular için birden fazla cevap verebilirsiniz. Kağıdın arka tarafını gerektiğinde kullanabilirsiniz.)

1. How many years have you attended an Armenian school?
(Kaç yıldır bir Ermeni okulunda eğitim görüyorsunuz?)

0-5 years (yıl)	5-10 years (yıl)	10-15 years (yıl)	My whole life (Tüm yaşamım boyunca)
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2. Which language do you speak with your family? (circle more than one if it applies.)
(Ailenizde hangi dili veya dilleri konuşuyorsunuz? (Birden fazla işaretleyebilirsiniz.))

Turkish (Türkçe)	Armenian (Ermenice)	English (İngilizce)	Other (Diğer)
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3. What is your favorite academic subject in school?
(Okulda en sevdiğiniz ders hangisidir?)

Languages	Math	History	Science	Religion/	Music/	Other/
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and Literature (Dil dersleri ve Edebiyat)	(Matematik)	(Tarih)	(Fen Bilgisi)	Philosophy (Din/ Felsefe)	Art (Müzik/ Sanat)	I do not know (Diğer/ Bilmiyorum)
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4. Which language(s) are the most enjoyable for you to learn in the classroom?
(Derste öğrenmekten en çok keyif aldığınız dil veya diller hangisidir/hangileridir?)

Turkish (Türkçe)	Armenian (Ermenice)	English (İngilizce)	Other (Diğer)
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5. Which language(s) are the most difficult for you to learn inside the classroom?
(Derste öğrenmeyi en zor bulduğunuz dil veya diller hangisidir/hangileridir?)

Turkish (Türkçe)	Armenian (Ermenice)	English (İngilizce)	Other (Diğer)
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6. Which materials do you use inside your Armenian classroom?
(Ermenice dersinde kullandığınız ders araçları nelerdir?)

Textbooks (Ders Kitapları)	Notebooks (Defterler)	Digital resources (videos, audio, etc.) (Dijital Kaynaklar (görüntülü, sesli, vb.))	Other (Diğer)
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7. Which materials do you use inside your Turkish classroom?
(Türkçe dersinde kullandığınız ders araçları nelerdir?)

Textbooks (Ders Kitapları)	Notebooks (Defterler)	Digital resources (videos, audio, etc.) (Dijital Kaynaklar (görüntülü, sesli, vb.))	Other (Diğer)
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8. Which materials do you use inside your English classroom? (circle more than one if it applies.)
(İngilizce dersinde kullandığınız ders araçları nelerdir? (Birden fazla işaretleyebilirsiniz.))

Textbooks (Ders Kitapları)	Notebooks (Defterler)	Digital resources (videos, audio, etc.)	Other (Diğer)
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		(Dijital Kaynaklar (görüntülü, sesli, vb.))	
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9. Outside the classroom, how many hours of Armenian do you use (speak, listen, read, write) per week?

(Sınıf ortamı dışında, Ermenice'yi haftada kaç saat kullanıyorsunuz (konuşma, dinleme, okuma, yazma)?)

0-4 hours (saat)	5-8 hours (saat)	9-12 hours (saat)	More than 12 hours (12 saatten fazla)
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10. Outside the classroom, how many hours of Turkish do you use per week?

(Sınıf ortamı dışında, Türkçe'yi haftada kaç saat kullanıyorsunuz (konuşma, dinleme, okuma, yazma)?)

0-4 hours (saat)	5-8 hours (saat)	9-12 hours (saat)	More than 12 hours (12 saatten fazla)
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11. Outside the classroom, how many hours of English do you use per week?

(Sınıf ortamı dışında, İngilizce'yi haftada kaç saat kullanıyorsunuz (konuşma, dinleme, okuma, yazma)?)

0-4 hours (saat)	5-8 hours (saat)	9-12 hours (saat)	More than 12 hours (12 saatten fazla)
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12. Inside the classroom, how many hours/week do you spend on test preparation?

(Sınıf içinde haftada kaç saat test çözüyorsunuz?)

0-4 hours (saat)	5-8 hours (saat)	9-12 hours (saat)	More than 12 hours (12 saatten fazla)
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13. Outside the classroom, how many hours/week do you spend on test preparation?

(Sınıf dışında haftada kaç saat test çözüyorsunuz?)

0-4 hours (saat)	5-8 hours (saat)	9-12 hours (saat)	More than 12 hours (12 saatten fazla)
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14. In which language course do you prepare the most for tests?

(En çok hangi dil dersinde test çözüyorsunuz?)

Turkish (<i>Türkçe</i>)	English (<i>İngilizce</i>)	Armenian (<i>Ermenice</i>)
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15. Students spend too much time during class preparing for language tests.
(*Öğrenciler ders vaktinde test çözmeye çok fazla vakit ayırıyorlar.*)

Completely disagree (<i>Kesinlikle katılmıyorum</i>)	Disagree (<i>Katılmıyorum</i>)	Neutral (<i>Kararsızım</i>)	Agree (<i>Katılıyorum</i>)	Completely agree (<i>Kesinlikle katılıyorum</i>)
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16. What is your fluency level for the Armenian language?
(*Ermenice dil seviyeniz nedir?*)

Elementary Proficiency/ Basic (<i>Başlangıç Seviyesi/ Temel Beceriler</i>)	Limited Proficiency/ Conversational (<i>Kısıtlı Yeterlilik/ Konuşma Becerileri</i>)	Professional Proficiency/ Business (<i>Profesyonel Yeterlilik/ İş Becerileri</i>)	Full Proficiency/ Fluent (<i>Tam Yeterlilik/ Akıcı</i>)
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17. What is your fluency level for the Turkish language?
(*Türkçe dil seviyeniz nedir?*)

Elementary Proficiency/ Basic (<i>Başlangıç Seviyesi/ Temel Beceriler</i>)	Limited Proficiency/ Conversational (<i>Kısıtlı Yeterlilik/ Konuşma Becerileri</i>)	Professional Proficiency/ Business (<i>Profesyonel Yeterlilik/ İş Becerileri</i>)	Full Proficiency/ Fluent (<i>Tam Yeterlilik/ Akıcı</i>)
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18. What is your fluency level for the English language?
(*İngilizce dil seviyeniz nedir?*)

Elementary Proficiency/ Basic (<i>Başlangıç Seviyesi/ Temel Beceriler</i>)	Limited Proficiency/ Conversational (<i>Kısıtlı Yeterlilik/ Konuşma Becerileri</i>)	Professional Proficiency/ Business (<i>Profesyonel Yeterlilik/ İş Becerileri</i>)	Full Proficiency/ Fluent (<i>Tam Yeterlilik/ Akıcı</i>)
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19. Which language(s) do you think are the most important for your *personal life* (family, friends)?

(Hangi dil veya dillerin kişisel hayatınızda (aile, arkadaşlar) daha önemli olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?)

20. Which language(s) do you think are the most important for your *professional life* (career)?

(Hangi dil veya dillerin mesleki yaşantınız (kariyer) için daha önemli olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?)

21. In the future, would you like to live in Turkey or abroad?

(Gelecekte Türkiye’de mi yurtdışında mı yaşamayı istersiniz?)

Turkey (Türkiye)	Abroad (Yurtdışı)	I do not know (Bilmiyorum)
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APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Student Interviews

1) Interview One: Introductions

- Getting to know you
 - Please give some background information about yourself (age, class, extracurricular activities, etc.).
- Where are you from?
- Where is your family from?
- Do you know about the history of your family (grandparents, great-grandparents, etc.)
- Do you have family members living in different countries?
- What's your family life like?
 - Which languages do you speak with your family?
 - Do you consider yourself close with your family?

2) Interview Two: Being a student at an Armenian school

School life

- For how many years have you attended an Armenian school?
- Do you enjoy being a student at this school?
- What are the most and least enjoyable parts of school for you?
- Do you participate in any school clubs?
- What are your classmates and teachers like?
- Out of all the classes you're taking, which one(s) are the most important for you?
 - Professionally?
 - Personally?

Language learning and practice

- Which languages are you learning at school right now?
- Which languages do you use the most?
 - At school?
 - At home?
 - With friends?
- Out of all the languages you've learned at school, which one(s) are the most important for you?
 - Professionally?
 - Personally?
- Is language learning important for you? If yes, how so?

Social life

- Are your closest friends from your school?
- Do you have friends outside of the school environment?

- Do you have friends with different backgrounds (educational, ethnic, religious, etc.)?
- What kinds of social activities do you participate in?

Post-graduation

- What are your plans for after you graduate from this school?
- Would you prefer to study/live in Turkey or in a different country?
- Which academic skills do you think will be the most useful for you after graduation?
- Do you think you will use your language skills in your life after you graduate? If so, in which ways?

3) Interview Three: Reflections on the participant's identity

- Identity Chart Activity
 - “An identity chart is a diagram that individuals fill in with words and phrases they use to describe themselves as well as the the labels that society gives them”
(from Facing History and Ourselves website)
- Think about the question, “Who am I?”
- Background
 - Ethnic
 - National
 - Religious
- Roles
 - Family
 - School
 - With friends
- Hobbies and interests
 - Art and Culture
 - Sports
- Physical characteristics
 - Hair, skin, eye color
 - Tall / short

Other questions you can ask yourself:

- What are the most important parts of my life? What are my most important relationships?
- What do I want others to see about me? What do I want others to not see about me?
- It might be difficult to express these thoughts in a verbal way. An alternative way you can articulate these thoughts is by drawing an identity chart on a piece of paper.

One way to do this is with the following:

- 1) Write the word “me” in the middle of your paper and draw a circle around it.
- 2) Draw a few lines extending from the middle circle toward the edge of the paper and create some categories with circles around them. Examples of categories might be characteristics, interests, hobbies, goals, etc.
- 3) Draw lines extending from these category circles and write down specific

words that are connected with these categories, which describe different aspects of who you are.

- Looking at your chart, what are the five things you think are the most significant in shaping your identity?

Follow-up questions:

- Do you feel like you have grown, developed, or changed since attending this school?
- Do you think that attending this school has influenced the way you see yourself and the world?
- If you did not attend this school, how might you be similar or different today?
- Do you identify with certain identities (national, ethnic, religious, etc.)? If yes, do you think this school shaped the way you perceive your identity?
- Do you think that your language learning processes at this school have shaped your identity?

(Öğrencilerle yapılacak görüşmeler)

1) Birinci Görüşme: Giriş

- Katılımcıyı tanıma
 - Lütfen kendiniz hakkında bilgi verin (yaş, sınıf, okul dışı aktiviteler, vb.)
- Nerelisiniz?
- Aileniz nereli?
- Ailenizin geçmişi hakkında bilginiz var mı (ailenizin anneleri-babaları, dedeler-nineler, vb.)?
- Başka ülkelerde yaşayan aile üyeleriniz var mı?
- Aile yaşantınız nasıldır?
 - Ailede hangi dilleri konuşuyorsunuz?
 - Ailenizle yakın bir ilişki içinde olduğunuzu düşünüyor musunuz?

2) İkinci Görüşme: Ermeni okulunda öğrenci olmak

Okul yaşamı

- Kaç yıldır Ermeni okulunda okuyorsunuz?
- Bu okulda öğrenci olmaktan memnun musunuz?
- Okulun size göre en çok ve en az keyifli yanları nelerdir?
- Öğrenci topluluklarına katılıyor musunuz?
- Sınıf arkadaşlarınız ve öğretmenleriniz nasıldır?
- Gördüğünüz tüm derslerin içinde sizin için en önemli ders(ler) hangisi veya hangileridir?
 - Gelecek kariyeriniz açısından
 - Kişisel ilgi alanlarınız açısından

Dil öğrenimi

- Okulda hangi dilleri öğreniyorsunuz?
- En çok kullandığınız diller hangileridir?
 - Evde?
 - Okulda?

- Arkadaşlarınızla?
- Okulda öğrendiğiniz tüm diller arasında sizin için en önemli olan dil(ler) hangisi veya hangileridir?
 - Gelecek kariyeriniz açısından
 - Kişisel ilgi alanlarınız açısından
- Dil öğrenmek sizin için önemli midir? Önemliyse, ne bakımdan?

Sosyal yaşam

- En yakın arkadaşlarınız okuldan mı?
- Okuldaki çevreniz dışında arkadaşlarınız var mı?
 - Eğitim, etnik, dini, vb. açılardan başka çevrelerden arkadaşlarınız var mı?
- Ne tür sosyal aktiviteler içinde yer alıyorsunuz?

Okul sonrası

- Okuldan mezun olduktan sonra neler yapmayı planlıyorsunuz?
- Türkiye’de okumaya/yaşamaya devam etmeyi mi tercih edersiniz yoksa başka bir ülkede mi?
- Edindiğiniz akademik becerilerin hangilerinin sizin için mezun olduktan sonra en çok faydayı sağlayacağını düşünüyorsunuz?
- Edindiğiniz dil becerilerini mezun olduktan sonra kullanacağınızı düşünüyor musunuz? Düşünüyorsanız, ne şekilde?

3) Üçüncü Görüşme: Katılımcının kimliği üzerine görüşleri

- “Kimlik çizelgesi”, bireylerin kendilerini ifade etmek için ve toplum tarafından kendilerine verilen etiketleri açıklamak için kullandıkları sözcükler ve ifadelerle doldurdukları bir şemadır.
- Şu soruyu düşünün, “Ben kimim?”
- Arka planınız
 - Etnik
 - Ulusal
 - Dini
- Roller
 - Aile
 - Okul
 - Arkadaşlar
- Hobiler ve ilgi alanları
 - Kültür sanat
 - Spor
- Fiziksel özellikler
 - Saç, ten, göz rengi
 - Uzun / kısa

Kendinize sorabileceğiniz diğer sorular

- Hayatımın en önemli kısımları nelerdir? Hayatımdaki en önemli ilişkiler hangileridir?
- Başkalarının benimle ilgili olarak neleri görmesini istiyorum? Kendimle ilgili nelerin başkaları tarafından görülmesini istemiyorum?
- Bu gibi düşünceleri sözlü ifade etmek zor olabilir. Bunları ifade edebilmenin bir başka yolu ise, bir kâğıt üzerinde kimlik çizelgesi oluşturmak olabilir. Bunu yapmak için sırasıyla:
 - 1) Kâğıdın ortasına “ben” yazın ve etrafına bir çember çizin.
 - 2) Çemberin merkezinden kâğıdın kenarlarına doğru uzanan birkaç çizgi

çekin ve onların etraflarına da çemberler çizerek bazı kategoriler yaratın. Örneğin, özellikler, ilgi alanları, hobiler, hedefler, vb. kategoriler.

3) Bu kategori çemberlerinden de çizgiler uzatın ve her bir kategoriyle ilgili olarak sizin farklı yönlerinizi tarif eden belli başlı kelimeleri yazın.

- *Çizelgenize baktığınızda, kimliğinizi şekillendiren en önemli beş şeyin neler olduğunu görüyorsunuz?*

Teacher Interviews

1. Please give a basic description about yourself and your role at this school.
 - a. What is your educational background?
 - b. How long have you been working here?
 - c. Which subjects do you teach?
 - d. Which classes do you work with?
2. Why did you choose to be a teacher at this school?
3. What topics and themes do you cover in your classes?
4. What types of materials do you use in your classroom (books, videos, photos, etc.)?
5. What types of homework, projects, and exams do you give to your students?
6. Do you feel like your students are interested in your class subject?
7. Do you notice any trends in the student body in terms of their language abilities or language learning attitudes?
8. In your opinion, what is the role of the Armenian school in helping its students learn about culture and language?
9. Do you think that the school is an important shaper of its students' identity?
 - a. Specifically, do you think that the Armenian school is an important shaper of the students' identity?
10. What do you think are the positive and negative aspects about attending an Armenian school for your students?

(Öğretmenlerle yapılacak görüşmeler)

1. *Lütfen kendiniz ve okuldaki rolünüz hakkında genel bir açıklama yapınız.*
 - a. *Öğrenim geçmişiniz nedir?*
 - b. *Ne kadar zamandır burada çalışıyorsunuz?*
 - c. *Hangi konularda ders veriyorsunuz?*
 - d. *Hangi sınıfların derslerine giriyorsunuz?*
2. *Bu okulda öğretmen olmayı neden seçtiniz?*
3. *Derslerinizde işlediğiniz ve bahsi geçen konular nelerdir?*
4. *Derslerinizde kullandığınız materyaller nelerdir (kitap, video, fotoğraf, vb.)?*
5. *Öğrencilerinize ne tür ev ödevleri ve proje ödevleri verirsiniz, nasıl sınavlar yaparsınız?*
6. *Öğrencilerinizin verdiğiniz dersin konularıyla ilgili olduklarını düşünüyor musunuz/hissediyor musunuz?*
7. *Öğrencilerin dil becerilerinde ve dil öğrenimindeki tutumlarında süreç içinde fark ettiğiniz gelişimler ve değişimler var mı?*
8. *Ermeni okulunun öğrencilerine kültür ve dille ilgili öğrenimlerinde yardımcı olma konusundaki işlevi sizce nedir?*

9. *Okulun, öğrencilerin kimliklerinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir etken olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?*
 - a. *Özellikle Ermeni okullarının, öğrencilerinin kimliklerinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir etken olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?*
10. *Öğrencilerin bir Ermeni okulunda eğitim ve öğrenim görmesinin olumlu ve olumsuz yanları sizce nelerdir?*

Administration and Staff Interviews

1. Please give a basic description about yourself and your role at this school.
2. Since you've been working at this school, have you noticed any trends in students in terms of:
 - a. Behavior and discipline
 - b. Interactions with teachers
 - c. Interactions with classmates
 - d. The languages they speak outside of the classroom environment
3. Do you notice any trends in the student body in terms of their language abilities or language learning attitudes?
4. In your opinion, what is the role of the Armenian school in helping its students learn about culture and language?
5. Do you think that the school is an important shaper of its students' identity?
 - a. Specifically, do you think that the Armenian school is an important shaper of the students' identity?
6. What do you think are the positive and negative aspects about attending an Armenian school for your students?

(Yönetimle ve çalışanlarla yapılacak görüşmeler)

1. *Lütfen kendiniz ve okuldaki rolünüz hakkında bilgi verin.*
2. *Bu okulda çalışmaya başladığınızdan beri öğrencilerin gelişimlerinde ve tutumlarında*
 - a. *Davranış ve disiplin*
 - b. *Öğretmenlerle ilişkiler*
 - c. *Sınıf arkadaşlarıyla ilişkiler*
 - d. *Sınıf ortamı dışında konuştukları diller açısından değişimler gözlemlediniz mi?*
3. *Öğrencilerin dil becerilerinde ve dil öğrenimindeki tutumlarında süreç içinde fark ettiğiniz gelişimler ve değişimler var mı?*
4. *Ermeni okulunun öğrencilerine kültür ve dille ilgili öğrenimlerinde yardımcı olma konusundaki işlevi sizce nedir?*
5. *Okulun, öğrencilerin kimliklerinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir etken olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?*
 - a. *Özellikle Ermeni okullarının, öğrencilerinin kimliklerinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir etken olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?*
6. *Öğrencilerin bir Ermeni okulunda eğitim ve öğrenim görmesinin olumlu ve olumsuz yanları sizce nelerdir?*

APPENDIX D

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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

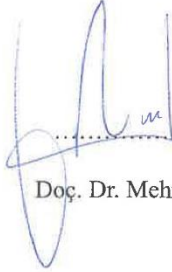
Sayı: 2018-15

04 Nisan 2018

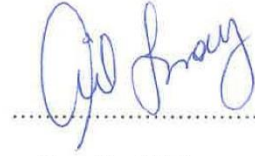
Minji Lee
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Türkiye'de Ermeni okullarında dil öğrenimi yoluyla toplumsal kimliğin gelişimi" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığımız SBB-EAK 2018/14 sayılı başvuru İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 04 Nisan 2018 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.



Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal



Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay



Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bengü Börkan



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Nur Yeniçeri

APPENDIX E

FIELD NOTES SAMPLE

I present a small sample of field notes taken as a researcher at Getronagan Armenian high school. It includes a site description with details of various rooms, decorations, and accessories within the school building, as well as a layout of the classrooms within the building. I have noted some of the interactions between the teachers and students in both ‘informal’ settings, such as within the hallways during their break times. I have also included random observations and notes to self.

Site description

- Getronagan High School is located in Karaköy, Istanbul. From the moment a visitor walks in, he/she has to choose to go either left or right. On the left is the church; on the right, the school.
- As one walks up the stairs of the school, there are hand-painted and hand-sculpted portraits and statues of famous Ottoman-Armenian intellectuals and creative leaders. I can make out the names and portraits of those like Taniel Varujan, Gomidas, and Zabel Yessayan... There is a spiral staircase leading upwards to the classrooms. There is a small library as well (this is my favorite room in the whole building, along with the foreign languages teacher’s room). Ara Güler’s signed photos are lined along the staircases.
- The principal’s room is on the right side of the entrance, beautifully decorated with carpets and photos of Getronagan. Though she is usually in a meeting or focused on a work task, her door is always open.

- There is a common lounge where students relax between their classes, where students and teachers engage in one-on-one sessions, with a variety of paraphernalia scattered across the walls. There are bird and butterfly stickers, inflatable paper planets hanging down from the ceiling, aquatic life creatures on the lower wall, animal chart classifications on a bulletin board directly above, different types of fungi and where to collect them in Istanbul. There is a large wall panel about Taniel Varujan between the Foreign Languages and Armenian teachers' offices. On the 2nd top floor of the school there is a music room as well as a performance hall. At the very top is the student canteen and sports room.
- There is a large acrylic painting of men, presumably Ottoman Armenian intellectuals from the 19th and 20th centuries, outside of a building marked with 125. Trophies from volleyball match, 2016 trophies won for Mind Games organized by Tbrevank. There are booklets from their programs, holiday cards sent to parents and families. Various photos of famous teachers, doctors, scientists who attended Getronagan in past years.

Classroom layout

- There are classrooms between three floors of the school. The office of the *müdür başyardımcısı*, or vice principal, is on the same hall as the philosophy class, photography room, computer lab. Classrooms 11B and 12A, 12B, and 12C are located here as well. Classrooms 10A and 10B, the library, and a historical bell are located on the same hall. There are also special science rooms. There is a new biology lab with a placard of the family who provided

financial funds to create it. The chemistry and physics lab, on the other hand, isn't new. It almost looks like its from the 20th century.

- These labs share a wall with the church. The students go to the church on Thursdays. They stay there for 10 minutes and then come back. Easter and Christmas events are at the church. The classroom windows are large, and most of them look out to the dome structure of the Armenian church. The pastel blue domes with the golden cross that sits on top are classic Armenian-influenced architecture designs.

Teachers and students

- The students all wear black or grey as a part of their “uniform”, but many of them wear Getronagan sweaters as well.
- During break times (5 minutes between classes), some of the teachers are on “duty” to monitor the students. Other teachers sit and stand outside of the classrooms, chatting with the students between their lessons. They all make use of the hallways and common rooms together. Not many of them go out to smoke. If they do, they have to climb down the whole building and smoke in the narrow alleyway outside (in front of the church or the art gallery).
- I hear the students and teachers talking in a mix of Armenian and Turkish. English is the third most common language that sometimes gets spoken, usually just with me. But it's mostly a mix of Armenian and Turkish.

Random observations

- Walking through some sections of the high school is like walking through what I would imagine an Armenian institution in Ottoman times to be like,

with paraphernalia in different languages covering the walls; walking through other sections makes me feel like I am in a foreign languages department building, with many languages and alphabets adorning the walls in colorful decorations; walking through the *yemekhane* makes me feel like I'm in a Turkish school canteen, with the sound of students and teachers quickly eating their lentil soup and drinking their ayran, talking in Turkish the whole time, before rushing off to their next school activity. The only phrase I hear in Armenian is “anoushoulah”, which means something like “afiyet olsun”, or “enjoy your meal”.

- The sound of the afternoon call to prayer goes off in the distance. This Armenian school is physically connected to the church, but sometimes I forget because I don't hear the church bells. Maybe I get them mixed up with the school bell.
- The students and teachers call the school a “labyrinth”—the architecture seems to come from the 19th or 20th century, and it's quite nostalgic.
- The school feels crowded sometimes, but there aren't so many students in the classrooms. Some of them have five students; the most is in the high 20s. I wonder how this student:teacher ratio and classroom size compares to those of other schools in Turkey.

Notes on researcher's positionality

- Be sure to find an interview space that is private and has a door that can be closed.

- When speaking with the students, recognize that English is not their first language. Give them as much time as they might need to look things up in their dictionaries or to find the correct word for what they are trying to say.
- Don't assume that you know or understand something that someone is articulating. For example, you hear the word "Kurtuluş" and assume that the participant is plugged into the Armenian community because he/she lives in a neighborhood with the highest concentration of Armenians. However, it is important to remember that these stories and sentences are personal to every participant, and they may not reflect trends or patterns.

APPENDIX F

SCHOOL SAMPLING PLAN

PLACE	Getronagan Armenian High School
Demographics	Karaköy, Istanbul Next to Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church 3 or 4 floors total
Public places	Common lounge Stairwells
Eating areas	Cafeteria and kitchen on top floor
Recreation areas	Sports room on top floor No outdoor area or garden
Classrooms	1st, 2nd, 3rd floors The architectural dome of the church is visible from almost all classroom window
Other rooms	Performance room, 3rd floor Library, 2nd floor Science labs (they share a wall with the church), 1st and 2nd floors Counselor's offices, 1st floor
Teacher's rooms	Entrance floor, one large room 2nd floor (divided between Foreign Languages, Armenian, Turkish) 3rd floor, smaller rooms
Principal's office	Entrance floor, door always open, well-decorated with cultural artifacts and banners in Armenian
Vice principal's office	3rd floor, door closed Next to a classroom Random location
SCHOOL SCHEDULE	
Breaktimes	5-minute breaks between lessons One-hour lunch break
Before and after school	Shuttle buses take students to and from their homes
EVENTS / ACTIVITIES	
Clubs	Theater, Music, Chess, English, Spanish, Scrabble, Technology, Model United Nations, Philosophy
School trips	Art museums and galleries, parks, intramural school trips to other Armenian schools, foundations

Special school events	Getronagan preview days (for Armenian secondary schools), Ara Güler photography competition, Christmas celebrations, Easter religious ceremonies, workshops with Armenian associations, talks with other nonprofit organizations, music and theater performances
ARTIFACTS	
Common areas	Ara Güler photography in hallways Large Gomidas portrait created by students in stairwell Easter decorations Woman's day signs hanging from ceiling
Classrooms	Atatürk portrait İstiklal Marşı banner Zabel Yessayan billboard
Banners	Gomidas Days poster Ara Güler photography competition poster Event advertisements
Objects	Trophies and medals sculptures of famous Ottoman Armenian figures decorative objects for religious celebrations Photographs of alumni

APPENDIX G

STUDENT PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

The following participant descriptions were a crucial part of establishing the thick description for this qualitative research. Here I provide detailed descriptions on each of the student participants in order for the reader to get to know the personal background and personalities of each individual. I have written these participants descriptions from a subjective stance that was based on recurring points of conversation and topics that came up the most often in our conversations together.

Alex

Alex negotiates multiple social identities, the most prominent of which are his Armenian/Greek ethnic affiliations and his identification as queer. His father is Armenian and his mother is Greek; therefore, he identifies ethnically as half-Armenian and half-Greek. He lives in Kurtuluş, but as a child he grew up in Maltepe. Alex is enthusiastic about learning and teaching foreign languages, Armenian included, though he claims that his Armenian language proficiency is limited. Apart from school, he only uses Armenian when communicating with his extended family, especially with his uncle, who is a priest in an Armenian church. He learned Armenian at school, starting from kindergarten, and continues to use it in this singular context, not necessarily in other social contexts. Alex is queer, and many points in our conversation came back to this point; he oftentimes mentioned his love for drama, dress-up, and drag. He told me that theater-related activities have always been his passion, which allows him to be both anything he wants to be as well as a distanced version of his real self at the same time.

Anoush

Anoush's main identification points were ethno-nationally as Armenian and Turkish. Her passions include music, especially the violin, and women's and men's rights. Anoush, a languages/literature student at Getronagan, expressed interest in studying literature and psychology, perhaps at a university in Armenia or Canada in the future. One main point of conversation surrounded the discourse of responsibility and saving her Armenian culture, and her fear of cultural assimilation, which she feels an aspect of guilt about given her self-identified limited proficiency in the Armenian language. Another important point she continued to emphasize was her dislike for nationalism. She told a story about when she went to Yerevan, Armenia and met older people who said negative things about other nations, especially Turkey, because of their family trauma with the Catastrophe. While she said that she could not blame these individuals, her strong belief in equality, not in superiority of nations, is the value she uses to define her identity.

Artin

Artin self-identified as an Armenian student living in Istanbul. He might be classified as the 'all-star Armenian student'. Unlike the other participants, Artin grew up speaking Armenian before Turkish because he was raised by an Armenian nanny. He mentioned that his mother speaks a different dialect of Armenian called *Musa dagh* Armenian. Historically, Musa Dagh was located in the Ottoman province of Aleppo, Syria; presently, it is located in the Samandagh district in the multi-ethnically diverse Hatay province of Turkey. Musa Dagh Armenians spoke a dialect called Kistinik, which means "the language of Christians". He claims he has a slightly different

accent in Turkish due to his being raised by his mother and Armenian nanny, which sometimes confuses his Turkish counterparts. However, as I never heard him speaking Turkish (only Armenian and English), there is no way to objectively judge this self-perceived accent. Artin assumed a heavy responsibility for maintaining his Armenian identity, sometimes at the cost of openly rejecting his Turkish one. At one point, in talking about his national identity as a Turkish citizen, he said that he would prefer to be a Swiss citizen, which implied to me that he did not want to be a Turkish citizen. Furthermore, for Artin, religion and language were the most important preservation factors for being Armenian, and he is successful in maintaining his identity through these channels.

Julia

Julia claimed she had multiple identities, the most important of which were being a daughter and a literate person. Julia stated that she spoke exclusively Armenian with her mother, but spoke Turkish with her father. She talked at length about her former neighborhood, Kurtuluş, as well as her present neighborhood, Feriköy, which is 'too Turkish' for her liking. Though she is proud to be Armenian, she does not adhere closely to the religious aspect of her Armenianness, and only attends church because she feels a warm sense of community from her attendance. Out of all participants, Julia was the most adamant about speaking Armenian both inside and outside of school, and continued to say that she wished her classmates would speak Armenian instead of Turkish with her. When it came to her role as a student at the Armenian schools, Julia talked about how she enjoyed the values of her school in equipping her with tools to defend her critical opinions. She talked at length about how she did not enjoy the schooling process, as she felt it was a tool for the government to force

people into a capitalistic labor market that she did not agree with. Julia's resistance against stereotypical social discourse, especially when it came to being a student at the Armenian schools, seemed to be a defining aspect of her character, which was affirmed by her feeling that she did not fit in with most of the students at her school.

Aren

Aren's most important expressed identity was "Armenian", but with the important side note that he openly utilizes his Turkish identity to 'fit in' with the national climate. Our main points of conversation were about the discourse of responsibility for attending an Armenian school, but how he enjoyed fulfilling this responsibility because it meant that he was providing a service for the Armenian community as well as to the generations of students and Armenian children to come after him. He passive-aggressively, sometimes undecidedly resisted strict identity classifications such as "Armenian" and "Turkish", even stating in one interview that separating people based on nationality was nonsense. He also stated that his identity is subject to change based on the social groups he is surrounded by. Out of all the student participants, Aren was the least occupied about the idea that language and identity are connected, as he claimed that his knowledge of Armenian was merely a tool for shaping his character. However, he did go on to state that if a community did not uphold their language practices, its culture might disappear, and seemed concerned about how the Armenian community in Turkey was vulnerable to this disappearance. However, his role as a student at an Armenian school seemed to be enough for him to be able to help the Armenian community; in fulfilling this role as a student at his school, he felt confident and contributory to his Armenian community.

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