RESEARCH

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Social Formation and Reproduction among Armenians in Germany

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I dedicate this book to the memory of my parents.

Astghik Chaloyan
May 2017, Göttingen

Contents

1 Introduction

"I feel myself 100 % French, and at the same time 100 % Armenian."
Charles Aznavour

These words are of Charles Aznavour, the famous French-Armenian singer, songwriter, public figure, and a diplomat who describes himself as 100 % French and, at the same time, 100 % Armenian. These words of Aznavour perfectly indicate the complexity of the sense of belonging for migrants. People who reside in one country and consider it as home, but also claim another country to be their homeland, can be simultaneously attached to both countries, which results in dual sense of belonging and variations in self-identification. This research is devoted to the study of migrants through the lens of transnationalism, which means by revealing characteristic manifestations of transnationalism, cross-border engagements and encounters, I will address issues of dual sense of belonging, various self-identifications, and correspondingly, different modes and levels of attachments to the homeland.

Therefore, the purpose of this work is to reveal manifestations of transnationalism, social practices, and ties (transnational and non-transnational) of Armenians in Germany through the examples provided by participants in this research. Taking this as a point of departure, this work touches upon the broader issues of self-identification and sense of belonging, home and homeland, and through this lens, refers to the social formation and reproduction of ties from generation to generation. Furthermore, it considers how this social reproduction influences and/or determines self-identification of younger generations. In the attempt to uncover specificities of Armenian belonging and transnational attachments in their various manifestations, I turn to the rich history of the nation's past, and identify the three most powerful collective memories which determine not only the diasporic consciousness typical for Armenians, but also the situational and fluctuating character of their transnational engagements and activity.

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1.1 Transnationalism studies: state-of-the-art and the perspective of the book[1]

Transnationalism, as a notion and as a field of study, has been widely rotating in the sphere of migration research since the 1990s. It has captured the attention of a broad community of social scientist, as it has emerged in answering the challenges that the diversity of contemporary migration flows has put before scholars. Classical migration theories and approaches[2] generally deal with issues that migrants confront in the host country, thus focusing the attention on assimilation, and integration or incorporation into the country of residence. In parallel, issues and hardships that migrants encounter in the home country after they return have also been of interest to the migration scholarship. In other words, the scholarly attention has been directed to the processes which happen either in the country of residence or in the country of origin. These areas of research leave out the needed attention to a very important point, which can be crucial in understanding and interpreting various issues and phenomena related to migration. Therefore, since migration is not merely a linear process, what should be of particular interest to social researchers working in the field of migration, are the linkages, connections, and movements taking place between the host and home countries. In leaving temporarily or permanently for another country, migrants do not break off every relation with their homeland. On account of migrant border-spanning connections and movements of material and immaterial resources between sending and receiving countries emerge specific over-territorial fields within which all the processes with respect to both countries are concentrated. Transnationalism studies highlight the importance of these linkages and back-and-forth movements.

The transnational approach, therefore, challenges the linear understanding of migration processes by revealing that incorporation into a host country and simultaneous maintenance of any kinds of ties, engagements, or attachments to the homeland are not mutually exclusive.[3] Not to consider these attachments would mean to leave out important aspects of migration-related issues which can play a considerable role in understanding and interpreting not only multiple realities and simultaneous engagements of migrants, but also specificities of

[1] A detailed literature review on transnationalism will follow in Chapter 2. For that reason, here I focus only on the introduction of the key topic-related developments.

[2] For a review, see, e.g. Borjas 1990; Massey et al. 1993; Castles 1998; Massey 1999; Castles and Miller 2009

[3] See, e.g. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999, 2001, 2002; Glick Schiller 1999, 2005b; Levitt 2001, 2002, 2009; Portes et al. 1999, 2001, 2003; Vertovec 1999, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009a; Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo 2002; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Guarnizo and Smith 2006; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 2008; Laguerre 2009; Lee 2011

migrant self-identification and sense of belonging. In other words, adopting the transnationalism lens, researchers have begun to deal with world societies where simultaneous presence in more than one reality (Kearney 2000; 2008; Vertovec 2009) and, consequently, multiple social, cultural, economic, political, and religious engagements (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 2008) become crucial in understanding the aforementioned phenomena. Transnationalism has opened a new door, and a different view for the studies of migration and related phenomena, pushing the scholarly attention beyond such dichotomies as integration–non-integration, and assimilation–non-assimilation. However, this does not mean that from that point on, every research in the scope of migration has incorporated the transnational approach. Some scholars have continued developing their research upon issues of the second generation's assimilation and integration without considering transnational connections. In this realm, the attention is focused on certain linkages to the country of residence, such as education or economic engagements, and more precisely, opportunities for involvement in the labour market which leads to successful incorporation into the host country (see, e.g. Alba 2005; 2013; Alba and Foner 2014; 2015a, b).

Developments and large-scale popularity of transnationalism have, nonetheless, been accompanied by some backlash. The main critique has referred to the questioning as to whether or not transnationalism is a new phenomenon (see, e.g. Foner 1997; 2001), and the second point of criticism has been the continuity of transnationalism (see, e.g. Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Waldinger 2008), arguing that ties with the country of origin get attenuated throughout time, and dissolve in contrast to various strong links to the country of residence. As a consequence, the future of most immigrant children will not be transnational. The critique regarding continuity of transnationalism states that this phenomenon is characteristic to the first-generation migrants, and, consequently, for the young generations transnational ties may fade away. This is, however, a presumption which can, in parallel, presuppose that certain kinds of ties may also survive, and be transmitted from generation to generation. In this realm, such questions as what kind of ties and under which circumstances are maintained (if they do), and which fade away, and dissolve in loyalties toward the country of residence still remain unanswered. Another unclear point in this realm is whether and to what extent the maintained ties (or which kinds of ties) will still be relevant for the concept of transnationalism.

In part, as an answer to the backlash with regard to the novelty of transnationalism and the difference between then and now, and in part, as a new development in scholarship, a new approach emerges in transnationalism literature with the application of concepts regarding transnational social spaces (see, e.g. Faist 2000a; 2008; Pries ed. 2001; 2008) and transnational social fields (see, e.g.

Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004 a, b; 2007; Nowicka 2015). These notions shed light on the whole spectrum of cross-border connections between sending and receiving countries, pointing out the over-territorial, fluid, and, at some point, also imaginary spaces where the back-and-forth flows and the exchange of any kind of resource takes place. In my opinion, the concept of transnational social fields goes a step further, and includes in its focus the role and significance of *capital* (in the scope of this research the *symbolic capital*), and *symbolic power*, derived from various positions and aspirations rotating within the field which, in turn, give birth to *symbolic struggles*. These notions are taken from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social fields and theory of practice with the corresponding meanings that the author has put into the mentioned terms. Symbolic capital refers to honour and prestige, to commitments, rights, and duties (Bourdieu 1990, p. 119). As the other sorts of capital distinguished by Bourdieu (economic, social, and cultural), symbolic capital, as well, has the characteristic to reconvert into any other form of capital, however, the sociologist highlights that the symbolic capital can 'replace' other capitals especially when those are not recognized (Bourdieu 1990, p. 119). Domination over the symbolic capital opens the door to the symbolic power, which can claim to be the power of constructing reality (Bourdieu 1991, p. 170). Symbolic power, thus, becomes a mode of domination (Bourdieu 1990, p. 123).

Consideration of these notions opens an interesting pathway into the understanding of manifestations of transnationalism; in addition, accumulated symbolic capital and the struggle to dominate it, and thereby win a prestigious position in the field, can explain from a different perspective the manifestations of transnationalism, dynamics in the fields, and engagements in various transnational practices. For example, a better representation and advocacy of interests of Armenians in the country of residence brings prestige and honour, and thus, contributes to accumulation of symbolic capital. The aforementioned itself presupposes engagement in certain transnational activities. Moreover, this is also connected to the strategic nationalism which is a typical manifestation of long-distance nationalism for Armenians, and is expressed in concrete situations and contexts. Hence, the scope of analysis becomes broader, and also includes in the area of interest various factors influencing manifestations of transnational practices and engagements.

Bourdieu's concept of social fields and theory of practice have already been applied to some previous studies related to transnational lifestyles and incorporation of migrants into their host countries (e.g. Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 2008; Nowicka 2015); however, these studies mainly focused on the logic of social fields (the structure and functioning), and omitted the relational character of fields. Bourdieu himself

describes the field as bunches of relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 16). Therefore, the perspective of transnational social fields indicates the necessity and importance of studying the relational interconnectedness of those fields with other important aspects of transnational lifestyle, namely, with transnational practices and issues of belonging – interconnections which has been generally left out of the scope of similar research.

My own approach puts forward the importance of the interrelated and interconnected analysis of three important components and, to some degree, also consequences of transnationalism—fields, social practices and/or encounters, and self-identification. This kind of view and analysis is produced by the employment of the conceptual schema-triad 'configurations–representations–encounters' presented by Steven Vertovec (2009b, 2015). By applying this schema to my studies, I suggest to take into account the interdependence of configurations, encounters, and representations, instead of studying all of these separately.

This, in turn, permits insight into such questions as how social ties of migrants are formed, and why some of those connections endure over generations, whereas others fade away; or how encounters determine representations, and how the latter, in turn, serves as a conditioning factor for maintenance of social connections. In other words, Vertovec's schema opens the door to a complex interrelated analysis of the three domains suggested by the triad, which in my study correspond to *transnational social fields* and *local-diasporic fields* (configurations), *self-identification* (representations), and *migrants' social practices and engagements* (encounters). In addition, this approach reveals the significance of studying transnationalism not only at the level of social ties, that is, real social practices and encounters, but also at the level of representations. Transnationalism at the level of representations presumes attachments to the homeland through imagination, and is more typical to diasporic communities. In other words, it is a kind of social activity with an imaginary reference to the homeland – a characteristic point for diasporic consciousness (Gilroy 1994; Vertovec 1997). The latter, as Gilroy defines, indicates memories and imagination related to the homeland (Gilroy 1994, p. 207) that, in turn, have a considerable impact on the sense of belonging and self-identification. I, therefore, distinguish two different configurations – *transnational social fields* and *local-diasporic fields*. From this perspective, diaspora becomes a relevant and significant notion for my work, mainly represented as a category of practice.

There can often be an overlap between these two notions—transnationalism and diaspora—however, they do not address the same phenomena. Thus, from my viewpoint, transnationalism refers to real cross-border engagements and back-and-forth movements, whereas the notion of diaspora is with

regard to strong feelings and emotional attachments to the homeland which do not necessarily manifest in real engagements and social ties. The core distinguishing characteristic of diaspora is its specific consciousness. Therefore, I understand diaspora as a *type of subjective consciousness* which entails warm, tender, and revenant feelings for the homeland, however, it does not necessarily presuppose engagement in sustained or sporadic transnational activity and practices.

Thus, my research provides insight into a different viewpoint of transnationalism studies. Answering the questions as to which kinds of ties are transmitted from generation to generation, and under which circumstances and in which form transnational ties endure, this research shows that regular and intensive maintenance of border-spanning ties (Portes et al. 1999)—in every manifestation: travels, remittances, calls, letters, etc.—are not the only characteristics of transnational lifestyle. Besides, homeland-related activities and engagements do not need to be regular and sustained to be called transnational. Over time, transnationalism rather fluctuates, passing through increase–decrease intervals. The increase of transnational activity significantly depends on certain configurations and representations. For that reason, application of the conceptual triad of 'configurations–representations–encounters' to the studies of transnationalism provides the groundwork for a complex and interconnected analysis of the three domains which, in turn, serves as a basis for thorough understanding of the maintenance of transnational ties, and many other issues related to transnationalism.

1.2 Studying Armenian transnational ties and components of belonging: the research questions

The history of Armenian migration, and formation of the Armenian diaspora dates back to very early centuries, however, the massive wave of the diaspora formation began in 1915 (Tölölyan 2005). The Armenian diaspora is considered as a classical diasporic group (Ciffford 1994, Cohen 1997, 2008; Brubaker 2005; Baser and Swain 2009), and there exist a considerable number of studies regarding the Armenian diaspora which concentrate their attention on the process and history of the formation of the diaspora, development of relations between the homeland and the diaspora, etc.[4] Studies of the Armenian diaspora, thereby, focus rather broadly on the diaspora as a cumulative analytical category, mostly

[4] See, e.g. Meliksetyan 1985; Bakalian 1994; Tölölyan 2000, 2005, 2007; Dallakyan 2004; Manaseryan 2004; Aghanian 2007; Yeghiazaryan 2013. In detail review and analysis will follow in Chapter 3.

paying attention to such issues as the formation or construction of the diasporic identity, history of diaspora, the role of religion, etc. Another focus in diaspora studies, also with regard to Armenians abroad, is the diaspora politics (Shain 1994–1995; Sheffer 2003) and lobbying that they do in their countries of residence in favour and honour of the homeland. The existing research on Armenians in Germany[5] is also built upon the above-mentioned perspectives. Thus, aspects of transnationalism, maintenance of border-spanning ties on a daily basis, and, most importantly, research from the perspective of transnationalism by combining the different generations of Armenians goes beyond the sight of existing studies with respect to Armenians in Germany. From this point of view, this work makes a significant contribution to the realm of studies among Armenian communities in Germany by considering them from the perspective of transnationalism, and by revealing transnational practices and modes of cross-border engagements, maintenance of ties to the homeland, and by discussing modes of attachments and belonging simultaneously to the country of origin and to the country of residence, within cross-generational consideration.

The research and literature regarding the Armenian diaspora highlight that the Armenian communities, independently from the country of residence and the size of the population, as a rule, are recognized as being 'invisible' (e.g. Talai 1989; Bakalian 1994; Aghanian 2007). This claim is also relevant to Armenians in Germany (Dabag 1995; Ordukhanyan 2008), meaning they are not widely known to their host country. The reason for this invisibility may be the fact that Armenians do not make much 'noise', or, rather, they calmly and silently live their lives outside the country of origin. In addition, in some host countries, Armenians are not concentrated in certain residential areas, but are spread throughout the country (Talai 1989, Ordukhanyan 2008), which can also be a reason for this 'invisibility'.

A typical feature for Armenians all over the world is their maintained sense of Armenianness, reverent attitude, and strong emotional attachments to their ancestral land. Throughout their rich historical past, Armenians were often suppressed under a foreign domination that sought not only to conquer the territory of Armenia, and make Armenians change their religion—Christianity[6]—but also to physically exterminate them as a nation. Though violent evictions and massacres forced people to flee from their ancestral land, they have always maintained the sense of belonging to it. Due to their religion and unique language, Armenians have survived until today, carrying the history and traditions of one of the oldest nations in the world. Their sentimental attitude and attachments to their ancestral country have survived throughout history, time, and

[5] See, e.g. Dabag 1995; Hoffman 1997, 2005, 2007, 2011; Ordukhanyan 2008; Thon 2012

[6] Armenia was the first country to officially adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301 C.E.

generations, to which a great contribution have made the mightiest emblems of Armenian belonging – the Armenian language and religion, as well as the most powerful collective memories related to the accomplishments of the nation, and to the traumatic events in the history of Armenians.

Hence, what makes the Armenian case interesting and worthy of study? In comparison to the countries where Armenians settled down centuries ago (e.g. the USA, France, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, etc.), the Armenian diaspora in Germany is rather young and not that large (Dabag 1995, Ordukhanyan 2008). Due to being a young or an emerging diaspora, Armenians in Germany provide some compelling characteristics to study. First of all, the second generation is young which makes it interesting to study their sense of belonging and self-identification: though the family's influence on them can still be fresh, to some extent, they have already become parts of a quite large and diverse social environment. Second, as a young diasporic group, Armenians in Germany provide a good opportunity to study social formation and reproduction of social ties (transnational, as well as non-transnational). Third, Armenians in Germany are represented by generations of immigrants who came directly from the present Republic of Armenia, as well as those who immigrated to Germany from other countries where Armenians had already been a diasporic group. This fact makes the study of various forms of transnational attachments and components of belonging more varied and encompassing. Fourth, second-generation Armenians in Germany are, in fact, not home-raised. That is to say, the children, in general, were not sent back to Armenia (e.g. to grandparents) for long periods of time (e.g. whole vacations). In some cases, their first travel to the homeland took place already at the age of adolescence. This is an interesting point when studying second-generation transnationalism, and the types of connections to the homeland. From this perspective, the study of their transnational practices and linkages opens an interesting lens into the research upon second-generation transnationalism. And finally, the case of Armenians in Germany provides a good opportunity to observe the process of formation of diasporic consciousness, and consequently, feelings for and modes of attachment to the homeland. It points out that even young immigrant communities might already bear imprints of diasporic groups – be carriers of diasporic consciousness. The latter is expressed in strong feelings for the homeland, but not necessarily in real and sustained engagements in the daily life of the homeland.

Therefore, this research aims to study social formation and reproduction of transnational ties amongst Armenians in Germany (the first and the second generations) – it puts forth the questions as to whether or not, and which kinds of transactional activity/ties/practices survive over generations. Further yet, the goal of my research is to find out whether or not, and to what extent, transnational

engagements influence self-identification and the sense of belonging, and how this, in turn, impacts perceptions of components of belonging. My research thus also takes into its scope the question of durability of transnationalism. Here, I argue that although the social practices and lifestyles of the second generation are not the continuation of their parents' transnational involvements and connections to the country of origin, they still bear imprints of transnationalism.

1.3 Methodological framework and research methods

1.3.1 Data collection and analysis

This research focuses on 'transnationalism from below' (Smith and Guarnizo1998). This means, units of my analysis are individuals and their experiences, rather than organizations. To be more precise, participants of this research were the first- and second-generation Armenians who immigrated to Germany from the present Republic of Armenia, and those Armenians who came from a third country. From this perspective, those who arrived in Germany from some third countries were members of the second- and third-generation immigrants in their previous immigration countries, yet, in the German context, they have become first generation, and their children, correspondingly, second-generation immigrants.

The sample for this research is based on the rules of qualitative research sampling, which means it considers typical or case representativeness. I have chosen several criteria based on which my interview partners were included in this research. This kind of qualitative sampling is called *sampling according to prior-established or prior-determined criteria (criteria-based sampling)* (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2009, p. 178). It can also be known under the name of *purposive sampling* (Gobo 2004, p. 418; Guest et al. 2006, p. 61; Bernard and Ryan 2010, p. 362–365). Formerly determined sampling criteria allowed me to avoid, for example, including in my sample only those people who are transnationally active and, thus, more identifiable, than those who prefer not to engage in wide-range transnational activity. Therefore, the criteria for my purposive criteria-based sampling are the following:

- *Transnational activism*, under which I distinguish two categories – first, those who are transnationally active: regularly participate in community gatherings and other transnational evens, frequently engage in the activity of German–Armenian transnational associations, and sustain regular contacts with relatives in the country of origin. Second, those, who do not partake in the aforementioned activities on a regular basis, yet maintain some connections with the country of origin to some extent.

➢ *Generation*. My interview partners were representatives of the first and the second generations. In migration literature, there is a tendency to differentiate between 1.5 and second generations. The former refers to children of migrants born in the sending country and migrated with parents at an early age (e.g. Levitt and Waters eds. 2002; Faist et al. 2013). In contrast, the notion of 'second generation' points to the children of migrants who were born in the country of settlement. In their study, Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut combine these two categories referring to a broad operational definition of the second generation as "native-born children of foreign parents or foreign-born children who were brought to the host country before adolescence" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, p. 23). I apply their definition, and by 'second generation' mean both children of migrants born in the country of destination, and children born in the home country but migrated at an early age, which means, they attended school in Germany.

➢ *'Roots' or origin*, where I distinguish two categories of Armenians – *arevmtahays (*Armenian: *արևմտահայ* – translated Western Armenian) and *hayastantsis* (Armenian: *հայաստանցի* – translated Armenian from Armenia[7])**.** Notably, these terms have come out during the interviews.[8] *Arevmtahays* are twice or even multiply diasporized, which means before arriving in Germany, they had already been members of the Armenian diaspora, and immigrated to Germany not directly from the Republic of Armenia, but from a third country. *Hayastanstis* are those Armenians, who, respectively, arrived in Germany directly from Armenia. The origin of the name *arevmtahay* has two main sources: first, it is directly related to the language spoken among the Armenian diaspora. Two main branches of the Armenian language exist today – Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian.[9] The latter is spoken in the present Republic of Armenia, and Western Armenian, with its variations and branches, is spoken among the Armenian diaspora. The second reason for calling diasporic Armenians *arevmtahay* is also with regard to so-called Western Armenian territories – territories of ancient Armenia, constituting the Western part of the country, which nowadays officially belong to neighbouring countries. Correspondingly, people who left for other countries from those territories are associated with the lands of

[7] Armenia in Armenian is called *Hayastan (Հայաստան)*, and correspondingly, *hayastatsi* means an Armenian from Armenia.

[8] These categories were named during my fieldwork. Armenians who live in the present Republic of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora use these categories with regard to themselves and one another. Therefore, participants of my research also mentioned these notions with the same purpose – to refer respectively to those originally from Armenia, and those born in other countries. Thus, each group, speaking about themselves and the other one, uses the terms *hayastantsi* or *arevmtahay*.

[9] More details with regard to the Armenian language, its branches, meaning, and importance for Armenians will follow in Chapter 6.

Western Armenia, or are called Western Armenians or *arevmtahay* in Armenian. From the category *arevmtahay,* Syrian- and Iranian-Armenians took part in my research.

These two categories—*arevmtahay* and *hayastantsi*—create interesting analytical units, derived from specific ways of being and a sense of belonging for both. The importance of these categories is also expressed at the level of representations, perceived as categories of practice: self-identification and the sense of belonging are different for each category. *Arevmtahays* migrated to Germany already bearing diasporic consciousness; in addition, *hayastantsis* and *arevmtahays* have different habituses. These differences manifest in behavioural patterns and values of both. For example, the importance of maintenance of Armenianness, the religion and the mother tongue, have different interpretations for *hayastantsis* and *arevmtahays*. The latter values it more, in a sense, given the circumstances of their dispersal, or forced emigration of their ancestors from Armenia. The necessity and urgency to maintain the Armenian language and religion in a foreign land has been passed from generation to generation.

Thus, in general, I interviewed 35 first- and 27 second-generation Armenians. In addition, I have conducted interviews with 5 key informants, among which one pastor, two members and two leaders of German–Armenian associations. On account of the anonymity tenet, I will not mention the names of these associations.

In the very beginning, to set a starting point, I contacted German–Armenian associations where I was told about upcoming social events and gatherings venues of the Armenian community; furthermore, I was also provided some demographic data regarding Armenians in Germany, which served as a basis for deciding sampling criteria, as well as for the establishment of first contacts. My own social network, and the one of my acquaintances, also contributed to the process of 'discovering' Armenians. Due to the snowballing, I got acquainted with a considerable number of Armenians who corresponded to my predefined criteria, and who participated in actual interviews. In addition to the latter, many informal guided talks accompanied the whole fieldwork, and in the starting phases, they, together with a sizable number of pilot interviews, helped me revise and elaborate on the interview guideline.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews allowed me to gather information about my interviewees' everyday encounters, variety of practices and social environments, and also gave me the opportunity to disentangle components of Armenian belonging, and to find out further, whether transnational lifestyles have had any impact on my research participants' sense of belonging.

In parallel, I also conducted *participant observations*, which helped to better understand some behavioural patterns, and to study the lifestyle and some

transnational practices in the 'live-mode'. I attended all meetings of the Armenian community in Göttingen, as well as some events and community meetings in Berlin and Cologne. Regular meetings were organized on occasions of some Armenian national and religious holidays, for example, Christmas, Easter etc., and commemoration dates (e.g. commemoration day of the Armenian Genocide). In addition to community gatherings, I partook in some transnational events or activities, such as, demonstrations on the centennial of the Armenian Genocide (February–May 2015), and other initiatives of the Armenian youth in response to corresponding events and developments in Armenia (e.g. protests against electricity price augmentation in Armenia).[10]

Participant observations gave me the opportunity to observe daily lifestyle and practices of my respondents directly from inside, engaging in the atmosphere of both their everyday routine and specially organized activities. Nevertheless, my observations were not limited to the attendance of those community gatherings. I also maintained further informal contacts with some Armenian families and the second-generation youth, and thus took part in their informal meetings and friendly gatherings. This allowed me to enlarge the spectrum of my observations, and not to focus only on transnationalized environments where the atmosphere itself, and, particularly, the occasion of gathering by default and by some unspoken common agreement leads everyone to be transnational. For this reason, observations of ordinary daily life in respondents' common environments were of great importance to this research.

In addition to interviews and participant observations, I also conducted *thematic analysis of social network web-pages* of German–Armenian transnational associations. To begin with, I observed general thematics on these online pages, as well as topics of online communication and conversations. After that, I analysed activity around commemoration ceremonies of the Armenian Genocide centennial (February–May 2015), and a protest movement against the increase in electricity price in Armenia (June 2015), which got response among Armenians in Germany. I studied representations of transnational practices on online social networks, and observed how the latter contributes to the spread of transnational activity, and how they disentangle various aspirations and moods articulating around such a massive transnational activity as the 100-year commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. This virtual reality represents a unique transnational social field where symbolic struggles are especially prominently expressed.

I have applied the method of *thematic analysis*—a qualitative analytic method—to the interpretation of the empirical data (see e.g. Braun and Clarke 2006; Boyatzis 1998; Saldana 2009).

[10] Detailed description and analysis of these events will follow in Chapter 5.

The results of my analysis will be presented in a balanced text between analytic narrative and interview extracts.

1.3.2 Reflections on the fieldwork: an Armenian researcher studying the Armenian community

Implementation of the above-mentioned methods of research provided deep insight into the understanding of encounters and representations of my research participants, as well as configurations in the name of social fields, contexts, and situations, which, in turn, define, influence, and determine their practices, self-identification, and belonging.

I undertook fieldwork from March 2014 to October 2014 in Berlin, Cologne, Göttingen, and some other small towns in Lower Saxony. My choice of these cities/towns was conditioned by several factors: Berlin is the capital city, and thus a preferred centre for most transnational activities. Cologne has the largest Armenian community, and also, the centre of the Armenian diocese—*Saint Sahag-Mesrop Church (Սուրբ Սահակ-Մեսրոպ)*—is situated there. And finally, I have been living in Göttingen, which has given me the opportunity to make good acquaintances and connections with Armenians residing in the town and its surroundings. During this time period, I was conducting interviews in parallel with participant observations, nevertheless, even after that, I was still attending some social gatherings of Armenians, and was following the activity taking place on German–Armenian Facebook pages until July 2015, which included the period of discourse with regard to the Genocide centennial, followed by the protest movement against the increase in electricity prices in Armenia.

During my research trips, I was staying with some Armenian families, and our conversations upon my research topic were, thereby, not merely limited to the interview procedure: I had long, interesting, and fruitful discussions with my interview partners and their families around a cup of tea and/or dinner. My interview partners thus perceived me as a social scientist, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as an Armenian with whom it is possible to talk about their concerns, and to self-reflect on things. Some of them even expressed their great appreciation and interest in my research, for which I am very thankful to them. Their regard of my work filled me with enthusiasm and inspiration during the whole fieldwork process. The fact that I am Armenian myself, and doing research on Armenians living in Germany, played rather a constructive role in my fieldwork. My interviewees told me that they felt quite comfortable talking to me, and that they would not have been relaxed, had the researcher been a non-

Armenian. Armenians (perhaps as any other nation) tend to present mainly positive characteristics of their nation, and as some of my research participants stated, they would have never explained to a foreign person the things they had told me. In my opinion, the reason for this openness and honesty was the fact that being an Armenian myself, I shared the same collective memories with them, some pre–knowledge regarding the situation in Armenia, and the Armenian diaspora. I had the feeling that due to my Armenian origin, my interviewees were answering my questions more self-critically and self-reflectively.

Khachig Tölölyan, a famous diaspora scholar and an Armenian by origin, writes that researchers in the field of diaspora must know the people they study, their cultural and social life, and traditions. In addition, the social researcher must have knowledge about the history and formation of the people under study (Tölölyan 2012, p. 4). Anthony Jackson (1987) writes about 'fieldwork at home', and mentions a number of its advantages, in particular, that 'fieldwork at home' opens new insights into taken-for-granted facts, and fosters other researchers to approach their studies and objects of their study from a different perspective (Jackson 1987, p. 11). Though being an Armenian—born and raised in Armenia—I met the criteria mentioned by Tölölyan, I was still critically cautious accepting the information that had been explained to me. My research was not exactly at home in its literal meaning; nevertheless, it was among the community of Armenians, or, to put it differently, it was a 'fieldwork at home abroad'. Therefore, I was aware that my appearance among the research participants of Armenian origin, parallel to the aforementioned positive impacts, could also bear some danger of being presented the information which, as perceived by the interviewees, I might want to hear. At this point, the issue of distancing myself from my own Armenianness stood as a challenge in front of me. I encountered the following dilemma: even though my research participants mentioned that they were honest and open with me, I was bearing in mind that the inclination to highlight positive features of the nation may also have influenced their stories. In the course of this research, however, the dilemma was solved, and the puzzle was completed, due to the balanced information I received during my interviews and observations. Hence, with regard to different topics and from different people, I collected a considerable amount of critical comments (at times even a harsh critique) about Armenians: participants of this research were rather self-critically reflecting upon some Armenian ways of being, habitual behaviour, and manifestations of Armenianness, in general. The balance that my fieldwork provided between praise and criticism, in parallel with my own 'distanciation' (Jackson 1987, p. 14), assured me, in the end, that I was receiving an appropriate picture of the situation.

The interview language was Armenian. Talking to my second-generation interviewees, I was first asking about their language preferences, and their choice fell on Armenian. Supposedly, for some of them, this was an interesting challenge to demonstrate their ability to hold a conversation in Armenian with an unknown Armenian person. At the beginning of interviews, however, I always assured my second-generation informants that we can immediately switch to German at any time they felt uncomfortable. I was speaking simple Armenian – either avoiding difficult words or replacing them with German equivalents, so that even those with poor Armenian skills were able to answer my questions. At times we were in part switching to German, and then, back to Armenian: for example, they were suddenly using some German words or sentences; or I was myself switching to German, unable to find a simple Armenian word. Some German was also present during the interviews with the first-generation research participants; nevertheless, those were expressions from everyday life, or some German routine words which are principally easier to say in German than in Armenian.

Throughout this work, I quote interview excerpts in both languages – original Armenian and English translations. In some cases, very specific Armenian expressions have been used, and corresponding translations are more contextual and semantic than verbatim. I also use false names for my informants. It is thus easier to follow individual stories, and to make comparisons between different cases. According to the anonymity tenet/maxim, all the names appearing in this book are, of course, fictional.

1.4 Outline of the book

This work, based on the example of Armenians in Germany, highlights broader issues with regard to transnationalism, belonging, manifestations of diasporic consciousness, and other relevant issues. Drawing on the literature of transnationalism and diaspora, *Chapter 2* provides analytical frameworks for this book, touching upon various approaches and definitions of transnationalism and diaspora. The juxtaposition of these two concepts not only helps define points of intersection and divergence of transnationalism and diaspora, but also furthers the understanding of specificities of Armenian transnational activity, and manifestations of diasporic consciousness. Further, Chapter 2 reveals my approach to the study of transnationalism, belonging, and other related issues – with the application of the conceptual triad 'configurations–representations–encounters' of Vertovec (2009b, 2015). This shows that only a complex and interrelated analysis of each of the domains will provide a thorough understanding of aforementioned issues of research. From the perspective of my research, this means

that dynamics in transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields, on the one hand, and, social practices, encounters, and self-identification of migrants, on the other, are interconnected and interdependent categories of analysis.

With the purpose to provide a brief historical background to Armenian migration, and formation of the Armenian diaspora, I turn to *Chapter 3,* which presents three main waves of Armenian migration with their typical characteristics, and historical periods of Armenian diaspora formation. At this point, I discuss formation and development of homeland–diaspora relations in correspondence with three historical phases – the three republics of Armenia, established correspondingly in 1918, 1922, and in 1991—the last and present Republic of Armenia. The dynamics of homeland–diaspora relationships were becoming stronger and weaker during each of these periods, and they reached their peak mainly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and especially during the last ten–twenty years. This chapter also contains an important reference to long-distance nationalism which is closely related to diaspora and transnationalism. Here, I argue that the manifestations of Armenian long-distance nationalism, which I have named *strategic nationalism,* receive fuel from certain collective memories. In this realm, I distinguish three main aspects of the Armenian collective memory—past achievements, the Genocide with 'struggles' for the recognition and restitution, and the Karabakh conflict—which not only have a strong impact on the manifestations of Armenian strategic nationalism, but also determine the unification and solidarity of Armenians all over the world. Chapter 3 also contains some qualitative data on Armenians in Germany, German–Armenian associations, and their transnational practices. This provides a starting point for the analysis of my empirical data in the following chapters of this book.

Hence, *Chapter 4* focuses on the analysis of two domains of the conceptual triad – configurations and encounters. More precisely, the main points of interest here are daily encounters and social practices (transnational and non-transnational) of my research participants, and related configurations, namely transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields. The chapter accentuates the role of *contact recipients,* with respect to cross-border ties and engagements, and continuity of transnationalism. They determine the intensity and sustainability of transnational ties. I distinguish three types of these contact recipients – *priority* (parents and siblings)*, primary* (uncles, aunts, and cousins), and *secondary contact recipients* (friends). In addition, Chapter 4 also highlights that preferences of involvement in different social environments depend on the totality of a person's past and present encounters and experiences. In this realm, I distinguish two main umbrella categories among my second-generation informants – *children from the local environment* and *children from the family environment,* which serve as ideal types and analytical categories that help to understand the role and

importance of choices of one's social environment and manifestations of self-identification.

Chapter 5 refers to the analysis with regard to the third domain of the triad – representations. It is important to understand how a nation defines itself, and how such definitions impact social relations with others (Medrano Díez and Koenig 2005). Taking this argument as a point of departure, this chapter focuses on typical ways of being and self-identification of the research participants. Situating the research results in a broader scope, and drawing parallels with other research and literature on self-identification, the chapter identifies some characteristic Armenian ways of being which were determined by the research participants. On the basis of these ways of being, various modes of self-identification emerge. Furthermore, this chapter also touches upon another important mode of representation – the media. In this scope, it provides a general overview of German–Armenian online social networks, and distinguishes main characteristic themes articulated in these fields. Chapter 5 also includes the analysis of two cases of transnational activity represented by and on social media – commemoration of the Armenian Genocide centennial in April 2015, and a civic protest against the augmentation of electricity prices in Armenia. These cases highlight the role of online media in creating stances of representation, on the one hand, and on the other, its input in the process of the construction of virtual transnational social fields.

Following, *Chapter 6* provides insights on the components of belonging, and brings into the focus two core symbols and/or determinants of Armenian belonging – the Armenian language and religion—Christianity. In this scope, Chapter 6 examines the language as a system of communication and representation (Luckmann 1984), and also symbolic functions (Koenig 1999) of different linguistic habituses (Bourdieu 1991). The language provides a specific worldview, and thus determines a person's own representations. As a means for transmitting information, language can play a rather significant role in the symbolization of collective memories. For Armenians, their mother tongue and religion have historically been two powerful identifiers of Armenianness and Armenian belonging. Armenians living abroad, therefore, make every effort to maintain and to pass these treasures from generation to generation. The church undertakes a key role in this process which, to some extent, can foster the development of strategic nationalism. The vision of Chapter 6, then, moves to the realm of the sense of belonging, home and homeland, untangling interesting correlations between various perceptions of home and homeland, and focusing on how Armenia and Germany are associated with these notions. The chapter ends with reflections upon an interesting characteristic of Armenian transnationalism, named *fluctuating transnationalism,* which points out that transnational ties,

engagements, and activities change in increased–decreased intervals, in correspondence with back-and-forth travels, and events related to suitable situations for demonstrating strategic nationalism. The most pronounced examples are the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, and situations fraught with external threats to the Armenian nation.

By way of conclusion, *Chapter 7* finalizes the main findings of my research, pointing out some conceptual and empirical contributions of this work to a broader spectrum of research on transnationalism, continuity of transnational ties, sense of belonging, and other related questions. The chapter correspondingly contains some retrospective reflections on this research, and also suggests possible avenues for future studies.

This research, in general, fleshes out different types and modes of transnationalism, and provides a different view on the existing literature. These have allowed me to come out with new concepts and explanations on such a phenomenon as transnationalism.

2 Transnationalism and Diaspora. Analytical Frameworks

This chapter is devoted to some theoretical reflections on concepts regarding transnationalism and diaspora, and presents several core arguments. The chapter contains a review of various approaches in transnationalism studies, a summary of different definitions of the term, and focuses on differences between the notions of transnationalism and diaspora. This is followed by a discourse on durability of transnational ties, and, correspondingly, issues of second-generation transnationalism. In addition, I will present the conceptual triad 'configurations–representations–encounters' elaborated by Vertovec (2009b, 2015). I review the application of the model to the studies of migration-related issues, and thus take it as a conceptual-analytical base for my work.

The juxtaposition of transnationalism and diaspora studies is important, because it helps define points of intersection and divergence of these two notions. This conceptual framework provides the background for the analysis of my empirical data, and will further the understanding of specificities of Armenian transnational activity and manifestations of diaspora consciousness. Although my work is not directly about diaspora studies, the notion of diaspora is a significant and relevant factor as a category of practice at the level of representations. As the analysis in the empirical chapters of this book will provide evidence, diaspora consciousness plays a considerable role by influencing encounters, and also to a great extent determining representations. Also, as mentioned, I differentiate two categories of Armenians living in Germany—*arevmtahay* and *hayastantsi*—one of which (*arevmtahay*) has already had diasporic consciousness before establishing permanent residence in Germany. Meanwhile, *hayastantsis* find themselves either at the beginning, or within the process of formation of diasporic consciousness. The latter, at the level of representations, influences ways of being, encounters, perceptions, and dispositions of both immigrant categories.

To begin with, I will lay out the traditions and approaches in transnationalism studies and the definition of the term.

A. Chaloyan, *Fluctuating Transnationalism*,
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2.1 Transnational approach in studying migration

The term transnationalism started to capture attention among social scientists from the 1970s; however, it has become a popular and fashionable topic of research since the 1990s. The interest in such a new trend was conditioned by a new view on migration studies and migrant ties, which suggested viewing maintenance of migrant ties with the country of origin, and migrant practices in the receiving land in correlation with each other. It will provide more complete understanding of problems related to migration. Since then transnationalism research has included a variety of topics and directions – among them incorporation of migrants into the host country and simultaneous maintenance of social, political, religious, economic, and cultural connections to the homeland.[11] In this section I will first discuss whether transnationalism is a new phenomenon, or if it has been existing in parallel with history of migration; second, if maintenance of transnational ties is a common characteristic of all migrants;[12] third, transnationallism and assimilation debates, and fourth, specificities of second-generation transnationalism, and questions of its endurance over generations,[13] as well as other related topics of research.

Thus, the transnational approach goes beyond a one-sided focus on migration-related issues and encompasses a wide range of activities, and tries to concentrate on multiple cultural codes and 'homes' that may in parallel exist geographically, ideologically, symbolically, and emotionally (Wolf 2002, p. 257).

2.1.1 Traditions of studying transnational migration

Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004a; 2007) provide a summarizing theoretical synthesis of transnationalism scholarship which gives clear and thorough understanding of research traditions and directions in transnationalism studies. After this synthesis, they build a new approach on studying transnational

[11] See, e.g. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999, 2001, 2002; Glick Schiller 1999, 2005b; Levitt 2001, 2002, 2009; Portes et al. 1999, 2001, 2003; Vertovec 1999, 2002, 2004; 2009a; Al-Ali and Koser (eds.) 2002; Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo 2002; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2008; Guarnizo and Smith 2006; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 2008; Laguerre 2009; Lee 2011; Waldinger 2011; etc.

[12] See, e.g. Vertovec 2004, 2007, 2009a; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Morawska 2003a; Waldinger 2008

[13] See, e.g. Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Eckstein 2002; Foner 2002; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002; Letitt and Waters 2002; Perlmann 2002; Rumbaut 2002, Smith 2002; Morawska 2003b; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2008; Waldinger 2008, 2009; Levitt 2009; Wessendorf 2009; Lee 2011

connections—a transnational social field perspective on society (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, b; 2007). I will reflect upon the latter later, in the section on conceptual-methodological framework of my work, which directly links with the perspective suggested by Levitt and Glick Schiller. In following, I will briefly introduce the traditions of transnationalism research, which will, in turn, lead to the definition of the term itself. In doing so, I lean on works of Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller who have summarized existing directions in transnationalism research. Hence, they distinguish four traditions among scholars researching on transnational migration (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2007, p. 183–184; 2004a, p. 1004–1006)

- The research done by sociologists and anthropologists in the US
- Studies done by the Transnational Communities Programme based at Oxford University
- Studies of transnational families and kinship
- An effort to reformulate notion of space and social structure.

The US school of transnational migration studies focuses on homeland–hostland connections and issues of assimilation. Scholars following this tradition are interested in determining conditions under which migrants maintained homeland ties and identities and commonplace transnational practices among the migrant population as a whole.[14] In the scope of this tradition, some studies explore the relationship between migration and development, categorizing migration as a product of capitalism which makes small, non-industrialized countries dependent on migrant-generated remittances.[15]

The Oxford Transnational Communities Programme used a much broader definition of transnational ties than simply putting the accent on the land of origin and receiving country. Here scholars demonstrated that migrants are embedded in networks stretching across multiple states, and migrants' identities and cultural production reflect their multiple locations.[16]

The study of transnational families documents the way in which family networks constituted across borders are marked by gendered differences in power and status. Family networks maintained between people sending remittances, and those who receive them, can be fraught with tension. In the framework of this tradition, one of the focus areas is to what extent kinship relations

[14] See, e.g. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Smith 1998; Goldring 2002; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2002; Portes, Haller, Guarnizo 2002; Morawska 2003b; Levitt 2003
[15] See, e.g. Itzigsohn 2000; Landolt 2001; Portes 2003; Guarnizo 2003; Guarnizo and Smith 2006
[16] See, e.g. Castles 1998; Morgan 1999; Faist 2000a, b; Riccio 2001; Van der Veer 2001; Abelman 2002

influence migration decision making (see, e.g. Ballard 2000; Chamberlin 2002; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002).

The fourth group of scholars uses a transnational approach to migration *to challenge social theory* (see, e.g. Guarnizo 1997; Faist 2000a, b; Morawska 2001; 2003). They propose migration as structuration to indicate the continuing dynamic between structure and agency, which takes place in a transnational space.

This brief summary is very useful since it sheds insight on the field of transnationalism research, highlighting the main group of research questions and problematic transnationalism scholars have traditionally been addressing. From this point, the discussion will follow to the direction of various understandings and definitions of transnationalism. Although researchers and scholars in this field point out slightly different aspects of the phenomenon, their views coincide in some core ideas, which I will then present following.

2.1.2 Definition of transnationalism

As noted above, transnationalism is studied from different angles and aspects, and that is one of the reasons conditioning a multi-aspect definition of the term. It would probably be more correct and precise to say versatile and differing understandings of the phenomenon, rather than a multi-aspect definition of the term. This diversity of interpretations of transnationalism, however, points out more or less the common phenomena – combination of plural civic-political memberships, economic involvements, social ties and engagements in cultural, social, political and economic activities, which are not limited by any spatial, territorial or geographical borders.[17]

Apart from border-spanning engagements and activities, transnationalism literature indicates another important aspect of transnationalism—*simultaneity*—living a life and being present in more than one reality simultaneously,[18] feeling home at home and abroad.

The phenomenon of simultaneity leads transnationalism studies to consider movement and attachment at home and host countries, which rotate back and forth and change direction over time, as persons change their location, and depending on the context (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, p. 1011). Indeed,

[17] See, overview in Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller, Szanton Blanc eds. 1994; Smith 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Vertovec 2002, 2004, 2009; Levitt 2003b, 2004; Khagram and Levitt 2008

[18] See, overview in Vertovec 1999, 2009; Levitt and Waters eds. 2002; Menjívar 2002; Levitt 2003b; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, b, 2007; Glick Schiller 2005b; Khagram and Levitt eds. 2008; Wessendorf 2009, 2013

simultaneous attachments lie in the basis of transnationalism-related phenomena and issues. For example, simultaneously feeling at home in the country of residence and in the country of emigration (even maybe to different extents), identifying oneself as e.g. both German and Armenian at the same time, and feeling belonging not only to the country of origin, but also to the country of residence are important points of interest to scholars studying transnational migration. This thematic is also a core emphasis in my work, discussion of which in relation to the Armenian case will follow in the next chapters – in the analysis of the empirical data.

As mentioned, transnationalism has versatile and multiple interpretations. In the frameworks of this work I will summarize and present the most typical and relevant definitions of the notion. Thus, Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1992) describe transnationalism as a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. Taking simultaneous engagements as a point of departure, Glick Schiller et al. (1995) and Basch et al. (2008) suggest distinguishing *transmigrants* from migrants. According to them, only transmigrants live their lives across borders participating simultaneously in financial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political relations and getting involved in more than one reality. They live in a specific geographic place but yet occupy many social, political, economic, and cultural spaces simultaneously (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 2008, p. 261–272). Later on, the notion of transmigrant has been used also by other scholars (e.g. Guarnizo 1997; Glick Schiller 1999; Goldring 2002; Adick 2008).

Ideas of simultaneous presence here and there, and border-spanning engagements of various types are present also in Kearney's works (2000), however, from a slightly different viewpoint. The author distinguishes two different meanings embedded in the term transnational. One points to simultaneous occupancy in multiple locations crossing national borders, while the second aspect refers to the political, social, and cultural practices, whereby citizens of a nation-state construct social forms and identities that partly diverge from the cultural and political supremacy of origin nation-states (Kearney, 2000, p. 174).

Portes et al. (1999, 2008) insist that transnationalism should be regular and sustained, with long term contact, while Levitt (2002) prefers to envisage concrete continuum of transnational practices in which individuals may engage, rather than to refer to all-encompassing transnational being of migrants. The essence of both arguments is that border-spanning ties will fade away if they are not regular, which basically would mean they have no reference to transnationalism. Though I concede that regular and sustainable cross-border connections are important components of transnationalism, I still believe that the factor of sustainability should be re-discussed. Indeed, regularity and

sustainability of connections are strongly interconnected, nevertheless, connections can be regular but still less frequent. On this ground, I propose that in order for cross-border connections and ties to be called transnational, they do not necessarily need to be sustained and frequent. They might become sporadic and/or experience increase and decrease intervals, but not completely disappear.[19] From this viewpoint, I grant Levitt's statement, and emphasize the importance to consider that the continuum of transnational practices provides the opportunity of understanding preferences and encounters of migrants in a diverse reality. Thus, encompassing the continuum of transnational practices with regard to possible influence of these practices and encounters on the sense of belonging and self-identification already provides a wide spectrum for social analysis.

Steven Vertovec provides not only a thorough study of transnationalism, but also a profound overview of transnationalism research with reflections on different authors (Vertovec 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009a). He suggests multilevel explanations of transnationalism, viewing it as a *social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and (re)construction of 'place' and locality* (Vertovec 1999, 2009a, p. 4–13). In the following pages, a brief presentation of each will follow.

- Transnationalism as *social morphology***.** Transnationalism has to do with a kind of social formation spanning borders. In this realm, Vertovec, drawing upon Manuel Castells' (1996) analysis of the current Information Age, writes: "the network's component parts—connected by nodes and hubs—are both autonomous from, and dependent upon, its complex system of relationships" (Vertovec 1999, p. 3). This indicates the importance of diverse hubs and their relationships in interpreting transnational engagements. With regard to maintenance of transnational networks, the role of technologies becomes rather significant; nevertheless, it is important to note, that by emphasizing the importance of new technologies and developments in modern telecommunication, it is not meant that the latter create new transnational practices. What is here highlighted is the input of the current Information Age in the reconsideration and reformulation of social patterns that existed before. This has reinforced the transnational potential of diasporas, and thus made them more visible, due to a wide-range of opportunities for engagements and communication going beyond any kind of borders.
- Transnationalism as a *type of consciousness***.** Vertovec describes this as individuals' awareness of de-centred attachments, of being simultaneously

[19] My empirical data allow me to distinguish a specific characteristic of Armenian transnationalism, which I call fluctuating transnationalism and which I will touch upon in the following chapters devoted to the analysis of research results.

'home away from home', 'here and there' (Vertovec 1999, p. 5) or, for instance, Armenian and something else. Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc contend that the majority of migrants maintain simultaneous links to more than one country, and, as a rule, identify themselves with more than one nation which is derived from different identities they have (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc 1992, p. 11). The multi-locality and awareness of it fosters 'here-and-there connections' of migrants with others who share the same 'routes' and 'roots' (Gilroy 1993). A considerable role in this process surely belongs to the collective memory. The latter, in fact, becomes responsible for the formation of specific consciousness which is typical to diasporas.

- Transnationalism as a *mode of cultural reproduction.* Transnational ways of life often presuppose cultural translation and hybridity. This is mostly observed either through visual arts, music, and fashion, or simply through the process of socialization in culturally mixed environments (Vertovec 1999, 2009a, p. 7). It is to say, the children of immigrants are the primary targets or carriers of this mode of cultural reproduction. These young people can, however, consciously choose the behavioural and cultural patterns which would be more familiar to them. Therefore, they tend to bear diverse cultural heritages.
- Transnationalism as an *avenue of capital,* which in a nutshell means enriching social capital through and due to transnational corporations and cross-border involvements. The role of transnational corporations becomes especially crucial in this realm, since they are viewed as main contributors to and explanations for processes spanning territorial or geographical borders and national boundaries.
- Transnationalism as a *site of political engagement.* This mode of transnationalism points out that in parallel with social, cultural, and economic aspects of life, transnational approach can also be applied to political engagements. Moreover, Ulrich Beck mentions that national politics is not enough "to properly debate and resolve the new dialectic of global and local questions" (Beck 1998, p. 29). To understand and to address this dialectic the transnational framework is to be applied. Transnational political activism—of which most obvious and prime forms are international non-governmental organizations, the International Red Cross and different agencies of the United Nations—is winning more and more attention.
- Transnationalism as a *(re)construction of 'place' or locality.* Transnationalism has changed and challenged perceptions of place and locality. By simultaneous presence 'here and there' at any time, place and locality lose their classical meaning and perception. As a matter of fact, such notions as 'transnational social spaces' or 'transnational social fields' create trans-localities by

connecting and positioning social actors in more than one reality (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Castells 1996).

It is important to mention briefly the variety of terminology around notions of transnationalism and transnational. When the studies around the phenomena emerged (1990s), transnationalism was a prominent term. Thereafter, some variations of the notion appeared. For example, Thomas Faist distinguishes between *transstate* (Faist 2000c, 2008) and *transnational*. He uses the first term to refer to spatial factor of border-spanning connections, and the second term he refers to the human aspect of transnational migration, in other words, to migrants themselves. The term 'transstate' thereby indicates that the point of departure is not relations and spaces in between nations, but in between states and across states (Faist 2008, p. 79). Few scholars, however, followed his example (e.g. Fox 2005, p. 172). This is noteworthy because different terminology might be another reason for ambiguity around transnationalism; however, this explanation provided by Faist, dissolves and disentangles possible 'dark corners'. In my work I do not make a semantic differentiation between these two notions, and use the term transnational, referring to actions and practices of any social agents which go across borders.

Having discussed various viewpoints of the notion and phenomenon of transnationalism, in sum, I will emphasize two key aspects embedded in the term:

- ✓ simultaneity, i.e. simultaneous occupancy in multiple locations;
- ✓ multi-local engagements and ties, i.e. political, social, cultural; economic, civic practices stretching across borders.

I consider important, therefore, the focus on simultaneity in the sense of simultaneous 'presence' in various localities, and feeling homelike simultaneously in different places. From this point, I go back to the argument of Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004a, p. 1011), and especially emphasize the back-and-forth rotations of attachments in parallel with the change of location, context and circumstances. I strongly believe that those rotations impact not only the intensity of transnational activism, but also the sense of belonging.

Hence, summarizing the above-mentioned traditions of transnationalism research and versatile interpretations of the phenomenon, as a point of departure for my research, serve the tradition developed at Oxford University, and the tradition of reformulation of space and social structure. From this point, the three dimensions of transnationalism suggested by Vertovec are especially relevant – transnationalism as a type of consciousness, transnationalism as a (re)construction of 'place' and locality, and transnationalism as social

morphology. Coming out of these frameworks, *I view transnationalism as ties and connections of migrants, going beyond the country of residence (with any relation to the homeland), as well as the back-and-forth flow of material and immaterial resources binding to a common reality more than one locality and actors involved in it. The multiple localities these actors are involved in reflect their self-identification and the sense of belonging.* Therefore, in the scope of this work, I differentiate transnationalism at two different levels – at the level of social ties and encounters, and then at the level of representations. The latter is derived from and entails the diasporic consciousness. This means, ties to the homeland are assumed to be at the level of imagination. I will address this issue in the following chapters of this work.

2.1.3 New social phenomenon or the familiar transformed in its meaning?

After the first wave of euphoria around transnationalism, some researchers started questioning whether transnationalism is a new social phenomenon, or if it has always been a typical feature of migration. Indeed, migration movements are probably as old as the history of humanity. Immigrants have almost always to the greatest extent possible maintained connections (in this or another form) with their home countries. Is this not what transnationalism is supposed to be? What is new about it, then, that has made the phenomenon so popular among social scientists?

Glick Schiller, Levitt, and Smith distinguish several factors that make the situation of 'now' fundamentally different from the situation of 'before' (Glick Schiller 1999; Levitt 2001; Smith 2003). Among those counts:

- ✓ technological developments, and its effects on communication and travel;
- ✓ the shift to multiculturalism;
- ✓ the bulge of national identities which are not only determined by their reference to the nation-states;
- ✓ a new international human rights regime (named post-nationalism) which reduces the difference between 'nationals' and 'foreigners';
- ✓ a permit of dual citizenship in most countries.

Hannah Arendt also touches upon the question of the difference between 'now' and 'then'. According to Arendt, the point is embedded in the circumstances of having no home or of having two homes (Arendt [1951] 1996). Due to the fact that some countries accept dual citizenship, having two homes has become even legally possible. Therefore, simultaneously feeling homelike in two countries, in

this case, is not simply a consequence of having attachments to both countries. Migrants having dual citizenship are connected to the country of origin and to the country of residence with legal ties and obligations (if they are a citizen of both countries). Dual citizenship, however, is only one of the factors regarding differences between how migrant connections and ties to homelands were before, and how state-of-the-art is now. Another important factor which makes the simultaneous presence and participation in two realities possible, are rapid developments in information technology and means of communication.[20] A huge number of telephone operators suggest cheap tariffs for calling to different directions. Thus, a range of modern cell phones allow to have internet connection at every point of the world, and to connect people from different edges of the world into one 'time and space reality'. Therefore, the development of modern means of communication and information technologies is, as Vertovec observes, 'social glue of migrant transnationalism' (Vertovec 2004, p. 219–224). Due to a variety of means of communication, such as cheap phone calls, Internet, as well as online social networks, ties between home and host countries are becoming quick and more frequent. Today's migrants can communicate staying at home in any number of ways simultaneously.

Technical and technological changes and developments are surely important factors making 'now' different from 'before', by contributing to intensive and sustained maintenance of transnational connections. Still, I believe that what also makes the modern transnationalism specific, in addition to the mentioned factors, is the point that it has become a type of consciousness, as Vertovec puts it (Vertovec 2009a, p. 4–13). This type of consciousness points out individual's awareness of his or her complicated and entangled attachments, and of being simultaneously home away from home. In my contemplation, by merging borders of time and space, modern communication technologies contribute to the development of this type of consciousness, or in other words, it fosters the feeling and awareness of dual belonging.

To summarize, arguing around the question of whether transnationalism is a new social phenomenon, or something familiar transformed in its meaning, a few aspects must be taken into account. Even if transnational life existed before, it was not understood as such. Transnational perspective thus provides a new analytical lens to focus on what has not been seen before (Smith 2003, p. 725). Up to present, a number of social scientists study variety of transnational lives with the aim to discover new examples of it.[21] Thus, some types and ways of

[20] See, e.g. Vertovec 2004; Orozco 2005; Kane 2011; Bortoluzzi 2012; Greschke 2012; Hepp, Bozdag, Suna 2012; Pertierra 2012

[21] Hanagan 1998; Smith 1998, 2000; Glick Schiller 1999; Foner 1999, 2001; Morawska 2001; Portes 2001, 2003

transnational life are new, and the study of their manifestations makes contribution to transnationalism research and existing literature.

Another aspect to consider is the repetitive character of history. Regarding transnationalism, it is about new manifestations and interpretations of, to some extent, familiar social phenomena. Indeed, migrants have always been maintaining connections to their home countries; however, modes of these connections have changed. The content is the same— migrants are connected to homes—but first, the form and possibility of maintenance of connections is different, and second, multi-local and simultaneous engagements make certain impacts on migrants' consciousness. In other words, changes in the form have reflected changes in the content, and made social scientists pay attention to modern developments, and come up with questions about possible circumstances and impacts that these changes might bring to familiar meanings. Hence, the question to discuss is not whether or not transnationalism is a new phenomenon, but rather, what interesting aspects of studying a transnational perspective can offer.

2.1.4 Durability of transnationalism: reproduction of ties vs. fading connections

Transnationalism is a migration-related social phenomenon; however, opinions about endurance of transnational ties over generations vary. In the realm of studies of the second generation, three mainstreams of thought can be distinguished: scholars of the first mainstream thought speak about second-generation transnationalism,[22] and take as a point of departure the fact that migrant offspring to some extent engage in transnational activity. This might not totally repeat the transnational activity of the parents; nevertheless, the transnational lifestyle of the parents still influences migrant children. Others speak about second generation from the viewpoint of assimilation,[23] or acculturation,[24] or incorporation.[25] Smith, for example, even states that assimilation helps create transnationalism (Smith, 2002, p. 163). And finally, the third wing, in the name of Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald (2004), questions endurance of transnationalism over generations. They look at 'here-and-there connection' from a different point of view. Waldinger speaks about immigrant transnationalism (Waldinger 2011), but argues that here-and-there connections get attenuated over time and

[22] For a review, see Levitt and Waters eds. 2002; Khagram and Levitt eds. 2008; Levitt 2009; Lee 2011; Wessendorf 2009, 2013

[23] See, e.g. Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1997, 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Moya 2005; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2008

[24] See, e.g. Berry 1997, 2005, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut 2001

[25] See, e.g. Landolt 2001; Itzigsohn, Giorguli-Saucedo 2002 a, b; Levitt 2003b

generations, and loyalties transform from old to new homes (Waldinger 2008, p. 3–29). The essence of Waldinger's argument is that the continuance of transnationalism is in question, and that the future of most immigrant children will not be transnational.

In their concept of segmented assimilation, Portes, Zhou, and Rumbaut (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001) state that assimilation does not necessarily mean a total fusion (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, p. 44). Since they suggest that assimilation occurs partly, it could be presumed that some 'space' is left for transnational practices. Thus, children of migrants do not practice a transnational lifestyle with the same intensity as their parents (Portes, Zhou 1993). Nevertheless, they do not stay totally away from transnational lifestyle and maintenance of transnational ties either (Levitt 2009). Children of migrants are raised at the crossroads of several cultures, and as Levitt points out, having mastered these cultural repertoires, they can act selectively in response to the opportunities and challenges they face. Thus, as Jones-Correa notices: "transnationalism could continue, or even be rejuvenated and reinforced, among the second generation owing to the continued influx of first-generation immigrants from the country" (Jones-Correa 2002a, p. 220).

My own view, however, is that putting transnationalism and any of these categories on the same level is not methodologically quite correct, for they relate to different processes. Transnationalism refers to types, intensity, and ways of connections crossing borders of the country of residence, whereas the other notions cover the realm of the immigrant and host country relations in different spheres. Ultimately, they are not contradictory. Immigrants might have completely incorporated cultural values and behavioural patterns of the host country, and may in parallel maintain connections to the homeland, and have attachments to it. Even if those connections are symbolic, transnational ties do not disappear with progressive incorporation. I presume, therefore, that the factor of incorporation into the country of residence alone cannot determine the endurance of transnationalism over generations, or the sustainability of transnational ties. I will further elaborate on this argument in Chapter 4, drawing deductions from my empirical data.

Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo and Lee in their works categorize transnationalism in terms of the continuance of transnational ties. Thus, Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo distinguish three types of transnationalism (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2002b, p. 899).

- *'Linear' transnationalism*, which refers to connections of migrants with families and relatives at home countries. These connections include remittances, travels, conversations, other types of connections, etc. 'Linear' transnational ties might weaken in course of time.

- *'Resource-dependent' transnationalism*. This type of transnationalism affirms that transnational practices depend on resources. Newcomers are normally short of them, and from this point of view, transnational practices increase in parallel with incorporation into the country of residence. Transnationalism emerges when migrants have enough resources to engage in transnational activity.
- *'Reactive' transnationalism* considers transnational practices as reactions to negative experiences of incorporation. In this case, transnational practices serve as a compensation of frustration and/or discrimination that migrants may experience in the host country. Transnational engagements and activities help them regain the feeling of self-realization.

Helen Lee, studying transnationalism of second-generation Tongans in Australia, identifies another three specific forms of transnationalism – *intradiasporic, indirect, and forced transnationalism* (Lee 2011, p. 303–309).

- *Intradiasporic transnationalism* reflects not only connections between homeland and host country, but also across the diaspora, and translocal connections between different population clusters within a single nation. These ties are especially important for the sense of national belonging (Lee 2011, p. 303).
- *Indirect transnationalism* refers to indirect attachments to the country of origin (Lee 2011, p. 306–307). In other words, this type of transnationalism reflects emotional attachments of second-generation migrants. For example, they could have never travelled back to the country of origin of their ancestors or never send any remittances, but they still somehow associate themselves with that country. They might have been maintaining some connections with relatives or friends through various forms of communication, such as phone or Skype calls, e-mail, or via various social network web-sites, even letters, etc. What Lee calls indirect transnationalism, is linked to *emotional transnationalism*—a notion Wolf (2002) proposes, referring to second-generation Filipinos in the United States. Emotional transnationalism goes beyond direct transnational engagements with the country of origin, and reflects emotional attachments and belonging to the nation of ancestors.
- *Forced transnationalism* can overlap with some forms of indirect transnationalism, and the sense of 'forced' here refers to the lack of choice of the second generation (Lee 2011, p. 308, 309). Therefore, forced transnationalism may have several variants of manifestation: first, when migrants send remittance to families and relatives left in home countries, driven from the sense of duty to remain loyal to the family. Second, it may express itself through donations to the church or other kinds of transnational organizations, which struggle for maintenance of national cultural and historical heritage and/or national traditions. Third, a specific manifestation of forced transnationalism can be sending children to the

country of origin – to grandparents or some other relatives for a certain period of time. In this case the motivation is to introduce the culture and history of the homeland to children, and thus to prevent forgetting one's roots and origins. Time spent with the 'environment of origin' can contribute to a faster and better incorporation of 'native' norms and patterns of behaviour. In this case, 'root incorporation' is not a result of the children's own choice.

These typologies show that when speaking about the durability of transnationalism, the factor of time should not be viewed only as the reason for fading connections. Throughout time transnational ties might not only decrease, but also increase (e.g. 'resource-dependent' transnationalism). Portes et al. (2002, p. 289) also point out that people who are residing for a longer time in another country, are more likely to engage in transnational activities. Thomas Faist (2000a, p. 200) comes out with the similar assumptions that migrants and refugees, who have settled down in countries of residence for a long time, still have transnational links with countries of origin. Thus, when discussing the endurance of transnationalism, it is important not to take as a point of departure the assumption that in the course of time transnational connections and practices fade away. The process can take also the opposite direction – transnational practice might increase parallel to time spent in the country of residence.

Transnationalism, indeed, is quite a broad term, which includes various domains – cultural, economic, political, social, and emotional, etc. As mentioned earlier, referring to transnational practices, it is important to specify which ones they actually relate. This statement becomes especially relevant in the scope of research on second-generation transnationalism. Moreover, the first and the second generations might express different interests in the spheres of transnational activity. Hence, Joel Perlmann (2002) and Jones-Correa (2002a) argue that transnational practices in the cultural domain are more common among the second generation, than say in the economic domain. According to Jones-Correa, in the cultural sphere, everyone is potentially transnational (Jones-Correa 2002a, p. 232). In other words, it is more probable that second-generation migrants will involve in cultural transnational activities, rather than practice economic modes of transnationalism. In addition, even highly incorporated migrants of the second, third, and fourth generations to some extent and in some ways periodically practice transnational activity related to cultural and historical heritage of ancestors. For example, generations of Armenian diaspora all over the world, even those who do not master Armenian language, and have never been in Armenia, actively partake in discussions and organized activities (sometimes they appear not merely in the role of a participant, but as active organizers) around different issues and problems concerning Armenia. A primary example is the

issue of the worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and a range of activities related to it.

To conclude, my statement regarding the discourse on endurance of transnationalism and its reproduction in the second generation is that children of migrants are, to some extent, transnational. However, I also argue that transnational practices and linkages with the home country are not the dominant activity of the second generation. Transnational practices, manifested as sustained cross-border relations, are, in fact, not the core characteristic of the second generation's everyday routine. Interestingly, this point is to some extent true for both generations: for some, transnational practices might occupy more 'space' in the routine of daily life, for others, less; however, they exist and do not completely vanish. Therefore, engagement in transnational activities on a daily basis is not at all a necessary condition to maintain attachments to the homeland. Such transnational connections at the level of imagination are typical to diasporas. Thus, the latter have strong feelings toward the homeland, and are interested in its daily life and events happening there; even though they may not be transnationally very active.

2.1.5 Transnational social fields as analytical categories

The concept of transnationalism, as stated, suggests that migration needs to be studied, taking into account linkages of migrants to countries of origin. In this logic, the continuum of studies includes some over-territorial space, where transnational activities and flow of resources take place. From this perspective, everyday practices, movements, and interactions of migrants create a sort of over-local social space. Due to transnational practices and transnational activism, the contemporary world is becoming more and more deeply interconnected, and various realities are getting bounded in transnational coexistence, which makes possible a simultaneous presence in different social spaces. Beck describes this as 'social proximity in spite of geographical distance, or, social distance in spite of geographical proximity' (Beck 2000, p. 105).

Referring to these over-territorial spaces, literature on transnationalism proposes two main terms – transnational social spaces[26] and transnational social fields.[27] Both concepts open up a broader view on connections and processes occurring between immigration and emigration countries. Methodologically,

[26] For overview of the authors and term usage see, e.g. Faist 2000a, 2008; Pries ed. 2001, 2008; Jackson et al. 2004; Faist and Özveren 2008; Faist and Sieveking 2011; Charsley 2012; Faist et al. 2013

[27] Goldring 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Levitt and Glich Schiller 2004 a, b, 2007; Basch et al. 2008; Nowicka 2015

they provide the possibility to study simultaneous involvements in more than one reality or 'here-and-there presence'. Multi-local engagements prove the above discussed: transnationalism and such categories as e.g. incorporation into the host country do not belong on the same plane of analysis. To put it succinctly, incorporation into a host society, and simultaneous maintenance of connections to the country of origin are not diametrically opposite, and do not exclude one another. Back-and-forth movements, 'here-and-there connections' are the result of transnational migration, and, thereby, are one of the most important 'construction materials' of transnationalism. Here is how the explanation of the notions appears in transnationalism literature.

Transnational social spaces are dense and durable configurations of social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts. They structure everyday practices, social positions, and identities, and exist beyond the social context of nation-societies (Pries 2001, p. 5, 23). Faist et al. see transnational social spaces as social formations which arise due to transactions of migrants and other agents across borders (Faist et al. 2013, p. 2). Having been formed due to concatenated cross-border ties and practices (Faist et al. 2013, p. 53), these social formations enter the second phase of development manifested in new forms of border-spanning links which create and develop second and further generations (e.g. by combining cultural practices from different countries) (Faist 2000a, p. 201–202).

In parallel, literature offers, nevertheless, another concept regarding the research on multiple engagements and connections of migrants – the concept of *transnational social fields*. Authors (see references above) draw on the concept of fields of Pierre Bourdieu Bourdieu (1984, 1992, 1993). According to Bourdieu, a field is an 'open space of play with dynamic borders which are the stake of struggles within the field itself' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 104). It is a zone of social activity in which there are actors who create a certain kind of cultural product (Bourdieu 1993). The boundaries of a field are dynamic, and the field itself is created by the participants who are joined in struggle for social position. This is an analytical concept which can be applied to studies and analysis of actions and social practices of social agents. The fact of belonging to a certain field determines an actor's social practices, preferences, and dispositions.

Thus, from the perspective of border-spanning and over-territorial 'places', transnational social spaces and fields indicate similar phenomena – various connections between the sending and the receiving countries through number of immigrants' transnational ties and engagements. I believe, nevertheless, that the notion of transnational social fields enlarges the spectrum of analysis, by accentuating certain sort of capital articulating in the field, positions of actors, and back-and-forth movements of those actors throughout the field. In

this work I will lean on the notion of fields, differentiating *transnational social fields* and *local-diasporic fields* of my research participants, which correspondingly include (and are based on) real transnational connections, and those social ties which do not literally 'travel' beyond the borders of the residence country, nevertheless, the transnational character of those contemplate the level of imagination (peculiar for diasporic communities with subjective diasporic consciousness). A detailed description of these fields will follow in Chapter 4, in the section devoted to the analysis of configurations. In addition, the notion of transnational social fields, with the reference to Bourdieu's concept of fields, allows the analysis of immigrants' encounters, representations, and configurations, and takes into account the interconnection and interrelation of these aspects.

Indeed, the concept of social fields has a great input in the study of transnational migrant ties, as it makes clear that the incorporation into a host country and enduring transnational attachments are not binary opposites. Moreover, as Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron argue, application of the concept of social fields to the studies of transnationalism allows one to overcome the conceptual impasse created by some definitions of transnational processes, according to which transnationalism creates a sort of 'third space' between sending and receiving countries (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999, p. 356). My study confirms this argument, and assumes that to engage in transnational practices, migrants do not necessarily need to appear in a 'third space'. In parallel with Glick Schiller and Fouron, I also emphasize that the transnational lifestyle and border-spanning connections do not oppose national aspirations. They go hand in hand, and are parallel to each other, and in the case of Armenians they strengthen and/or weaken where nationalistic aspirations might find proper fuel for their manifestation depending on the context and situation.

Applying Bourdieu's terminology further, I consider habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1990, 1993) an important factor in being able to explain preferences of social practices and daily encounters, as well as transnational activity and engagements. Moreover, issues of self-identification, belonging, preferences of social encounters, and thus durability of some transnational practices are interconnected; and factors conditioning and determining one may influence manifestations of others.

Taking the above mentioned as a point of departure, I apply the notion of social fields, distinguishing transnational social fields, and local-diasporic fields. This allows me to analyse my data from the point of interconnection of migrant encounters and practices, self-identification, and the sense of belonging. In doing so, I employ the conceptual triad of 'configurations–representations–encounters' as presented by Vertovec (2009b; 2015), and then analyse my empirical data in the framework of its interrelated domains. By applying the triad to the study of

transnationalism and related issues, I propose that in order to have complete perception of the phenomenon, it is necessary to study configurations (transnational and non-transnational social fields, situations, contexts that immigrants engage in), practices and encounters of migrants, and various modes of representation (self-identification, identification of others, representation in media) not as separate research domains, but as a whole – taking into account their mutual influence on one another.

2.1.6 Conceptual triad of 'configurations–representations–encounters' in transnationalism studies

Description of the triad's domains and their relevance to the studies of transnational migrant ties

The conceptual schema of 'configurations–representations–encounters' in the works of Vertovec refers to studies of diversity, and contributes to thorough understanding of modes of social differentiation. It is a unique guide for scholars whose research is about complex social environments. I take this conceptual model, or analytical triangle, and employ it to the study of transnationalism and transnational ties. Moreover, I build the analysis of my empirical data within the framework of this model. In the following, I will briefly present the model with its three domains, showing their correspondence and possible application to transnationalism studies. To do so, I will separately discuss domains of configurations, representations, and encounters, first presenting how Vertovec defines each domain, and after explaining my approach of how and in which sense I apply each of the mentioned domains to my study.

Domain of configurations refers to the structural conditions within which people carry out their lives (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). It includes articulations of power/status, political economy, opportunity structures, segregation, stratification, etc. Following this logic, and employing it to the study of transnationalism, transnational social fields, and local-diasporic fields, I refer to in my work, represent such configurations. Thereby, in the framework of my research, the domain of configurations corresponds to social fields. A field, as Bourdieu defines it, is a mediation between the practices of participants and the surrounding conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 105) where those who take part in the dynamics of the field (whom Bourdieu analogically also calls players) apt to increase or to conserve the sort of capital they possess. This happens due to an agreement that it is worth to play (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 98, 99). Applying this terminology of Bourdieu to my research, I consider transnational social fields to be explicit configurations in which migrants engage

during their daily routines. They 'play' transnationalism and 'struggle' to maintain the symbolic capital they own – Armenianness.

The concept of transnational social fields is encompassing, and shows the wide range of cross-border connections not specifying types of transactions: for example, some might travel, others might call on phone, or use other means of telecommunication. In this scope, it is an interesting and new attempt to study engagements of migrants in certain types of activity. Levitt and Waters, hereby, argue that "the more diverse a transnational social field is, the greater the number of ways within which migrants can remain active in their homeland. The more institutionalized these relationships become, the more likely it is that transnational membership will persist" (Levitt and Waters eds. 2002, p. 10). I partly follow this claim, however, I do not intend to mean that those with stronger social ties will be more transnationally active than those with weaker connections.

Domain of representations, as presented by Vertovec, refers to the conceptual ordering of the world, social concepts and categories, frames, cultural idioms, etc. (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). To put it otherwise, representations are social constructs or social constructions of reality. There are as many different interpretations of the reality as there are social actors. In the scope of my research, I view representations as self-identification of social actors, and as the identification of others by the same actors. In the role of others may appear Germans, Armenians, as well as anyone else. In this sense, of particular interest are the ways in which social actors construct images of themselves, other Armenians (both living in Germany and in Armenia), and Germans, and how they relate or distance themselves from those images. Hereby, I place those images and the modes of their construction by social actors in the domain of representations. In addition, social media is an important and interesting mode of representation: on the one hand, it can be a 'constructor' of the reality of social actors, which will influences encounters in transnational social fields, and on the other hand, social media is a suitable arena for social actors to present themselves, and follow representations of others. In this sense, I consider the analysis of (transnational) activity in the scope of social media as an important part in the domain of representations.

Domain of encounters refers to actual interactions, and how different modes of relation to each other changes attitude (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). In the framework of my work, I place social practices of actors into the domain of encounters. The range of these social practices is quite large, as it varies from daily routines, transnational activity and engagements, back-and-forth travels, and cross-border engagements to institutionalized transnational activities, or organized work of transnational associations.

The following figure schematically describes the conceptual model 'configurations– representations–encounters', and reflects its essence. The two-sided arrows, situated between the triangle's domains, indicate interconnectedness and mutual influence of each domain. The figure also shows the correspondence of each domain to analytical categories in my research. Therefore, in addition to representing the model itself, the figure below also reflects my own approach to the implication of the model. Ultimately, it embodies my argument that transnational social fields, local-diasporic fields, situations, contexts, etc. that immigrants engage in, social practices and encounters of migrants, and various modes of representation, should be studied in relation to each other and not separately. I consider that doing so will provide a thorough explanation of self-identification specificities which will lead to better comprehension of the sense of belonging. Moreover, this analysis will provide better opportunities and possibilities to research whether, and to what extent, transnational engagements might impact components of belonging, or whether transnational ties pass from generation to generation (and if yes, which ties survive).

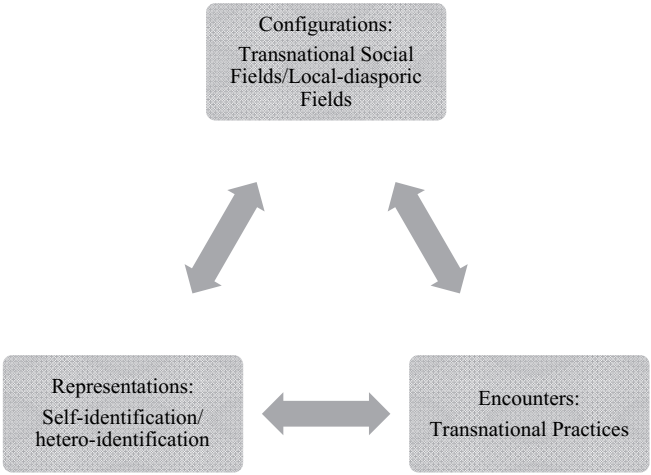

Figure 1: Conceptual triad 'Configurations–representations–encounters': application in transnationalism studies

As the figure shows, three domains of this analytical framework are interconnected, and each one is a necessary condition for the existence of the other. In other words, structural conditions, in which interactions take place, are conditions for construction of corresponding reality or for categorization. Moreover,

structural conditions and categorizations (configurations and representations) are the basis for encounters which take place in the given structural conditions. Thus, three angles/corners of the above-presented triangle strongly determine the existence of each other. The same logic determines interrelation of transnational social fields, self-identification, and transnational practices. On the one hand, transnational social fields are 'structural frames' for various transnational practices; on the other hand, these practices shape transnational social fields. Self-identification and identification of others occur on the basis of interactions and practices, and it depends on the structure and features of the field within which actors interact with each other. Moreover, actors construct their self-identification and identify others based on their own experience and practices in the fields. As Vertovec (2015) mentions, this triad is a conceptual schema, a methodological abstraction, and, as such, provides methodological insights to studying transnationalism and phenomena related to it.

Thus, a starting point for my analysis is neither configurations, nor encounters, nor representations separately, but the interdependence of all of these by taking into consideration important factors such as past dispositions of migrants, the social context in which those dispositions have emerged, and in which encounters took place. In other words, it considers the role and possible impact of diaspora consciousness, images of the homeland, and collective memories on social formation, and reproduction of social (transnational and not) practices. This provides better comprehension of the Armenian case, as I will show in the following, that collective memory of the past has had quite an important and specific impact on self-identification of Armenians, and that the articulation of Armenianness and patriotic aspirations (these are strategic aspirations, the engine and basis of which is strategic nationalism) might become a subject for symbolic struggles (who will better represent Armenians, who will better contribute to development of friendship and relations between both countries, etc.).

Interconnections of actors' practices, habitus, and social fields apply another perspective to the study of transnationalism. It is a key point to better understand the process of social formation of migrant ties, and the interconnection among migrants' encounters, their self-identification, and social fields they are involved in. From this perspective, in order to understand transnational connections and their endurance over generations, a complex study of migrants' practices (transnational and non-transnational), their habitus (a result and cause of ways of being), and social fields (transnational and diasporic) is necessary. This kind of approach contributes to the studies of transnationalism, transnationalism literature, and to theoretical heritage of Bourdieu.

Some previous studies in the field of migration and transnationalism have applied the concept of social fields, referring to Bourdieu; [28] however, the main focus of these studies is on the concept of the social fields itself, and the modes of its employment in studying transnationalism and migration. They use the concept of social fields to describe activities and movements of transnational actors, but do not focus on interconnection of these fields with encounters and representations of actors.

The role of habitus within the triad

Proceeding with the analysis of the triad and its relevance to transnationalism studies, I assume that habitus plays an important role in understanding the above-described interconnectedness. It is present in every domain and simultaneously conditions the existence of the others. As Bourdieu explains, habitus is "internalized and converted into disposition structures, as well as a set of historical relations that generates meaningful practices, and perceptions that give meaning" (Bourdieu 1984 p. 166; 1993, p. 16, 97). In other words, habitus is a system of dispositions that generates and organizes perceptions, practices, and representations (Bourdieu 1990, p. 53). It is a specific schema of perception, appreciation, and action (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 16).

As Bourdieu elaborates on his statement: "habitus is not only a structuring structure *(modus operandi)*—a condition for practices and perceptions of practices—but it is also a structured structure *(opus operatum)*" Bourdieu 1984, p. 166–167). It is a precondition for practices and dispositions, and at the same time, it is structured by dispositions, which generate practices (Bourdieu 1990, p. 63). Practice is a subordinate category and does not possess the same capacities of structuring and being structured at the same time (as habitus does). Thus, various aspects of practices must be interpreted as analytical categories inherent to the habitus (Nowicka 2015, p. 13). In other words, ways of being determine practices, and also perceptions of these practices.

Therefore, I claim that the habitus is an explanatory factor for a person's ways of being (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004a), which shows the connection between configurations and individual practices. In this realm, as Levitt and Glick Schiller suggest, two main categories should be distinguished – *ways of being* and *ways of belonging* (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004a, p. 1010). The authors refer *ways of being* to actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in, and not to the identities associated with their actions. *Ways of belonging* re-

[28] Goldring 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Levitt and Glich Schiller 2004 a, b, 2007; Nowicka 2015

late to connections to homeland mostly at the level of consciousness which can be manifested through memories, nostalgia or the feeling of homesickness. To put it differently, ways of being are preconditions for social practices and self-identification of social actors, whereas, ways of belonging refer to the attachments to the homeland, and feelings of being home at one place or another. I use the notion of ways of being to describe peculiarities of self-identification of migrants, admitting that ways of being and their interpretation/perception are the basis of self-identification.

Coming out of the connection between ways of being and habitus, I presume that the latter plays a determinant part in a person's own choice of his or her social environment. This choice does not only depend on his or her inherited capital and cultural heritage, but also on the cultural, social, and symbolic capital of the ones whom this person intends to involve in his or her social environment. In other words, preferences of social environment depend firstly, on totality of person's past and present circumstances and experiences, and secondly, on representations of those circumstances and experiences. On the one hand, the habitus is a result of incorporated structures (configurations), imagined and real images, memories, and perceptions (representations), and thus it is a condition for existence of a transnational field. The latter, indeed, exists due to various representations—conceptual orderings—as for example, the homeland image (real and mythical), representations of Armenianness, and ways of being. In parallel, practices drawn from and conditioned by these images, identifications and memories are also determinants of the fields. On the other hand, the field and representations, in the above-mentioned categories, determine the habitus. Hence, these considerations bring me back to my initial argument; that is, to understand each of these notions thoroughly, researchers should study them in relation to each other.

To summarize, I employ the model of 'configurations–representations–encounters' as a conceptual-analytical framework for this book. The three domains of the model are interconnected, and each domain, simultaneously, is a condition and reason for the existence of other two. Consequently, various social ties and practices actually construct transnational fields, but at the same time they are determined by the field. Representations that agents have of their own selves and of other social agents flow out from their practices/encounters, which take place in the frameworks of this configuration, or another. Moreover, as Bourdieu notices, representations are products of a schematic system of perception and appreciation (Bourdieu 1990, p. 139). They are products of habitus. Simultaneously, habitus determines 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' encounters. Respectively, representations *are socially constructed* on the basis of these encounters. The application of the traid-schema gives thorough understanding of

interconnectedness of contexts, agents, practices, images, memories, identifications, and reflections upon all of these.

Thus, after presenting the concept of transnationalism from different perspectives, and my conceptual-analytical approach with the application of the triad 'configurations–representations–encounters', I will proceed with the next subchapter devoted to disentanglement of the notion of diaspora, and some comparative statements regarding diaspora and transnationalism.

2.2 Who are diasporas and why are they transnational?

As stated earlier, diaspora is important for my studies as a category of practice and from the point of representations, since diasporic consciousness influences a rather large spectrum of relations regarding my research participants, as will be shown later.

This part of my work is devoted to the definitions of the term diaspora, and to discussions on some overlapping points of the terms diaspora and transnationalism. In literature, the terms 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' are often used interchangeably, or overlap each other. Indeed, it is not easy to separate the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism in any meaningful way, mainly because it is hard to imagine a diaspora which is not transnational, or which does not engage in any transnational activity at all. However, the two terms differ in the meanings and phenomenon they signify. First of all, speaking about diaspora, the idea for any reason of a dispersed population crosses the mind, while dispersion is not a determinant for transnationalism, as such. Second, the term diaspora refers to a community or a group, and has been widely studied in the scope of history and literary studies, whereas the concept of transnationalism, in the name of transnational spaces, fields and formations, refers to processes that go beyond borders, and thus appears to describe more abstract phenomena, as over-territorial and de-centralized 'places' and connections.

Before going further with the discussion of possible confusion regarding the notions of transnationalism and diaspora, as well as similarities and differences between these two concepts, it is important to define the term diaspora, especially taking into account the detailed explanations of transnationalism in the previous subchapter.

2.2.1 Concept of diaspora

Diaspora is an old concept of which the usage and meaning have faced some changes nowadays, taking into account challenges of current developments in

social sciences and modern approaches to the study of migration and related issues. Many social scientists, historians, and even politicians have devoted their works to the studies of diaspora, and there are a number of definitions of the term, and correspondingly, different opinions on which criteria are essential for the formation of diaspora.[29]

Originally, the term diaspora referred to historic experience of particular groups, and the classical diasporic groups have been the Armenians, Jews, and Greeks.[30] Later it started also including religious minorities in Europe. Nowadays, the usage of the term diaspora has expanded, and it is used to describe almost any immigrant community and dispersed population of various types. However, the important precondition for diaspora formation was and is dispersion. It is still important to note that although dispersion and diaspora are interconnected or interrelated, they do not indicate completely the same meaning, or the same phenomenon. Dispersion is a reason and basis for diaspora formation, but not all dispersions become and/or form a diaspora. As mentioned earlier, diaspora is not a term with a clear and univocal dimension. Its various definitions might cause confusion about which specific characteristics of the diaspora differentiate it, for example, from other transnational communities and immigrant groups.

Thus, the fact of population dispersal is one of the main characteristics of diaspora, more precisely, forced dispersions of the population in the past, or exile, or even annihilation, related to the religious realm (Cohen 1997, 2008; Brubaker 2005; Dufoix 2009; Tölölyan 2012). In addition to dispersal, another characteristic, typical for a diaspora are peculiar links or attachments to the homeland. Thus, in his definition of a diaspora, Shain emphasizes common national origin and a distinct status of belonging to the homeland, irrespective of the real place of residence and citizenship (Shain 1994–1995, p. 813). The Armenian diaspora perfectly fits the mentioned criteria of dispersion, origin, and specific links to the homeland. It has the same national origin, and, for the most part, was formed because of exile, or as the result of numerous attempts of annihilation of the nation as a whole. Regarding the Armenian diaspora, exile is a consequence of forced deportation of population, and escape from violent

[29] There is still a huge range of literature on diaspora, here are the most important concepts, on which I lean in the scope of my work Abramyan 2005; Bauböck and Faist 2010; Armstrong 1976; Baser, Swain 2009; Ben-Rafael, Sternberg 2009; Ben-Rafael 2010; Butler 2001; Brubaker 2005; Cho 2007; Clifford 1994; Cohen 1997, 2008; Darieva 2011, 2012; Demmers 2002; Dufoix 2009; Freinkman 2001; Fuglerud 1999; Hovhannisian, Meyers 1999; Laguerre 2009; Manaseryan 2004; Pattie 1997b; Safran 2001, 2007, 2009; Shain 1994-1995; Sheffer 2003, 2007; Smith 2003; Sorensen 2007; Skrbis 1999, 2001; Tölölyan 1996, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2012; Thon 2012; Vertovec 1997, 2005; Waltraud, Tölölyan, Alfonso 2004

[30] Ciffford 1994, p. 306; Cohen 1997, 2008; Brubaker 2005, p. 2; Baser and Swain 2009, p. 46

massacres. For that reason Robin Cohen calls the Armenian diaspora a victim diaspora (Cohen 2008). As a consequence of dispersals, certain nations (dispersed nations) form communities in countries of residence. If those communities sustain over generations, and still maintain their sense of national belonging, they could become a strong diaspora group, which can act on behalf of the homeland. That is what Tölölyan emphasizes defining the diaspora. He names 'diaspora' those communities of the dispersed, who develop varieties of association that endure at least into their third generation (Tölölyan 2012). Due to the endurance of diasporic belonging, the distinct character of diaspora attachments to the homeland survives through diasporic generations, and entails specific consciousness of diasporas. Vertovec describes this as a form of emotional attachments to the land of origin and its attributes – language, religion, and other socio-cultural characteristics (Vertovec 2005, p. 2). Vertovec thus accentuates another important aspect of diasporas – diaspora as a type of consciousness (Vertovec 1997).

The fact of dispersals and specific links to the homeland is also a focus in works by Faist and Brubaker regarding diaspora. Brubaker suggests three key criteria as composites of diaspora: *(a) dispersion, (b) homeland orientation, (c) boundary-maintenance* (Brubaker 2005). In this sense, the approach of Brubaker to diaspora, or what should and could be called diaspora, is interesting. He suggests that instead of speaking of a diaspora as an entity or a group, it would be more fruitful and more precise to speak of diasporic stances, projects, practices, etc. (Brubaker 2005). Brubaker believes that doing so would help avoid generalizations by grouping all members of a diaspora into one whole unit. The concern of the scholar is that this kind of unification approach in diaspora studies risks to put aside the differences between active diaspora members and their practices, and those who do not actively engage in diasporic projects, and are not committed to diasporic stances (Brubaker 2005, p. 12–13).

Elaborating on Brubaker's three composite criteria of diaspora, Bauböck and Faist continue his argument, stating that a diaspora can be distinguished by three characteristics (Bauböck and Faist 2010), which are:

- ✓ Causes of migration or dispersal – mainly including forced dispersals.
- ✓ Links between cross-border experiences of homeland with destination countries. This characteristic includes the whole spectrum of relations between diaspora groups and homelands, and, admittedly, the discourse on return to the imaginary homeland (country of origin, ancestral land) at some point.
- ✓ Incorporation into the countries of settlement.

In addition to these three key criteria of dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary maintenance, Safran adds another point, which is *shared collective memory* of the ancestral land, which members of the diaspora idealize and call homeland (Safran 2001). There are more criteria to the basis of diaspora formation, however, than merely the fact of exile and shared collective memories of the ancestral homeland. Those criteria, of course, do not necessarily refer to all types of diaspora. Some of them, instead, may be relevant to just one diasporic group, whereas, for others, the definition may have different criteria of importance. Thus, Robin Cohen distinguishes four main types of diasporas, and each category has different criterion as the basis (Cohen 1997, 2008). Hence, in accordance with Cohen's classification, there are:

- Victim diasporas (Armenians and Africans)
- Labour and imperial diasporas (Indians and the British)
- Trade and business diasporas (Chinese and Lebanese)
- Cultural diasporas (the Caribbean).

Though in Cohen's typology the basis or the core criterion of diaspora formation is different, homeland orientations and boundary maintenance are still, to some extent, present in each of the type mentioned. This kind of diaspora classification makes clear, however, that dispersals of population as an important element of a diaspora, do not always have violent roots, or do not always have a forced character based on a trauma.

Proceeding with the discussion of the core composite criteria of a diaspora, another point in the life of a diaspora is incorporation vs. boundary maintenance. At this point, I consider important to emphasize the differentiation between incorporation and assimilation. Diaspora groups are well incorporated into the countries of their residence, and are integral parts of those societies; however, the notion of diaspora does not consider total assimilation or fusion. In the case of total assimilation, there would not be any diaspora as such and no transnational practices (political, economic, and social-cultural activities) on behalf of and for the sake of homelands. The notion of diaspora, therefore, excludes total assimilation, since it would practically mean the end of diaspora. By this claim, I consider assimilation from the viewpoint of the sense of national belonging. Maintained consciousness by descendants of a certain nation and a sustained sense of belonging to that nation are key characteristics of diasporic groups, regardless of generations and the status occupied in the residence country. At the early phase of establishment in the new country, diasporic groups maintain relationships with the homeland through the family members and relatives left there. Later on, those relationships enter a new phase of life, getting an

institutionalized character; or, to say it otherwise, homeland connections tend to take place through institutionalized practices. It becomes possible due to certain diasporic organizations, which have for their missions to represent the homeland and its interests in the host countries, and to act in favour of the homeland. Institutionalized character of relationships with the homeland changes the structure of transnational social fields – the latter becomes institutionalized, as well. Diaspora activities, nevertheless, are mostly situated in both institutionalized and non-institutionalized transnational fields. Transnational activity of diaspora is institutionalized regarding the official part of their engagement in the cultural, social, economic, and political life of the homeland. Moreover, the content and direction of diaspora's transnational practices cover different spheres of life in the host country, given the core interest points of the diasporic group in a concrete country. To take a case in point, the Armenian diaspora in the United States is quite active, especially in lobbying regarding the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the United States. France was one of the first countries to recognize the Genocide, and for that reason, activities of the Armenian diaspora in France are focused mainly on other aspects of Armenian life in France. The Armenian community in France is especially active in social-cultural spheres, and further developments of French–Armenian relations and partnerships. Germany, as well, has various German–Armenian associations which actively work on the development of German–Armenian partnerships in the political, cultural, social, and educational spheres.

Hence, when speaking about diaspora, one should consider that despite its complete incorporation into the countries of residence, diaspora does not totally assimilate, and maintain some boundaries—may also be imaginary—with the host society (Armstrong 1976, p. 394–397; Tölölyan 1996, p. 14; Cohen 1997, p. 24). Diaspora will otherwise stop existing, as such, in the sense of dispersed people, who always keep in mind an idealized image of the homeland, and to some extent relate themselves to that 'sacred' space with the name of ancestral land. However, the question is why diaspora members choose to maintain their national belonging, and not to assimilate to the host population; even taking into account their high level of incorporation – they speak the language, bear cultural elements, behavioural patterns, and to some extent also historical heritage of the host society. Sheffer identifies four social-psychological approaches to this, as he calls it, 'ethno-genesis' (Sheffer 2003, p. 18). Thus, *the essentialist, instrumentalist, psychological*, and *constructionist* approaches (Sheffer 2003, p. 18–19) suggest different versions of why members of ethnic groups tend to maintain their identification with the people of the same origin even after being a long time resident of another country.

Essentialist approach leans on biological and cultural similarities, which unconsciously unify people of the same ethno-national origin. For example, by biological similarities the same appearance (hair colour, skin colour, eyes, etc.) is meant, and by cultural similarities the same language, traditions, food, etc are indicated.

Instrumentalist approach says that the sense of belonging to a certain group, in this case to diaspora, might be beneficial. Thus, people tend to maintain their sense of belonging to diasporic groups as they pursue some practical-instrumental goals. Belonging to a diaspora group can consequently bring useful contacts with influential people, authorities, and thus provide access to material and immaterial resources. This instrumentalist explanation emerges from rational choice approach, therefore, belonging to a diaspora and identifying oneself with a diasporic group is some kind of a rational choice.

Psychological approach claims the feeling of comfort among people of the same origin. Common historical past and common collective memory create this feeling of comfort and shared commonalities. For the Armenian diaspora a strong collective memory is the Genocide, and this memory is passing from generation to generation, unifying the Armenian diaspora all over the world around the importance of national values and their intergenerational transmission.

Constructivist approach comes from constructivism theories in sociology, according to which all units of sociological analysis are social constructs. Diasporas are, therefore, social-cultural constructs too. If diasporas are socially constructed units, then their actions, identification with the given diasporic group, and the sense of belonging to that group, are as well socially constructed. Moreover, I would say it is a double social construction – from the side of diasporic groups, and from the side of non-diasporic groups. It is interesting how diaspora appears in the eyes of non-diasporic groups, or the homeland.

The explanations of the four mentioned groups provide interesting claims on the tendency of diaspora not to assimilate. However, I consider them as ideal types. That is, each of them alone is not sufficient, and is not able to thoroughly explain the phenomenon. In one case, nevertheless, some points from each explanation may be more relevant than others, and in another case, the combined and all-inclusive application of the four explanations could provide an appropriate basis for interpreting diasporic aspirations and connections to the homeland, or to the members of the same diaspora elsewhere in the world.

The definition of diaspora by Vertovec as a type of consciousness (Vertovec 1997) contains some elements from the aforementioned explanations. As such, diaspora consists of positive and negative memories of the common historical past, or in other words, of shared collective memories, which is also

pointed out in Safran's works (Safran 2001). The negative memories are associated with violent evictions, and possibly discrimination, which was the reason of migration; whereas, positive memories nurture identification with the historical-cultural heritage, and considering themselves as a part of it. Those memories are types of construction; moreover, I would say a type of subjective construction (although every construction, to some extent, contains elements of subjectivity). Presuming that collective memories are results of a subjective construction, and coming out from the argument that diaspora is a special type of consciousness receiving food from these memories, the notion of diaspora can also signify a condition of subjectivity, as Lily Cho notices (Cho 2007). She points out that diaspora emerges from deeply subjective processes of collective memory, suffering and losses, and contingencies of long histories of displacements, which are passed from generation to generation through collective narratives. I principally agree with the perspective of Cho about the condition of subjectivity. Moreover, going back to the definition of diaspora as a type of consciousness proposed by Vertovec, I claim that this type of consciousness, itself, contains a condition of subjectivity; first of all, because positive and negative memories that endure in collective narratives are results of a *subjective selection*. Second of all, the image of homeland in diasporic consciousness is also a result of *subjective creation*. In this sense, I consider diaspora as a *type of subjective consciousness,* the endurance of which occurs through collective memories.

Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the importance of diaspora as a mode of cultural production (Vertovec 1997) involving the production and reproduction of transnational, social, and cultural phenomenon through hybridization (Hannerz 1992). Nowadays, this becomes especially relevant because of the modern means of communication, and the possibility to exchange every type of information very fast in a short period of time. Cultural production means the proliferation of newspapers, journals, TV programmes, Internet pages and various websites, blogs, etc. Diaspora carries this specific function of cultural production, familiarizing young generations with the history and culture of their ancestral land, and thus, realizing the function of transferring national values and norms (also behavioural patterns), and keeping the national identity alive.

Given so much literature on diaspora, and correspondingly, various definitions of diaspora on the basis of different criteria, I find it necessary to clarify the definition I lean on in my work, with regard to its relevance to the Armenian case. Coming from this point of view, the important criteria for the Armenian case would be non-voluntary dispersion of population, and collective memories of a traumatic past. In this sense, I will follow Vertovec, viewing a *diaspora as a social form of dispersed population cemented by collective memories of the common past and of the ancestral land* (Vertovec 1997; 2005) *by the symbolic*

and real ties to the homeland. From my point of view, the distinguishing factor is that diasporas entail a type of subjective consciousness, which conditions aspirations, engagements, attachments, and connections to the homeland, determining the sense of belonging to that 'sacred' land. The homeland is an imaginary and an idealized image in diaspora consciousness.

In addition to various criteria to define diaspora, the literature also suggests a number of diaspora-related notions. Thus, Sheffer distinguishes between terms 'diaspora', 'diasporic' and 'diasporism' (Sheffer 2003, p. 10–12). According to him, diaspora is a standard term, a substantive, which indicates a certain ethno-national group. 'Diasporic' is an adjective, referring to this ethno-national group, and determining its certain activities and practices. Besides that, diasporic can also refer to certain organizations functioning in a transnational field, and acting on behalf of a diaspora group. Behavioural patterns of diaspora groups influence those diasporic entities. Thus, the term diasporic designates features of a diaspora as a social and political formation. Finally, 'diasporism' signifies that various categories of diaspora share characteristics that create structural, organizational, and behavioural similarities (Sheffer 2003, p. 12). In other words, diasporism points out that all dispersed groups regardless of national origin or historical period, who reside in different geographic spaces, belong to the same social phenomenon, and to the same social field.

Having discussed the most relevant features of diaspora, I will now turn to the next section devoted to the dialogue between diaspora and transnational community.

2.2.2 Transnational community or diaspora

Diaspora and transnationalism studies often overlap with each other; however, they do not address the same phenomena. The main difference between diaspora and transnationalism lies at the construction point of the notions. As presented in the previous section, one of the important characteristics of a diaspora is the dispersion of population (in some cases under pressure), and its integration without assimilation. Meanwhile, transnational communities (though not *every* transnational community), do not consider forced dispersion of the population. Nevertheless, transnational communities, as well as diasporas do not exclude the fact of living integrated in the host country without assimilation. The core feature of transnationalism is a process of back-and-forth flows of resources, whereas the key point for a diaspora is the diasporic consciousness, or the sense of stemming from one place, of having roots in the same homeland. In other words, it is a type of subjective consciousness with an idealized and mythical image of the homeland, which has almost a sacral meaning for diasporic people.

I state that activities of all diasporas are transnational, but not all transnational communities can refer to the category of diaspora in accordance with the determinant criteria of diaspora discussed in the previous section. Diaspora is a trans-global network nation (Laguerre 2009, p. 197), which must be transnational (Safran 2009, p. 76). The last statement flows out from the mission and devotion of the diaspora to engage in various activities connected to and related to the homeland. Members of a transnational community (as well as of a diaspora) can be individually concerned for the wellbeing of the relatives in the homeland. They can send remittances, and maintain connections to the homeland or with relatives living in any other land. But, in contrast, those are not organized actions aimed at contributions to the wellbeing of the homeland. In general, transnational communities are not politically and economically strong enough to develop an agenda or make lobbies in the political and cultural realm for the favour of the homeland. Furthermore, transnational communities do not have such goals, and raising interests of the homeland in the country of immigration is neither their major avocation nor the main aim.

For the transnational community, the homeland is 'actual' or 'real', and not 'mythical' as for a diaspora. This argument can be especially well illustrated, leaning on the case of the Armenian diaspora. Forced evictions—the reason for formation of the Armenian diaspora—led to the loss of a considerable part of geographical territories belonging to Armenia. Consequently, the land, which used to be the homeland for a significant part of the Armenian diaspora, at present, does not belong to the Republic of Armenia. That is, the land *arevmtahays* identify with as their homeland, does not exist anymore in practicality. Those were territories of Western Armenia which are now part of Turkey (Manaseryan 2004, p. 6). The homeland (and the meaning of homeland), therefore, becomes mythical for them in its literal sense. In this situation, the agenda, love, and aspirations of the Armenian diaspora towards the homeland are projected on what is left of Armenia – the present Republic of Armenia.

Most representatives of transnational communities actually and actively engage in back-and-forth travel, and the exchange of resources with the homeland, whereas connections of the diaspora to the homeland bear mostly an instrumental character. In other words, transnational communities exchange resources directly with the homeland, whilst interactions and communication between diaspora and the homeland have, as a rule, a mediated character. They are mediated by some organizations, associations, or political parties. It is to say, those connections generally take place in an exchange–development nexus, and include diaspora lobbies in the residence country in favour of the homeland, diaspora investments in different spheres in the homeland, and many other

activities driven by the purpose to introduce the culture and life of the homeland, and to articulate the homeland interests in the country of residence.

The basic factors for diaspora network-building are symbolic capital, and memories transmitted from generation to generation. Belonging to a diaspora allows living simultaneously in three dimensions, or as Vertovec puts it, "diaspora integrates three dimensions: (1) the global dimension of dispersed ethnic groups who reside in different countries, and identify themselves as belonging to the same group; (2) local dimension of states where these groups reside; (3) the dimension of the homeland or home country" (Vertovec 1999). The preference of one dimension or another differs from person to person.

To summarize, certain content-driven and structural factors condition differences between diaspora and transnational communities. Some similarities between these notions are typical, though. Diasporas are transnational in nature. As Tölölyan believes, "a community of transnational migrants might become a diaspora when its members develop some familial, cultural, or social distance from their nation, but yet continue to care deeply about it not simply on grounds of kinship and filiations, but by commitment to a certain chosen affiliation" (Tölölyan 2012). A person can be diasporic, as he or she shares the same origin with the ancestral land, and has attachments (practical and real, or symbolic and emotional) to that land. A diaspora is to some extent an autonomous social formation, partly independent from the host and origin countries, and possessing the power to do lobbying in the host countries in favour of the country of origin. In this sense, diasporas are emblems of transnationalism (Tölölyan 2008), for they embody the essence of border-spanning activity, and exchange of resources. Only the forms and ways of realization of these transnational practices are different. Due to diasporas, transnational social fields are created not only between the homeland and the residence country, but also among other countries, where people of the same diaspora live. Thus, diasporas also contribute to the development of connections among various transnational social fields.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has framed the conceptual basis of this book, covering two of the most important key terms—transnationalism and diaspora—from the point of their relevance to my work. From the discussion of different approaches to transnationalism studies and various interpretations of transnationalism, I then turned to the concept of diaspora and the discourse on similarities and differences between the notions of diaspora and transnationalism, and possible confusions between them. Thus, from my viewpoint, transnationalism refers to real cross-border connections, back-and-forth ties, whereas the essential feature of diaspora

is its specific consciousness. Therefore, I understand diaspora as a *type of subjective consciousness*, which entails warm, tender, and sentimental feelings for homeland, however, not necessarily presupposes engagement in sustained transnational activity and practices. In the scope of this book, I define transnationalism at the level of social ties, real social practices and encounters, and at the level of representations. Transnationalism at the level of representations presumes attachments to the homeland through imagination. In other words, it is a kind of social activity with an imaginary reference to the homeland – a characteristic point for diasporic consciousness. This issue and its manifestations are to be elaborated in the following chapters of this work.

Further, this chapter has provided insights into the application of the conceptual triad 'configurations–representations–encounters' to the studies of transnationalism. I have presented the meaning of model's domains and modes of their interconnection, specifying that in the framework of my research, I understand configurations as transnational (as well as non-transnational) social fields, encounters as social practices and engagements of migrants, and representations as self-identification of social actors. In addition, social media and diaspora as a category of practice also appear in the realm of representations, since diasporic consciousness may influence modes of self-identification. On this ground I have developed an argument that in order to study transnationalism and related issues thoroughly, a complex and interrelated analysis is necessary. That is, to understand specificities of social formation of ties, their reproduction, features of self-identification, and factors influencing the latter, there is a need to conduct a complex analysis, which will take into consideration the wholeness of the three domains simultaneously. In short, a starting point for the analysis should be the interrelation and mutual influence of configurations, encounters, and representations.

Taking all this knowledge as a basis or a point of departure, I turn to the next chapter, which provides insights into historical background and main waves of Armenian migration, and observes German–Armenian associations as diasporic structures and their transnational activity. Besides, the following chapter contains reflections on periods of the Armenian diaspora formation, and the development of relations between the homeland and the diaspora, in accordance with the distinguished historical periods of the three Armenian republics. In this realm, I will also address features of Armenian long-distance nationalism, and argue that the latter has specific context- and situation-dependent character, which I will name *strategic nationalism*, and will present how and to what extent certain collective memories can contribute to the development of this strategic nationalism.

3 Historical Background of Armenian Migration, and Formation of the Armenian Diaspora. Manifestations of the Strategic Nationalism

The aim of this chapter is to briefly introduce the history and main waves of Armenian migration and formation of the Armenian diaspora all over the world. This chapter also discusses manifestations of long-distance nationalism—diaspora related phenomenon—in the case of Armenians. In this realm, I argue that peculiarities of Armenian long-distance nationalism have specific context- and situation-dependent character, which I will name *strategic nationalism*. Further, I analyse the role of collective memory in forming and fuelling this strategic nationalism.

I will then proceed with the introduction of Armenians in Germany and types of transnational associations they have founded. Doing so will, firstly, provide a path to the deeper analysis of my empirical material, and secondly, will serve as a basis for understanding some specificities of Armenian character. Following, I will make a short excursion into the history and reasons of Armenian immigration to Germany. This leads to better understanding of their incorporation into the receiving country, and opens the floor for further discussion of specificities of their transnational ties – the analysis of which I will present in the following chapters.

3.1 Historical background and waves of Armenian migration

The history of Armenian migration is almost as old as the history of Armenia itself; full of dispersals, persecutions, and violent massacres. For long periods of time Armenian nation did not have an independent state. It was continually under the domination of strong empires that sought not only to conquer the territory of Armenia, but to physically exterminate Armenians as a nation. Throughout the years, the Armenian Church and language were two strongholds rescuing Armenians from being physically exterminated. In other words, due to their religion and unique language, Armenians have survived until today, carrying the history and traditions of one of the oldest nations in the world.

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Permanent threats of extermination and efforts to maintain Armenianness have deep roots in the history, and have become a kind of specific characteristic of Armenian nation. Armenians have amazingly good skills of integrating into any environment, accepting and adopting rules, norms, and laws of the society they live in. But simultaneously, they *do not forget about being Armenian.* The sense of maintaining their unique identity has become a kind of national heritage, which is passed from generation to generation on a subconscious level, without being explicitly taught or learned. Obviously, maintaining Armenianness is a specific issue of concern for Armenian communities spread all over the world. Permanently living in another country, or even being a citizen of a foreign state, Armenians have developed a collective sense of preserving Armenianness (Armenian: *հայապահպանություն, hayapahpanutyun*) – a specific consciousness of being Armenian and belonging to an old nation. This principle of *hayapahpanutyun* is one of the specific features of Armenian ways of being, and it articulates as a red thread especially among Armenian communities abroad. Elements of *hayapahpanutyun* are reflected in individual choices; however they are carried out subconsciously—meaning that individuals, acting in this or that way, do not deliberately put a special sense of Armenianness in every action. The fact that one's action was conditioned by his or her Armenian belonging may remain in the level of sub-consciousness.

The contemporary Armenian diaspora represent generations of survivors of the Armenian Genocide (a few survivors of the Genocide are still alive). The formation of diaspora in this phase has a long history of migration from one host country to another, repatriation and re-migration. I use the word 're-migration' to indicate the phenomenon of emigrating from the homeland, then returning back (or repatriating), and after that (after repatriation) emigrating again. This was very typical for Armenian migration in the post–Genocide period. During the period from 1915 to 1923 (after the Treaty of Lausanne, according which territorial borders of modern Turkey were marked) thousands of Armenians migrated to various destinations in the world. The main countries of destination, however, were the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Lebanon, Syria, Persia/Iran, and Egypt. Around 60,000 Armenians stayed in Turkey, mostly in Istanbul (Tölölyan 2000; Yeghiazaryan et al. 2003; Manaseryan 2004). Most of them hid their nationality by getting Turkish names and by never manifesting anything that could uncover their Armenian origins.

After the Second World War, between the years 1945–1948, a great repatriation of Armenian migrants took place, and around 105,000 survivors returned to their homeland (Tölölyan 2005, p. 44). However, it was a different homeland they had left behind: Armenia was part of the Soviet Union then. A contemporary stage of migration began some 20 years after the great repatriation

programme, approximately in the 1970s (Abramyan 2005; Tölölyan 2005; Stepanyan 2010). I have grouped these new population floods into three large waves of emigration from Armenia, and below is a brief description of these waves, and the reasons of migration (push factors) during each wave.

The first wave of migration started already in 1970–90s. Being part of the Soviet Union, Armenia suffered all the consequences of systemic crisis of the Soviet economy. The collapse of the Soviet Union, and economic downturn in Armenia were accompanied with the beginning of armed conflict against Azerbaijan for the independence of Nagorno Karabakh.[31] Officially, the war or the armed conflict began in 1990, but the Karabakh movement started already in late 1988 (Marutyan 2009). Thus, Armenia was not only suffering a deep economic and energy crisis; moreover, as the consequence of the war, the country was in a territorial and economic blockade. Armenian Nuclear Power Plant was not functioning because of both the crisis and the blockade, and the country could not receive energy from neighbour countries. During this period a huge amount of Armenia's population left the country, and a lot of refugees from Azerbaijan (ethnic Armenians) came to Armenia,[32] who later left for Russia or United States. The immigration intensified also after the disastrous earthquake in north Armenia in December 1988. It took tens of thousands of lives and totally destroyed two cities. Millions of people completely lost not only their homes, but also their entire families and relatives. Many people strongly affected by the earthquake were evacuated from the country (Yeganyan and Davtyan 2001). Later on this became a network for migration. Evacuated people who established in other countries were inviting relatives still living in Armenia to join them.

Apart from immigrants from Armenia, the number of Armenians in Armenian communities all over the world increased because of immigration from Middle East countries and Iran. Because of the Middle East conflict, many Armenians immigrated from Syria and Lebanon, and found shelter in various European countries, among which Germany also occupies a noticeable place (GTZ Migration und Entwicklung 2008, p. 9).

The second wave of migration started after 1991 – the declaration of Armenia's independence, and establishment of independent Republic of Armenia. Roughly calculated, this wave can be determined from 1991 until 1995. According to CRRC (the Caucasus Research Resource Centres) *Migration and Skills* project report (July 2011–June 2012), the earliest research on post–Soviet migration started in 1995, and more than 17% of Armenia's population

[31] A brief reflection on the conflict will find place in one of the following subchapters (more precisely, in the part on core aspects of Armenian collective memory).
[32] During the times of the Soviet Union and before the Karabakh war Armenians and Azerbaijanis were living peacefully side by side, and there were many ethnic Armenians living in Azerbaijan.

migrated between the years of 1991–1995 (CRRC, Armenia 2013). Limited energy supplies and the downturn of country's economic system resulted in so-called *years of darkness*[33] in Armenia. Those were years of transition, and as a result of social-economic problems, emigration rates increased dramatically in this period. In just three years, more than 610,000 people left Armenia and established themselves abroad permanently (UNDP, Armenia 2009, p. 39). During this period Germany was one of the most preferred countries of immigration for Armenian population. In parallel, the number of immigrants from Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey coming to Germany was also increasing. Generally, from the beginning of 1990s Armenian communities in Germany have considerably grown numerically (UNDP, Armenia 2009; Sumlyonni 2006). Moreover, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Germany was the target immigration country for many Armenians from post–Soviet countries, such as Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, etc.

The third wave of migration was determined by the beginning of the 21st century. Several years after the millennium was a special phase in the history of Armenia, and particularly in the history of Armenian migration. This time period I call *disappointment years,* which followed the Armenian presidential elections in February 2008. The majority of the population, disappointed with the results and led by the opposition leader, started a huge mass protest which turned into a respective social-civic movement. Quite soon, with the intervention of authorities and violent actions of the police, the movement was stopped. In addition to political disappointment, economic condition of the country began to turn down. During this period of time, the main reasons for leaving the country were disappointment from the political situation, rare career opportunities, and inability to sustain the family because of low income (CRRC, Armenia 2013).

Hence, Armenia has quite an old history of migration, which dates back to ancient times. However, the biggest mass waves of Armenian migration are after–Genocide period and the period started during the crisis of Soviet economy. The after–Genocide wave of migration is specific and different in origins, and on this account, I have left it as a separate category, and do not combine it with the above-distinguished waves of relatively contemporary migration.

[33] Armenians name this period *years of darkness* or *dark and cold years*.

To generalize, the after–Genocide wave of migration was the main and huge precondition of Armenian diaspora formation all over the world. Two categories of migrants that I cover in my research, i.e. *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis*, belong to different waves of migration. Correspondingly, *arevmtahays* arrived in Germany mainly during the first wave of migration; however, some of them are migrants from the post–genocidal period. As for *hayastantsis*, they mainly belong to the second and third waves of migration. As mentioned, Armenian migration has a long history, and it dates back to ancient times of formation of Armenian kingdom, republics and struggle for independence. However, in a summarized way within the framework of my research, I have presented the three major waves of emigration from Armenia with characteristic push factors in each of the mentioned historical periods. Hereinafter, I will briefly present main phases of Armenian diaspora formation and development of diaspora–homeland relations in regard to three historical Armenian republics.

3.2 Formation of the Armenian diaspora

> Եթե Հայաստանը չզարգանա և չկարողանա սնուցել սփյուռքին, սփյուռքը կվերջանա:
>
> If Armenia does not develop and is not able to feed the diaspora, the diaspora will end.
>
> (Extract from an interview)

In this part of my work I will show that development of relations between the Armenian diaspora and Armenia have passed a long and difficult way, however, the homeland and the diaspora have always been interconnected and interdependent. They have always been mutually important for the existence and development of each other.

The main characteristic of diaspora is its long sedimentation over a long period of time. The formation of diaspora occurs through different waves of migration. Each of these waves might have different causes and different reasons. The formation of the Armenian diaspora dates back up to early 4th century. Nowadays the population of the Republic of Armenia is approximately 3.5 million, whereas the number of Armenians spread all over the world is around 7.5–8 million. Armenian history is full of various invasions, due to which Armenia was for years and centuries under foreign domination. Moreover, in the result of these invasions, most of which had the purpose to physically exterminate Armenians

as a nation and conquer the country, Armenia lost most of its territory.[34] Nowadays the Republic of Armenia is much smaller than the geographical territory of historical Armenia.

Tölölyan distinguishes two essential phases of Armenian diaspora formation: the first phase dates back to 3rd and 4th centuries; and the second one is calculated from 1915, the beginning of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. Tölölyan names this phase *the emergence of the new Armenian diaspora* (Tölölyan 2005, p. 43). Thus, the 19th century was the beginning of the second phase of Armenian diaspora formation. Dispersed Armenians found shelter in different corners of the world, but the main destinations were the east costs of United States and France. This was the beginning of Armenian mass migration.

At the earliest stage, destination countries were neighbouring Persia/Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, as well as some European countries. For example, many intellectual Armenians or students migrated to Greece and Italy for educational purposes and became established there, contributing to the development of Armenian scientific-educational thought (Tölölyan 2005). Besides, from ancient times Armenian merchants are known all over the world, and big trade cities well connected to different parts of the world have always attracted them. Trade relations existed between Armenia and neighbour countries, as well as many European cities, for example port-cities or financial-centre-cities.

The Armenian diaspora notably grew to a considerable size after the First World War, in response to mass deportations of Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire. Starting from that point, Tölölyan differentiates three general phases of Armenian diaspora formation (Tölölyan, 2000) as presented below.

- The period from 1923–1965 represents the recovery and reconstruction stage, when dispersed Armenians, recovering from the shock of massacres, gradually began to form some communities and associations.
- The following stage includes 1966–1988. This was the period when the diaspora met a new phase of challenges as to concerns about maintenance of national values, culture, and mother tongue. This period is also notable because of the attempt to re-establish the interrupted relations with the Soviet Armenia. However, this attempt gave birth to some ideological disagreements between the generations of Genocide survivors and those who were exiled from the Soviet Armenia. Those disagreements were on the realm of further developments

[34] Poghosyan 1965; Zhamkochyan et al. 1975; Melkonyan 1998; Simonyan 2000; Sargsyan and Hakobyan 2004

of diaspora–homeland relations, the role of diaspora in social–political life of Armenia.

- The last stage, according to Tölölyan (2000), covers 1988 to present time. This period is remarkable with its new challenges and development in the life of diaspora. Diaspora communities are already formed social groups, recognized in the countries of residence. In 1991 Armenia became an independent country, which essentially changed the quality and nature of relations between the Armenian diaspora and the homeland.

In the literature appear many approaches for how, and on which basis, to distinguish certain periods in the history of Armenian diaspora formation. In general, categorizing the phases of diaspora formation according to (a) main migration flows and (b) history of development of the relations between the diaspora and the homeland are more common among diaspora scholars and particularly among scholars studying the Armenian diaspora (Tölölyan 2000; Dallakyan 2004; Manaseryan 2004; Yeghiazaryan 2013). However, in my opinion, this distinction between different periods of diaspora formation is not accurate enough, because the two criteria mentioned do not exist separately one without another. Moreover, one presumes the necessity of the other. The history of diaspora formation cannot be viewed just on the basis of migration flows. Relations with the homeland are integral part of the notion and mission of diaspora. Historical periods or phases of diaspora formation cannot be studied separately from the development of relations with the homeland. Dallakyan, an Armenian historian and diaspora scholar, tried to bring mentioned points together. Thus, Dallakyan determines the following stages of Armenian diaspora formation (Dallakyan 2004, p. 75):

- The first period includes the years starting from the first half of 1920s. Those were the first years of establishment of the first statehood in Armenia (in 1918). For a new-born republic, the key principle was national unification, and the development of diaspora–homeland relations started from this perspective.
- The second period lasted from the second half of 1920s until 1960. During this time period, Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. The iron curtain impacted the relations of Armenia with the diaspora. Moreover, some misunderstanding occurred between the political parties in the diaspora and the political leaders in the homeland. Consequently, the relations between the Soviet Armenia and the diaspora were destructed.

- The third period covers from 1960s till 1988. Within these years the government of Soviet Armenia made steps towards establishment of relations with active political parties in the diaspora. In the history of development of the diaspora–homeland relations this is known as a period of political stratification.
- The last period of the development of the relationships between the diaspora and Armenia continues until present. All kinds of stratifications are eliminated, and a comprehensive dialogue is established between the diaspora and Armenia.

In the discourse of the relationships between Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, it is notable to mention that Armenia historically has experienced life in three republics – Armenia had its first statehood in 1918, which in history is known as *the first Republic of Armenia.* Then in 1922 Armenia was incorporated into the Soviet Union, and this was the period of the *Soviet Republic of Armenia*. The third Armenian statehood was established after the declaration of the country's independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1991. This was the year of establishment of the *third (and present) Republic of Armenia.*[35] In the process of development of relations between the diaspora and the homeland, existence of the state (statehood of the homeland) is an important factor, because together with the diaspora it is one of the most significant actors in the field of transnational activities. In the case of Armenia, therefore, relationships between Armenian republics and the diaspora best present the history of Armenian diaspora formation in regard to the intensity of relations with the homeland (Yeghiazaryan 2013, 2014). In fact, the history of Armenian diaspora formation was parallel to the history of Armenian republics, and this provides better understanding of the dynamics within the transnational social field of these connections. A short description of the three mentioned periods of Armenian republics is as follows:

The First Armenian Republic (1918–1920). This was the starting stage of the relationship between the homeland and the Armenian diaspora. For the diaspora itself, this phase was a hard period of establishing in foreign countries, getting a residence status and facing various difficulties related to a life in a new place. This was a time for self-determination and fight for physical, cultural, and national survival.

The Second or Soviet Armenian Republic (1921–1990). In a way, this is a contradictory phase. At the beginning the relations between the diaspora and Soviet Armenia started to develop in a positive way. During the first decade even

[35] For more information on the history of Armenia, see, e.g. Poghosyan 1965; Zhamkochyan et al. 1975; Melkonyan 1998; Simonyan 2000; Sargsyan and Hakobyan 2004

a lot of Armenians from other countries immigrated to Armenia, and established their long-term residence there. But shortly afterwards the Soviet government had conflicts of interest with beneficiary/charity organizations and some political parties in the diaspora, mainly with *Armenian Democratic-Liberal Party* (ADL), *Social Democrat,* and *Armenian Revolutionary Federation* (ARF) parties.[36] The reason for strained relations was the principal differences between ideologies of these parties and the Soviet government. Being part of the Soviet Union, the Armenian republic was de jour self-sufficient or 'independent', but de facto every desicion had to be officially approved by the Soviet government, with no deviation. Ideologies of the mentioned parties in particular, and the whole diaspora, in general, claimed the freedom and independence of the homeland, which was obviously against the maxims of the Soviet Union. Moreover, persecution was waiting for anyone who attempted to publicly claim any liberal ideas. Many outstanding Armenian writers, poets, publicists, and other activists became victims of persecution from the Soviet government. Furthermore, during the Soviet regime the articulation of and discourses on the Genocide of Armenians were forbidden. Publicly speaking about the Genocide would mean deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey, which was not at all an attractive perspective for the Soviet Union. As a consequence, Soviet Armenia had no other choice but to cut any relations with the diaspora. The lack of any contact continued until the end of The Second World War, when as stated earlier, the first wave of great repatriation started (Tölölyan 2005, p. 44; Stepanyan 2010; Yeghiazaryan 2014, p. 42). Many Armenians who were exiled from the country by the Soviet government, returned to their homeland. However, shortly afterward, already in 1949, the repatriation programme was stopped, and Armenians in the Soviet Republic of Armenia and Armenians in the diaspora again had to live separated and without any contact. This separation led to some sort of division between the Armenian diaspora and Armenia. Imprints of this division were especially obvious in the cultural sphere, and Manaseryan argues (Manaseryan 2004, p. 6) that this separation driven by the Soviet government is the reason why even until today diaspora has little cultural proximity with Armenians in Armenia.

However, these ideological borders/walls of division started to break down in 1980s. During these years two important events happened, which made diaspora ideologically, as well practically, closer to the homeland. After the

[36] The Armenian Democratic-Liberal Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Foundation are two political parties which have been active social actors in the Armenian diaspora. As a consequence of their liberal-nationalistic ideas, the dialogue between the soviet government and the Armenian diaspora was interrupted, and it influenced the relations between the Armenian diaspora and the homeland, in general.

disastrous earthquake in December 1988, significant amount of humanitarian and financial help came from the Armenian diaspora. In parallel, 1988 was marked as the beginning of Karabakh movement, which got ideological and economic support from the diaspora. Being survivors of the Genocide, and having experienced the loss of homeland territories, the diaspora adopted a motto *no more Armenian land to be lost* (Shain 2002, p. 119). Collective memory of the traumatic past played an important role in mobilizing people within the Armenian diaspora and Armenia. This was an excellent opportunity to make an attempt to re-establish the broken relationship between them. Armenian history is rich of examples how the nation mobilizes on the occasion of an external threat or enemy, and how the collective memory of the past events can contribute to mobilization. I will in more detail elaborate on this in the following subchapter.

The Third Republic of Armenia (1991–present). The third phase in the history of the diaspora–homeland relationships started right after Armenia declared its independence. No doubt, the independent Republic of Armenia actualized the discourse of return among the Armenian diaspora. Now the idea of returning to the land of their ancestors seemed more real and doable to thousands of Armenians abroad. Surprisingly, however, the opposite process happened. During the first years after the independence, hard and unstable political and economic conditions made many thousands of Armenians emigrate and replenish the numbers of the diaspora.

It is notable, however, that this period did not pass without conflicts and contradiction between the new-born Republic of Armenia and the diaspora. Supposedly, after the collapse of the Soviet regime and establishment of the Armenian independent republic, the relationships between the diaspora and the homeland should have improved; the independence of Armenia, however, opened the floor for other challenges in this relationship. Some political and ideological misunderstandings and disagreements arose between the Armenian government and some of diasporic political parties with respect to internal politics of Armenia, more precisely, the diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey (Yeghiazaryan 2014, p. 43). The latent reason was the concern by the diaspora that diplomacy would relieve the issue around the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The latter had, and still has today principle significance for the diaspora. Besides, with the development of diplomatic relations the diaspora might lose its powerful tool of political lobby in the counties of residence. The diaspora, in any case, has its own agenda regarding the internal politics of the homeland, and Armenia cannot act without taking it into consideration. Consequently, the relationships between the Armenian diaspora and the Republic of Armenia are not smooth and without any problems. On the one hand, sometimes the diaspora itself is not unified, and the Armenian diaspora communities in different

countries have different ideas and agendas about the development of the homeland, and its political, economic, and social life. On the other hand, Armenia would want to unify more with the diaspora, especially on the level of public institutions; however, the government is somehow reluctant to allow the diaspora totally into the political life of the Republic of Armenia, fearing political pressure from those outside through the diaspora (Yeghiazaryan 2014). Nevertheless, an interesting dialectical interconnectedness exists between Armenia and the diaspora. Armenia is significantly poor and not strong enough without the diaspora; and without Armenia, the Armenian diaspora all over the world might face the risk of marginality. Thus, the diaspora and the homeland cannot exist without each other, and one proof of this is the establishment of the Ministry of diaspora in the Republic of Armenia in 2008, officially called Ministry for Diaspora Affairs.

Taking into account different phases and periods in the history of Armenian diaspora formation, Manaseryan (2004, p. 10–11) distinguishes three types of the Armenian diaspora—*old, new, and the newest diaspora*—which correspond to the periods of three Armenian republics. He argues that the possibility for newest diaspora to be involved in the economic reforms of the Republic of Armenia is greater than for the old and new diasporas. He explains it with the fact that the old and new diasporas have been separated from the homeland by the iron curtain, and given that fact, have much less knowledge of the state of affairs in Armenia, whereas the newest diaspora is the latest offspring of *mother Armenia.* I would argue, however, that this might be true when judging uniquely the economic sphere, and from the viewpoint of investments. Another conclusion could be that the involvement of the old diaspora in the life of the homeland has more symbolic character than the involvement of the new and newest diasporas. The involvement of the old diaspora deals more with the spiritual, rather than with material life spheres of the homeland. The economic involvement of the newest diaspora, however, is not to be taken for granted. Their involvement in the economic life of the homeland starts and ends with remittances, which are just an elementary and basic manifestation of economic involvement. Big investments come from the old diaspora, and the field of investments highly depends on the cooperation and mutual agreements between the government of Armenia and power structures in diaspora.

To summarize, I should note that relations between the Armenian diaspora and the homeland even at present seem to bear the heritage of history. The failure of communication (Manaseryan 2004, p. 18) is sometimes also a current issue, whereas, to be more precise, the problems that arise are not because of the communication failure, but rather because of political misunderstandings, driven by different visions and perceptions of internal and external politics in Armenia.

The political agenda of diaspora sometimes does not correspond to the homeland policies (Baser and Swain 2009, p. 49). Given coalescence of Armenian political and economic spheres, political misunderstandings between the diaspora and Armenia smoothly transfer to the economic sphere as well. Nevertheless, the role of the diaspora is very important both for the Republic of Armenia and Armenians all over the world. The existence of a special Ministry of Diaspora in the Republic of Armenia highlights this importance. The mission of the ministry is to coordinate diaspora initiatives and work on development of relations with the Armenian diaspora all over the world.

After presenting the main historical periods of Armenian diaspora formation, and specificities of development of homeland–diaspora relations, the topic of my analysis will be the long-distance nationalism of which peculiar manifestation, in the case of Armenians, I will name *strategic nationalism*.

3.3 Strategic nationalism: the case of the Armenian diaspora

Discourse about diaspora and transnationalism leads to the discussion of a phenomenon which is tightly related to both of them. Hence, in this subchapter I will proceed with the analysis of long-distance nationalism[37]—migration or diaspora related phenomenon—which from a specific angle interprets relations and attachments to the homeland, aspiration of transnational communities and diasporas. Long-distance nationalism has different manifestations for distinct migrant groups. Moreover, its basis or origin might also differ from case to case. My argument is that Armenian long-distance nationalism gets fuel from the historical past of the nation, more precisely, from certain collective memories. In addition, it has a situational and/or context-dependent character, and on that account, I name it strategic nationalism. The section below is devoted to the elaboration of this argument, and to the explanation of how certain collective memories nurture Armenian strategic nationalism.

3.3.1 Definition of long-distance nationalism

Long-distance nationalism is a term closely related to any transnational community and diaspora group. Discourses on transnational communities and diasporas include ideas on specific manifestations of nationalistic moods. The latter, however, is different from case to case, and its reasons and results are unique in

[37] See, e.g. Anderson 1992, 1994; Fuglerud 1999; Skrbis 1999, 2001; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Demmers 2002; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002; Glick Schiller 2005, 2005b; Tölölyan 2010; Ziemer 2010; Skey 2011; Darieva 2011, 2012

each case. This section develops the argument that aspects of collective memory, or specific parts of Armenian collective memory, contribute to manifestations of Armenian long-distance nationalism, which I have named strategic nationalism. To begin with, I will present some reflections on the long-distance nationalism definition in the literature, and from this basis develop my own argumentations.

The notion 'long-distance nationalism' first came out in the works of Benedict Anderson (1992, 1994). Interestingly, the term became popular in social science in 1990s,[38] when the popularity of the term transnationalism also reached its summit in social science and migration literature.[39] Before the 1990s, in research on migration assimilation theories were dominating, focusing the attention of research on the processes of incorporation in the new place of residence, thereby, leaving out of the field of interest any possible attachments to the land of origin, and the impact of those attachments on the formation of the sense of belonging. After scholars became interested in studying transnational ties to the homeland and disentangling various aspects of this phenomenon, long-distance nationalism appears to be an important and interesting subject of study, closely related to diaspora and transnationalism studies. Thus, the interest in long-distance nationalism reflects the interest in current debates about global interconnectedness of the world, which allows social actors to live simultaneously in more than one reality.

The term long-distance nationalism has a close relation to the notion of nationalism;[40] however it differs from the classical understanding of nationalism, which might embody some negative shades, given acts of discrimination and various manifestations of extremism on the nationalistic level, whilst long-distance nationalism is not a chauvinistic nationalism. Its essence is embodied in reference to social actions and practices towards a certain geographical space that people of a dispersed nation identify as their ancestral homeland. Expressions of long-distance nationalism are based on attachments to the homeland, and those attachments can vary from emotional to material levels. Thus, Glick Schiller and Fouron see the relation of nationalism and long-distance nationalism in the way that the latter resembles nationalism as an ideology, and links people to territory, binds together immigrants, their descendants, and those who have

[38] Fuglerud 1999; Skrbis 1999, 2001; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Demmers 2002; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002; Glick Schiller 2005a, b; Tölölyan 2010; Ziemer 2010; Skey 2011; Darieva 2011, 2012

[39] Review of the literature on transnationalism is presented in previous sections of this work devoted to issues of transnationalism. For that reason, I do not repeat the references on transnationalism literature here.

[40] Armstrong 1982; Brehony and Rassool eds. 1990; Feuchtwang 1992; Anderson 1998; Gilbert 1998; Brown 2000; Calhoun 2002; Gans 2003; Smith 2004; Dieckhoff, Jaffrelot eds. 2005; Gellner 2006; Brubaker 2009; Harris 2009; Hutchinson 2010; NImni 2010; Chernilo 2011; Coakley 2012

remained in the homeland (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001, p. 20). It is the ideology of belonging built within a transnational social field (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002, p. 173). This account allows me to contend that long-distance nationalism and transnational social fields do not exist without each other. In other words, long-distance nationalistic behaviour is transnational in its sense. It stretches beyond national and state borders, and refers to the homeland – the idea or the image of which links together different transnational social fields. Practices driven from long-distance nationalistic moods play the role of unifying factors for these transnational social fields. Long-distance nationalism thus becomes an important attribute for the formation of transnational social fields. Emotional and practical attachments to the homeland and ideology of belonging to the nation of ancestors are important factors for long-distance nationalism. Ideas are indeed important to unify people, but long-distance nationalism also requires actual social practices in the favour of the homeland's prosperity. There exists a variety of those practices such as but not limited to demonstrations, lobbies, investments in economic sphere, organization of cultural events, creation of art works, etc. Emotional attachments of long-distance nationalists to the country of origin might be much stronger than to the land of residence. These kinds of attachments and sense of belonging are typical for diaspora. It thus creates a common consciousness about the imaginary homeland. Shared perceptions of the homeland transform diasporas from simply socially organized groups of dispersed people to a unique *type of consciousness* (Vertovec 1997).

In this realm, long-distance nationalism is a particular aspect of diasporic consciousness – diasporic belonging and self-identification with a certain nation (the nation of ancestors). It is about beliefs and ideologies of diaspora for the sake of the homeland's welfare, and the diaspora's involvement in the national 'struggles' in and for the homeland. Those beliefs and ideologies, as a rule, embody concrete collective actions, such as protests or lobbies in the host country, to drive attention to some issues or problems in the homeland. Priorities of diaspora regarding the development and prosperity of the homeland may, nevertheless, be different from the ideas of the homeland's people or government regarding the same issues. Thus, in some cases long-distance nationalism might lead to conflict of interests or contradictions between the diaspora and local groups in the homeland. The character of contradictions depends mainly on the origins of long-distance nationalism. On this point, I have developed the argument that origin and conscious or unconscious *motives for long-distance nationalism have roots in the collective memory of the nation*. Collective memory defines and fuels manifestations of long-distance nationalism. I argue, in addition, that long-distance nationalism also assumes some extent of solidarity of the nation, both in the homeland and among diaspora. In this context I interpret

solidarity as collective actions and aspirations toward the achievement of a common goal, driven from common interests. Those collective actions might chase material interests—mutual benefit from some investments in the homeland economics—as well as immaterial goals, such as, winning the recognition and respect for being the best 'spokesperson' for Armenians and Armenian nation[41] abroad.

[41] Indeed, nation is a slippery notion, and there is no single definition of it. Many scholars have tried to define the nation in regard with various criteria, simultaneously questioning their relevance and accuracy (Anderson 2006; Smith 1991; 1996; 2004; Feuchtwang 1992; Žižek 1993; Balibar 1996; Duara 1996; Held 1996; Tölölyan 2008; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Calhoun 2002; 2003; Gellner 2006; Skey 2011). For example, Anthony Smith mentions that nations are communities of history and culture processing a unified territory, economy, mass education system and common legal rights (Smith 1996, p. 107). In general, all definitions of the notion include elements of shared culture, and sense of belonging to that culture, by the persons themselves and by the others (belonging to the same nation).
In some cases, however, no other terms or concepts can replace the notion of nation. In social sciences and particularly in migration research, the noticeable tendency has become to use the notion of ethnicity and ethnic groups. This is especially in respect to various migrant groups and diversification of the contemporary world. As nation was traditionally understood to be in connection with nation-state, it is self-evident that the notion of nation should have been challenged with regard to the critique of nation-state model. Nevertheless, many scholars still stand by the term nation in various contexts (Smith 1991; 1996; 2004; Feuchtwang 1992; Žižek 1993; Balibar 1996; Duara 1996; Held 1996; Tölölyan 2008; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Calhoun 2002; 2003; Gellner 2006; Skey 2011).
Despite the ambiguity that the term nation might create, in some cases it cannot be avoided, mostly because the terms nation/nationhood and ethnic group/ethnicity do not indicate the same phenomenon. Calhoun points out, for example, that nationality is a large categorical identity, which encompasses many smaller categories, such as tribes, ethnic groups, etc., whereas ethnicity occupies some intermediate position between kinship and nationality. (Calhoun 2002, p. 39, 40) From this perspective, nation, correspondingly, is understood as people who share common origins and history, culture, language, and identity. (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001, p. 17–18). Thus, kinship and descent appear to be important factors in determining nation (Calhoun 2002, p. 37). In contrast, Feuchtwang does not agree with this assumption, and instead, argues that a nation is a political arrangement which has to do with territorial sovereignty (Feuchtwang 1992, p. 2).
Nowadays, national belonging has lost its importance in determining states, since due to increasing scale of global migration, states have become, and are becoming, ethnically more and more heterogeneous. Throughout its history Armenia has always been highly a mono-ethnic country. A few ethnic minorities residing in Armenia are the Yezidis and Assyrians, who have no state. Taking this into consideration, in Armenian discourse, where Armenians are referred to as the ethnic group, the notion of 'nation' is more relevant. It is also embedded in the consciousness of Armenians, and they perceive themselves as a nation, rather than as an ethnic group. For Armenians, being an Armenian is a sign of bearing characteristics and heritage of Armenian nationhood, which is mostly the core determinant of self-identification. Michael Skey calls this *the logic of nationalistic thinking* (Skey 2011, p. 4–5). He states that recent academic work in this area has criticized the notion of nation, but doing so, they have challenged the logic of nationalist thinking, which argues that being national *(national and not nationalist!)* makes sense to many people. Thinking in terms of nation and nationhood is not only the way many people define themselves and their national experiences, it also helps specify how people identify themselves and perceive others, and locate their experience of belonging in a world of global flows (Brubaker 2002, p. 175; Calhoun 2003, p. 170; Skey 2011, p. 4–

The history of Armenia evidences that Armenians have always demonstrated a high level of solidarity, and will to unify whenever an external threat menaced the nation. In other words, Armenians residing in the territory of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora tend to unify under the conditions of an external threat to the homeland. The history shows that under the mentioned circumstances, the diaspora and the homeland have always succeeded in their dialogue. Explicit examples are the Karabakh conflict, accompanied by the Karabakh war, and the disastrous earthquake in 1988. The latter was not a literal threat as in the existence of an external enemy; however, it is an example of sorrow, a tragic event that unified the Armenian nation all over the world. Given the course of Armenian history, full of struggle for survival, the instinct of unifying under external threat has developed into some sort of collective memory.

Another precondition to awaken the Armenian national spirit is the necessity of a recognized charismatic leader.[42] Historically, Armenians tend to unify mainly in cases when some individual leader, organization, or some other party takes the lead.

Given the above-mentioned conditions necessary for Armenian solidarity, I contend that in the case of Armenians, long-distance nationalism tends to be especially strong under the circumstances of some real or imaginary external threat, or in the case of organizing any new leadership. The role of this leadership might be undertaken by any transnational organization, diasporic association, religious leader, etc. Taking this assumption as a background, in the following I will go further to develop my argument on the interconnectedness of long-distance nationalism and collective memories. For Armenians, the most significant and strongest collective memories have two main sources: *(a) events when the nation demonstrated a high level of solidarity*, driven from emotional

5). Sense of belonging and self-identification in this global flow are formed with the help of a combination of everyday practices and some ontological origins, which Žižek calls *the national thing* (Žižek 1993, p. 201). Some basic linguistic analysis of the terms and sentences in the narratives of my interviewees addressing their own nation and others allows to presume that nations are constructed as concrete entities through the use of these terms 'we', 'our', etc. Skey comes to this conclusion, too, studying manifestations of British nationalism in regard to British national events and mass rituals. These terms and sentences variously indicate unique manifestations of national pride.

Whatever nations are—ideal types or imagined communities (Anderson 2006)—for the Armenian case, the notion is relevant due to several factors. Firstly, for Armenians, the characteristics of nation and ethnic group intersect: Armenians are one of the most ancient *ethnie-nations* in the world (whilst not all ethnies are nations). Secondly, taking into consideration peculiarities of Armenian history, more precisely, the existence of Armenian kingdoms (BC and AC) and the republics based on national criterion, the term nation, better than any other, refers to Armenians. Moreover, in this logic, the Armenian diaspora all over the world is a national diaspora.

[42] My argument is not that this situation referred only to Armenian people. Just my observations are with regard to Armenians.

attachments, and existence of some external threat, *(b) memories of past achievements of the nation*, which nurture national pride. Both have their roots in the past.

3.3.2 Core aspects of Armenian collective memory as underlying factors of strategic nationalism formation

In this section I will discuss how and which collective memories have shaped and nurtured Armenian long-distance nationalism. I argue that the latter has situation- and context-dependent character. This type of long-distance nationalism I call *strategic nationalism,* which is based on a traumatic past – on the memories of threat, and emotional attachments. Thus, my argument is that Armenian strategic nationalism is situation-driven and awakes in certain cases. Further on, I claim that strategic nationalism has its roots in the historical past and the strongest collective memories of the nation. For Armenians, those are either traumatic memories, presuming an external threat, or memories (combined with the sense of pride) of past achievements. The latter, for Armenians, are symbolic imageries of belonging and nationhood, as well as symbolic resources for celebrating Armenianness *when it might be necessary*. In this sense, this strategic nationalism gets some specific designation or mission – it serves as a source of solidarity. Besides, it unifies Armenians from all over the world, from various intersecting transnational social fields.

I therefore consider the following parts, or axes, of Armenian collective memory to be of great importance for the development and manifestation of strategic nationalism:

- Past achievements
- The Genocide and struggles for recognition
- The Karabakh conflict.

Henceforth, a brief presentation of each will follow.

Collective memory of past achievements: Armenians experienced a lot of traumatic events, which directly and/or latently influenced their identification, and determined ways of being. For years, Armenia was divided between Sassanid Persia and Byzantium, and the danger of physical extermination and complete annihilation of the nation has accompanied the history of Armenia for centuries.[43] They were exiled, deported, experienced a genocide, and yet the

[43] Zhamkochyan et al. 1975; Smith 1991; Redgate 1998; Melkonyan 1998; Simonyan 2000; Sargsyan and Hakobyan 2004; Herzig and Kurkchiyan 2005

sense of a common Armenian belonging has always been strong among Armenians all over the world. Besides and despite traumatic aspects of the past, the history of Armenia is very rich with significant facts that provide reason for national pride. Collective memories of past achievements constitute one of the three important elements on the stem of Armenian strategic nationalism. Moreover, the permanent threat of physical annihilation and extermination, and the fact of surviving under foreign domination for rather long periods of time doubles the value of those achievements. Given these circumstances, Armenians tend to turn to their historical past, and proudly refer to their achievements and ability to survive as a nation, while maintaining two very important components of national belonging – the language and the religion. (The role of religion is especially important, on account of non-Christian foreign domination). As already mentioned, Armenians tend to live *with* and *in* their past. Of course, this should be taken figuratively: living with and in the past here means orientation to the past, and the feeling of national pride owed to the rich historical past. Armenians all over the world are proud of their old culture, history, art, and literature. This kind of nationalistic pride materializes in such accomplishments as the invention of the Armenian letters and alphabet in AC 401, having the first constituted kingdom, and being the first nation converted to Christianity and adopting it as a state religion in AC 301, and many other events that can feed national pride. As the famous Armenian writer, poet, and public activist Paruyr Sevak *(Պարույր Սևակ)* mentions, orientation to the past can nevertheless be a dangerous weapon for the suicide of the nation (Sevak, 1966). Indeed, this past-oriented behaviour fuels strategic nationalism, however, it might also become a reason to splurge. As a result, the nation develops a sort of 'feeling of fake safety', and the latter impedes aspiration for moving forward.

> Մենք քամիներ շատ ենք տեսել և եթե գայսօր գոյատևում ենք, ապա շնորհիվ յոկ այն բանի, որ քամիներդ թռցրել են մեր գլխարկը, բայց ոչ գլուխը: Սնամեջ ու հավակնոտ, պոռոտ ու պռատ գլուխգովանութիւնը, բաջնազարաիին դինջութեան և արխաիհնութեան հետ հանդիպելիս՝ առաջագնում են մի քամի (ո՛չ, այս անգամ հո՛ղմ), որ այլևս գըլխարկ չի թռցնում, այլ գլուխ (Սևակ 1966):
>
> We have seen lots of winds, and if we are still alive until today, it is only because the winds have taken our hats, and not heads. Hollow and ambitious pride and boast (…) create a kind of wind (no, this time a hurricane), that does not take a hat anymore, it takes a head (Sevak 1966).

Sevak considers the 'feeling of fake safety' as a dangerous weapon for a nation's suicide, since the feeling of pride and splurge because of Armenia's past makes the nation stay in the past and be relaxed about their present and future status. Time and the world move ahead, however, and the past achievements need to be

confirmed and doubled, in order to survive and make the nation competitive in modern circumstances: pride in the past is not enough. In this realm I follow Sevak's point of view in criticizing the sense of 'fake safety', and its consequences, which leads to inactivity; not the sense of pride itself in a rich historical and cultural heritage, or because of an established kingdom thousands of years ago BC, or an alphabet and literature since 4th century – these are, indeed, reason to be proud of. The points of condemnation are the fake safety and idleness that flows from it. The past achievements should nurture the sense of national belonging, at the same time encouraging further aspirations. It is also what Sevak is urging:

> Ես ուզում եմ, որ մեր մեծերի ստվերները հետապնդեն մեզ, նույնիսկ սատանայի կամ չեյթանի նման, միայն թե հիշեցնեն, որ մենք պիտի արժանի դառնանք հրենց հիշատակին ոչ թե ճառով, այլ ապրելակերպով ու գործով (Սևակ 1966):
>
> I want the shadows of our famous people to haunt us, even like a devil, only to remind us that we must merit their remembrance not by speeches, but by lifestyle and action (Sevak 1996).

The sense of national pride, driven from the past achievements, therefore provides a basis for strategic nationalism, as Armenians tend to go back to their historical past and pick up advantageous points from there, in order to present their nation from the most profitable angles.

Collective memory of the Genocide of Armenians, and struggles for its recognition (see, e.g. Hovhannisian (ed.) 1999, 2008; Marutyan 2008, 2009; Hovhannisyan 2010):[44] A large-scale discourse around the Genocide of Armenians played a significant role in creation of Armenian identity and in the development of Armenian history. In other words, the Genocide has become one of the crucial points for manifestations of Armenian strategic nationalism, in general, and amongst the diaspora, in particular. The Genocide has become a symbol of social cohesion and solidarity, a specific legitimization of loss, trauma and victimhood; the worldwide recognition of which generations of victims have had to fight with unified efforts. Hence, the collective memory of the Genocide is another key element on the stem of Armenian strategic nationalism. Moreover, it is apparently the strongest collective memory which has survived in national

[44] The literature on the Armenian Genocide is rather expansive, varying from archive materials to published books and articles. My aim here is not to discuss the Genocide and consequent issues of its recognition, but merely to touch upon the topic of the Genocide as a collective memory. For that reason, I have quoted only a few reviews, amongst thousands of others, with references to the memory of the Genocide, and not the other related issues, such as ethics, denial, or recognition of the Genocide, etc.

narratives over more than a century, and thus has become the strongest nurturer for strategic nationalism. Speaking with Aleida Assmenn's terminology, the collective memory of the Armenian Genocide goes under the categories *remembering in order to prevent forgetting* or *remembering in order to never forget* (Assmann 2010) for Armenians all over the world. Assmann suggests four models of memories dealing with the traumatic past, and remembering in order to never forget is the second model in her categorization. She sees the strategy of remembering in order to never forget as "a remedy for survived generations and a spiritual obligation for the victims" (Assmann 2010, p. 17). This claim is especially relevant to the Armenian case, since the majority of the Armenian diaspora are generations of the Genocide survivors. The collective memory of the Genocide has survived through a century in the form remember in order to never forget. It embodies not only the ethical and moral obligation for the victims and survivors, but also carries a demand to recognize the crime as genocide, and never to forget what happened then to the Armenian nation. Memory of the Genocide and the strategy remember in order to never forget are another illustration of the above-mentioned claim that Armenians tend to live with and in their past, not only when it refers to accomplishments. Manaseryan notices that the Genocide and demands of recompense are surely of great historical significance, however, it still remains a past-oriented agenda, and the nation needs also a positive and future-oriented strategy (Manaseryan 2004, p. 6).

The Karabakh conflict: The third, but not less important and most recent element of Armenian strategic nationalism is memories of the Karabakh conflict. It is a conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh for the independence of the latter. Armenia has contributed to Karabakh in its intention to protect its borders and independence from Azerbaijani aggression. The majority of Nagorno Karabakh population has always been ethnic Armenians, and at present, only Armenians inhabit there. In order to have a better picture of why this conflict is also strongly embedded in the Armenian collective memory as a remembrance of the traumatic past, a brief background of historical evidence of the conflict's emergence is necessary. My aim, however, is not to present the entire conflict itself, or to discuss its reasons. In this context, just a few historical evidences are enough to provide some pre–knowledge which will shed light on the reasons why it has become a key characteristic of Armenian strategic nationalism. During the Soviet times Karabakh was a part of the Azerbaijani SSR as the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast.[45] The Karabakh movement, which further gave birth to the armed conflict, started in February 1988. With the beginning of the crisis in the Soviet Union, Karabakh decided to become independent, as

[45] Hewsen 1972, 2001; Zhamkochyan et al. 1975; Croissant 1998; Melkonyan 1998; Simonyan 2000; Sargsyan and Hakobyan 2004; Marutyan 2009

many other post–Soviet republics did. The armed conflict between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan started in parallel with economic and political hardships resulted with the crisis, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Karabakh conflict is not solved until present, it is in the process of regulation, and since 1994 both sides have been in a condition of truce, which has been periodically violated or sabotaged by actions from Azerbaijani side. Today, Karabakh is, de facto, an independent republic, but its independence is still not recognized. In the Armenian collective memory, the Karabakh conflict is juxtaposed with the demonstration of hate and genocidal intentions. For Armenians, those events were associated with the revival of the genocidal intentions, this time by Azerbaijani Turks, and for that reason the conflict has become an axis of collective memory, though not as strong as the memory of the Genocide.

Thus, the above-mentioned collective memories are powerful narratives that have been passed inter-generationally throughout decades and centuries. These memories are not merely parts of collective narratives; they are cornerstones of pan-Armenian identification and sense of belonging, and as such, the key tenets of Armenian strategic nationalism.

As mentioned earlier, in the historical past struggles to survive and the fights against physical extermination have created the image of an external enemy for Armenia and Armenians. Thus, claims and social actions against those enemies or threats have become important criteria of self-identifying as Armenian, and experiencing Armenianness. Furthermore, they have become key points in Armenian long-distance nationalism. However, Armenian collective memory differently fuels the manifestations of long-distance nationalism. The latter tends to wake up on certain occasions, for example, commemoration date of the Genocide, or special cultural days devoted to Armenian art, poetry, etc. The sense of solidarity awakens on these occasions, and people go out to demonstrations, demanding the recognition of the massacres or playing praises to the values of Armenian nation. To take some illustrative cases in point, demonstrations and processions are organized by Armenian diaspora all over the world every year on 24th of April (the official date of the Armenian Genocide commemoration), or on following days. The picture below elucidates activities of Armenians in Germany, regarding commemoration of the Genocide. People are gathered around an Armenian *khachkar (խաչքար)*[46] in Bremen to commemorate the day, and to pray for the victims. Religious leaders were the main organizers of the event.

[46] *Khachkar* (Armenian- *խաչքար*) is a specific Armenian memorial. The literal translation from Armenian means cross-stone. *Khachkar* is made of stone with a carved cross in its centre, surrounded by different engravings of biblical and saintly figures. *Khachkars* can be found in church yards or other places as commemoration memorial. They belong to the UNESCO world heritage.

Picture 1: Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in front of the Armenian *khachkar* in Bremen, 24th of April, 2014

In addition to the goal to commemorate the victims, these processions and demonstrations, as a rule, embody also a political aim – to raise the issue of Genocide recognition. These collective actions are especially significant amongst the diaspora for whom traumatic memories of massacres are direct and personal, since they are descendants of victims who had been forced to leave the homeland as a result of violent evictions. This could be one of the latent reasons that explain why the issue of the Armenian Genocide and its desired recognition is of such great interest to the Armenian diaspora, whose actions are mainly driven from memories of a traumatic past and the feelings of loss.

Nevertheless, the aim and desire to keep Armenians all over the world together also motivates diaspora actions. In order to achieve this pan-Armenian unification, the creation of some unifying ideas or ideology is necessary. Logically, a nation, which prefers to live with the past, and is proud of its past achievements, would seek the best unifying ideas also in the past. Thus my argument why and/or how three axes of collective memory are powerful ideologies that bring together interests of Armenians all over the world.

Interestingly, this Genocide-recognition-driven solidarity spreads almost equally to the political, economic, and cultural spheres of life, not being reduced

only to political lobbies and campaigns. Instead, from the social-cultural perspective, it includes the organization of various cultural events, bringing together all generations of Armenians. From the economic perspective, it expresses itself in the financial support for building and renovating memorials all over the world.

Consequently, the collective memory of the Armenian Genocide has an important, however latent, function of unifying Armenians all over the world by bringing together the diaspora and the homeland, and improving the dialogue between them.

3.3.3 Development of Armenian strategic nationalism in transnational social fields

Collective memory—particularly its mentioned cornerstones—has historically proved its important role in formation of the sense of belonging of Armenians. In different situations and occasions, collective memory has been articulated with a varied intensity, preparing the suitable ground for manifestations of strategic nationalism. Following the course of history, some phases of development of the Armenian strategic nationalism can be distinguished, and interestingly, they are related to the three Armenian republics. In the following, I will address the key determinants for the strategic nationalism in its corresponding historical period. In doing so, I lean on the approach of Yeghiazaryan, who distinguished various periods in the history of the Armenian diaspora in relation to the three Armenian republics. He argues that relations between the Armenian diaspora and the homeland experienced interesting developments and challenges in accordance with the periods of these three republics (Yeghiazaryan 2013, 2014).[47] In addition, in my inference to the development of the strategic nationalism in these three historical periods, I take into the consideration the distinction of the historical phases of Armenian diaspora's formation by Tölölyan and Dallakyan (Tölölyan 2000; Dallakyan 2004).[48] Taking these scholars' studies and statements as a starting point, I deduce further that Armenian strategic nationalism has passed through different levels of formation and manifestation in parallel with the three Armenian republics. Moreover, in each period, the mentioned aspects of the Armenian collective memory appeared to be more dominant than the others. The below section elaborates on this argument.

[47] In detail, description of specificities of the diaspora–homeland relations and their development in the historical periods of the three Armenian republics finds place in the previous subchapter on formation of the Armenian diaspora.

[48] For the description of these phases see the previous subchapter devoted to formation of the Armenian diaspora.

Cornerstones of strategic nationalism in periods of three Armenian republics

Hence, the establishment of the first Armenian Republic (1918–1920) needed the creation of a national ideology, which could also serve as a political ideology for the new-born republic. What else than the events of not far-distant past could best take this role? During those years, still-fresh memories of loss and trauma were a perfect ideology, around which the nation could unify and demonstrate devotion to the homeland. This period, however, was quite short and for that reason, memories of trauma and loss did not have much time to fully incorporate into minds of Armenians. The first republic of Armenia with its national ideology had only two years of life.

The collapse of the first Armenian republic was followed by the establishment of the Soviet Union, and Armenia constituted part of it. Thus the second or the Soviet Republic of Armenia was established (1921–1990). The Soviet government did not encourage any nationalistic or liberal-democratic aspirations, and for that reason, Genocide-related discourses were not welcomed, especially due to their subtext (apart from the issue of recognition) about the reclamation of lost territories. Articulation of these issues would cause a lot of trouble to the Soviet government, and, accordingly, the Soviet Armenia adopted the strategy of silence. The strategic nationalism, therefore, had to find other sources of supply. The need of a strong national ideology was especially urgent, in order to prevent the diffusion of national characteristics. Driven by this purpose, Armenians started creating a myth of national ideology leaning on Armenian literature and history. Those years were so-to-say years of renaissance of Armenian literature and poetry. Works of Armenian poets and novelists were full of the spirit of national pride. As expected, the core role in their works belonged to the past achievements of Armenians.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declaration of the Armenian independent republic in 1991 (the third and the present Republic of Armenia), the necessity of a common national ideology became even more urgent, given the hard economic and political situation that the new-born republic had to confront. Here again, the collective memory appeared as a remedy reminding the population about national achievements as tenets of the national pride, and the traumatic past as an appeal to keep the nation cohesive and fight for a better future. In this period, discourse of the Genocide and the struggle for its recognition revived itself in the national consciousness. Moreover, improved relations with the diaspora significantly contributed to the development of the strategic nationalism. Two Armenian political parties—ADL and ARF, mentioned earlier—clamouring for the independence of Armenia and the importance of the Genocide recognition, could finally freely express themselves. They have

become active actors in the political realm of Armenia, articulating interests of the independent republic of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, simultaneously representing interests of the diaspora, and providing improved communication between Armenia and the diaspora and transnational communities in different countries. Hidden nationalistic aspirations became evident, and different agents appeared in the realm of transnational fields. The right and the assignment to be announced as the best presenter of Armenianness and national interests in the homeland, as well as abroad, have become a desired symbolic capital, and emerging agents started a struggle for domination over it. From this perspective, the sense of national pride and strategic nationalistic spirit express themselves particularly apparently among Armenians abroad.

Diaspora–homeland relations through the lens of strategic nationalism

Strategic nationalism manifests generally in the desire to represent the homeland in the best way, and to show foreigners the richness and value of the country and the Armenian nation. It opens the door for demonstrating the national pride based on past values and achievements. However, this could be the characteristic of any diaspora, in general. It is much more common to love the homeland from faraway, rather when one actually lives there. Distance love appears in specific identification with the homeland and the development of relationships (symbolic and real) with it. Both are multi-focal and vary from situation to situation, and from case to case. Glick Schiller distinguishes four types of relationships between the homeland and diaspora, and correspondingly, four stances that long-distance nationalists adopt toward the homeland (Glick Schiller 2005a, p. 574). Those stances are *anticolonialism, separation, regime change* and *participation.* The first three types of relationship are oppositional, because, in each case, the emigrant community in different ways contributes to radical political actions in the homeland, and supports either separatist movements or change of political regime. However, the fourth type of relationship refers to non-oppositional participation in homeland life. For example, by contributing money; attending some political or cultural meetings in the homeland and abroad related to problems and development issues of the homeland; or organizing demonstrations and lobbies in lands of residence on behalf of the homeland, etc. Armenian strategic nationalism fits into this fourth type (participation), though it has its own typical characteristics, and is more complicated than long-distance nationalism on the stance of participation. It is more than a nationalism that appears from far-away, it is a situational and contextual participation. Thus, the above-mentioned actions of participation, lobbies, etc. also depend on the situation. This is to say, not everything that is happening in the homeland captures the attention of the

diaspora or emigrant communities. The reason or cause of such a selective motivation stems from the collective memory. Even historical evidence and the collective memory are selective and context-dependent, and speak in favour of the argument regarding the situational character of the strategic nationalism. One of the good and not quite so old examples is the Karabakh conflict, when the nationalistic spirit of Armenians all over the world was at its summit. The situation was advantageous to articulate national interests, and to show care and concern about the homeland. I would even argue that the situation was not only advantageous, but even more, everything about the conflict was self-evidently dictating to be nationalistic. In other words, strategic nationalism becomes one of the ways of celebrating Armenianness, especially amongst diaspora. It is a symbolic capital in the dynamics of transnational social fields, and the diaspora (or particularly different diasporic organizations) is struggling to win a better place in this field, and to dominate the symbolic capital in the best way. Interestingly, all the actors involved in this struggle are related to one another, and are mutually interdependent. The diaspora articulates interests of the homeland, and the latter, itself, benefits a lot from the efforts, investments, and other contributions of the diaspora to the development of different spheres of life within the country.

The interdependence between the diaspora and the homeland, on the one hand, and the homeland and transnational migrants, on the other hand, and various transnational practices that take place in the scope of this interdependence guarantee the existence of transnational social fields. The symbolic capital unifying all the actors in the field is Armenian national belonging, or, more precisely, the representation of Armenian national belonging. The domination over this capital will bring recognition and authority not only at the level of transnational social fields, but also in other arenas, where articulation of nationalistic ideas may be of some interest. Notably, activities and practices of different actors involved in a transnational social field develop differently, regarding the relations of power in the homeland. Diaspora activities are dependent on the homeland processes, and vice versa. Sometimes even the image of the homeland can change in the eyes of diaspora, driven by the changes of political power and government in the homeland. It is to say, power relations and political orientations, of both the diaspora and the homeland, highly influence the dynamics within transnational social fields. Referring to the Armenian case, it is notable to mention that in the political realm, the diaspora mostly plays the first-chair or principle violin. It is to say, the political system and the politics of the homeland, in general, and internal politics, in particular, tend to be more dependent on the diaspora, than vice versa, though this domination is quite invisible.

In this framework, strategic nationalism becomes a specific tool for articulating Armenianness in a transnational social field, whenever the situation and consequences are most profitable. It is mostly the economic and political spheres that make significant profits from the manifestations of strategic nationalism. Elites and the government play the role of encouragers, even indicating ways and niches, where nationalistic moods and activities of diaspora from abroad can be best elucidated. Emigrants thus tend to become a specific resource for the homeland through which it can express its interests abroad. Scope of these interests and type of the resource emigrants may be, depends on the historical past of the homeland and its weak points. Diasporas are unique agents abroad, who give voice to the concerns of the homeland in international arenas. Consequently, the homeland welcomes long-distance nationalism, driven by its own interests, and emigrants for their part have their own motivations and interests in that.

Completing the analysis of strategic nationalism and its manifestations, I will now proceed to the topic of Armenians in Germany, and will briefly present some general characteristics of Armenian communities in Germany, and institutionalized transnational activity of some German–Armenian associations.

3.4 Armenians in Germany

The Armenian comunity in Germany is relatively young (Dabag 1995; Ordukhanyan 2008); nevertheless, it has been constantly growing during the last 20–25 years. About 50,000–55,000, it is the second largest one in Europe—after France. Presently, in Germany reside about 25,000 naturalized Armenians; 15,000 still have the status of an asylum-seeker, and about 10,000–15,000 Armenians who have the legal status of a permanent German resident (Ordukhanyan 2008). In general, the population of Armenian origin in Germany consists of:

- ✓ immigrants from the present Republic of Armenia,
- ✓ immigrants from post–Soviet countries,
- ✓ immigrants from any third country.

Under the last point, I categorize immigrants from countries of western Asia – Syria, Lebanon, Beirut, Iran, Turkey, etc.

Some considerable features are distinguishing the Armenian diaspora in Germany from other Armenian communities in different countries. According to Azat Ordukhanyan (2008), those features are:

- Armenian communities in Germany are not centralized. In other parts of the world, Armenian communities can be found in special cities and regions, for example, in France, Canada, Russia, Lebanon, and USA. In Germany, on the contrary, Armenians are spread all over the state, and are not concentrated in one or other federal regions of Germany (Dabag 1995). For example, there can be a city in Germany where only one Armenian family lives. On the institutional level, this makes it difficult to organize community life for that family.
- In contrast to other countries with big populations of Armenians, there are no Armenian schools in Germany. In many countries, where Armenian communities live in concentrated clusters, there are special Armenian schools. These are not only for learning the language, but actual Armenian schools with Armenian teachers, and subjects taught in Armenian. In Germany, such schools do not exist, nevertheless, in some German cities so-called Sunday schools are functioning, where periodically classes on Armenian language, culture, art, and history are organized. However, these schools are situated mainly in the big or central cities, and families living far cannot afford travelling back and forth every time just to attend those classes.
- Armenian communities in Germany are sometimes hidden or invisible, and do not make much 'noise', but have a discreet existence. As a consequence, Germans do not know much about Armenia, nor its culture. One of the reasons of this invisibility can be the dispersion of Armenians all over Germany. In addition, this could also be due to the skills of quick incorporation of the value-norm system and behavioural patterns of the host country, and thus not differing from the mainstream population.
- Armenians in Germany are mostly represented by highly qualified immigrants. Labour migrants have appeared in Germany due to brain drain. Lack of carrier opportunities in the home country, and inability of the market to absorb the labour force has made skilled professionals search for jobs abroad.

What is the background of Armenian migration to Germany, and since when has Germany become a preferred country of immigration? Those are the questions to be addressed in the following pages.

3.4.1 Immigration to Germany: a retrospective glance

The history and reasons of migration of Armenians to Germany are various. They vary given the year and purpose of migration, and also due to expectations from migration and from a new life in a new country.

After the First World War, when Germany was accepting guest workers from Turkey, many Armenians living in Turkey left for Germany (Ordukhanyan 2008). Those were generally undiscovered Armenians in Turkey, which means

they hid their Armenianness, but never changed their religion and always, even implicitly, sustained the sense of belonging to the Armenian nation. They established themselves all over Germany; however, the main cities of their residence became Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg, which provide a lot of opportunities for organization of international trade. Nowadays Berlin is known as a city where most Armenians from Turkey inhabit.

More than 5000 Armenians arrived in Germany from Iran after Islamic Revolution in Iran, to escape discrimination of Christian minorities (GTZ, Migration und Entwicklung 2008). These are so-called Iranian-Armenians, who were established in Iran after the massacres of 1915 in Ottoman Empire.

However, at the beginning of 20th century, Germany was not on the list of most desirable countries for Armenians (Hofmann 1997; Thon 2012). Flows of Armenians to Germany might have been larger after the Armenian Genocide, had the German Empire not supported the Ottoman Empire during those years (Hofmann 1997; Sumlyonni 2006). Besides, there is an assumption that the reason of this dislike might be the large-scale Turkish immigration to Germany at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. As one of my key informants mentioned:

> Այդ ժամանակահատվածն ընկնում է անմիջապես ջարդերից հետո, իսկ նման սահմռկեցուցիչ դեպքերից հետո դժվար թե հայերն ուզենային գնալ մի երկիր, որը հյուրընկալում է նրանց, ումից իրենք փախել են…
>
> This was the period after the massacres and after this kind of horrifying events Armenians would hardly like to go to the country, which welcomed those from whom they had escaped…
>
> (Extract from interview: key informant)

Armenians were fleeing to Germany during each wave of the already mentioned contemporary stage of Armenian immigration; however, mostly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Germany has become one of the main countries of immigration for Armenians. The large-scale immigration of Armenians to Germany took place especially after 1991, and then 2008—the second and third waves of migration, mentioned earlier. According to the data provided by CRRC (the Caucasus Research Resource Centres) *Migration and Skills* project report (July 2011–June 2012) Germany was the 4th ranked immigration country to go to by the preferences of Armenians (CRRC, Armenia, p. 41). The first three places belong to Russia, the USA, and France, respectively.

The main waves of migration to Germany, thus, started after the economic crisis and political instability in the years of 1990 and then followed by another wave started in the 2000s. Beside these, a significant reason to leave Armenia was the ferocious 1988 earthquake. Many families had to leave the

country because of the loss of homes and no hope for a better future. The disappointment, however, did not directly accompany the huge damages caused by the earthquake. Organized reconstruction works followed the earthquake, and the victims initially had hope for at least getting their lost homes back. However, with the collapse of Soviet economic and political system, the reconstruction works in Armenia stopped, and with that the people lost any hope for better conditions. In the 1990s Lusiné[49] was a young woman, who had a great hope and belief in prosperous future for Armenia. Although she and her husband had prestigious jobs at that time, the uncertainty in Armenia was increasing day by day, and at some point they had to make a difficult decision to emigrate.

> Առաջին երկու տարին սպասում էինք ոգևորված, որ տուն կստանանք, հետո օգնություն ստացանք տների քանդվելու պատճառով, ֆինանսական փոխհատուցում՝ կորցված ունեզվածքի դիմաց: Այդ ժամանակ մենք՝ ես ու ամուսինս, բավականին յավ աշխատանք ունեինք: (…) Մտածեցինք, որ երկրաշարժից հետո կկարգավորվի ամեն ինչ: Այն էլ, որ քանդվեց սովետական միությունը, շինարարները հեռացան, ու ամեն ինչ մնաց քանդված: Հետո գնալով դրությունը վատացավ…
>
> The first two years we were waiting fascinated, that we will get a house, then we got some aid, because of the loss of the houses – financial compensation for the lost property. At that time my husband and I had very good jobs. (…) We have thought everything will be regulated after the earthquake. But when the Soviet Union fell, builders went away, and everything remained destroyed. Afterwards the situation went worse and worse…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

For some families the decision to leave the country was very difficult, for despite the hard conditions, they still had their favourite professions and jobs, and fear for uncertainty was a significant factor keeping them back from emigration. Some of them had the clear idea to find a good job in Germany, to earn enough money to go back to their hometown one day, to buy a house and *continue the life from the point it stopped there*. Of course, this process took longer than expected, and in parallel situation in Armenia did not get any better. As a result, the migrants had to weigh the pros and cons: not only their security, but also their children's future in the country of immigration, on the one hand, and on the other, starting everything from the beginning in uncertain conditions in the homeland. Then, the decision to stay came by itself.

[49] As mentioned earlier, all names appearing in this analysis are imaginary (not real names of my interviewees). I introduce some of my interview partners with fake names to make it easy to follow their stories, especially when quoting several extracts from interviews with them. The few interview extracts that appear without a connection to a concrete person, indicate common statements or tendencies in the majority of interviews which are merely more 'colourfully' expressed in those extracts.

Transnational ties, as such, also played a crucial role in migration decision making. I had a number of cases during my fieldwork when my interview partners mentioned that some relatives already residing in Germany had had a great influence on their decision to leave, by convincing and emotionally supporting.

During their residence in Germany, Armenians have established a number of associations, institutions, and research centres separately or in cooperation with German colleagues. These associations promote Armenian culture and history, and foster German–Armenian partnership and cooperation.

3.4.2 German–Armenian associations: transnational practices

Associations, organizations, councils and other transnational structures are important elements in the transnational social field. They carry a 'responsibility' for creating, balancing, and stimulating the dynamics necessary for the functioning of the fields. The purpose of this section is to introduce associations in the Armenian transnational social fields in Germany, and to discuss their practices within the context of transnational social fields. Armenian or German–Armenian cooperative associations do hard work in the realm of improving German–Armenian cooperation, representing Armenian culture and traditions and, of course, concerning the question of the Armenian Genocide.

German–Armenian associations first appeared in the 1970s manily in Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne, Stuttgart, and Munich, and afterward spread all over Germany (Ordukhanyan 2008). In general, Armenian associations and communities in Germany can be categorized in two big groups – church communities and social-cultural associations. Church communities belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, and are subordinate to the Armenian diocese in Germany.

As a result of German–Armenian partnership, in Germany emerged centres for scientific research, and some German–Armenian associations which organize different festivities, social, cultural, and scientific events, and, most importantly, they support contacts with Armenia, therefore, representing a specific transnational field. Following, is a brief description of German–Armenian associations and their major activities.

Deutsch–Armenische Gesellschaft – DAG (German–Armenian Society) is one of the oldest German–Armenian associations, founded in Berlin in 1914. Among its members were Johannes Lepsius, Paul Rohrbach, Joseph Marquardt, and others. From the Armenian side, the members of DAG were famous Armenian writers, politician, intellectuals, and among them well-known Armenian poet Avetik Isahakian. The Second World War interrupted activities of the association, but some years later, it restarted its functions. At present, the

Society publishes a quarterly magazine *German–Armenian Correspondence (Deutsch–Armenische Korrespondenz)*. The magazine includes articles on political, historic, and sociological analysis of events in Caucasus Region on Turkish–Armenian relations.

Der Armenisch–Akademische Verein 1860 – AAV 1860 (The Armenian Academic Association 1860) was originally founded in Leipzig in 1860. After that, it stopped its activities for a while, and reopened again in Bochum in 2005. Today the head office of the association is in Bochum, but its activities are spread all over Germany. The association organizes cultural programmes and so-called Armenian days in different German cities. They invite Armenian professors from Armenian and German universities to give talks and make presentations at the University of Bochum, and organize presentations of books by German authors and poets. The Armenian Academic Association 1860 also founded one-day or Sunday schools in different German cities to teach Armenian children to read and write in Armenian. The Association also publishes articles in different German newspapers and magazines. For the future, the association plans publication of research of German Armenologists in different languages, particularly in Armenian, German and Russian. In addition, one of the main goals of the association is to help Armenian students in their education and career opportunities.

Zentralrat der Armenier in Deutschland – ZAD (Central Council of Armenians in Germany) was founded in 1969, and its interests spread on issues of the Armenian community life in Germany, and German–Armenian relations, as well as in problems of the Armenian nation and country in general. The main goal and organizational directive of ZAD is political, and here a sizable part is dedicated to the organization of various events focused on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The council regularly holds seminars on this topic, and its members regularly meet with members of German parliament, as well as with politicians of Turkish origin. The main topics of discussion refer to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, inclusion of the history of Armenian Genocide in German school textbooks, and building Genocide commemoration monuments. Nevertheless, apart from politically oriented activities, ZAD is famous for organizing various cultural and social events, and special youth-oriented programmes. It initiates organization of annual youth meetings from German-speaking countries. For example, every year so-called summer camps take place, where the young Armenians living mostly in Germany and other German-speaking countries spend several days together. The aim of these summer camps is to bring the Armenian youth together and familiarize them with Armenian culture, literature, music, history, and language.

The Diocese of Armenian Church in Germany (Die Diözese der Armenischen Kirche in Deutschland. Through the order of the Catholicos of all Armenians, His Holiness Vazgen I, a diocese was founded in Germany in April 1991. The centre of the Armenian diocese in Germany is the *Sahak-Mesrop* church in Cologne. Nowadays the diocese with its deacons and spirituals has become one of the biggest pillars of German–Armenian community. The diocese regularly organizes church services and different events mainly on religious holidays.

Verein Armenischer Mediziner in Deutschland (The Association of Armenian Physicians in Germany) was founded in 1990. The precondition for such an enterprise was the humanitarian help programme for Armenia after the huge earthquake in 1988. By now the Association of Armenian Physicians in Germany has carried out a number of medical programmes in Armenia. Moreover, it provided medical institutions and hospitals in the homeland with various medical equipment and facilities. One of the main aims of the associations is to invest in development of Armenian health system and health institutions. Members and the head of the association periodically travel to Armenia with the purpose to assess the current situation in Armenian health institutions personally, and to study possible areas for development and further investments. In parallel, the association regularly organizes trainings and re-qualification research stays for Armenian physicians, particularly for laboratory workers. For example, two Armenian laboratory heads had a three-month research visit to laboratories at the university clinic in Göttingen. It gives them the opportunity to get re-qualified in highly professional atmosphere and afterwards apply these skills working in Armenian medical institutions. With the association's efforts and support, a laboratory for clinical microbiology and hospital hygiene was founded in Armenia.

Armenischer Unternehmer–Verein (The association of Armenian Entrepreneur) was founded in Cologne, and it is unifying Armenian entrepreneurs and businessmen from Cologne and the neighbouring areas. The main ideology of the association is to bring together Armenian traders and businessmen/women and to support German–Armenian communities. The association also periodically makes investments in culture, economic, and political development programmes in Armenia, as well as in Armenian communities in Germany. A significant part of activities in German–Armenian communities are organized with the financial help of the association.

Deutsch–Armenischer Studentenclub HAIK (German–Armenian Student club HAIK) was founded in Manheim in 2003, and its intention is (a) to support and promote Armenian students in Germany, and (b) to create a network of Armenian students and young professionals in Germany. Members of HAIK are either students or young professionals who are already at the beginning of

careers. Moreover, the student club takes the responsibility to supervise and support Armenian students who come to study at the University of Manheim within German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). HAIK offers newcomers help in such issues as housing, organization of leisure time, and other specificities referring to student life in Germany.

In addition to the aforementioned associations, a number of scientific research centres are also functioning in Germany, the main objectives of which are as follows.

The Institute for the 'Armenian Question'[50] was founded in Munich in 1977. The Institute is interested in Armenian culture and history; however, the topic of its special interest is the 'Armenian Question'. Thus, the main activity here is collecting documents about the Armenian Genocide and publishing them in different languages. Doing so, they aim to familiarize Germans with Armenia and Armenians.

Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Studies was founded at University of Bochum in 1995. The interests of the Institute are not only the research on the Armenian diaspora and the Genocide, but also studies of cases of genocides of other nations. Thus, it is not an organization which occupies itself only with Armenian questions and research driven from Armenian interests.

Mesrop Centre for Armenian Studies was founded in Halle in 1998, and belongs to the University of Halle-Wittenberg. The research of the institute relates to the studies of classical Armenian literature and philosophy, theology, and history of the Armenian Church. One of the biggest achievements of the Mesrop centre is the publication of the archive of Johannes Lepsius.

The centre for Research on Armenian Architecture was officially registered in Aachen in 1978. The centre also has branch offices in Armenian National Academy of Sciences in Yerevan and in Los Angeles, USA. The mission of the research centre is to search for works of Armenian architecture outside the territory of the Republic of Armenia, particularly on the territory of West Armenia, as well as in neighbour countries—Georgia and Iran—with the aim of maintenance of ancient works of Armenian architecture.

Armenian Information and Documentation Centre in Berlin, headed by Tessa Hofmann, a German professor of history and sociology, is interested in research on the 'Armenian Question' and related issues. The archive of the centre contains documents and materials on Armenian massacres, and photos made by a German humanist Armin T. Wegner.

[50] The Armenian Question (Armenian- հայկական հարց, *haykakan harc*) is an expression to refer to the Genocide of Armenians, its recognition, claim of territories and other associated issues.

Those associations are important actors in the transnational field. The range of activities varies from investment of social and economic capital to scientific-educational and entertainment programmes. The main goal of all German–Armenian associations is to contribute to development of relationships between Armenia and Germany, and to represent the Armenianness in the best way. On the one hand, due to transnational practices they engage in transnational social fields, and become important actors there, and on the other hand, those transnational practices contribute to creation of the fields, and determine dynamics within and between them. The majority of German–Armenian associations are working on creating a network among similar organizations in different countries, which will mean enlarging transnational fields and engaging more participants. Interestingly, there have always been back-and-forth movements among transnational fields in different countries. For example, migrants who found their first residence in neighbouring countries of Armenia, moved shortly afterward to the third country for permanent residence. Thus, many Armenians, who nowadays reside in Germany, have a complicated background of migration, before becoming permanent inhabitants in Germany.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have presented the main waves of emigration from Armenia with typical reasons and push factors in each of these waves. It has led me to the discussion of periods and stages of formation of the Armenian diaspora and the specificities of its relationship with the homeland during each of the historical periods. In this scope, I have presented three main waves of emigration from Armenia, with their typical characteristics, and proceeded with the analysis of historical periods of Armenian diaspora formation all over the world in relevance with three Armenian republics, established correspondingly in 1918, 1922 and 1991—the last and present Republic of Armenia. Relationships between the diaspora and Armenia experienced interesting dynamics and development during each of these periods, and intensified mainly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and especially during the last ten–twenty years, given some political disagreements between diaspora parties and the homeland government.

Referring to immigration to Germany, I would point to the years of 1990s and a decade later, 2000s, as main waves of migration. Immigration of *arevmtahays* had a more random character. The main reasons of migration were unstable economic and political situations in Armenia, and lack of personal development opportunities. Although the Armenian diaspora in Germany is relatively young, there are a number of associations and organizations founded by *arevmtahays* or *hayastantsis*. Activities of these associations vary from political

to academic research and questions, and from medical to business purposes. However, all of them are important and unique actors in the transnational social field, and contribute to dynamics and struggles for the symbolic capital in these fields. The symbolic capital in this case is the privilege of better representing the Armenian nation, celebrating Armeniannes, and thus appearing as a main spokesperson of the Armenian nation in Germany.

The brief discussion of periods of Armenian diaspora formation, and specificities of relations with the homeland, has led me to some reflections on the phenomenon of long-distance nationalism as a key attribute of a diaspora. My argument is that for the Armenian diaspora, collective memory has played a core role in the process of formation of homeland orientations, in sustaining ties with the ancestral land, in forming the sense of belonging, and in maintaining and celebrating Armenianness. Moreover, certain aspects or components of Armenian collective memory contribute to manifestations of Armenian long-distance nationalism, which I name *strategic nationalism***,** and argue that the latter has situation- and context-dependent character. Notably, it is not a manifestation of a chauvinistic nationalism. Instead, it is a specific type of long-distance nationalism, based on the traumatic past, on the memories of threat and emotional attachments. Strategic nationalism with its roots goes into the historical past, and nourishes from the strongest collective memories of the Armenian nation. For Armenians the most significant and strongest collective memories have two main sources: *events when the nation demonstrated a high level of solidarity*, driven from emotional attachments, and *memories of past achievements of the nation*, which nurture national pride. Collective memory identifies the scope and niches for manifestations of strategic nationalism. The latter has situational character, for it expresses itself in most profitable circumstances, and **s**trategically becomes a specific tool to articulate Armenianness in a transnational social field, whenever the situation and consequences are most suitable.

Having presented historical background of Armenian migration, formation of the Armenian diaspora, and having touched upon the core information about Armenians in Germany, I will now turn to the analysis of my main empirical data, according to the three analytical domains – configurations, encounters, and representations. Various configuration and encounters occurring in diverse realities, specificities of different social environments, and cross-border ties are the key points I address in the following chapter.

4 Peculiarities of Armenian Transnational Ties

The purpose of this chapter is to describe specificities of Armenian transnationalism in Germany based on the experiences of my research participants. Elaborating on the topic in this chapter, I will analyse Armenian transnational ties and their characteristic manifestations. In doing so, I lean on the conceptual schema 'configurations–representations–encounters' suggested by Vertovec (2009b, 2015), and of which the introduction and analysis is found in Chapter 2. As the latter has already included the description of the model, its domains, and relevance of the triad to my studies, in this chapter I will directly start with the analysis of my empirical data. To begin with, however, a brief reminder that the three interdependent domains of the model—configurations, representations, and encounters—in the scope of my research correspond to transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields, self-identification/ identification of others, and migrants' practices. The employment of Vertovec's triad as a conceptual framework for my analysis sheds multi-sided insights on issues related to migration and transnationalism. It provides an explanation of how practices of migrants may influence their self-identification, and how self-identification may determine those practices, or how configurations may condition or foster one practice in favour of another, etc. It will not be enough to study migrants' practices independent from their self-identification and some contextual factors, influencing this self-identification, and vice versa. In short, application of the conceptual triad allows understanding of mutual interconnection and interrelation among transnational social fields, migrants' practices, and self-identification. Moreover, it leads to the argument that to thoroughly analyse one domain, it is necessary to consider it in relation to the others.

Hence, in this chapter I will analyse two domains of the triangle—configurations and encounters—which in my study correspondingly represent transnational social fields, local-diasporic fields, and migrant practices.

4.1 Configurations

As mentioned earlier, I view transnationalism from two points of manifestation – at the level of real social ties, encounters, and practices, and at the level of

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representations.[51] This kind of perception of transnationalism in parallel with my research data, leads me to distinguish two main configurations – transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields. As explained in the conceptual-analytical part of this book, the notion of field is taken from the concept of Bourdieu (1984, 1992, 1993). Bourdieu points out that as a specific space of play (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 104), where actors create a certain kind of cultural product (Bourdieu 1993), fields accumulate practices and surrounding economic, cultural, social conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 105). Configurations of Vertovec are structural conditions within which daily practices of people take place, and which also include articulations of power, status, opportunities, etc. (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). A transnational social field, in this logic, is deterritorialized space of a play created by transnational practices of social actors, their dispositions, shared memories, and images, and which, in turn, determines those transnational practices, dispositions, and practices. My research evidences that social actors involved in transitional social fields—not necessarily continuously or permanently, but surely at some point of their life—do not always regularly engage in such transnational practices as regular travels back home, phone calls, or Skype conversations.

Transnational social fields thus represent those configurations where daily transnational practices of social actors take place, and where various transnational associations and organizations perform their activities. They are formed through real cross-border practices and engagements of immigrants, binding so-called Armenian and German realities into one time and space. Local-diasporic fields also have this characteristic of binding realities; however, the real border-spanning activity does not occur in this case. In other words, transnational aspects of ties manifest in the imagination—derived from diasporic consciousness. Those fields, thus, emerge due to in-border communication of Armenians with each other occurring within Germany. Although the dynamics in those fields rotate within the country of residence, it has direct relation to Armenia. This imaginary relation to Armenia is present at every meeting of compatriots on various occasions. It is embedded in conversations, shared memories, and nostalgia for the homeland. Local-diasporic fields thus outline a small Armenia, or part of Armenia in Germany. A very characteristic point of local-diasporic fields is a common concern for the homeland, which generally manifests in discussions about how to initiate any transnational activity, the purpose of which would be the aid to some families in need, or to somehow contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic situation in the homeland. Various possible projects are

[51] See, Chapter 2, definition of transnationalism

discussed with great enthusiasm, though in the majority of cases these initiatives remain at the level of discussion, and do not find proper ways of implementation.

It is noteworthy that the above-mentioned types of fields have points of interconnection, or more precisely, each of them might include parts of others. The intersecting points belong to each field simultaneously. It is to say, some of the agents are members of transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields at the same time, and their various transnational practices—in the reality or in the imagination—go beyond the area of barely one field. In addition, as in every field, transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields have changeable and fluid borders. Here, I use the term 'borders' not in the sense of boundaries, but as some symbolic definition marks, which in this sense may vary, depending on occasion, time and other factors or circumstances. It is to say, social actors in transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields might change periodically, and on occasion there occurs an exchange between those fields: members of a local-diasporic field also engage in transnational activity, and thus enter a transnational field, and vice versa. Thus, those fields produce a variety of practices and encounters.

A good pattern of transnational social fields are churches. The Armenian Church is an example of an ethnic church or an immigrant church,[52] where one of the main roles has always been to foster the maintenance of the heritage culture, traditions, and the mother tongue, and to prevent the forgetting of the ancestral land, origins, and national merits. In this sense, Armenian churches abroad are included in transnational social fields, since they create fields providing access to various transnational activities, and foster 'power or status games' for the title of a (better) representative of Armenian interests. An important point is that Armenian churches abroad are episcoposates of the Armenian Apostoloc Church, and thereby maintain close connections to Echmiadzin – the mother church of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Armenia. These ties are transnational in character, since they go beyond borders of religious life in the host country, and connect Armenians to their churches of origin. Last, but not the least, the priests and pastors are, generally, sent from Armenia, and thus constitute a part of back-and-forth movements in a transnational field. In addition, as also Olivia Sheringham accentuates, religious leaders contribute to transnational change as individuals, as well, and not only as representatives of religious institutions (Sheringham 2013, p. 83).

In some German cities Armenian communities are officially called *Armenische Kirchengemeinde*, which means Armenian Church communities. There

[52] See, e.g. Dolan 1975; Kim 1991; Casanova 1994; Pattie 1997a, b; Menjívar 1999, 2002; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Levitt 2003a; Glick Schiller and Caglar 2008; Ben-Rafael 2009; Crisan 2013; Sheringham 2013

are three Armenian Apostolic Churches in Germany – *Saint Sahag-Mesrop (Սուրբ Սահակ-Մեսրոպ)* Church in Cologne, *Surp Harutyun (Սուրբ Հարություն)* Church in Halle/Saale, and *Surp Khatsch (Սուրբ Խաչ)* Church in Göppingen. They all belong to *Diözese der Armenischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany).

As stated earlier, I name the fields local-diasporic which are formed around in-border communication of compatriots. Social ties within these fields can have various levels of intensity, as well as have unframed or unthemed structure of dynamics of the fields themselves. Articulations of interests revolve around strong personal preferences. Those fields may exist absolutely separately from transnational social fields, but usually they have points of contact, or more accurately, their borders are periodically merged. An example of an emergence of a local-diasporic field is seen at Armenian community gatherings on various occasions, such as celebrating Christmas, Easter, or other religious and national holidays. Generally, the organizers of those social gatherings are either the Church or some of the activists from German–Armenian associations. Meetings and celebrations held in the Armenian Church usually start with a Church service in Armenian, and then participants celebrate the occasion with music, dancing and singing – more or less in the way those holidays would be celebrated in Armenia.

In addition to the aforementioned fields, there is also another important configuration to take into consideration – transnational fields created by internet communication. These represent interesting stances for analysis, namely, Internet blogs, various online social networks, and web-pages referring to Armenians in Germany. Internet forums and blogs foster the feeling of simultaneous presence in more than one reality, and thereby they are carriers of transnationalism. In addition, they unify people with similar concerns and interests (see, e.g. Pertierra 2012; Greschke 2012; Stoyanova and Raycheva 2012). The majority of German–Armenian associations, in addition to their official web-sites, also have special Facebook pages. The latter create unique transnational social fields where various kinds of transnational practices are represented. These virtual transnational fields are an interesting contribution to the notion and understanding of the concept of social fields. As mentioned earlier, one of the important elements of social fields is the habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1990, 1993), which is also a key explaining factor of relational interdependence between the three domains of the triangle – it is uniquely present in each domain. Thus, habitus is not only one of the determinant factors of a field's functioning, but also one of the main conditions of maintenance and endurance of cross-border as well as in-border relations. It determines transnational practices and engagements in transnational social fields. In the case of the Internet-mediated transnational social fields,

habitus plays a two-sided role: even though only those who have similar concerns and interests are involved in these fields, members of online social networks are not necessarily personally acquainted. Impersonal online communication does not necessarily require similar ways of being. Online social networks, various web-pages, and specifically, Facebook, create large-scale transnational social fields, which unify Armenians from Germany and Armenia, and generally elsewhere. Anyone, who has access to online networks and share the same concerns, can engage in this field. Activities and events finding place on German–Armenian online social networks refer to various issues of Armenians in Germany; however, topics are of interest to all Armenians in general. To take a case in point, every year in March, starts one of the highly discussed topics – the organization of the commemoration events of the Armenian Genocide. It directly refers to activities in Germany; however, it gets remarks and comments also from Armenians residing in different countries. Ongoing events frame the contents of the field, and guide communication within it. In the following chapter I will discuss in detail the case of the Genocide centennial commemoration as a mode of representation of transnational activity in online media.

In addition to unifying people with common interests, and creating a feeling of simultaneous presence in various realities, these virtual fields also represent stances of 'symbolic struggles': each agent occupies its own position with a corresponding status, and stepping out of it, engages in a struggle for the prestigious role or mission to be the best advocate of national interests. Winning the struggle will promise a better position, and a more prestigious status in the field.

In summary, dynamics of the presented types of configurations is rather complicated and manifold. The most important starting point for a social analysis should be the interconnection or intersection of those various fields. This is to say, one person can be part of a local-diasporic field, and thus not engage in any kind of transnational activity (with the exception, perhaps, of connections with relatives in the origin country), whereas another person from the same local-diasporic field may also simultaneously be involved in a transnational social field (virtual or real), and vice versa. I would thus state that such a categorization of configuarations is an ideal type, which means each separate type practically does not exist in a pure way. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a local-diasporic field which is always purely non-transnational, and a transnational social field without elements of diasporic consciousness. As ideal types, however, these categories become methodological tools for studying configurations, and analysing processes happening within.

Mobility and practices within and among named configurations give birth to various encounters in diverse realities. The following is the analysis of these encounters.

4.2 Encounters: everyday practices in diverse realities

In this section the subject of my analysis will be the next domain of the conceptual triad – the encounters. In the scope of my research, encounters refer to everyday interactions, practices, cross-border and in-border engagements of migrants in a given configuration. To proceed with, I will separately present encounters of the first and the second generations. I name them routines as symbols of continuity in everyday engagements and interactions. This helps to better understand the specificity of each generation's engagements – be it transnational practices or not.

Routines: first generation

Daily life of an average Armenian family in Germany perfectly fits into the framework of what can be called an everyday routine. On weekdays everyone is busy working, however, they try to organize weekends differently: some with the family, some with other relatives who live in Germany, paying visits or hosting them during weekends and on public holidays.

> Բոլոր օրերն իրար նման են: Մենակ մի քիչ տարբերվում են այն օրերը, որ ծնունդներ կամ հավքներ ունենք:
>
> Every day looks the same. Only those are a little bit different when we have birthdays or other gatherings.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Some occasions and celebrations bring changes into everyday routine, even though they are occasional, rather than regular.

Yet, the routine is not the same for every family. Indeed, it differs depending on the field of professional affiliation. For those who work in the public or state sectors, the day begins early in the morning, and, they usually have more time for the family and various appointments in the evening. On the contrary, those running their own business—a fast-food joint or restaurant, etc.—have a different daily routine: they have the opportunity to start the day by organizing some private matters, however, their working day lasts longer. What generally unifies all of my respondents, though, is the desire to spend weekends somehow differently with the purpose of diversifying daily routine. Here, an interesting comparison comes out, a comparison between lifestyles and the *life tempo* in

Armenia and in Germany. Almost every interviewee mentioned these differences, and the notion *life tempo (*Armenian: *կյանքի տեմպ, kyanki temp)* belongs to them. Discussion of advantages and disadvantages of these lifestyles and life tempos appeared in the majority of interviews with *hayastantsi* respondents. One of the mentioned differences is that in Germany most jobs do not have flexible working hours. It might also be an advantage, however, since fixed working hours would also suppose fixed free time. By contrast, my research participants believe that working hours and leisure time are often mixed in Armenia. This means, people might spend less time at the workplace, but instead continue working from home. This obviously does not apply to every job and every profession. However, my interviewees noticed that sometimes in Armenia it is easier to find time for small *coffees or drops in on the way.* It is easier to find a suitable moment for an appointment with friends or relatives, even if it would be a quick visit on the way. Interestingly, even despite that, German lifestyle with fixed working and leisure time seems more preferable for my research participants. According to them, it is better, because after working obligatory x hours, they know they are free to plan the rest of the day.

Here is what Lusiné told me about her observations regarding German and Armenian life tempos.

> Ընդհանրապես, այստեղ մարդիկ ուրիշ տեմպով են ապրում: Հայաստանում մարդիկ, ճիշտ է, ֆինանսապես այնպես ապահովված չեն, ինչպես այստեղ, բայց թեկուզ քիչ փողով, ավելի հաճախ են հանդիպում՝ հարսանիքներ, կերուխումեր… առիթ են ստեղծում: Օրինակ՝ ամենահասարակ բանը՝ երեկոյան հավաքվում են սուրճ խմելու:
>
> In general, people live with a different tempo here. True, in Armenia people are not as financially sufficient as they are here, however, even with less money, they meet more often – weddings, other gatherings and parties… they create occasions, for example, the simplest thing – they gather together in the evening for a cup of coffee.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Lusiné mainly accentuates material and spiritual aspects of lifestyle. The Armenian life tempo is not as quick and stressful as the German one, but in comparison to those living in Germany, Armenians in Armenia do not have the same financial freedom and opportunities. In Armenia, nonetheless, people find more opportunities and possibilities for personal communication. Even in case of no specific occasion, people create one spontaneously. Immigrating to Germany with their own cultural background and ideas about how state-of-the-art in certain spheres of human relations should be, people start getting used to new conditions and lifestyles offered by the host society. Leaning on some patterns of their own cultural heritage, and simultaneously incorporating new knowledge,

migrants thus gain patterns of hybridized consciousness and a behavioural mixture. This process is an integral part of transnational lifestyle, and the hybrid ways of being peculiarly shape the sense of belonging. For this reason, participants of my research could not manage to make absolute preferences between German and Armenian life tempos.

Thus, the majority of those interviewed consider that life in Germany is to a great extent time-dependent, and due to that, time as a resource is differently valued than in Armenia. My research data highlights, two main challenges—*time* and *distance*—in daily routines and practices (transnational or not). Vered Amit Talai (1989) also touches upon these two points in her research on Armenians in London. Studying daily occupations and encounters of London-Armenians (especially contacts with other Armenians), the scholar points out that daily life of Armenians living in London takes place in the spheres of home, workplace, and neighbourhood – parallel to the city rhythm. Interactions with other Armenians occur on weekly or annual basis during community and/or associations gatherings or visits within their spare time (Talai 1989, p. 86–87). In the framework of my research, the factor of time as a condition for communications with others refers to contacts in general, and not especially to those with Armenians.

Thus, Aram, a middle-aged Armenian man, who has been living in Germany for more than ten years, is following the so-called German life tempo. His job starts very early in the morning, and his workplace is relatively a long drive from the town he lives in. The following extract from my interviews with Aram points out his emphasis on the importance of time as a resource, its meaning, and the role it plays to determine daily encounters.

> Հայաստանում մարդիկ շատ ժամանակ ունեն, դրա համար հաճախ են իրար գնում, իրար հրավիրում: Այստեղ մարդիկ ժամանակ չունեն, հատկապես մեծ քաղաքներում, որտեղ նաև շատ ժամանակ է պահանջվում աշխատանքի հասնելու և հետ գնալու համար: Դրա համար հիմնականում հավաքվում են շաբաթ և կիրակի օրերին: Դրա համար համարյա ամեն շաբաթ-կիրակի մեկ այլ քաղաք ենք գնում շրջակայքում: Փորձում ենք ինչ-որ ձևով փոխել մեր առօրյան:
>
> In Armenia people have much time, and for that reason, they often pay visits to each other. Here people do not have time, especially in big cities, where a lot of time is needed to go to work and come back. That is why they usually gather on weekends. Almost every weekend we organize a trip to some of the surrounding cities. We try to change (diversify) our day.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

The following is another example from the interview with Gurgen, also a middle-aged man, having resided in Germany for approximately eight years. Gurgen and his wife made acquaintance with the local Armenian pastor. Gurgen

and his family are aware of community activities and social gathering on various occasions and holidays. Yet, he pointed out the lack of time as an obstacle to engage in these activities.

> Մենք ժամանակ չենք ունեցել տեղի հայերի հետ շփվելու, որովհետև միշտ աշխատանքի մեջ ենք եղել: (…) Տեղի հայերից տեղյակ ենք եղել: Համայնքի մասին ենք իմացել… Տեր Հոր հետ ենք ծանոթ… բայց ժամանակի բերումով չենք շփվել:
>
> We have not had time to communicate with local Armenians, because we have always been working. (…) We were aware of local Armenians: we knew about the community… We are acquainted with the pastor… but because of time, we did not communicate with them.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

The factor of time equally influences intensity and sustainability of cross-border ties with relatives outside of Germany, as well as in-border connections with compatriots and friends of different ethnic origin. Lack of time is the reason for seldom communications, which creates imaginary distance between close friends and relatives. As a result, relationships become colder, and intensity and sustainability of everyday connections reduces. Time plays especially an important role from the perspective of endurance of transnationalism and maintenance of transnational ties. In further chapters of this work I will show how time stipulates specificities of the second-generation transnationalism, which I will name *fluctuating transnationalism*.

As mentioned, besides time, my research data also identifies another factor determining intensity of social ties—distance. Distance also plays a considerable part referring to both cross-border ties, and in-border social connections. By the latter, I mean social ties and engagements taking place within the country of residence. Based on the previous subchapter, these ties form and are formed by configurations, which I have named local-diasporic fields. My argument is that activities undertaken in the country of residence, the ties that social actors maintain with compatriots, and their practices and engagements carry imprints of transnationalized lifestyles—though are not transnational in the classical sense of the notion—and have relations to the homeland, to common memories, and images. The most important emphasis of this argument is that in social gatherings of compatriots a part of the homeland is always present (conversations, food, memories, nostalgia), and thereby these ties implicate relations and links to the country of origin, and bear a transnational aspect at the level of imagination.

Thus, from the perspective of in-border ties (with relatives and friends of Armenian origin), distance makes face-to-face connections seldom. In this sense, my data evidences an interesting interconnection between distance and time.

Moreover, in some cases, where both impediments are present, distance takes precedence. Dispersal of Armenians all over Germany is one of the core reasons explaining the primacy of distance. Vered Amit Talai also mentions this as an impediment to frequent communication of London-Armenians. As she has noticed, the scattering impacts interactions, and sometimes even leads to a loss of contacts, and sometimes it takes quite long to re-establish those lost contacts (Talai 1989, p. 86). The fact that Armenians are spreadout within Germany has a considerable role in various aspects of their lives. This argument will gradually and sequentially appear throughout my analysis. For example, this so-called distance-domination has expressed itself when during the interviews my respondents explained that regular personal communications become difficult when a number of relatives and friends live in different cities and towns. Thus, as Gurgen told me:

> …Ժամանակ կգտնենք, բայց հեռու է: 3ժամ գնալ, 3 ժամ գալ… Շատ է լինում, ու քո անգկացրած ժամանակն էլ քեզ համար կրակ է դառնում, հարամ է լինում: Հեռախոսով ենք շփվում:
>
> …We would find time, but it is far away. It is 3 hours to go, and another 3 hours to return. It is too much, and the time you spend becomes insane for you.[53] We communicate by phone.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Because of hindrances that time and distance create, telephone communication becomes the replacement to face-to-face meetings. These hindrances, therefore, do not mean that social ties disappear; they just transform from one mode of communication to another.

Thus, the majority of the first-generation Armenians interviewed see time and distance as two key factors that influence organization of daily routine and that considerably impact both transnational ties and in-border connections.

Routines: second generation

Daily engagements of my second-generation interviewees are different from the parents' everyday routine, though they similarly depend on the occupation and professional affiliation. Thus, when a person is a student, the main part of the day passes inside the university and library, and, correspondingly, the circle of friends and everyday communication are formed among classmates. When a person is already a young professional, his or her daily life rotates around work and communication with colleagues.

[53] This translation is not literal, because of the impossibility to directly translate the expression into English. Literally it means 'to become fire for someone', which in Armenian is an idiom used to indicate difficult situations.

To better understand everyday life, social connections, and the acquaintances of Armenian youth in Germany, it is important to go back to the starting point of their immigration, more precisely, to the memories and first impressions embedded in their consciousness. It is interesting whether first migration-related-experiences and impressions have had some influence on the later life course of the second-generation Armenians, and whether those have somehow contributed to the formation of a certain attitude toward the host society. Those who immigrated at very early ages have no memories of the homeland,[54] and their first childhood memories are related to Germany. Those who came at a later stage, in contrast, have some images from the homeland, and this has given them some basis for comparison between the homeland and the country of residence. In this realm, quite different are narratives of those who arrived in Germany as asylum seekers, and had to spend appropriate time period in the *Heim* – special hostel for refugees. One of my *arevmtahay* respondent's, Shahan's, first and probably, the most impressive childhood memory of Germany was about the refugee centre, where he and his family had to spend some time after arriving in Germany. As Shahan described, he had a shock when they first entered the *Heim*. For him, it meant not only a radical change of his common environment, but also a change of habits, common life rhythm and lifestyle.

> Առաջին անգամ, երբ Գերմանիա եկայ, շոկի մէջ ինկայ, քանզի ինձի համար ամեն բան նոր էր, և հոս՝ *Asyl Heim*-ին մէջ (գերմաներէն՝ փախստականների կենտրոն) սկսայ ապրիլ: Կեանքիս մէջ նման բան մը չէի տեսած և ուզեցայ երկու օրէն ետ դառնալ ետ՝ Սուրիա: Չէի ուզեր Գերմանիա ապրիլ. մէկ անգամէն չսիրեցի Գերմանիան: Բայց այնուհետ յարմարուեցայ տեղոյն ապրելակերպին, ու երջանկութիւնը գտաւ ինձի. սիրեցի Գերմանիան:
>
> When I first came to Germany, a shock happened to me, because everything was new for me, and the first time I came to live here, I was living in *Asyl Heim* (German for – refugee hostel). I had never seen such a thing in my life, and after two days I wanted to return to Syria. I could not live in Germany. I did not like Germany at first. But later on, happiness found me, and I started to like Germany.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Shahan was born in Syria and has never been to Armenia. His memories are about Syria, and comparisons refer to Syria and Germany. For the second-generation *arevmtahays,* Armenia, in fact, is not the homeland as in the sense of the birthplace; nevertheless, it is an important part of their self-identification as an Armenian.

[54] By homeland, here, I mean Armenia or other third countries, from where *arevmtahays* immigrated to Germany.

In general, memories of the period spent in refugee hostels are negative for everyone; however, some have assessed this as opportunity to get to know other people, and as a chance for communication with representatives of different cultures. In some respect, due to the *Heim* life, a positive image about diversity has been formed. From early childhood, the second-generation Armenians have learned skills to communicate with diversity, and to encounter diverse environments. Thus, another young *arevmtahay* participant of research, Partev, also points out his first negative experience in the refugee hostel; nevertheless, he also emphasizes some postitive aspects.

> *Heim*-ին մէջ ծանօթացայ հասակակիցներուս հետ, անոնց մէջ *sogar* (գերմաներէն՝ նոյնիսկ) թուրք և ադրբեջանցի կային: Սուրիոյ մէջ ես անոնց հետ չէի խօսեր. պատանի սեմական էի… բայց հոս ուրիշ է: Մենք իրարու հետ չփուեզանք, քանի որ նոյն խնդիրներն ունէինք: Հիմա արդէն չփումը սովորական դարձած է: Երբ ծանօթացայ, սկսայ երթալ անոնց տուն՝ խաղալու, հետո Լեզուի դպրոց գացի ու կամաց-կամաց վարժուեցայ նոր իրավիճակին:
>
> In the Heim I got to know people of my age, *sogar* (German for – even) Turkish and Azerbaijani. In Syria I had problems to talk to them, because I was a young Semitic… But now it is normal. When I got to know them, I started to go to their places to play, then I went to a language school, and got used to here little by little.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

This passage indicates the change of some negative experiences in communication with certain nationalities. The reason for such a change, in this case, might be sharing the same problems, and facing similar issues regarding residence in a new country.

Not only my *arevmtahay* interviewees had to pass through the procedures of first receiving centres and refugee hostels; some *hayastantsis* also arrived as asylum seekers. Interestingly, stories with more emphasis on asylum camps came out mostly in narratives of the second-generation interviewees: though the first-generation research participants mentioned the refugee camps, they touched upon this topic in-between words, without any special emphasis.

Returning to the routines of the second generation, it is noteworthy to mention that according to some of my interview partners the family can have a significant input in determining and guiding routines. Thus, Gayané, who came to Germany with her family at the age of three, and since then has been living in Germany, pointed out that when a family with children arrives in a foreign country, parents become the ones to create the basis for their children's future. This role can be manifested, for example, in teaching children how to study, to

work, and to organize leisure. By saying 'teach', she meant showing by one's own example.

> Ընտանիքից շատ բան է կախված, թե ընտանիքը ինչ է կազմակերպում: Ծովը մեզ շատ մոտ էր, ու մենք շատ հաճախ գնում էինք ծով: Շատ ընտանիքներ կային, որ ոչ մի բան չէին անում:
>
> A lot depends on the family, and on how the family organizes things. The sea was very close to us, and very often we went to the sea. There were many families who did not do anything.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

As Gayané believes, this is an elementary example of *teaching by showing*. According to some interviewees, this is the best way to help children adapt to new life conditions. This model works especially well at early ages. Thus, on the one hand, children incorporate new values, norms, and behavioural patterns of the host society, and on the other hand, due the model *teaching by showing,* they learn some family traditions and values.

To summarize, my data evidences that in the diversity of everyday routines, almost every social tie and connection has a sporadic and non-regular character, except kinship ties (relatives living in Germany). Reasons for this are several. Most participants of my research were reasoning their scarce and sporadic contacts outside the family circle with the peculiarities of urban and industrial life, such as busyness at the workplace or family concerns (this especially refers to families with small children). In these circumstances, preferable ways of spending spare-time are travels with family and children, visiting and hosting relatives living in Germany, etc. Other social connections more often survive via phone calls (sometimes random) or Skype conversations. Parallel to this tendency, however, I should mention that almost every participant of my research mentioned some other Armenian families with whom they maintain regular contact – as regular as the free time would allow. In order to better understand reasons of maintaining some ties with some, and declining contacts with others, the analysis of my interview data has led me to the concept of Bourdieu's habitus. Indeed, such factors as *time, distance,* or *previous negative experiences*, as distinguished during my interviews, have some significant role in constructing relations; however, they are not the only determinant factors in making friendships. Indeed, people might meet personally more often or more seldom, but frequency of meetings does not determine continuation of contacts by phone or via other means of communication. My key presumption is not that Armenians avoid maintaining ties with each other; what I claim, leaning on my research results, is that after the process of sifting, social connection sustain with those who can better understand each other. From this point of view, factors of time

and distance stop being hindrances, and it becomes clear that daily or frequent face-to-face interaction is not the determinant of the endurance of social ties. The people who can better understand each other are those sharing similar ways of being and practices. In other words, their actions come out from commonalities and ordinary dispositions which are presupposed by habitus. Moreover, the latter determines not only relations and ties with compatriots, but also spreads to social ties with any nationality, conditioning endurance and sustainability of close social connections. Hence, the topic of my analysis in the following subchapter is social connections of Armenians in Germany based on the examples supplied by my research participants.

4.3 Social environment and connections: peculiarities of social ties

In this subchapter, I will continue the analysis of encounters, moving from description of everyday routines in diverse realities to social formation of ties and their peculiarities. Routines to a great extent determine daily connections and communications. It is to say, in everyday reality people simply live their lives and communicate with colleagues, friends, family members and others, based on the type of occupation. Transnational practices occupy a special space in the daily routine of almost everyone, although not planned, and at times not recognized as such. Thus, every morning or evening regular Skype conversations with relatives back in Armenia are manifestations of transnational routines.

Regarding in-border connections with compatriots, my research data demonstrates that new arriving migrants, as a rule, do not explicitly search for compatriots in the same city, town, or generally, in the same area. Some other research, for example, evidences that Polish immigrants in Britain also tend to make aquaintances among the population of the residence country (Burrel 2009; Datta and Brickell 2009; Nowicka 2012; 2014). Still this is not the absolute tendency among my research participants; although the majority of those interviewed pointed out that they had not been deliberately looking for other Armenians. Acquaintances with other Armenians happen either by chance or during community meetings. I consider important to mention that those sporadic and ad hoc acquaintances are especially typical for small towns where, on average, only a few Armenian families live. In small towns, community meetings do not have an institutional character, and the life of migrants is not transnationally organized, which means acquaintances, in these cases, do not normally happen through membership in associations or participation in social events. German–Armenian associations function mainly in big cities, such as Munich, Berlin, Cologne or some industrial or financial centres, namely Bochum or Frankfurt. Transnationally active people in small cities follow activities of those

associations through their Internet pages: especially popular are Facebook pages. Small cities, nonetheless, also periodically demonstrate transnational activity by organizing various get-together events, taking an initiative to gather all Armenians from surroundings, etc. These initiatives, however, have a more random, rather than regular character. In general, an important and necessary detail in these initiatives is the leader. The latter is a formal, as well as an informal leader who takes the initiative to announce an event, and mobilize others to organize and take part in it. The role of the leader is particularly considerable in small cities, where the level of self-organization is relatively low, compared to big cities. The reason for this might be the small number of Armenian inhabitants, which might reduce motivation to organize big events. In cities with the considerable size of Armenian population participation in various initiatives is more common.

In the following, I will separately analyse social formation, types and preferences of ties of the first- and the second-generation Armenians, who took part in my research.

First generation

Everyday life dictates diverse communications and acquaintances, each of which might have a different character. For the first generation, main areas of social contacts are workplaces, or the realm of various formal and informal interactions occurring within different social institutes—healthcare, education, etc. Ties formed in these scopes might become cordial acquaintances, or even close friendships. To take a case in point, one of the interviewees mentioned her close relations with a former colleague of hers. The place of work generally determines the spectrum and diversity of ties. Thus, if the job deals with social and cultural diversity, more probably the circle of friends will also be diverse. Correspondingly, the opposite statement is also true: when the job presumes limited interaction with different people, the level of diversity of social contacts will not be high.

It is interesting that in my interviews, the same descent was not mentioned as a key conditioning factor of social contacts. For my interview partners, common interests and similar mentality were more important than, solely, the same national belonging. This statement contains some contradiction, since people from the same origin to some extent share similar mentality. Nevertheless, my interviews evidence that having the same national origin is necessary but not a sufficient factor in determining contact preferences. For example, Arman, one of my interview partners, tends to think that nationality is a secondary factor from the point of making good friends. He immigrated to Germany in the 1990s, and since then has established quite a large circle of friends and

colleagues including Armenians, Germans, and people from other countries. Talking about his social environment, Arman mentioned that in order to become friends, people need to be compatible and share approximately similar viewpoints about important life issues.

> Շփման հարթության մեջ ինձ համար առաջնայինը ոչ թե ազգային պատկանելությունն է, այլ թե կոնկրետ մարդն ինչպես է մեզ հասկանում: Օրինակ՝ ես ռուս-գերմանացի րնկեր ունեմ, ում հետ մենք շատ լավ ենք իրար հասկանում, ու ինձ համար ավելի հաճելի է իր հետ ժամանակ անցկացնել, քան թե ինչ-որ մեկի հետ, ով հայ է, և ինձ համար հաճելի չէ: Ազգային պատկանելությունը որևէ դեր չի խաղում կոնկրետ իմ հարաբերություններում:
>
> In the area/field of communication the primary thing for me is not the national belonging, but rather how the person understands me. For example, I have a Russian-German friend, with whom we understand each other very well, and it is more pleasant for me to spend time with him, rather than with someone who is Armenian but unpleasant. For me, national belonging does not play any role in my personal relations.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Arman's opinion is common among my first-generation interview partners. As mentioned, however, it can be contradictory, since it is not exclusive that people belonging to the same nation can also share similar mentality and be compatible. From this angle, *perceptions* of respondents become the most important points to consider – *perceptions* about *who understands them better*. In this sense, account must be taken of *what is perceived as similar mentality*. In the above-quoted example, and in many other similar cases from my fieldwork, nationality goes by the wayside in those perceptions. Yet, other examples from my interviews accentuate the belief that those who share the same nationality tend to understand each other better, and not to question each others' ways of being. For that reason, my conclusion is that common dispositions and similar ways of thinking are important determinants in maintaining social contacts, but more important are *perceptions* of those commonalities, or what is *perceived* as a commonality. The latter, derived from perceptions, might in part refer to common national characteristics, and in part, merely to human compatibility, independent from any kind of belonging.

The most sustained, closest, and strongest ties are with family members and relatives living in Germany. Maintenance of kinship ties is an example of expressing importance of habitus. On the one hand, relatives and family members presumably share more of the same habitus than others. On the other hand, being in a foreign environment, ties with relatives become more valuable in the sense of having a 'soulmate' *(*Armenian: *հարազատ հոգի, harazat hogi)*

nearby, as the interviewees named it. This last remark refers mainly to the first generation, since for the second generation the country of residence is not a foreign environment. When parents tend to maintain sustained and close contacts with uncles, aunts, etc., children grow up with cousins, and ties with them by default sustain throughout time. Nonetheless, here as well, a considerable part belongs to factors of time and distance; the latter determine frequency of ties, more precisely, frequency of communication in person, and not conversations via telephone, Skype, etc. In the excerpt below, my respondent Satenik speaks about her expected visit to her sister's and niece's family, who live quite far from her. However, it is a tradition in their family to visit each other on special occasion—birthdays, holidays, etc.

> (...) Օրինակ՝ մյուս շաբաթ պետք է գնանք երեք օրով: Երեխայի ծնունդն է: Հիմնականում նման առիթներով ենք հավաքվում: Այլ կերպ ժամանակ չկա:
>
> (...) For example, next week we are going for three days. It is their child's birthday. Usually we gather on this kind of occasions. Otherwise there is no time.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Regarding the *willingness to make acquaintances with other Armenians*, factors which Wessendorf calls different feelings of connection, or disconnection, with co-ethnics (Wessendorf 2007) appear to be influential. In this realm, I distinguish three noticeable points. First, my research results indicate that despite reluctance of some research participants to search other Armenians, the opposite process happened to them – *others found them*, due to curiosity, or because of certain occupation assuming contacts with Armenian (religious leaders, members of associations, etc.). For example, those who run a restaurant might have been asked to host celebrations or other social events there. However, those are not the kinds of contacts which grow into sustained and close communication. They maintain a superficial level, and can repeat on occasion.

Second, my interview partners have observed *cautious behaviour* of Armenians when meeting compatriots. Their observations state that when someone somehow notices a new Armenian, he or she avoids or hesitates to approach the new person first and to start a conversation. They would rather hint they are Armenian, expecting the other person to make the first step.

> Բայց ես, օրինակ՝ նման մի բան եմ զգացել. ոնց որ ամեն մեկը սպասի, որ դիմացինը սկսի: Ամեն մեկն իր մեջ ոնց որ ուզում է խոսել, բայց ոնց որ սպասեն, որ թող իյո դիմացինս խոսի կամ բարևի կամ ասի, որ ինքը հայ է: Հենց մեկը սկսեց խոսել, արդեն սկսում են խոսել, շփումը սկսվում է:

> But, for example, I have noticed such a thing: as if everyone waits until the other person starts. It seems that everyone wants to speak, but as if they are waiting, – let the other person speak or say hello or say s/he is Armenian. As soon as someone starts speaking, everyone does, and the communication begins.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Reasons for such cautious behaviour may be based on uncertainty of expectations or on a feeling of inconfidence regarding the reaction of another person.

Third, some interviewees mentioned about their *negative experiences previous*. For some reason, past acquaintances had, at times, not met their expectations, or had disappointed them. As a consequence of some negative or unpleasant 'aftertaste' those acquaintances had left, many interviewees preferred to stay apart from any close contact, than later suffer the consequences. Yet, this does not mean that Armenians avoid compatriots living in Germany. Occasional acquaintances, as a rule, do not become close friendships, however, they do not end up with total indifference either. They pass through filters, and only a few remain as regular and sustained social contacts.

> (...) հայերի հետ սկզբում շփվում էինք, բայց հետո տեսնում ես, թե ով է քեզ լավ հասկանում, ով՝ չէ: Կային մի 20 ընտանիքներ, մենք շփվում էինք մի 3 հոգու հետ համարյա:
>
> (...) at the beginning we were communicating with Armenians, but then you see who understands you better, and who not. There were about 20 families, and we were communicating with about 3 persons.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

As the extract states, connections pass through the process of filtration, and finally endure connections with persons/families *who understand better*. Interpreting words of my interviewees in the frameworks of theoretical categories, those are who have the same habitus—common dispositions, similar ways of being, or patterns of practice. Those might be significant factors explaining endurance and sustainability of social ties.

Second generation

Kinship ties have occupied a considerable place in my second-generation interviewees' lives, especially during their early childhood. In this period, the social environment of parents, to some extent, conditioned the contacts made by the children. Having grown up, children have made acquaintances among peers in yards, at schools, universities, etc., and, thereby, have formed their own circle of friends and acquaintances. From the perspective of continuity of transnationalism, it is interesting to study on which basis social environment of the second generation has been formed. To begin with, I will touch upon *the role of*

the family, or more accurately, the possible impact of upbringing on the process of social contacts' formation. To do so, I will discuss two cases from my field-work—two young *hayastantsi* women/girls—Mariné and Armenuhi. These cases point out how the family and parents might indirectly outline their children's friends circle.

Mariné, has grown up in a more strict and traditional family environment, whereas, Armenuhi has been brought up with more freedom. In Mariné's case, some family restrictions (e.g. controlling with whom the child maintains close social contacts, where she goes, with whom, at what time, etc.) have caused some misunderstandings among the child and her German peers. Mariné told me that during her school years she had to miss classmates' parties with overnight stays, and sometimes social gatherings of peers, in general. As a consequence, some of her German peers started distancing themselves from her. In contrast to the example of Mariné, Armenuhi's family provided her with more freedom, and allowed her to participate in many social events and activities with peers and schoolmates. This does not mean, however, that Armenuhi's family was not traditional. What makes the two girls' cases so different is that Armenuhi's parents were of the opinion that more restrictions would cause more problems for their child, and also misunderstandings between each other. Armenuhi could always object to her parents, and the family would always discuss advantages and disadvantages, pluses and minuses of any decision. Armenuhi's circle of friends has always been large and diverse, whereas Mariné has always had a small number of friends. Moreover, Mariné has mostly preferred to socialize and communicate with Armenians, feeling, that with Germans she does not have common ways of thinking and values, and this hinders development of close relations—spending holidays together or having deep personal conversations, etc.

Cases of Armenuhi and Mariné evidence the role and indirect influence of parents on the formation of their children's social connections. Earlier researches on the second-generation immigrants show that the role of the family in determining children's behaviour can go much further than affecting the circle of friends. Thus, Wessendorf's research on the second-generation Italians in Switzerland points out that the role of the family can be considerable, especially regarding regulations of gender relations and marriage (Wessendorf 2013, p. 42). My own research does not confirm evident family restrictions related to this question. Parents, who participated in my research, expressed their willingness to have Armenian daughter- or son-in-laws; however, they had never tried to prevent their children dating Germans or anyone else they preferred.

Examples of Armenuhi and Mariné have allowed me to distinguish some categories of the second-generation Armenians, on account of their social ties.

Differentiation of these categories continues and supports my argument that family might indirectly and latently determine the appropriate circle of their children's social ties. Thus, I differentiate two main umbrella categories – *children from the local environment* and *children from the family environment* (also see, Chaloyan 2015, p. 118–119). I call them umbrella categories, since they embody generalized pattern-features, describing my second-generation interviewees. Armenuhi and Mariné are correspondingly representatives of children from the local and the family environments.

- *Children from the local environment.* These young Armenians have had, and still maintain, contacts with different groups in the country of residence, and at the same time they have social ties with some other Armenians. Some of these young people during their school and university years have made good friendships with German peers, and those relations have survived until present. As mentioned earlier, in some small German towns, my research participants did not get to know any other Armenians. For that reason, children from these families grew up mostly among German peers. Parents of those, apart from German acquaintances, sometimes communicate with other migrants mostly from countries of the former Soviet Union, primarily from Russia or other Russian-speaking countries. The same space of socialization, shared values, and common language (Russian) unify them. Armenian immigrants born and raised in the Soviet Union are proficient in Russian. Their children, on the contrary, do not belong to the Soviet socialization space, and do not speak Russian. Therefore, they do not engage in the Russian-speaking post–Soviet field, and socialize in local environments, surrounded by Germans and immigrants from different countries. From this perspective, these children have quickly incorporated the norm-and-value system of the host country; yet, in parallel, they maintain some ties with the homeland and compatriots in Germany. Those connections with relatives in Armenia, and Armenian acquaintances in Germany, may be occasional and random; however, they do not vanish completely.
- *Children from the family environment.* These children grew up in a so-called family environment. By the latter I mean mostly—and in some cases only—narrow kinship ties, and lack of contacts with other children of the same age. Consequently, this category has grown up with no significant contacts either with compatriots or with other peers. They maintain ties with family members and relatives, and have no significant contacts with others. Having grown up, and due to various social and professional occupations, children from the family environment, obviously, would enlarge their friends circle.

Notably, children from the local and the family environments differently interpret Armenian and German ways of being. Hence, for children from the local environment, German ways of being are self-evident, and they do not have

to uncover every action or each sentence (as it sometimes happens in communication with Armenians); whereas children from the family environment consider Armenian ways of being and behaviour less challenging. Evidently, depending on the socialization agents and social environments, either German or Armenian ways of being would be more understandable, and perhaps, also more acceptable.

It is important to notice that this categorization mainly refers to early ages of my interviewees, when the role of family as a primary agent of socialization is especially significant. Stories and examples of my interviewees, which have led me to this categorization, referred to their first social contacts in Germany and to the formation of their circle of friends. Therefore, belonging to either category can change in course of time, according to changes of encounters and configurations.

Apart from the role of the family, *school encounters* might interestingly influence the process of formation of social ties, and determine dispositions. Positive or negative experiences can affect preferences of social environment and the circle of friends. Thus, many second-generation Armenians—born outside of Germany—whom I interviewed for this research, experienced to some extent language difficulties at school. Some of them were in special classrooms for foreigners, or went to special language classes. For this time period, thereby, schools and classrooms directly and indirectly determined the circle of social ties. In addition, mixed classrooms taught children to be tolerant toward diversity. Hence, starting from early school years, my interviewees have had numerous encounters with people of different backgrounds. Interestingly, these encounters were perceived as much positive, as negative. One of my interviewees stated that before school years she had been communicating with peers from the same playground, who were mainly Arabs. The language of communication was German, and those were my interview partner's first steps in learning German. This was a positive encounter for her. Another example is from Partev's school encounters. Partev is one of my *arevmtahay* respondents, already introduced earlier. He experienced language difficulties at school, but his German peers offered him help by their own initiative.

> Գերմանացի ընկերներս առաջինը մօտեցան ինձի դպրոցին մէջ. կր տեսնէին, որ լեզուն յաւ չեմ գիտեր: Կօգնէին, կր բացատրէին, թէ ինչպէս պիտի օգտուեմ գրադարանէն, ինչպէս երթամ Օրհորդի (ուսուցչի) մօտ և այլն: Անգլերէն կր խօսէինք: Անոնք ալ անգլերէն յաւ չէին գիտեր: Հետո սկսան հետս գերմաներէն խօսիլ, ես ալ կր փորձէի, անոնք կուրախանային, որ գերմաներէն կր խօսիմ: (...) Ասանկ ծանօթացանք, ու մինչև հիմա կը շփուինք իրարու հետ:
>
> My German friends first approached me at school, as they saw I could not speak the language well. They were helping me, explaining how to use the library, how to approach the teacher, etc. We were speaking English. Their

> English was not good, and after a while they started speaking German with me, and I also tried to speak. They were getting happy when I spoke German. (...) This is how we got acquainted, and we still keep in contact now.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

As the extract states, acquaintances grew into close friendships, and some of them are good friends of Partev today. They meet almost on every occasion – organize spare-time together, plan holidays, etc.

My data, though, highlights some negative school encounters as well – manifestations of which are quite interesting. Thus, Arusik was seven years old when her family immigrated to Germany. She had already started her first school year in Armenia at that time. In Germany she had to change many schools, due to continuous movement of her family from one residence to another. Evidently, it was doubly hard for Arusik to get accustomed to new environments and new people in short periods of time. However, Arusik's main complaints were regarding unfriendly behaviour of some classmates, and unwillingness to accept a newcomer.

> (...) Այդտեղ շատր մուսուլմաններ էին դպրոցում: Լավ չէին վարվում նորեկների հետ, որովհետև որ քո ակզենտր լավր չի, լեզուն լավ չգիտես, էլ չեն շփվում քեզ հետ, հետ են պահում իրենց: Իրենցից շատերն այստեղ ծնված, մեծացած էին, ու գերմաներենն իրենց համար պրոբլեմ չէր: Ես էլ որ նորեկ էի, իսկ դասարանն էլ արդեն համախմբված էր, իրենք ոնց որ միշտ մեկին ման գալին, որ գցեին, ու դա ես էի՝ որպես նորեկ: Լեզուն էլ որ չես հասկանում, չես կարողանում պատասխանել, չես հասկանում՝ ինչ են քեզանից ուզում: (…) ու որ դու չես հասկանում ու չես կարողանում ոչ մի բան տալ, ոնց որ էլ չեն ուզենում շփվել քեզ հետ:
>
> (...) The majority were Muslims there. They did not behave well with newcomers, because when your accent is not good, when your knowledge of the language is not good, they do not communicate with you, they hold themselves back. Most of them were born and raised here, and German was not a problem for them. As I was new, and the class was already closely-knit, it was as if they were searching for someone to drop everything on (to blame everything on), and that one was me, as a new pupil. And when you do not understand the language, you cannot answer; you do not understand what they want from you. (...) and when you do not understand and cannot give anything, it seems they do not want to deal with you anymore.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Arusik's story highlights two aspects of unfriendly behaviour: first, the religious belonging of classmates, and second, her poor knowledge of German in the beginning. Although she noted that the majority of classmates were Muslims, the key point of unfriendly welcome was mostly language skills, i.e. proficiency in German. As Arusik explains, poor language skills hindered understanding and

communication, and as a result, she felt excluded. Being a newcomer in any class is generally difficult, and the process of integration into an already close-knit group usually takes some time. Communication obstacles (here the language) make it even longer and more difficult. Later Arusik learned the language, and now she has perfect skills in German. Negative experience during early school years has, however, left some impact on her. She always tries to prove her excellent knowledge of German—though unconsciously—even being among Armenians.

If in Arusik's story, the reason for unfriendly behaviour of classmates was mainly the language skills, and religion went by the wayside, the following case of Raffi shows that communication problems may occur outside of language barriers. Raffi is a Syrian-Armenian, who was born in Syria, and migrated with parents at a very early age. Raffi had never had any language difficulties at school, as he had been living in Germany since his early childhood. However, he also noticed some unfriendly behaviour from his non-German classmates.

> Դպրոցին մէջ շատ թուրքեր ու քրդեր կային, բայց ես անոնց հետ չէի շփուեր. խնդիր կար: Ինձի կրսէին՝ դուն Սուրիայէն ես, ուրեմն սուրիացի ես, կօնապախոխ եղած ես, դարձած ես քրիստոնեայ: Ես որ կը պնդէի՝ հայ քրիստոնեայ եմ, անոնք կրսէին՝ կր խաբես, Սուրիոյ մէջ քրիստոնեայ չի կայ: Արաբներ հետս չէին խօսեր, բայց ես խնդիր չունէի. ընկերներուս մեծ մասը գերմանացի էր:
>
> There were many Turks and Kurds at school, but I did not communicate with them, because there was a problem. They said, because I was from Syria, it means I am a Syrian, and I had changed my religion, and became a Christian. When I told them I am Armenian and a Christian, they thought I was lying. They said, there are no Christians in Syria. Arabs did not talk to me. But I had no problems. My friends were Germans.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Despite Arusik's case of a language barrier, here the main reason for unfriendly behaviour is religion, but still in an interesting and uncommon mode of expression, as the different religious belonging is not the main cause of the negative attitude. Raffi's Muslim classmates believed that he had changed his religion (from a Muslim to a Christian), and as a consequence they refused to communicate with him. An important clarification – all statements about religion refer to relations with the other migrant groups, and not with Germans. Since Armenia and Germany are Christian countries, religion was not a reason for positive or negative experience during Armenian–German encounters.

Thus, the main reasons mentioned as a basis for positive or negative school encounters are language skills, and in some cases religion. The latter appears as a pretext, and not the main reason for unwelcoming attitudes towards

new pupils. Negative experiences or unpleasant school encounters on the basis of religion cannot be granted as regular, and generally, they did not negatively influence relations of my research participants with different religious minorities. Moreover, during their school years, some of my interview partners made friendships with other immigrant children.

Another interesting question to discuss is *acquaintances with Armenians*. During the school years, those acquaintances were generally limited to relatives, and friends of the family. It is to say, during their childhood the second generation, generally, did not have many Armenian friends of their age. One of the considerable reasons is again the dispersion of Armenians all over Germany – unlike some other migrant groups, they do not live concentrated in one district or area. Thus, making acquaintances with coevals of Armenian origin has been quite an interesting experience for my interview partners (both children from the local and the family environments). Below is an example of how Mariné appreciates contacts with compatriots.

> Հայաստանից որ գալիս ես օտար երկիր, ոչ մեկի հետ չես շփվում, ոչ մեկ չի հասկանում քո լեզուն: Շատ դժվար է… Կարոտում ես, սառում ես այստեղ մի քիչ, ու որ հայկական ձայն ես լսում, ուրախությանդ չափ չկա:
>
> When you come from Armenia to a foreign country, you communicate with no one, no one understands your language. It is very difficult… You miss someone or something, become a bit colder here, and when you hear some Armenian voice, your happiness is not measurable.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

This passage expresses the feeling of homesickness, and the desire to hear Armenian speech. The fact of missing the sound of the mother tongue is very specific here. Although for the majority of the second generation, it is generally easier to express themselves in German, some tender feelings are still associated with the Armenian language. Inccidentally hearing Armenian speech somewhere around, some of my research participants were eager to approach the person speaking Armenian, and start a conversation. Following, is an extract from my interview with patriotic Hasmik, which points to an interesting behaviour, when having noticed someone of Armenian origin. As a child, Hasmik was shy to approach someone when hearing them speak Armenian, but her desire to get acquainted with those people was so strong that the girl was resorting to some tricks.

> Միշտ ես եմ առաջինն իմացել, որ հայ են, ու ուզեցել եմ, որ իմ ծնողներն էլ իմանան ու այդ մարդիկ էլ, ու միշտ բարձր հայերեն խոսում էի, որ լսեին, ասեին՝ վա՛յ հա՞յ ես ու սկսեին հետս շփվել: (...) Մեր կողքը մեզ պես ընտանիք էր ու իմ չափ աղջիկ, ու ես լսեցի, որ

> հայերեն էին խոսում… հիմա չգիտեմ ինչ անեմ, որ իրենք հասկանան՝ ես էլ եմ հայ: Պապաիին նայեցի, աչքով, ունքով արեցի, ու իրենք արդեն իրար հետ ծանոթացան:
>
> It was always up to me to find out that someone is Armenian, and I always wanted my parents and those people, too, to know it. So, I have always spoken Armenian, in order for them to hear and say, oh, are you Armenian? And then we'd start to communicate with each other. (...) Beside us there was a similar family and a girl of my age, and I heard them speaking Armenian… and I did not know what to do, in order for them to understand that I am Armenian, too. I looked at my father, winked at him, and they got acquainted with each other.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

This kind of behaviour was more typical during childhood. When Hasmik was grown up and moved to her university town, out of curiosity, she decided to find out whether other Armenian students were also studying at the same university. She started a search using the online system of the university. Almost all Armenian family names end with *yan* or *ian (յան)*, so it was easy to find students with Armenian surnames. Her initiative went further than simply contacting those students; she was eager to bring everyone together, to introduce everyone to each other. Her motto was: *all Armenians in the same city must know each other*. Meanwhile, the example of another interviewee shows the opposite: having studied at the university, she had no intention of seeking other students of Armenian origin at the same university, and only by chance met some of them.

Hence, the ways of being have various manifestations, even when actors experiencing or practicing them belong to the same social field. The latter configure ways of being, but do not condition their manifestations.

Talking about their recent acquaintances with Armenian coevals, my interviewees were comparing those with their German friends. The most common accentuation reads as following:

> Գերմանացի ընկերներս շատ լավն են, ու շատ լավ է իրենց հետ էլ տեղ գնալ, բայց հիմա հասկանում եմ, որ ինչ-որ բան պակաս էր: Էն ժամանակ դա չէի հասկանում: Մենակ մի տեսակ զգում էի, որ ինչ-որ բան պակաս էր... Հիմա հասկանում եմ՝ դա ինչ էր: Դա տաքությունն էր, որ զգում եմ իմ հայ ընկերներից:
>
> My German friends are very nice, and it is interesting to go out with them, as well, but now I understand that something was missing. I did not realize it then. I just felt somehow, that there is something missing…. Now I understand what it was. It was the warmness that I feel coming from my Armenian friends…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female, *hayastantsi*)

Almost every respondent during the interviews distinguished some characteristics of Armenians and Germans, referring to their own acquaintances. The above

mentioned interview excerpt hints on some missing points in communication with Germans, which have been found among Armenians. Notably, this was a tendency among the younger generations of both the *hayastantsi* and *arevmtahay*. I also consider important to mention that most of my *hayastantsi* and *arevmtahay* interviewees have first met each other in Germany. For example, Siruni, a 19-year old Iranian-Armenian girl, who has been living in Germany for around 14 years, had never been to Armenia, and her first contacts with *hayastantsis* started in Germany when, through some acquaintances of her family, she got to know *hayastansti* coevals. Before knowing her new friends, she had a rather negative disposition regarding *hayastantsis*; however, her new acquaintances have made Siruni reconsider her point of view, and she has found common points of interest with her new friends.

> Հայաստանցիներու հետ մօտիկէն ծանօթանալէն ետք ուրիշ բան մը նկատեցի անոնց մէջ, որ գերմանացիներոր չունէին. գերմանացիներոր քիչ մը աւելի պաղ են, ու ես ալ առաջ աւելի պաղ էի, ճիշդն ըսած: Մենք կը հաւաքուինք, կը նստինք, քարթ կը խաղանք, շատ կը խօսինք, յատկապէս գիրքերու մասին կը խօսինք, որ ես անչափ կը սիրեմ: Իսկ հայերուն հետ աւելի *lebendig* (գերմաներէն՝ աշխոյժ, կենսախինդ) է, պար կայ, աշխուժութիւն կայ, որ ես նոյնպէս կը սիրեմ: Ես գերմանական *Gruppe*-ին (գերմաներէն՝ խումբ) մէջի խենթն էի, անոնց ես կը տաքցնէի:
>
> But now, after getting acquainted with them, I saw another thing in them, which Germans did not have. It is to say, they (Germans) are a little bit colder, and I was also colder before, to tell the truth. When we gather together, we play cards, speak about books, which I also like. With those Armenians it is more *lebendig* (German from – living, alive), there is dancing, there is liveliness, which I like. In our German *Gruppe* (German for – group) I was the crazy one, I was warming them up.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female, *arevmtahay*)

Thus, predispositions and opinions gained as a result of some practices change, due to other practices and experiences. However, the core idea here is not the change of opinion, attitude, or predisposition itself, but the reason for this change. As Siruni's case states, the factor that brought this change about is similar preferences, worldview, and ways of being.

It is noteworthy that during my fieldwork and my interviews I did not explicitly or deliberately ask my *arevmtahay* respondents their opinions of *hayastantsis,* or vice versa. This kind of narratives came out by themselves, especially around questions referring to acquaintances and social ties with other Armenians residing in Germany. It is also remarkable that comparisons appeared primarily in narratives of *arevmtahay* interviewees. *Hayastantsis* did not emphasize special differences between their and the *arevmtahays'* ways of being, mostly pointing

out that *arevmtahays* normally keep a distance, and they (*hayastantsis*) do not try to intervene.

To summarize, significant determining factors for an acquaintance to become a friendship are practicing common ways of being, and sharing the same cultural heritage. To put it otherwise, in order to build sustained social connections, an important condition is habitus. It is the basis of social practices, and at the same time, social practices and ways of being determine habitus. The aggregation of commonalities thus becomes a significant factor for the endurance of social ties.

4.4 Cross-border social ties: the role of contact recipients in determining sustainability of ties

Social environment, everyday routines, and social practices are important parts of encounters. Nevertheless, a thorough and complete study of encounters in the realm of transnationalism is possible through the analysis of cross-border ties and engagements. Juxtaposition of studies of cross-border and in-border social ties will provide a better understanding of features of Armenian transnationalism. This part of my work is devoted to the analysis of cross-border connections and engagements of my research participants. As the results of my study show, border-spanning ties of my interviewees are not only with relatives and friends residing in the Republic of Armenia. Their circle of friends and family ties go beyond continents. Given the dispersal of Armenians all over the world, it is not surprising. A noticeable remark is that for the first generation, cross-border ties and engagements play a more significant role than for the second generation. If for the first generation border-spanning ties have relatively regular character, for young Armenians, in contrast, these connections are more sporadic, and have a *fluctuating* character. Thus, one of the most important factors determining intensity and frequency of contacts is the other side of communication, or to put it another way, the *recipient* of cross-border ties. Leaning on my research data, I distinguish three types of recipients in cross-border communication: *priority, primary* and *secondary contact recipients*. To the first category belong parents and siblings; to the second – uncles, aunts, and cousins; and friends correspondingly belong to the third category.

Thus, *priority contact recipients* of transnational ties are parents and siblings who, for the majority of the first-generation research participants, still reside in home countries. Here, I write 'countries' in plural, because for *hayastantsis,* parents and siblings are in Armenia, and for *arevmtahays,* they are in a third country, which, in this scope, is partly a home country for them. Connections with priority recipients are maintained on a daily basis, sometimes even

several times a day via various means of communication, the most popular being Skype. However, phone calls are also practical for short conversations during the day. In fact, they can speak several times a day—depending on free time—and share impressions about daily encounters even around a virtual cup of coffee. As one of my interviewees said:

> Առավոտյան մամայիս հետ սուրճ եմ խմում սկայպով:
>
> In the morning my mom and I drink coffee together on Skype.
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Satenik, a middle-aged woman, who has been residing in Germany for about eight–nine years, mentions:

> Ծնողներիս հետ ամեն օր խոսում եմ, եթե ոչ օրը մի քանի անգամ: Սկզբում սկայպ չկար, հեռախոսով էինք խոսում, հիմա էլ սկայպով: Չեմ կարող ասել, թե երբ էի ավելի շատ խոսում: Եղել է, որ ամեն օր էլ խոսել ենք հեռախոսով: Միշտ ինֆորմացված ենք եղել ամեն ինչից: Սկայպի ի հայտ գալուց հետո մեզ մոտ ոչ մի փոփոխություն չի նկատվել, պարզապես հիմա դեմքերն ենք տեսնում, իսկ առաջ միայն ձայները էինք լսում:
>
> I speak with my parents every day, if not several times a day. There was no Skype at the beginning, and we were speaking by phone. I cannot say when I have ever spoken more. There were cases when we talked on phone every day. We have always been informed about everything. After the arrival of Skype, we have noticed no changes – only now we see faces, and before we only heard voices.
> (Extract from an interview: female)

The excerpt speaks about the intensity and frequency of ties with priority contact recipients. However, cases when interviewees could not notice any significant changes in frequency of communication with the home country after the invention of Skype are quite rare and rather an exception, than regularity. More often they talked about the role of Skype in reducing financial and emotional difficulties in maintaining contacts with relatives in homeland. Indeed, Internet-mediated communication is easier, cheaper, faster, and also more accessible. Nowadays, internet connection is cheap and available not only through computers, but also with mobile phones. It means connecting with relatives in Armenia has become as easy as making a phone call (via Internet) and talking to them 'here and now'. In other words, people are as reachable for each other, as if no distance separated Germany and Armenia. Permanent virtual presence is the key characteristic of the first generations' transnational ties with priority contact recipients.

Although in the category of priority contact recipients I have situated parents and siblings, frequency and intensity of ties with each of them are not the same. Usually, siblings have lots of concerns regarding their own families—children, grandchildren—and sometimes the daily routine takes over, and thereby communication with each other can become more random, compared to contacts with parents.

Other relatives, such as uncles and aunts, who, according to my categorization are *primary contact recipients,* are another important link on the chain of transnational ties. Though contacts with them are not on the basis of everyday calls, they still have quite a regular character. Sometimes these ties presume back-and-forth travels and mutual visits going far beyond borders of Armenia. Hence, Davit, his wife and two small children have lived in Germany for over a decade; meanwhile some of his extended family members are not only in Armenia, but also in the Netherlands, in France, and elsewhere. Davit maintains connections with his relatives as often as possible.

> Հորեղբայս Ֆրանսիայում է ապրում: Իրենց հետ բավական շատ կապ ունենք, գնալ-գալ... Չնայած հիմա ժամանակի բերումով շատ չենք գնում-գալիս, բայց հարազատորեն կապի մեջ ենք:
>
> My uncle lives in France. We have quite much contact with them, visiting each other… Although now visits are not quite often because of time, we are still cousinly in contact.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

The final group, parallel to family members and relatives, are friends – another important category in the scope of transnational ties. I have called them *secondary contact recipients.* The role of the latter is especially considerable for the first-generation respondents, given the fact that by immigrating, they have left behind a significant part of their conscious lives and started everything from the beginning in the new country. A common past, and especially memories of this past, unifies friends, and contributes to the maintenance of either regular or periodic ties. Mher came to Germany shortly after graduating from the university in Armenia, and has lived in Germany already for many years; however, he always remembers his student years and university friends with nostalgia. Mher maintains quite intensive connections with friends, communicating mostly via Facebook, various mobile applications, using Internet, and sometimes via Skype. As he told me, he has always been looking forward to his travels to Armenia and to friends' reunions.

> Հայաստանում ունեմ ինստիտուտի շատ լավ ընկերներ, երևի մի յոթ հոգի, ում հետ միշտ կապը կա սկայպով, հեռախոսով…

> In Armenia I have very good university friends, about seven people, with whom we always have contact by Skype, by phone…
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

The intensity of connections with the secondary contact recipients might reduce in course of time, and due to distance; however, transnational social ties do not completely vanish or fade away. My research participants expressed a feeling of obligation to meet them when in Armenia. Remarkably, this feeling of obligation is not meant in negative terms; rather it is to emphasize the desire to meet with friends once one is back to the home country for a visit.

Contanct recipients are also important in regard with the frequency and intencity of second generations' transnational ties. Having immigrated with parents at early ages, the second generation only has primary contact recipients outside Germany, i.e. uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, etc. Social ties with them are sporadic and occasional, and attachments are generally emotional; however, they fluctuate—having phases of increased and decreased contact—corresponding to the back-and-forth travels to Armenia. These kinds of ties are typical for indirect transnationalism (Lee 2011) or emotional transnationalism (Wolf 2002), presented in Chapter 2 in the paragraph on continuity of transnationalism, and for *fluctuating transnationalism*, which I will present in the coming chapters of this work. Notions of indirect and emotional transnationalism refer to indirect transnational engagements on the basis of emotional attachments, either to the country of origin, or relatives. In addition, as my data evidences, spending some time in Armenia (which means living at a grandparents' place with uncles, aunts and cousins) strengthens relations with relatives. After return to Germany, for a short while, cross-border ties continue regularly and frequently; however, they diminish in the course of time, until the next visit to Armenia. I have named this phenomenon *fluctuating transnationalism,* and later will touch upon its manifestations in more detail.

Participants of my research assessed cross-border connections from two points of view—technical and spiritual aspects of communication. The technical aspect of ties refers to means of communication. On account of continuing developments in this sphere, it is easier, cheaper, and faster to connect with relatives and friends all over the world. In parallel, interviewees emphasize the so-called spiritual aspect of communication, development of which is not as univocal as of the technical aspect. My research data shows that except for connections with priority contact recipients, other ties become colder, and their intensity decreases. On the one hand, social-economic hardships that people face in Armenia made them 'get fettered in their own shells'. People thus become more confined to themselves, which negatively impacts human relations and social contacts at a distance. On the other hand, those residing in Germany, experience

time pressure, or more precisely lack of time, for maintenance of sustained cross-border ties. After more than a decade's life in Germany, Gurgen painfully noticed that throughout time, and due to daily routine, connections with those who stayed in Armenia had somehow lost their warmness.

> (...) նաև մեր Գերմանիայի պայմաններում էլ մարդ ժամանակ չունի: Այստեղ պետք է առավոտվանից երեկո վազես, որ հասցնես: Օրինակ՝ ես առավոտվա 5-ից մինչև գիշեր վազքի մեջ եմ: Հետո էլ, երբ ավարտում եմ, ուզում եմ հանգստանալ: Բացի դրանից էլ, Հայաստանում արդեն գիշեր է լինում... Նրանք էլ այնտեղ իրենց պրոբլեմներով են վազվզում:
>
> (...) also in our German condition, one does not have much time. Here you must run from morning till evening in order to manage things. For example, I am on the run from 5 a.m. till night. And when I finish, I want to have a rest. Besides, it is already night in Armenia at that time … They are also running around there with their own problems.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, first generation)

Regarding the second generation, transnational ties, in their sense of sustained border-spanning connections, are fading away; however, they do not disappear completely. What disappears is the practice of regular phone calls and skype conversations with relatives back in Armenia or elsewhere. Parents regularly inform them about relatives, but children themselves rarely initiate contacts across borders. Communication in these cases takes place in the framework of short greetings, while parents are speaking by Skype.

Transnational ties of the second generation, therefore, get a new comprehension. Thus, immigrant children do not maintain daily regular connections with their relatives in Armenia or elsewhere. Their transnational activity reduces to back-and-forth travels only. Some relatively intensive connections still remain for a while right after the return, but throughout time and in the everyday routine, the frequency of those decreases. The reason could be that Armenians moved to Germany mostly with nuclear families, and for the second generation, relatives back in the homeland are the primary contact recipients. Some of my second-generation interviewees in person got acquainted with those relatives already after many years of life in Germany. From this viewpoint, arguments questioning endurance of transnationalism over generations might prove themselves right; however, I argue that those second-generation Armenians still have imprints of transnational lifestyle. Firstly, this is an interesting type of transnationalism which fluctuates in increased-decreased intervals parallel to back-and-forth travels, and events of pan-Armenian importance when even the most transnationally passive or neutral person can find corresponding opportunities to engage

at least in a virtual transnational field. Secondly, their transnationalism manifests at the level of representations – with the imaginary reference to the homeland.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have described everyday routines and encounters of my research participants, and have addressed social formation and further manifestations of their social ties. In doing so, I have analysed two domains—configurations and encounters—of the conceptual schema of 'configurations–representations–encounters'.

Based on my research data, I have distinguished two main configurations of my research participants – *transnational social fields* and *local-diasporic fields*. The first ones emerge due to daily transnational practices of social actors, and at the same time determine those practices. Diasporic fields, in contrast, do not necessarily require cross-border engagements and practices. Those fields are configured through the in-border communication of immigrants within the residence country, but have direct relation to Armenian, even though a rather imaginary relation. The latter is expressed in conversations, shared memories, nostalgia and care for the homeland. Local-diasporic fields thus shape a small part of Armenia in Germany.

Virtual transnational fields, as specific configurations, emerge due to internet communication and online media, namely Internet blogs, online social networks, and web-pages of transnational associations. Internet forums and blogs are important configurations fostering the feeling of simultaneous presence in different realities. They enlarge the possibilities of transnational activism, also giving the opportunity to be transnational for those who in other similar conditions would prefer not to engage in common transnational practices. In addition, Internet-mediated fields create appropriate stances of representation.

Diverse social environments, encounters, and families with some significance, impact social formation of ties and their further development, though the family role in this process quite often is indirectly and latently expressed. Positive or negative encounters can determine further dispositions, and willingness or non-willingness of maintaining some social connections. Nevertheless, the family also indirectly and latently prompts appropriate circle of social ties for children. Given the role of the family, I have differentiated two main umbrella categories: *children from the local environment,* who have had and still maintain variety of contacts within the host country and with some Armenians; and *children from the family environment*, who grew up in the milieu of narrow kinship ties. These categories mostly refer to the period of childhood. The scope and range of social contacts can obviously change in length of time; however, per-

ceptions and dispositions set up during childhood can still periodically manifest, and to some extent also influence the second generations' behaviour.

As my research indicates, several factors can impact social formation of ties; however, for maintenance of those connections, the sense of common dispositions and the common habitus probably have the principal role. Other factors—particularly nationality—have a less important role in this process. Thus, habitus appears as an important condition to build sustained social connections.

In the realm of cross-border social ties' maintenance, the results of my research have allowed me to conclude that one of the most important factors determining the intensity and frequency of those transnational connections is the *recipient* person. I have thus distinguished three types of recipients – *priority, primary* and *secondary contact recipients*. To the first category belong parents and siblings; to the second – uncles, aunts and cousins; and friends belong to the third category. Sustainability and intensity of transnational ties with each of these categories vary for the first and the second generations.

My research has disentangled two aspects of Armenian transnationalism: first, it is fluctuating transnationalism (especially regarding the second generation), which means cross-border ties strengthen and weaken corresponding to back-and-forth travels to Armenia, and engagements in certain social events with direct relation to the homeland; and second, engagement of the second generation in transnational social fields, and maintenance of intense transnational connections diminish over time; however, they still retain imprints of a transnational lifestyle, and these imprints are not necessarily expressed at the level of social ties and practices, but rather at the level of representations, as supposed by the engagement in a local-diasporic field.

Having analysed configurations—transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields—and encounters of my research participants, I will now proceed with the next chapter, which is devoted to the analysis of representations, i. e., how my interviewees perceive themselves, and how their self-identification may vary and/or change in correspondence with the situation and context.

5 Modes of Representation in Transnational Social Fields

In the previous chapter I have described the transnational social fields that my research participants engage in, and their encounters in the sense of everyday transnational and not transnational practices. Moreover, the chapter has contained reflections on issues of social formation of transnational ties and their peculiarities. In this chapter I will describe various modes of representation. As mentioned earlier, representations refer to social concepts and categories, frames, cultural idioms, etc. (Vertovec 2009b, 2015). Thus, representations are social constructions of reality or social framings of certain phenomena and actors. In the scope of my work I view self-identification and identification of others as modes of representations. Both are the results of social framing and categorization, or, in other words, both are products of social construction – in one case it is a social construct of the self, and in the other case, a social construct of others. Those frames play an important role in determining and interpreting social practices of actors, and also define engagement or non-engagement in transnational social fields.

This chapter consists of two main parts. In the first part I will address issues of my research participants' self-identification, and their perceptions about their own and others' ways of being. I consider self-identification and ways of being as two interdependent notions. For that reason, representations of ways of being are important for representation and interpretation of self-identification.

The second part of the chapter will refer to media as a mode of representation. Here I will touch upon the role of media in migrants' lives, mainly focusing on social media—specifically online social networks—and their impact on and contribution to transnational activity. In this framework, I will present two examples highlighting the role of media, related to transnational activity of my research participants.

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5.1 Presenting own ways of being: self-identification

> Հայր շատ այքաբաց է, գետնի տակէն ալ կրնայ լուծում մր գտնել: Հայը սևը կրնայ ճերմըկցնել, և այդ բանը շատ կը սիրեմ հայուն մէջ:
>
> Armenians are brisk (smart); they can find a solution even from underground. An Armenian can whiten the black, and I like this in an Armenian.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, second generation, *arevmtahay*)

In this subchapter, on the example of my interviewees, I will address how the first- and second-generation Armenians in Germany represent their own ways of being. Perception of one's own ways of being leads to better description of self-identification. Correspondingly, representations of others' ways of being provide an understanding of identification of those others.

The literature, related to studies and research on self-identification,[55] evidences the complexity of the notion: the latter can have a situational character, which means self-identification might change, shift, or vary over time, context, situation, social environment, and under the impact of various other factors (Ewing 1990; Eschbach, Supple and Snipp 1998; Duncan and Trejo 2005). Social researchers employ different notions to speak about situation- or context-dependent and dynamic character of self-identification. Hence, in addressing the question of self-identification of different immigrant groups, Talai (1989) and Gluckman (1958 [1940]) analyse specific characteristics of immigrants to differently identify themselves, and easily shift from one way of being to another. Gluckman names this a *situational selection*, and Talai talks about *part-time ethnicity* of London-Armenians. Further, Zimmermann et al., in their research on ethnic self-identification of the first-generation immigrants, analyse the determinants of self-identification (Zimmermann, Zimmermann and Constant 2007), and the results of their research challenge the linear and mutual-excluding perception of attachments to the host and origin countries. Thus, self-identification can be multi-dimensional, with respect to multiplicity of migrants' attachments.

My own research on Armenians in Germany shows that self-identification of immigrants might be ambiguous, given their multiple attachments. In addition, situation- and context-dependent identification is expressed at the level of representations. In the following sections of this chapter I will in detail touch upon this phenomenon, naming it *manoeuvring with self-identification*.

Transnational lifestyles or activities can directly or indirectly impact, shape, and reshape self-identification, which may lead to corresponding changes

[55] See, e.g. Kinket and Verkuyten 1997; Kolossov 1999; Barrington, Herron and Silver 2003; Zimmermann, Zimmermann and Constant 2007; Van Veelen, Otten and Hansen 2011

in the sense of belonging. Even in cases when migrants (especially the second generation) do not preserve cross-border ties and connections on the regular basis, they, to a greater or lesser extent, bear impacts of transnationalized lifestyles. These imprints indirectly impact their self-identification. Comparing two generations, one can claim that self-identification of the first generation may be more ambiguous, since they have more engagements in various transnational social fields, compared to the children. The latter were born in the country of settlement, or have immigrated with parents in early childhood, which means, their socialization has taken place in the country of residence, and they have incorporated the new value-system and behavioural patterns. Hence, everything in the host country is familiar to them, and makes them feel at home. For both generations, nevertheless, it is common that self-identification can vary in length of time and throughout life's journey – in parallel with changes of social contexts and encounters, or due to diversification of social ties and acquaintances. Yet, the second generation also confronts ambiguity of self-identification, though to a lesser extent than parents. Even though the country of origin determines their roots and cultural patrimony, the second generation has more loyalties to the country of settlement, since it has become the place they can call home.

I consider self-identification and the sense of belonging as two dialectically interconnected notions; consequently, ambiguity of the one influences the other, as well. Transnational lifestyles and engagements in transnational social fields can provoke some difficulties to identify the social space migrants belong. I hereby draw a hypothesis that the more intensively migrants maintain transnational connections, and the more they engage in transnational social fields, the more ambiguous their self-identification will be. The above-mentioned features of self-identification—situational, changing, and context-dependent—confirm this presumption. Social actors, who are actively involved in transnational social fields, and also maintain loyalties to the country of residence, more probably face contradictions in the process of self-identification. Correspondingly, their self-identification might be multifocal, or situated at the intersection of two countries.

Hence, transnationalism can have certain influence on self-identification. Migrants engage in transnational social fields because of appropriate self-identification, although involvement in those transnational social fields constructs, or tends to construct, a common sense, common habitus, and dispositions. Those, in turn, determine involvement in the field, and the actors' self-identification with a certain category of ways of being. In addition, those common dispositions and ways of being become significant factors, determining maintenance of cross-border and in-border social ties.

Self-identification requires some external points of departure. Thus, interviewed first- and second-generation Armenians, answering questions which

presumed some self-description or self-reflection, or which had a relation to such topics as life in Germany, almost always started their narratives with some comparisons between features of Armenians and Germans, *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis,* without explicitly being asked to do so. It is to say, in order to reflect on themselves, and to identify their own ways of being, social actors must have a point of comparison. Studies of social identification in social psychology and sociology literature support this argument. Thus, Van Veelen et al. argue that personal and social selves are important components of social identification (Van Veelen, Otten and Hansen 2011, p. 629). Social actors tend to describe themselves in accordance with some group categories, and then associate themselves with the determined categories (Turner et al. 1987, p. 50). Jenkins writes about internal and external processes of definition (Jenkins 1994, p. 198–199), which are correspondingly self- and other-directed processes. The above-mentioned accentuates the importance of determining one's own and others' ways of being, since due to the mental overlap of those, occurring from the point of a single social actor and a group (Smith and Henry 1996), social actors are able to identify themselves. In addition, leaning on my research results, I concur that by distinguishing some frames and characteristics, social actors also express some latent tendency either to identify or to distance themselves from the mentioned characteristics. Consequently, when my research participants determined some features of Armenians, which they considered negative, they tended to distance themselves from carriers of these qualities. Since all interviews had references to some characteristics of Armenians and Germans, it is interesting to analyse which of those appear to be positive, and which negative, from the interviewees' viewpoints. Furthermore, consideration of the presumption that people tend to unconsciously identify themselves with positive characteristics they have distinguished, rather than with the negative, will help to understand peculiarities of self-identification. In other words, subjectively determined characteristics provide insights into self-identification.

During my fieldwork in this realm, a specific topic raised by my interview partners was who Armenians are, or how the image of Armenians appears in their own eyes. In other words, how they see that Armenians represent themselves. In the following sections I will separately address these issues for each generation. To thoroughly understand specificities of both generations' self-identification, I will first describe how they represent Armenians, in general, and which typical characteristics and ways of being they differentiate. This will help to better understand specificity of self-identification of both generations.

5.1.1 Ways of being and modes of self-identification

First generation

Armenians represent themselves as people, who have abilities and skills to easily become accustomed to new conditions. My interviewees interpreted this as a specific characteristic of all Armenians who live outside Armenia. However, incorporating into the host society, Armenians do not forget their roots. Describing Armenians as a nation and untangling their characteristic points, Aram pointed out the ability of Armenians to incorporate into a new environment and thus not to forget their origins, and to combine these two in such a way that the host society would consider these immigrants as its own members.

> Աշխատող են ու հասկանում են՝ ինչպես կարելի է աշխատել: Հայերը շուտ են ինտեգրվում, բայց ոչ թե իրենց արմատները մոռանալով, ո՛չ, իրենք շատ պահպանողական են: Բայց իրենք այդ հասարակության մեջ այնպես են ապրում, որ այդ հասարակությունն իրենց ընդունում է որպես իր անդամ:
>
> They are hard-working people, and they understand how it is possible to work. Armenians get quickly integrated, but not forgetting their roots, no, they are very conservative. But they live in a society in such a way, that the society accepts them as its member.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

This extract states that Armenians do not differ much from dominant groups of society. The fact that Armenians are residentially dispersed in different districts of towns and cities in Germany, contributes to better integration into new environments and new life conditions. In the study of London-Armenians, Talai also noticed that Armenians do not assemble in any particular city, and interactions between Armenians usually occur outside their routine engagements (Talai 1989, p. 3). In the scope of my research, two main circumstances can explain reasons for living dispersed. First, the Armenian diaspora in Germany is relatively young, and the size of Armenian population is not large. Second, both countries have the same religion. Dominant religion of the country also plays an important role in living dispersed or in compact quarters/clusters. For example, in such countries as Lebanon or Syria, where many Armenians have lived for centuries, Armenians live more compact, and special parts of cities are known as 'Armenian quarters'. Taking into consideration the fact that the religion is and has always been a historically significant symbol of Armenianness and of its maintenance, the issue of preserving Armenianness becomes especially important and is perceived more seriously in the countries where the dominant religion is different, in comparison to those with the same religion.

Good skills of integration, and consequently, a tendency not to be different from any social environment are sometimes expressed in deliberate adoption of different ways of being, given the country, society, or even narrow circle of friends. I name it *manoeuvre not to be different*. A noteworthy specificity of this behaviour is that it manifests equally in Germany and in Armenia. Accepted and common ways of being in each country may be different, and self-evident things in one country might be strange and incomprehensible in the other. Thus, Armenians choose corresponding ways of behaviour for each country. To say it otherwise, they strategically adopt appropriate ways of being, depending on the situation and the target audience. Thus, Gurgen was sure that Armenians perfectly know how to behave within the borders of Armenia, and how to live among others side by side.

> (...) Հայերդ դա լավ են հասկանում, թե ներսում ու դրսում ինչպես իրենց պահել. ներսդ՝ իրենց տանդ, իրենց շրջապատի մեջ, ինչպես իրենց դրսևորել, իրենց հայկական շրջապատում, և ինչպես ապրել մյուս ազգերի մեջ:
>
> (...) Armenians understand it well how to behave inside and outside. They know how to behave at home, among their Armenian surroundings and how to live among other nations.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Thus, manoeuvre not to be different represents awareness of some common German and Armenian ways of being and strategically switching from one to another. Satenik brought other evidences from her own observations pointing out to the manoeuvre not to be different:

> Նույն մարդուն, ով Եվրոպայում է, տեսար, հետո Հայաստանում տեսնես լրիվ ուրիշ մարդ է: Հայկական ամեն խոսելաձևր, պահելաձևր Հայաստան մտնելուց հետո ամեն ինչն ընդօրինակում է: Հասարակ մի օրինակ՝ հենց Եվրոպայում ապրող հայր գնում է Հայաստան, մեքենալի ամրագոտին չի գցում, իսկ այստեղ գցում է: Ինքնաթիռից իջան, փոխվում են… Դա է ցավր, որ դրսում իրենց այլ մարդկանց նման են դրսևորում, իսկ Հայաստանում՝ այլ:
>
> You saw the same person in Europe, then you see him/her in Armenia – he or she is a completely different person. He or she copies everything after entering Armenia – Armenian ways of speaking, behaviour. A simple example – as soon as an Armenian living in Europe goes to Armenia, he or she does not put a car seat belt on, but here does. As soon as they get off the plane, they change… It is painful, that they behave like different persons abroad, than in Armenia.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

People change ways of being, and choose the right ones regarding demands of the social environment. Not only in different countries, but also within Germany Armenians behave differently in a German, Armenian or mixed environment, manoeuvring with ways of being in order not to seem as different in each of these environments.

Another notable feature of Armenians, which came out in the interviews can be characterised as *perfection syndrome*. The basis for this is a splurge or feeling of pride, because of which Armenians sometimes tend to overstate their actual occupation and affiliation in the host country. Besides, they want to appear perfect for their families, relatives, and friends in Armenia. However, these innocent small lies sometimes become reasons for discrepancy of expectations of relatives and friends in the homeland. As Arpi noticed:

> Չեն ասում, որ այստեղ շատ մեծ դժվարություններով են գումար վաստակում: Ասենք՝ կարող է ռեստորանում աշխատեն, բայց ասեն, որ ռեստորանն իմն է, բայց իրականում ուրիշի ձեռքի տակ են աշխատում: Ցույց են տալիս, որ իրենք այստեղ օլիգարխներ են: Ցույց չեն տալիս, որ Եվրոպայում դժվար է աշխատելը: Պետք է ցույց տան և ասեն իրականությունը, որ մարդիկ էլ չմտածեն, որ այստեղ ծառերից են գումարները հավաքում: Ամոթ բան չէ.... Օրինակ՝ գալիս են այստեղ մաքրում են, բայց նույն մարդը նույն աշխատանքը Հայաստանում չի անի, ու ավելին, Հայաստանում չի էլ ասում, որ իրենք այստեղ նման բան է անում, որ այդ կարգի դժվարություններով է ինքն իր հացը վաստակում: Ամոթ է…
>
> They do not say, that here they earn money with much difficulty. For example, they might work at a restaurant, but say, that the restaurant is theirs, but in the reality they work under the control of someone else. They show they are oligarchs here, and do not show that it is difficult to work in Europe. They must show the reality, and tell the truth, in order people not to think that here we gather money from trees. It is not a shame… For example, they come and clean here, but the same person would not do the same job in Armenia, and moreover, s/he does not tell in Armenia that s/he is doing such a thing here, that s/he earns his/her daily bread with such difficulty here. That would be a shame…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

As mentioned in the extract, some avoid telling the truth about ways of earning daily wages, or some do jobs abroad which they would never do in their homeland. On the one hand, it is indeed because of simple ostentation. On the other hand, conglomerate of expectations of a person's social environment dictates this behaviour. To take a case in point, if a person has a prestigious job in Armenia, but because of some reasons he or she loses it, it will not be easy to search for an employment as waiter or cleaner. In the perspective of that person it would be a shame if others recognize him or her, thereby, it would negatively impact his/her prestige. Society has expectations from its members. As Calhoun points out,

individuals make their narratives, or categorize themselves in this or that narrative, not always by their own choice or under conditions that are not independently individual (Calhoun, 2003). Ultimately, Calhoun argues that social relations condition actions, and that culture, as such, plays a very important role in the process of self-identification. In this sense, a lot depends on the social relations individuals are involved in, and the habitus they have. Then why do 'forbidden' jobs become 'allowed' abroad? First, the circle of acquaintances shrinks and narrows, and second, no one would question or curiously gossip about it. Thus, some non-written group standards in some cases might become reasons for exaggerating the real occupation and status in the host country. As mentioned above, and as the interview excerpt states, this behaviour might lead to misunderstandings and discrepancy of interests and expectations between those who stayed and those who migrated. Misunderstandings and discrepancies generally refer to remittances and presents when travelling back home, visiting relatives. Here, two unique scenarios tend to happened. In the first case, migrants do everything (sometimes even borrow money) to present best gifts for relatives in the home country. Thus, the self-esteem is satisfied, and relatives are pleased. The second scenario is mutual dissatisfaction. Migrants get upset because of not being able to treat (presents, money) relatives in the way they would have preferred to, and relatives consider the treatment not corresponding to the position the migrant occupies abroad (the position that migrants assign to themselves, and not the one they indeed occupy).

In summarizing manifestations of the first generation's self-identification, perfection syndrome and manoeuvre not to be different are two general scenarios of ways of being for Armenians having lived abroad for a long time. Interestingly, they are typical for *hayastantsis* rather than for *arevmtahays*. The latter have lived outside Armenia, and the aforesaid specificities of Armenian environment seem strange to them. In addition, by distinguishing, positively or negatively assessing typical characteristics of Armenians, some interviewees realize that they also carry imprints of these features. As Varduhi, a young woman, who moved to Germany right after her marriage, and has been living in the country for about eight years mentioned:

> (...) մենք էլ ենք այդպես. այնպես չէ, որ մենք լիովին եվրոպացի ենք դարձել:
>
> (...) we are also like that. It is not that we have become totally a European.
> (Extract from an interview: female)

In general, the first-generation Armenians identify themselves with Armenian ways of being. Although they have incorporated some patterns of German ways

of being, and might disapprove of some typical Armenian behavioural patterns, the latter still have a dominant role in social practices of the first generation.

Second generation

In the behavioural patterns and value-norm system of the second-generation research participants, imprints from both cultures are present. From this viewpoint, their interpretation of Armenianness and Germanness is especially interesting. While the second-generation Armenians do not engage in transnational activity as frequently as their parents, their ways of being, however, supposedly contain marks of both Armenian and German behavioural patterns. In this sense, it is interesting to study which characteristics of Armenians, Germans, and others from their social environment they identify themselves with, and to which of these they perceive to belong. In comparison to their parents, my second-generation interview partners are attracted to different characteristics. They mostly emphasize spiritual features, particularly, openness, warmness, readiness to help, etc. Here is how Mariné described the nature of Armenians:

> Հայր *offen* (գերմաներենից՝ բաց) է: Օրինակ՝ ես որ ուրիշ հայի եմ տեսնում, շատ եմ ուրախանում: Օրինակ՝ որ արտասահմանում մի տեղ գնում ես ու հայի ես տեսնում, ուրախանում ես:
>
> Armenians are *offen* (from German – open). When I see other Armenians, I feel happy. For example, when you are abroad and go somewhere and see an Armenian, you get happy.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Almost in every interview comparisons between Armenian and German characteristics were present. A typical point in common, is that most second-generation Armenians got acquainted with Armenian peers mostly after they finished school, and these new acquaintances made them think and compare differences of ways of being they encountered. For example, almost all of my interview partners (even the children from the local environment) mentioned that at the beginning of relationships with Germans, as a rule, some emotional distance existed, which however, disappeared over time. Thus, Gohar, for whom German ways of being are self-evident and acceptable, still noticed:

> Օրինակ՝ իմ ընկերուհին սառն է շատ, պետք է հետը բավական շփվել, որ տաքանա… բայց մենք այդ էտապն արդեն անցել ենք: Բայց որ հանդիպում ենք շատ *Termin*-ով (գերմաներենից՝ պայմանավորվածություն) է ամեն ինչ՝ այս ժամից այն ժամը…Ինձ ավելի հոգեհարազատ է, որ *Termin*-ի մասին չմտածեմ, բայց դա ինձ չի խանգարում…
>
> For example, my friend is very cold, you have to communicate with her quite a while, in order to get warm… but we have passed that stage. But when we

> meet everything is with *Termin* (from German – appointment), from this hour until that hour… For me it is less familiar to think in terms of a *Termin*, however it does not bother me…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Gohar is a young second-generation Armenian belonging to the category of children from the local environment. Interestingly enough, for her, so-called openness of Armenians is more familiar and appreciated. Nevertheless, openness and an easy-going character do not necessarily mean that making friends with Armenian peers is always easier. While Armenian openness might contribute to making cordial contacts, at times Armenian ways of being are foreign and unaccustomed to the second-generation Armenians, who took part in my research. Hence, probable misunderstandings might occur in the relationship and daily communication. The example of Mané, who arrived in Germany with her family when she was five years old, demonstrates how uncommon ways of being give birth to various misunderstandings.

> Օրինակ՝ ես գիտեմ, որ գերմանացիները մի բան ասում են, ինչ են ուզում ասել, ինչ-որ բան անում են, ինչու են անում: Դա ինձ հարազատ է, որովհետև այստեղ եմ մեծացել, ու չեմ մտածում՝ ինչու այսպես արեց, ինչու այնպես արեց: Բայց օրինակ՝ հայերի մոտ շատ է եղել, որ մտածել եմ, թե ինչու այդպես արեց, ինչու այդպես ասեց: Չէի հասկանում, քանի որ ես ուրիշ ձև գիտեի… Օրինակ՝ ինչ-որ բան որ ասում էին, ես մտածում էի՝ յուրջ է ասում, թե ինչ-որ ուրիշ բան նկատի ունի: Օրինակ՝ հայերը, որ նեղանում են, ուրիշ ձևով են ասում, գուլգ տալիս, որ նեղացած են: Օրինակ՝ հայր, որ նեղանում է, չի բարևում, կամ չի շնորհավորում, բայց չի ասում, որ նեղացել է, ուղղակի «հոտած» ձևով է իրեն պահում: Օրինակ՝ Գերմանիա ուրիշ ձևով է… օրինակ՝ հոտել կամ չբարևել չկա…
>
> For example, when Germans say something, I know what they want to say, what they mean; when they do something, why they do it. That is familiar to me, because I grew up here and I do not think why they did it that way or another. But, for example, with Armenians, there were cases when I thought why they did so, why they said this? I did not understand because I knew it the other way… For example when they said something, I was thinking whether they meant it seriously, or they meant something else. For example, when Armenians take umbrage, they say or show it in some other way. For example, when an Armenian takes umbrage, s/he does not greet or does not congratulate, but does not say s/he is hurt; s/he just behaves in a sour way. In Germany, for example, it is another way… for example behaving sourly or not greeting does not exist…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Some behavioural patterns characteristic to Armenians from the Armenian environment cannot be familiar for those who grew up in a different social environment, and who incorporated different behavioural patterns. Hence, encounters

with typical Armenian ways of being might create misunderstanding even in elementary communication. Interestingly, contradictions in ways of being and difficulties in interpreting some behavioural patterns are more obvious among children from the local environment. In parallel, for the children from the family environment, Armenian ways of being are more understandable. Most of them share the opinion or conviction that Armenians (even despite some differences in viewpoints) would understand each other better. Ani, for example, during her childhood did not maintain cordial contacts with German peers, nevertheless, as she grew up, she made more aquaintaces with Germans, with some of whom she became close friends. However, Ani assumed that an Armenian would better understand the behaviour of another Armenian.

> (...) բո ամեն ինչո կհասկանա հայը: Թեկուզ չընդունի էլ, կհասկանա, ու կյանքում չի ասի՝ ինչու:
>
> (...) An Armenian will understand your every thing. Even if they do not accept, they will understand, and will never ask why.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Ani's opinion is contradictory to Mané's. Thus, as the previous excerpt shows, Mané—a child from the local environment—faced some difficulties in understanding motives of Armenians, and German behavioural patterns were familiar and self-evident to her. Meanwhile, in case of Ani—a child from the family environment—it appears to be different. Ani's assumption was "an Armenian understands another Armenian better" (than Germans or anyone else). From my viewpoint, reasons for these differences between the two mentioned cases are agents and ways of socialization. In the case of children from the local environment, kindergarten, school, and especially peers had significant influence on formation of the person's worldview, whereas for children from the family environment, family and relatives were the main and major agents of socialization. Correspondingly, Mané had more freedom in practicing behavioural patterns common in the host society, whereas Ani' was mainly surrounded with Armenian ways of being and behavioural patterns.

Thus, the second generation to some extent belongs to two countries and cultures. Therefore, their self-identification is somewhere in the intersection of two countries, to which they are tied through real and emotional attachments. The focus shifts either more towards Armenia or Germany, given the situation and social environment in which they grew up and in which they live at present.

5.1.2 Emotional and pragmatic aspects of self-identification

After identifying some Armenian and German ways of being, and behavioural patterns, interview narratives logically followed to the direction of discussions about advantages and disadvantages of this or other ways of being. Interestingly, in this realm, the results of my research highlight no interconnections between the fact of growing up mostly in an Armenian or German, or rather, in a transnational environment and assessing some behaviour as advantageous, or the other as disadvantageous. Moreover, here again the main argument of my interview partners was that nationality did not play a significant role. Even some children from the family environment stated that they would not necessarily feel comfortable with a person just because he or she was Armenian. Taking into consideration perceptions of ways of being and self-identification with some behavioural patterns, I distinguish two aspects of self-identification: *emotional* and *pragmatic*.

Emotional aspect of self-identification refers to situations when it is possible to speak the mother tongue, and discuss common interests about Armenia, etc. In other words, maintaining ties with compatriots contributes to self-identification as Armenian or identifying themselves with Armenian ways of being. It also highlights the importance of practicing, and not forgetting one's own culture and mother tongue.

> Օրինակ՝ հայերի հետ որ շփվում ես, հայերեն ես խոսում, խոսում ես քո կուլտուրայից, քո Հայաստանից… ավելի հարազատ է:
>
> For example, when you communicate with Armenians you speak Armenian, speak about your culture, your Armenia… it is more native (familiar) to you.
> (Extract from an interview: female, first generation)

Maintaining social ties with Armenians gives the opportunity to speak Armenian outside the family context, discuss events happening in Armenia, and speak about Armenia in general. It is so-called spiritual food especially for the first-generation Armenians. Most second-generation interviewees did not express this need to speak and discuss about Armenia, since no significant memories connect them with the homeland, and they do not have a common past referring to Armenia. Armenian language, nonetheless, remains important for the second generation. Maintaining ties with other Armenians, who speak the mother tongue, gives them the opportunity to practice the language. Thus, for both generations, situations providing an opportunity to speak Armenian outside the family, assure emotional aspects of their self-identification.

Pragmatic aspect of self-identification links to situations requiring rational thinking and action. Here such activities as organizing business, enterprise,

or some other average initiatives are meant. Remarkably, in this realm, Germans appear to be more trustworthy.

> Գերմանացիների հետ շփվելիս շատ ազատ եմ զգում, քանի որ գիտեմ՝ եթե գերմանացին ասեց՝ կանի, նշանակում է կանի: Չեմ վախենում, որ վաղը գա, ու ինքը չանի: Ու ինքը ճիշտը կասի, թե օրինակ՝ այս ապրանքն այս-այս թերություններն ունի: Իսկ որ հայն ասեց, որ մի շաբաթ հետո արի, դա, համոզված եմ 99,9%-ով սուտ է դուրս գալու:
>
> I feel free communicating with Germans, since I know if a German says s/he will do it, it means s/he will really do it. I do not fear that tomorrow will come, and s/he will not do it. And they will tell the truth that, for example, this product has this and that drawback or defect. But if an Armenian says to come in a week, I am 99.9 % sure it will turn out a lie.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, first generation)

Thus, the emotional aspect of self-identification expresses emotional attachments to the homeland and the necessity to speak, to hear, and not to forget the language, whereas the pragmatic aspect of self-identification manifests in identifying oneself with some German ways of being. Both the first and the second generations, to some extent, confront emotional and pragmatic aspects of self-identification. The emotional aspect, however, manifests more among the first, than among the second generation. Differentiation of the aforementioned two aspects of self-identification partly explains why in some cases Armenian ways of being are preferable, whereas in other cases German ways of being appear to be aspiring objects of imitation.

To summarize perceptions of both generations regarding Armenian and German ways of being, some important characteristics of self-identification always came out in comparing typical Armenian and German features. In this perspective, a mixture of both would create perfect and desirable ways of being. Khosrov's funny statement regarding the mixture of Armenian and German ways of being says:

> Պետք է մեկ հատ հայ և մեկ գերմանացի դնենք լվացքի մեքենան, խառնվեն, և մեկ հատ նորմալ դուրս գա:
>
> We should put one Armenian and one German into a washing mashine, mix them up, and one normal person will come out.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

My respondents assessed the ability to mix German and Armenian ways of being as a personal achievement or personal growth.

5.2 'Who are you?': perceptions of the self

The question of self-identification depends on various factors and situations. The analysis of ways of being, and their characteristic manifestations in different situations has provided insights into the interpretation of some self-identification aspects of my first- and second-generation interview partners. In this section I will proceed with the analysis of answers to an imaginary question 'who are you?' Confronting the imaginary situation when one is asked who he or she is, and formulating answers to this fictional question, interestingly disentangles specificities of one's self-identification. In order to create a more neutral and not country-dependent situation, I put the imaginary question out of the home and the host lands. Taking into consideration the earlier-mentioned strategic manoeuvre not to be different in either country (Armenia and Germany), I believe that situating the fictional question outside the contexts of both countries, provides more objectivity in answers, or better to say, more subjectively constructed objectivity.

Hence, I asked my interview partners to imagine a situation when they are on a holiday in some country, and someone asks them who they are. They were supposed to give the first three answers that immediately came to their minds, after hearing the question and without thinking it over. Thus, the answers in the vast majority were: 'I would say I am Armenian'. My interview partners, however, differentiated between questions 'who are you?' and 'where do you come from?' Hence, if 'where do you come from?' followed 'who are you?', the answer would be 'from Germany'. Sometimes in answer to these imaginary questions, respondents would tell almost the entire story of their immigration. They would explain that they are Armenians, but they immigrated to Germany, and have been living there for years. However, the first answer of both generations (both *hayastantsi* and *arevmtahay*) to the question of 'who are you?' would be 'I am Armenian'. To put it otherwise, Armenianness has strong imprints on self-identification of both generations. In particular cases self-identification goes even deeper, up to the place of birth. Sometimes, apart from Armenianness in general, the place of birth or the place of origin has a strong imprint on self-identification. Thus, some of my interviewees, in answer to the question 'who are you?', would mention their home city/town/village.[56] As some of my respondents pointed out, being an Armenian is a red thread in their lives, and there is no escape from it. In other words, even imagining an Armenian, who would answer

[56] For example, some of interviewees would answer to the mentioned fictional question, stating they are *yerevantsi*, *gyumreci* or *loreci*. The first two are cities in Armenia, and the third is a municipal region. Answering this way means that someone identifies himself or herself with the city/region in which he or she was born.

‘I am German’, he or she would not indeed behave as a German, only because of making such a claim.

The answers of the second generation to the imaginary question do not significantly differ from the first generation’s answers. Nevertheless, the difference between ‘who are you?’ and ‘where do you come from?’ plays a more principal role for them. To both questions my interview partners’ would generally answer: ‘I am an Armenian from Germany’, and sometimes the emphasis would fall on ‘from Germany’. For example, Gayané explained that in some situations it would be more convenient merely to say she is from Germany, since otherwise she would have to tell her whole story. If she says she is an Armenian, most probably she will have to additionally explain that she is not *from* Armenia…

> Սովորաբար հարցնում են, թե որտեղից ես, ասում եմ, որ Գերմանիայից եմ: Բայց որ հարցնում են՝ ինչ ազգ ես, ասում եմ, որ հայ եմ: Դա տարբերություն է, նայած ոնց են հարցնում: Եղել է նաև, որ ասել եմ՝ ես գերմանացի եմ: Օրինակ՝ նայի, մեկին հանդիպում եմ, չեմ ուզում ամբողջ կյանքս պատմել. ես ծնվել եմ Հայաստանում, հետո մենք եկել ենք Գերմանիա… Իմ *Identiät*-ը (գերմաներենից՝ ինքնություն) բոլորին հո չպիտի՞ բացեմ, բացատրություն տամ՝ ես որտեղից եմ: Ավելի շատ ասում եմ՝ Գերմանիայից եմ, բայց հայ եմ:
>
> They usually ask where I am from, and I say I am from Germany. But when they ask which nationality I am, I say I am Armenian. That is the difference, depending how they ask. There were also cases when I said I was German. For example, look, I meet someone, and I do not want to tell them my whole life – I was born in Armenia, then we came to Germany… I am not going to open my *Identiät* (German for – identity) in front of everyone, and explain where I am from. Most often I say I am from Germany, but I am Armenian.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female, second generation)

Self-identification of *arevmtahays* from the perspective of questions ‘who are you?’ and/or ‘where do you come from?’ might be even more entangled, in comparison to *hayastantsis*. According to the research data, the second-generation *arevmtahays*, whom I interviewed, would mention their two identifications – Armenian and also the country they were born in. This means, they would rather say they are Syrian-Armenians, Iranian-Armenians, etc. This is quite an interesting manifestation of self-identification. Armenianness has a dominant impact on self-identification of *arevmtahay* respondents; nevertheless, place of birth also plays a significant role. Many *arevmtahay* interviewees pointed out some interesting issues regarding their answers to these fictional questions. Hence, people sometimes do not understand what a Syrian-Armenian or an Iranian-Armenian means. Therefore, merely the first part of the doubled identification is accepted, and *arevmtahays* are considered as simply Syrians or Iranians,

which means not only a wrong understanding of nationality, but also religious belonging. Wrong interpretation of religious belonging seemed to be the primary source of trouble for my *arevmtahay* interview partners. In the following excerpt Raffi explains troubles he has faced clarifying what a Syrian-Armenian means:

> Ես կրսեմ՝ սուրիացի հայ եմ, բայց անոնք չեն հասկրնար՝ հայր ո՛րն է…Կր հասկրնան սուրիացի ու կր կարծեն՝մուսուլման եմ: Ստիպված կր կրկնեմ՝ Սուրիոյ հայ եմ, բայց դարձեալ հայը չեն գիտնար՝ ինչ է, ու նորէն կը կարծեն՝ մուսուլման եմ:
>
> I say I am a Syrian-Armenian, but they do not understand what Armenian is… they understand just Syrian, and think I am a Muslim. Then I say, but I am Syrian-Armenian, but they do not know what Armenian is, and again think I am a Muslim.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, second generation)

Identifying themselves as a Syrian-, an Iranian-, or a Turkish-Armenian not only Armenianness appears to be an important part of self-identification, but also the religion. In this realm, the desire to be recognized as Armenian, and not say Iranian, gets special importance because of the religion. *Arevmtahays* do not want to be wrongly identified with some other religion. This once again proves the significant role and importance of religion in Armenian self-identification, and in maintenance and celebration of Armenianness.

Imaginary situation with answers to the question 'who are you?' or 'where do you come from?' further disentangles some specificities of my research participants' self-identification, i.e. profiting from Armeninanness and Germanness, depending on the situation. My interviewees also told me real stories about these questions: they have surely faced this kind of questions before, and their answers and behaviour in those situations sometimes embodied a deliberate so-called manoeuvre with answers. Therefore, I call this *manoeuvring with self-identification*. In this realm, Gohar told me a story about her short study period in another European country. During her stay she was often asked where she was from, and she might give a different answer, given who was asking, and how at the moment she felt her answer would be accepted.

> Երբ հարմար էր, ասում էի, որ հայ եմ, իսկ երբ հարմար էր, ասում էի, որ Գերմանիայից եմ: Օրինակ՝ երբ զգում եմ, որ մտածում են, որ գերմանացիները վատն են, ասում եմ, որ հայ եմ… հետո… գերմանացիներին, որ տեսնում եմ, ասում եմ, որ ես Գերմանիայից եմ, բայց ես չեմ ասում, որ ես գերմանացի եմ:
>
> When it was convenient, I was saying I was Armenian, and when it was convenient to say I was from Germany, I was doing so. For example, when I feel they think Germans are bad, I say I am Armenian… then… when I see Germans, I say I am from Germany, but I do not say I am German.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female, second generation)

What Gohar did, is a typical manifestation of manoeuvring with self-identification. The latter has parallels with 'choices of habitus', referring to Bourdieu's terminology (Bourdieu 1991, p. 51). He argues that 'choices of habitus' are consequences or effects of social determinism, however, outside consciousness, and without restrictions.

Studying Armenians in London, Vered Amit Talai points out that Armenianness for London-Armenians is not a full time matter (Talai 1989, p. 77). Further, she argues that Armenians have *part-time ethnicity* (Talai 1989, p. 113), and they are Armenians, as such, only at their leisure time, or communicating with other compatriots. Talai also speaks about the flexibility of Armenians in presenting themselves as an Armenian, or not. Moreover, she argues that one of the aspects of their identification may dominate over others, depending on the situation or persons involved in the communication. As Talai puts it, these 'shifts are to suit circumstances' (Talai 1989, p. 99). Thus, manoeuvring with self-identification, manifested among the participants of my research, is parallel to the previous research on identification issues. Gohars story, quoted above, is an expression of this manoeuver. Remarkably, similar examples emerged not only in stories of my interview partners, but also I could observe various manifestations of manoeuvring with self-identification during my participant observations, or when I was accompanying some of my interview partners during their daily routines. My research shows that *manoeuvring between being an Armenian* and *being a German* lies in the scope of the question 'where do you come from?, the answer to which is based on the place of residence, and not on the place of birth or origin. It is also notable, that Gohar mentioned that she *came* from Germany, and not that she *was* German. This means Armenianness unconsciously remains as a primary basis for self-identification, even practicing *manoeuvring* strategy. This becomes clear from the answers to the imaginary question 'who are you?'. Germany would certainly be mentioned in answers, however, not in the sense of being German, but residing in Germany. Thus, the most common answer would be: 'I am an Armenian from Germany'.

Ways of being and self-identification are interconnected modes of representations. They might partly change in course of time, and various factors can impact this change—different agents of socialization, diverse encounters, and environments, etc. In the following subchapter I will proceed with the analysis of media as a mode of representation, and its role in determining transnational activity, and manifestations of ways of being and self-identification.

5.3 Media as a mode of representation

In this section I discuss the role and significance of media, which can create realities, and condition representations of self of media followers. In doing so, media might initiate attainment of certain demands and historic interests (Reicher and Hopkins 2001, p. 63). Correspondingly, I will first briefly present some arguments about the role of media in diaspora life; thereafter a short reflection will follow on types and role of media which participants of my research consume, and determine to be significant to them. I will then proceed with the analysis of two cases, which are clear examples of media-related transnational activity of Armenians. In doing so, I concentrate on online social networks—specifically Facebook pages, referring to issues of Armenians in Germany, or pages of German–Armenian associations. From the perspective of transnational practices and their representations in media, online social networks are interesting stances to study. They are not only quick means of communication, gathering people from all over the world in a common reality of 'here and now'; moreover, social media is a suitable field for representation of the self and others. It connects people sharing the same interests and issues from different parts of the world. Even those who are not transnationally active may be involved in online social networks and Internet forums. Their involvement may still be passive, limited only to reading and overviewing the pages without exchanging or posting; nevertheless, even with this passive involvement due to the Internet, they become part of a transnational social field occupying a position of an observer. Furthermore, online social networks provide a good opportunity to explore dynamics inside transnational social fields, articulation, and struggle for the symbolic capital, and also manifestations of relationships between Armenians in Armenia and abroad. Analysis of Facebook posts, comments, and discussions around crucial and fateful topics makes it possible to study the above-mentioned issues. As such, I take two relevant and actual cases: the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, and protests against the price increase of electricity in Armenia.

5.3.1 Media and mediatized reality

To begin with, I will make a reference to the concept of 'mediatized migrants', developed by Andreas Hepp, Cigdem Bozdag and Laura Suna (2012), which argues that the culture of migrants must be viewed as media cultures, because nowadays migrants are mediatized, and media highly determines their belonging. In other words, media is constructing and conditioning most of the processes happening in diaspora. Moreover, it plays a significant role in the realm of determining and constructing relations between the homeland and diaspora. The

authors developed the concept of mediatized migrants by leaning on the concept of 'connected migrant', presented by Diminescu (2008). In addressing the role and significance of media and particularly Internet for diaspora, social researchers point out to the unifying feature of the latter: it gives the opportunity to the diaspora to expess itself in respect of the homeland. In addition, it acts as a specific medium of quick communication and exchange between various diasporic groups, transnational communities, and people in the homeland.[57]

Media is a powerful tool of constructing realities. These are realities with unique and characteristic possibilities and opportunities, which construct a social actor's understanding and perception of everyday life, and configurations they live in or belong to. Moreover, media-constructed realities, to some extent, influence encounters, i.e. social practices (transnational or not) of media followers. For Appadurai (1996) media is a social imaginary, and it is impossible to presume contemporary migration and transnational fields without media and its multi-level influence. Nevertheless, reality created by media is not universal: it is diverse and unique at the same time. Media is influencing but not homogenizing diasporas. It is constructing realities around issues and topics which for one or another reason win widespread attention. With a light hand of media some topics and issues gain special emphasis, while others remain out of the range of interest. Media-selected problems capture worldwide attention of diaspora. Political and economic activism in diaspora thereby becomes a response to or even a continuation of political and economic situation and developments in the homeland. From this perspective, the role of media, as a powerful constructor of the reality becomes especially evident.

In addition, media, in all its manifestations and types, is a clear example of manipulation, generally through political and commercial assertions (Naficy 2003, p. 58). As my analysis of Armenian online social networks in Germany evidences, even if discussions are without any political subtext or implications, ultimately, political colouring escalates from time to time, in accordance with one or another occasion. The recent examples are two cases I will discuss in the following – the 100th anniversary of commemoration of Armenian Genocide, and youth protest in Armenia against the rise in electricity prices.

Due to satellites, Armenians in Germany have the opportunity to watch news from Armenia in the Armenian language and at Armenian time. Moreover, in addition to Armenian channels, satellite television broadcasts my research participants' other favourite TV channels in other languages (Russian, Arabic,

[57] For a review, see e.g. Dayan 1999; Karim (ed.) 2003; Knut (ed.) 2009; Beiley et al. 2007; Hepp 2009; Fortunati, Pertierra and Vincent (eds.) 2012

etc.[58]). Regarding Armenian-language TV channels, some programmes and shows have special orientation to diaspora (*Shant TV, Armenia TV,* and *Horizon TV*). These channels are also available via satellite. Because of this special diaspora-oriented channels and programmes, Armenian media produced in Germany is transnational and diasporic. Naficy differentiates these two types of media with regard to television, and explains that *transnational television* represents media imported into the host country. The 'homeland' of these programmes is outside the country of residence. *Diasporic television*, conversely, provides programmes produced in the host country by migrant groups residing there for a long period of time (Naficy 2003, p. 51). Referring to television, Armenians in Germany do not possess special TV channels or programmes produced in Germany; in contrast, there are printed and online journals (e.g. ADK – *Armenisch–Deutsche Korrespondenz*). I put television and journals together under the umbrella category of media, and suggest that the Armenian media in Germany fits into transnational and diasporic types.

The majority of my research participants own satellite, however, for most of them online newspapers still are most preferable means of getting information about Armenia and the world, in general. As mentioned, satellite television also offers a variety of Russian channels, and for some interviewees those are even more preferable to the Armenian ones. This might be due to several factors. Thus, the first and most evident factor is the *matter of generations*. It means that the preference of Russian TV channels is to be discussed mainly among the first generation, since the second generation, as a rule, does not master Russian language. After filtering out the factor of generation, I now will classify so-called Russian TV channel fans among my first-generation respondents. First of all, they are *hayastantsis* (as *arevmtahays* do not master Russian), unless they did not immigrate to Germany from Russia. Nevertheless, there is another tiny classification of Russian channel fans among the *hayastantsi* first generation: they are graduates of Russian schools.[59] In a nutshell, Russian TV channel fans are generally first generation *hayastantsi* graduates of Russian schools.

Another interesting fact worth noting is the tendency to watch news in all languages one after another or even simultaneously, by switching back-and-forth between various TV channels. As my respondents stated, it is quite easy to organize because of different time zones and correspondingly, the different broad-

[58] Participants of my research tend to watch TV programmes also in other languages than Armenian. Thus, for most of *hayastantsis* Russian language programmes are quite popular, and for *arevmtahays*, programmes in Arabic.

[59] During the period when Armenia was the part of the Soviet Union, Russian schools were functioning in Armenia, where every subject was in Russian. As a rule, those schools were more prestigious and well-known for their better education quality.

cast times for Armenian, Russian, and German news. For example, in the period of my fieldwork during my stays in one of the Armenian families, I witnessed how they were simultaneously watching news on different channels, in different languages, and, in fact, also about different topics, for self-evidently, the news was not synchronized. They were switching the channels claiming: 'ok, now let's see what NTV[60] says'. Apart from being mediated by television reality, this is an illustration of my research participants' transnationalized lifestyles (in this case intermediated through the media). They live simultaneously in two and more realities, and media plays an important role in organizing this simultaneous presence in different contexts, which is, in fact, *practical absence, but imaginary presence*.

Referring to the second-generation research participants, it is notable, that Armenian television is not the most preferable mode of getting information or a means of entertainment. Further, it is important to mention that most of my second-generation interviewees were students living outside their parents' houses, and did not have the access to watch satellite television daily. Besides, as some of my interviewees said, they could not profit from watching news in Armenian. Usually, reporters speak too fast, and use complicated words, young Armenians are not familiar with. Instead, they give preference to online media, i.e. online newspapers or the most popular and preferable pages of online social media, where one can easily access the same information in different languages. As one of my interview partners stated:

> Կարիք չկա, որ հատուկ լուրեր նայես կամ կարդաս: Հերիք է՝ բացես ֆեյսբուքը, ու վերջին նորությունները կհայտնվեն պատիդ վրա:
>
> You do not need to watch or read news intentionally. It is enough to open Facebook, and all the recent events will appear on your wall.
>
> (Extract from an interview: second generation, female)

Online media is probably the fastest way to exchange information, and the speed of that information exchange makes qualitative and quantitative changes in the dynamics of transnational social fields. For example, mentioned Facebook pages create communities of people with the same taste, where everyone's topics of interest are articulated and discussed.

Thus, the Internet has a huge potential for empowerment and negotiation of a significant symbolic capital in transnational social fields. It creates unique and specific conditions of struggles for the domination over the symbolic capital. From this perspective, the Internet becomes much more than just a simple means or tool of communication at a distance. Internet forums and online social

[60] NTV (Russian: *НТВ*) is a Russian TV channel.

networking provide access to platforms which might otherwise be less accessible, because of various impeding factors, such as time, distance, economic conditions, etc. In this sense, Internet forums and social network web-pages are important unifying margins, creating and synchronizing aspirations of the diaspora, homeland, and any other concerned actors. They create realities over time and over territories, where the imaginary presence of concerned and interested persons stimulates dynamics of the fields. In these configurations, online encounters promote representations of activists (participants of online discussions) themselves, as well as passive followers. These representations not only presume self-positioning in online debates, selection of the topics, but also dispositions towards various diasporic and non-diasporic associations and/or institutions. Very often, the most important and sincere discussions happen in virtual reality, and here power relations and interest articulations appear in more pure and non-artificial or non-fake ways. By following Internet forums—even being passive themselves—participants become a part of the common discourse, the actual consequence of events, and state of interests.

Thus, the sense of distance and locality yields to the sense of unification around a common idea, and to the sense of nationhood. It is to say, the sense of belonging is also mediated by the power of the media. In the foreign country many trajectories of ways of being that are typical to the land of origin come into question, and the sense of belonging to somewhere, or something concrete, might dissolve when caught up the practices and encounters of everyday reality. It is precisely here where the role of media gets special significance, since it claims to contribute to construction or reconstruction of belonging. Media is a strong creator of self-identification with some social formation, be it a nation as a whole, or transnational community, or diaspora. Moreover, it might as well strengthen or weaken an already constructed/existing self-identification. For example, despite general transnational passivism, Armenians can still demonstrate some level of activity on online social networks, by posting and commenting on events happening in Armenia, or in Germany with regard to Armenians. By doing so, they tend to show their love and devotion to the homeland to the extent possible; though in a non-virtual reality they prefer not to demonstrate much transnational activity by not participating in get-togethers, social events nor in protest actions and demonstrations.

5.3.2 General overview and thematic on German–Armenian online social networks

As stated in the previous section, the media can be a significant agent with a definite impact on the sense of belonging. Due to the media, therefore, this sense

of belonging might either be consolidated or, by contrast, weakened. In this sense, media also performs the role of accelerator for strategic nationalism. From this viewpoint, online social networks, in particular, play a role of strategic nationalism stimulators. They nourish patriotism and the desire to make one's own contribution to the wellbeing of the homeland, and hereby, they nurture aspirations to honour the ancestral land, and to present it to a foreign country in the best light possible. Members of these web-pages get connected with compatriots from all over the world, and topics of communication and discussions in such networks result in a social infection involving more and more participants who use the appropriate 'time and place' for demonstrating their nationalistic aspirations towards Armenia. Moreover, social network web-pages are unique fields of representation and articulation of Armenianness—the core symbolic capital of Armenian transnational social fields. Taking this as a starting point, thereafter I will proceed with the analysis of two cases, more precisely, with the analysis of posts and discussions on online social networks around cases of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide and protests of Armenians against the increase of electricity prices in Armenia.

To start with, I will briefly present the spectrum of German–Armenian web-pages found on Facebook, and will describe their main thematic classifications. Thus, the majority of posts are in both languages – German and Armenian. Armenian posts and comments are mostly written in Armenian letters (Armenian alphabet), sometimes Latin-written Armenian appears as well. Some posts are also in English, and once in a while in Russian. The main criteria for a topic to appear in the discussion arena are its relevance to current developments in Armenia and Germany, referring to the 'Armenian Question' and/or development of German–Armenian partnership. In this sense, the type of the page is not important: rather, it does not make any difference whether the page is student-issue directed, or it has a scientific-academic trend. Hence, the main dynamics in virtual transnational social fields rotate around the following points:

- German–Armenian partnership and commonly organized projects
- Conviviality, everyday life, and current problems/ issues
- 'The ugly truth'
- Discourse around the 'Armenian Question'.

In the context of *German–Armenian partnerships and commonly organized projects*, as a rule, such topics appear as publications by German authors about Armenia and vice versa, joint or only Armenian initiatives devoted to promotion of the Armenian language, history, and culture, as well as projects oriented to the development of German–Armenian partnerships. A good example here is an

initiative named *Friendship forest*. The purpose of the initiative was to transport 155 trees from Armenia and plant them in Bochum. It would symbolically signify deep roots and history of the German–Armenian partnership. The number 155 also had a symbolic meaning; approximately 100 years ago, German–Armenian relations were shortly interrupted, but afterwards they restarted with new intensity. Hence, 155 trees were to indicate that German–Armenian connections had been much older and more important, than their temporary interruption 100 years ago.

In the category of *conviviality and everyday life,* thematic announcements and information about social events, parties, and various initiatives find place, the purpose of which is to strengthen Armenian binds (especially Armenian youth) in Germany. The most common examples are annual summer and winter youth meetings *(Jugenttreff)*, or *khorovats* (Armenian barbeque) parties, etc. Beside entertainment and parties, discussions of various topics also take place in this realm – among them, for instance, bureaucratic issues, finding housing, asking for support and opinion about various everyday questions regarding procedures and life in Germany, etc.

The category, which I name *the ugly truth*, includes issues referring to Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, and aspects of relationships between them. In general, these discussions disentangle so-called non-honourable statements, sometimes even mutual accusations concerning contradictions among the diaspora, diasporic organizations, politics of the Armenian government, and other related issues. Thus, the 'ugly truth' varies from mutual criticism, coming from representatives of different associations, to a very open critique of different Armenian institutions (be it a political party, or even a religious organization). Nonetheless, it includes not only reproval of Armenian institutes and organizations, but also condemnation or unfriendly sayings from Armenians in Armenia about some diaspora structures and/or associations. I name this realm 'the ugly truth' because of its open, honest, and sometimes even extreme debates and critique.

Discourse on the 'Armenian question' is always present on Facebook posts and comments, and references to it periodically appear consequent to current developments and debates on this issue. Every year, however, dialogues related to the 'Armenian Question' gain more attention and importance when approaching the commemoration day of the Armenian Genocide—the 24th of April. In 2015 it was the 100 year of the Genocide, and thus, it became the dominant topic of almost every discussion in the media and on online social networks equally among Armenians in Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. In the following section, as a separate case, I will discuss reflections on the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide centennial which found place on online networks.

Interestingly enough, debates around this event spread among two of the above-mentioned thematics: German–Armenian partnership and 'the ugly truth'. Through the lens of the Genocide commemoration, the development of German–Armenian cooperative projects is promoted. Discourse about recognition of the Armenian Genocide and related issues, however, leads to dialogues and remarks in 'the ugly truth' thematic.

5.3.3 Representation of transnational activity in online media: example of two cases

Case 1: Centennial of the Armenian Genocide: a perspective from German–Armenian social network web-pages

Presenting the case of commemoration of the Armenian Genocide centennial, I explicitly concentrate on pre–commemoration preparations, rendering, and publicity they receieved on social media. The category named 'pre–commemoration preparations' belongs to organizational work and planning of events and/or demonstrations on the occasion of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, the type or level of accentuation they received, and the debates that arose.

Hence, in pre–commemoration preparations and discourse, I distinguish the following domains:

- Cultural-scientific events and announcements (conferences, talks, lectures, literature and music evenings, etc.)
- Information, interviews and stories about pro–Armenian public figures and political actors of Turkish origin
- Gallipoli vs. Yerevan
- Planning of demonstrations and dialogues around the planning.

Before going further, I will present the picture logo of the Genocide centennial, and explain its meaning. Variations of the logo appeared on covers of Facebook pages and web-sites of German–Armenian associations starting early 2015, and remained until the end of April 2015. The main figures featured on the logo are the forget-me-not flower (a symbol of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide), the monument of the Armenian Genocide in Yerevan, and the number 100.

Picture 2: An emblem of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide

All versions of this logo had more or less similar slogans in English, Armenian, and German, for example: *I remember and demand, Հիշում եմ և պահանջում, Ich erinnere mich und verlange*. Appearance of these pictures on Internet was a starting point in preparaing for the commemoration events, which began in different German cities a few months before 24th of April. Those events included rows of conferences, lectures, evenings of Armenian poetry, literature, music, etc. Following, I will briefly present examples of each of the above-distinguished domains.

Cultural-scientific events and announcements. During the period of pre–commemoration preparations the German–Armenian Facebook pages were full of announcements of pertinent cultural-scientific events, exhibitions and literature evenings with Armenian lyric, prose, and choirs. Thus, from 7th of March through 24th of April, Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theatre thematically devoted its performances to the Armenian Genocide, under the special programme headline *Es schneit im April (It is snowing in April)*. The summit of this event was the performance *Musa Dagh*, based on the historical novel of an Austrian author Franz Werfel *40 days of Musa Dagh*. The novel is based on true events in 1915, and tells the story of self-defence by a small Armenian community living near the mountain Musa Dagh.

Special attention was given to posts about church services or events, which the Armenian Church or Armenian Church leaders organized. Thus, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland*, to which belongs the Armenian Apostolic Church in Germany, announced ringing all church bells on 24th of April at 17 o'clock, as a gesture of solidarity within the Armenian Apostolic Church in commemoration of the Genocide victims.

Remarks indicating strategic nationalistic moods also found their indispensable place on Facebook pages, and got a respectable amount of proud comments. To give an example, Arthur Abraham, a famous Armenian boxer who represents Germany in boxing, devoted his victory to the 100 years of the Armenian Genocide. As he mentioned, this was to let the whole world know that Armenians will always be together and stand for each other, wherever they are. Obviously, this claim gave birth to a wave of national pride among Armenians in Armenia, and all over the world, especially in Germany.

A range of international conferences was organized addressing the 'Armenian Question' from different viewpoints and aspects are noteworthy. With respect to it, a conference with the headline *Armenische Identität 1915–2015: Gewalt, Geschichte, Gegenwart (Armenian Identity 1915–2015. Violence, History and Present)* was held at the university of Ulm in March 2015, where not only scholars, but also politicians of Turkish origin were present. The endpoint of the conference was the screening of *The Cut* by Fatih Akin, and discussion around it.

Another international conference in cooperation with the Lepsiushaus took place in Potsdam also in March 2015 with the headline *Zeuge eines Jahrhundertverbrechens: Das Deautsche Reich und der Völkermord an den Armeniern*. The conference addressed issues of German–Ottoman politics and the 'Armenian Question', German military, and involvement in the Ottoman Empire, the Imperial government, and the Armenian Genocide, etc.

The *Institut für Diaspora- und Genozidforschung* at Ruhr-Universität Bochum was actively engaged in holding open lectures in different universities of Germany regarding the history of Armenia and the Armenian Genocide. The director of the institute Mihran Dabag was actively organizing workshops and discussions under broad headlines of violence, colonialism, etc.

Noteworthy is information about newly published books on the Armenian Genocide. Especially two books were the most popular on social netwok webpages – *Beihilfe zum Völkermord. Deutschlands Rolle bei der Vernichtung der Armenier* by Jürgen Gottschlich and *Völkermord and den Armeniern* by Michael Hesemann. Notably, the authors are of German origin, and the books represent patterns of German–Armenian cooperation in the scope of studies and research on the topic of the Armenian Genocide.

Pro–Armenian public figures and political actors of Turkish origin. In this realm the film *The cut* by Fatih Akin, a German-Turkish film director, received great attention. The film tells the story of a man who was trying to find his two daughters, lost during the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Especially popular were interviews with Fatih Akin, and stories about his visit to Armenia and the Genocide museum in Yerevan opened the floor for a further dialogue about the 'Armenian Question', and steps towards the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

An informative article with condolences found place on many of German–Armenian Facebook pages on the occasion of the death of Yasar Kemal, one of the leading Turkish writers. He played a key role in stopping the planned destruction of The Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar Island in Lake Van. The Armenian Ministry of Culture awarded him the *Grigor Naregatsi* medal.

Gallipoli vs. Yerevan. Tremendous 'noise' in all debates and discourses of the centennial commemoration made the so-called Gallipoli vs. Yerevan 'battle'. As to how and why this battle emerges: in 2015 Turkey made a decision to change the victory celebration day of Gallipoli battle (also known as the Canakkale victory) precisely to 24th of April, whereas before, the Gallipoli celebration had always been on a different day. Armenian and Turkish governments simultaneously invited a number of world leaders correspondingly to Yerevan and to Ankara to accordingly participate in the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in one case, and in Gallipoli battle celebration, in the other case. This fact gave birth to hot debates, anger, and perplexity among all Armenians, especially the Armenian diaspora. Common interpretation of the situation was that Turkey intended to divert world attention from Armenia and the 'Armenian Question'. News, articles, comments, and remarks on this occasion were overwhelming the media. Many diasporic associations and human rights organizations propounded the global community not to participate in Gallipoli victory celebration. They criticized the deliberate change of the celebration date exactly on the occasion of the 100 years of the Armenian Genocide, given the fact that Armenia was preparing a huge commemoration ceremony. The Gallipoli vs. Yerevan battle began in media, and the main point of interest on the agenda became the question which world leaders and celebrities would accept the invitation of Armenia or of Turkey, or which representatives at which level would be present in each country (president, ministers, ambassadors, etc.). Among the Armenian community in Germany the main discourse was whether the German government would delegate to Armenia any official representative from the country, beside the ambassador. The question was especially crucial for Armenians in Germany, considering the fact that on 24th of April, for example, France would be represented by President Francois Hollande personally. These

two countries were key figures in all dialogues, on account of their important role in the European Union. From this perspective, for German-Armenians, the delegation of a high-level representative of the German government in Yerevan on 24th of April was rather important. Although neither the chancellor, nor the president of Germany, was present in Armenia—neither in Turkey—on the day of the 100 years commemoration, the president of Germany Joachim Gauck made a significant contribution to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide: he officialy pronounced the word genocide, and from his part recognized the massacres of 1915 as genocide. I will return to this later in the following section.

It was obviously very essential for Armenians to win the battle Gallipoli vs. Yerevan, and in this context the victory would not simply mean to have more representatives from different countries present in Armenia, than in Turkey. It would also be a moral victory, revenge, and the sense of restitution that the nation has been carrying for over a century.

Planning of demonstrations. The above-mentioned topics and events are obviously worth attention, as they show domination of interests among the Armenian diaspora especially in fateful moments for all Armenians. Here, I mean domination of interests in the realm of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, which also speaks about how Armenians all over the world make themselves recognizable to an audience. Nevertheless, from the perspective of dynamics in transnational social fields, debates around planned events and their organization are of a special interest. It untangles the clash of interests and specific articulations of opinions, as well as attempts to accentuate one's own privileges and achievements, underestimating or arguing with others, or pointing out each other's weaknesses. Remarks and comments in the scope of planning of demonstrations are highlighted in the thematic of the 'ugly truth'.

Thus, announcements about planned demonstrations in big German cities, specifically in the capital of Berlin and in Frankfurt, appeared already in February of 2015. A special organizing committee *Genozid 1915 – Initiative Deutschland. Gegen Vergessen. Für Anerkennung (Genocide 1915 – Initiative Germany. Against forgetting. For recognition)* took over the work. Evidently, encouraging and enthusiastic comments were accompanying every announcement about demonstrations; nonetheless, the picture had changed after March, when the committee made a decision about cancelling the demonstration planned in Berlin on 25th of April, 2015. No explanation followed the decision. The only ambiguous remark on cancellation announcement read:

> Nach einem peinlichen internen Streit der Eitelkeiten nun die endgultige Absage…
>
> After an embarrassing internal dispute of vanities now the final rejection…
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: April, 2015)

Apart from Berlin, another demonstration was planned in Frankfurt on 24th of April; however, a wave of disappointment followed the cancellation of the big event in the capital – the centre of power and important decisions.

The organization responsible for the Berlin demonstration received a lot of accusatory comments after it had left a short message on its Facebook page, without including explanations for the cancellation. In almost every message, remark, or comment on this message the Armenian word *amot (ամոթ)* was present, which means *shame*. The shame was blamed on the organization responsible, stating that even in such an important point for all Armenians some circumstances had managed to bring discord to the common idea, and because of some disagreements and/or not sharing something such a significant event was cancelled only one month beforehand. All blameing comments found place directly on the Facebook page of the responsible organization, following the short notice of cancellation. Self-evidently, organizers could not ignore all the accusations; however, as an answer they neither justified themselves nor gave explanations, but simply left a concluding remark, stating their own disapproval regarding the decision to cancel the event. In addition, this was followed by a claim that everyone should stay together, and instead of criticizing already-made decisions, one should try to think about follow-up steps, since 2015 was a very important year for all Armenians. Shortly afterwards, a group of active young Armenians initiated a lantern procession in Berlin on 23rd of April.

> (...) Հայ աստղերի համերգներին ներկա լինելով կամ հայկական առատ սեղանների շուրջ միայն բաժակաճառ ասելով չէ, հայրենասիրությունը պետք է գործով ապացուցել:
>
> (...) The point is not only to be present at concerts of Armenian stars, or making speeches around Armenian's abundant tables, patriotism must be proved by actions.
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: April, 2015)

Picture 3: Protests demanding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Berlin, April 2015

After all those debates and discourses, however, a demonstration took place in Berlin on 25th of April. Not only did the Armenian community in Berlin actively participate in the demonstration, but also many Armenians arrived in the capital from various German cities with the special purpose to take part in the event, demanding the recognition of the massacres of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire in 1915 as genocide.

Hereby, I have briefly covered core thematic domains in German–Armenian online social networks. In the following two sections, I will approach fields of political accentuation around the Armenian Genocide in the scope of its centennial. Objects of the analysis are publications and comments found on German–Armenian online social network pages. After that, I will briefly address some key points of criticism around the mentioned events.

Political repercussions

Commemoration of the Genocide centennial, in general, and particularly the demonstrations in April, had obvious political impact. The German government and most of political leaders, speaking about the 'Armenian Question', avoided mentioning the word genocide. Instead they spoke about mass murders and violent evictions. Their rationale was to avoid crippling the process of reconciliation in Armenian–Turkish relations. Hence, the political purpose of the demonstrations was to demand from the German government to officially pronounce the word genocide, referring to the Armenian massacres in 1915. In February 2015 German left-wing party *Die Linke* suggested to reconsider the attitude of Germany concerning the 'Armenian Question'. The *Linkpartei* presented an application to the German parliament (*Bundestag*), with the suggestion that the *Bundestag* recognize the Genocide of Armenians in 1915 during Young-Turkish regime. The application also included a point, requesting that the *Bundestag* admit that in those years the German *Reichstag* did not take preventative steps to stop the Genocide of Armenians, and thereby now the *Bundestag* should apologize for that. Furthermore, *Die Linke* suggested developing a scientific review of the case. The issue of recognition of the massacres as genocide was already a matter of discussion in the *Bundestag* on 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, however, at that time it did not get enough support. Apart from *Die Linke*, another German political party *Alliance '90/The Greens* also actively engaged in pro–Armenian lobbies.[61] The co-chairman of the party even paid a visit to Armenia, and discussed the issue of closed borders between Armenia and Turkey with the Armenian president. Moreover, he openly called on the Turkish president to make a step forward to opening Turkish–Armenian borders, and unconditionally recognize the Armenian Genocide. According to this politician, it would not only promote reconciliation between the two countries, but also would foster upbringing of healthy generations in Turkey, who would be taught to admit and learn from mistakes of ancestors, and never repeat them.

Armenian inspiration doubled, or even tripled, when leaders and representatives of the mentioned political parties participated in the demonstration in Berlin and gave empathetic speeches. However, enthusiasm of Armenians residing in Germany reached its summit when the president of Germany, Joachim Gauck, honoured with his presence the remembrance service for the Genocide

[61] The information is taken from the review of Facebook pages of German–Armenian associations, particularly, *Armenisch-Akademischer Verein 1860 e. V.*; *ZAD (Zentralrat der Armenier in Deutschland)*, viewed in the period of February–May 2015; online news and information sites – hppt://mitk.am (accessed on 6th of March, 2015), hppt://repairfuture.net (accessed on 3rd of March, 2015), http://www.der-kosmopolit.de (accessed on 14th of March, 2015).

victims in the *Berliner Dom* (Berlin Cathedral). During his speech he explicitly pronounced the word genocide (*Völkermord* in German), and apologized to Armenians for the silent and indifferent attitude of the German *Reichstag* in those years.

The noise around the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide centennial, as well as some contradictions, which were aroused during the organization, once again showed that the Genocide and the issue of its recognition are important factors fuelling Armenian strategic nationalism (especially among the diaspora). Moreover, the Genocide has a significant role in constructing and maintaining the self-identification of the Armenian diaspora – a self-identification based on victimhood and loss. Hence, typical manifestations of strategic nationalism also flow from the concept of victimhood.

Discussions and critical remarks

As every big project, the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide centennial also gave birth to a wide range of approval and disapproval. Apart from disagreements around various points regarding the organization of commemoration events and ceremonies, the main point of criticism which still continues today, circles around the activities of Armenian communities abroad; and more precisely, transnationally active communities who also have some political and/or economic power to influence decision making, or to lobby issues referring to Armenia. In the case of the Genocide centennial commemoration, the main wave of dialogues and critique started after the news broke about the cancellation of the Berlin demonstration, presented earlier. Questions with no answers made passive followers and active participants of these discourses think that the origins of the problems came from disagreements and disorganized actions of Armenian diaspora organizations, associations, etc. In other words, lack of comprehension and cooperation generated a wave of disappointment, not only among active and passive Armenian participants from Germany, but also among the Armenian population in Armenia. An independent observer might have assumed that instead of working together, those associations competed with each other, latently playing some ‘power game’. The status of a winner would bring laurels of recognition not only within German–Armenian transnational social fields, but also among Armenian diaspora all over the world. Despite the successful ‘end of the game’, the case of the 100-year commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, to some extent, resulted in disruption of forces among the Armenian community in Germany; meaning, from the very beginning, the preparation and organization of the centennial became a tool of establishing power, and practicing leadership in the field.

These claims advocate *actions* instead of *shows.* The latter, however, might be a necessary precondition of actions. In other words, in order to make claims, claimants should first make themselves and their issues recognizable. Otherwise, claims would have no addressees and would receive no support from prestigious and powerful mediators.

Contradictory discussions and criticism around the centennial of the Armenian Genocide once again highlighted differences of interest and priorities among different diasporic groups and organizations. Nonetheless, a strong counterargument regarding disagreements and non-unified actions of various diasporic associations is that the diaspora is not supposed to be a harmonious group without any contradictions, and Armenia and the Armenian diaspora should develop a mechanism of representing diaspora opinion to the homeland and vice versa—perhaps an independent institution representing interests of all sides.

To summarise the case: what was the contribution of the Genocide centennial and its pathetic commemoration to the collective memory of the Genocide? It led to the conclusion that Armenia and the Armenian diaspora should move one level up regarding the issue of the Genocide recognition; i.e. they should act as claimants and not as victims any longer. To put it succinctly, the centennial opened a new page in the history of the 'Armenian Question', which presumes revision of agendas regarding the issue of the Genocide and the demand for its recognition.

Case 2: Civic protests against the augmentation of electricity prices

In June 2015 a civic protest arose in Armenia 'from below', the purpose of which was the demand to the Armenian government to cancel the decision to raise the price for electricity. Young Armenians initiated the movement, but later on an enormous amount of people from different age categories and social clusters of the society joined the movement. The protesters blockaded one of the most important and busiest streets in Yerevan—Baghramyan Avenue—where the residence of the president and the National Assembly (the Armenian parliament), and most of Embassies are situated.

The street blockade lasted more than one week. From my point of view, after many years since the independence of Armenia, it was the first movement where the Armenian nation demonstrated such a high level of solidarity, standing strong for an idea and common interest. It was also the first movement not violently dissolved through police intervention shortly after its start. In other words, positively surprising, the government and, respectively, the police, let the

protesters stay on the Baghramyan Avenue for a very long time period, despite a lot of inconvenience caused to the city's traffic circulation.

Picture 4: Protests at Baghramyan Avenue against the rise in electricity price, Yerevan, Armenia

Probably, the strong national spirit and the sense of solidarity made both sides (the government and the society) realize the role and importance of every single person—every single citizen—in the struggle for justice and for rights. To put it differently, this movement made some actual changes in the consciousness of the society, and this refers not only to the Armenian society in the Republic of Armenia (RA), but also to Armenian diaspora all over the world.

Exhorting the diaspora

Having presented background of the protest-movement burst, I will now turn to the attempts of capturing the diaspora's attention. Thus, through online social networking Armenians in the Republic of Armenia started to urge the Armenian diaspora to accept the importance of the problem, and to support young Armenians who had gone out to streets to struggle against injustice. The claim was that in order to support this new civic movement in Armenia, first of all, controversies among different diasporic groups should be forgotten, that the

diaspora should unify, and oblige and urge the demand of Armenian youth to Armenian embassies in the countries of their residence.

Attempts of exhorting the diaspora included such claims as:

> Սփյուռքը նույնպես պետք է գիտակցի խնդրի հրատապությունը և որքան հնարավոր է, աջակցի Հայաստանի երիտասարդությանը, ովքեր դուրս են եկել արդարության համար պայքարելու: Հակառակ դեպքում կկորցնենք հայրենիքի այն փոքր կտորը, որը դեռ ունենք:
>
> The diaspora should also realize the urgency of the problem/ issue, and as much as possible support the Armenian youth, who has come out to fight for justice. Otherwise, we will lose the small piece of the homeland we still have.
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: June, 2015)

The emphasis here is on the young generation, and it makes the claim even stronger, since the youth are seen as the creators of future. Self-realization and self-organization of the youth, who came out to fight for stability of their country, and against violation of their rights, is a strong factor to touch or to affect the diaspora consciousness. Moreover, it is an effective means to capture diaspora attention, since the threat to lose the present small piece of Armenia is directly touching diaspora interests.

However, it was not yet quite evident what kind of contribution or support the Armenian diaspora could have for the homeland regarding this concrete civic movement. Perhaps moral support to protesters, and pressure on local embassies could give some results; however, the issue goes much further, and has much deeper roots, than it might seem at the first glance. In reality, the diaspora is highly interested in issues of democratic governance and protection of human rights in the homeland; however, the diaspora is disappointed, and the disappointment is not with the homeland and not with the folks, but with the government and state structures. From the diaspora's perspective, the situation seems to be the following: the homeland remembers about them only in critical occasions to demand aid and assistance.

As mentioned, the reason and explanations for hesitation by the diaspora bears the historical heritage of complicated relations between the diaspora and the homeland (Tölölyan 2000; Manaseryan 2004; Baser and Swain 2009; Yeghiazaryan 2014). An interesting point to mention is the dual perception of the homeland, and the precise differentiation between these two. One refers to the homeland as an idea, as an idealized place of belonging and ancestral land, and the other relates to the homeland government. As Manaseryan also points out, communication problems between Armenia and the Armenian diaspora have always carried a political character (Manaseryan 2004, p. 18). Controversies and disputes thus deal mainly with the government structures.

Importance of solidarity between the diaspora and the homeland

Notably, most of Armenians residing in Armenia share the above-mentioned feelings of disappointment with politics and the government of the homeland. In some crucial moments these shared feelings of disappointment and distrust become the core axis, upon which a solidarity coalition between the diaspora and the homeland could be built. The importance of the unification of the diaspora and the homeland appears as a core message on German–Armenian Facebook page quotes and remarks about the civic protest against the price augmentation of electricity.

> Առանց սփյուռքի մենք մնում ենք ոչ թե հայ, այլ Հայաստանի քայքայված, այլասերված հանրապետության քաղաքացի: Սփյուռքը նույն մենք ենք, մի՛ մոռացեք: Մենք կարող ենք մեզ թույլ տալ անգամ անկախության կորուստ, բայց հենց թույլ տվեցինք *միասնական Հայքի* կորուստ, կվերանանք: Միասնական Հայքը աշխարհում միսիա ունեցող մեծ ազգն է: Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունը այդ ազգի անկախության սիմվոլն է միայն: Այն, ինչ այսօր կատարվում է ՀՀ-ում, հավասարապես վերաբերում է ինձ և օրինակ՝ Ավստրալիայում ապրող հային:
>
> Without the diaspora we remain not Armenians, but just citizens of a dilapidated, degenerated Republic of Armenia. We can allow ourselves even the loss of independence, but as soon as we allow the loss of the *solid Hayk*, we will disappear. The solid *Hayk* is a great nation, which has a mission in the world. The Republic of Armenia is just a symbol of the independence of that nation. What is going on nowadays in the RA, equally concerns me and, for example, Armenians living in Australia.
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: June, 2015)

Although the key idea of this passage is to emphasize the importance of the solidarity of the diaspora and Armenia, another interesting message and not of lesser importance is contained in the remark, and should have one's attention. That is the differentiation, or more accurately, the separation of *the Armenian nation* and *the Republic of Armenia*. Above all, it provides an interesting example regarding the usage of the term 'Armenian nation' by Armenians. One of the determinant categories of a nation is the territory, in the sense of a physical, geographical category (see, e.g. Smith 1996). Commonly, it is the official territory of the state, where representatives of a given nation constitute the majority (the dominant group). However, the following part of the passage—'The solid Hayk is a great nation, which has a mission in the world. The Republic of Armenia is just a symbol of independence of that nation'—challenges the statement about territory. In otherwords, it claims that the territory of the independent Armenian state is a symbolic embodiment of the existence of the nation, or its political-official description. The main claim, embedded in the extract, is that the Armenian

nation is a category much above and much higher, than the Republic of Armenia. It represents the *solid Hayk*, which unites Armenians all over the world. From this viewpoint, the above-quoted extract accentuates the superiority of the nation over the state – the Republic of Armenia becomes the symbol of existence of a nation named Armenians. Indeed, the Armenian diaspora all over the world associates itself with the Armenian nation, but not with the state, namely the government and state-related institutions. Moreover, this kind of differentiation between the Armenian nation and the Republic of Armenia confirms that controversies and disagreements between the Armenian diaspora and its homeland are neither regarding Armenia, as an ancestral land, nor the nation living in that homeland, to which the diaspora considers itself to belong. The probable dispute has a political character.

Returning to discussions around the civic movement, a noteworthy point is that it was seen as a probable potential for improvement and development of relations between Armenia and the diaspora. It was a bottom-up and self-organized movement, the head of which was Armenian youth; important to mention – non-politicized youth. Moreover, no political party (in this case oppositional party) was engaged in the movement, which means the latter did not articulate direct anti-governmental demands. The main demand was to cancel the decision about the rise in electricity prices. The fact that the movement had a civic and a bottom-up character, and no political forces were involved, increased the likelihood to capture the attention of the Armenian diaspora from all over the world.

> (...) մինչ այս պահր շարժումր ամբողջովին ժողովրդական է, և բացառված չէ, որ այս անգամ հայաստանցիներս օգնենք սփյուռքին՝ հնարավորություն և առիթ տալով ինքնամաքրվելու: Ժամանակն է սփյուռքում ևս ձերբազատվել ներքին առնետներից: Պետք է հասկանանք, որ սա մի խումբ մաքուր երիտասարդների գերագույն ճիգերի արդյունք է և կարող է լինել վերջինը:
>
> (...) Until now the movement has been totally civic, and it is not excluded that this time Armenians from Armenia (hayastantsis) will help the diaspora, giving them self-cleaning opportunity. It is the time to get rid of internal rats in the diaspora too. We must understand that this is a result of great efforts of a group of 'pure' young people, and it might be the last one.
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: June, 2015)

This far-reaching remark has manifold messages. It points to the importance of cooperation between Armenia and the Armenian diaspora in the sense of mutual help and support. The protest, Armenian-youth organized, could serve as a self-cleaning remedy not only inside Armenia, but also among the diaspora. In other words, this bottom-up initiative should be an example for Armenians all over the

world, to unify and make their voices heard. The emphasis is again on the civic character of the movement and on the initiative coming from non-politicized youth. In parallel, the last sentence of the note makes an influential assumption about the struggle. Here I will clarify possible reasons for such a supposition. The point is that Armenian history (with the reference to the after–independence period, after 1992) has examples of protests or unification of the nation, which seemed to be really strong, and carried the potential of a change for the better. However, no protest or movement succeeded, as a rule, and none reached their goals at the end. Noticing growing size of population and probable 'danger' coming from it, the government used to dissolve protests with the police help. For that reason, people lost their belief in democracy and in the possibility of change. This resulted in the atmosphere of distrust, apathy, and disappointment not only among the residents of RA, but also among the Armenian diaspora. The above-presented quote from the Facebook post refers to mentioned negative experiences from the past, and contains worries about the future, unless this movement has a different fate and outcomes.

Important to mention, however, is that some disputes and controversies between the diaspora and the homeland, or disagreements with the homeland politics and governing elites, do not impede the diaspora to stand for its historical homeland. The Armenian diaspora has always supported Armenia in fateful/crucial situations and occasions, either directly or latently demonstrating that the delicate attitude of the diaspora towards the ancestral land is above any contradictions.

In summarizing the general description of the protest against the price augmentation of electricity, two points need special emphasis: first, the main engine of the civic movement was the Armenian youth; and second, the struggle was strongly non-politicized (although with a latent political subtext). By saying that the struggle was non-politicized, first of all, I mean non-involvement of political actors as organizers or initiators of the protest; and second of all, that demands of the protesters were non-political, although with reference to the government (the government made a decision to raise electricity prices without objective reasoning). In short, demands were only about the cancellation of the decision, and did not include such claims as, for example, the resignation of the president or the National Assembly.

Transnational 'Support action' from the diaspora

The events in Armenia got widespread publicity and response from a number of Armenians in several German cities. Very quickly a group of activists (mainly *hayastantsis*), who always seem to be waiting for an appropriate occasion to

show their patriotism and devotion to Armenia, organized the so-called 'support action' to their 'brothers and sisters' in Armenia. I name it a 'support action', as the purpose was not to initiate protests in the cities of their residence; instead, the idea was to gather together with posters, flags, etc., to take pictures, and send them to Armenia to encourage protesters on Baghramyan Avenue. The initiative was quickly brought to life, and due to social connections, pictures with short messages immediately appeared in online newspapers, on different web-sites, and Facebook pages.

With the slogan *We support our youth, and join their struggle. Their struggle is our struggle (Սատարում ենք մեր երիտասարդությանը և միանում ենք նրանց պայքարին: Նրանց պայքարը մե՛ր պայքարն է),* Armenian inhabitants of Berlin and Göttingen gathered together to show from far away their support and solidarity to compatriots in Armenia. As the pictures below show, participants hold posters with different claims, such as 'I am not going to pay' *(«Չե՛մ վճարելու»),* 'No to the rise of electricity prices' *(«Ո՛չ էլեկտրաէներգիայի թանկացմանը»),* 'No to plunder' *(«Ո՛չ թալանին»).*

Picture 5: The 'Support action' from Armenians in Germany

The aim of the support action was to let the compatriots know that although at a distance, they still do not disregard problems of Armenia, and worry about well-being of the homeland and compatriots. As one of the initiators of the German support action wrote on her page:

> Եթե Գերմանիայում ենք ապրում ու ապահով ենք ամեն ինչով, չի նշանակում, որ Հայաստանի հարցերը մեզ չեն վերաբերում:

> If we live in Germany, and are secure in everything, does not mean, that issues of Armenia do not refer to us.
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: June, 2015)

Generally, such transnational activities have the purpose of moral support. For example, in the case of the April demonstrations on the occasion of the Genocide commemoration, and demands to the German government to officially recognize the massacres of Armenians as genocide, the transnational activity had a direct message to the German government. To put it otherwise, it was a lobbying action, whereas in the case of the protest against the electricity price augmentation, participants of the support action from Germany had no aim of lobbying. Instead, it was an act of empathy, and support from the diaspora to compatriots in Armenia.

> Թեկուզ հեռու ենք, բայց հոգով միասին ենք:
>
> Although we are far away, we are together with the soul.
>
> (Extract from a Facebook note: June, 2015)

These kinds of transnational practices (without the lobbying purpose) are especially interesting, and the role of media is particularly significant in these cases. How would the message and support reach the protesters in Armenia if not through the media, and more precisely, through the online media and social networks? With the help of the latter, the group of activists from Germany were able to connect 'here and now' with the protesters in Armenia. The speed of the information dissemination with the help of the online media is also important; otherwise the transnational action would not have reached to the point it did, and would have lost the power of impact. Shortly after the final decision to organize the support action, information about participant cities, venues, and planned actions immediately appeared on Facebook pages of various German–Armenian associations.

> Սիրելի հայ ազգ ջան, ուրախալի լուր: Վաղվանից մեր *արդար պահանջին* իրենց իսկ քաղաքներից մեզ են միանում Սփյուռքից մեր հայրենակիցները. վաղ՝ Գերմանիայի Բեռլին և Գյոթինգեն քաղաքների հայերը, իսկ Հուլիսի 6-ին՝ Բելգիայի Բոյուսել քաղաքի հայերը: *Բոլորս դեպի արդար Հայաստան!* (26.06.2015)
>
> Dear Armenian nation! Good news!
> Tomorrow to our *fair demand* are joining our compatriots in diaspora from their cities: tomorrow Armenians from German cities Berlin and Göttingen, and on 6th of July – Armenians from Belgium, Brussels are joing us.
> *Everyone to the fair Armenia!* (26.06.2015)

> Unruhen in Armenien: Morgen 25.06.2015 um 20:00 Uhr soll ein Treffen am Alexanderplatz in Berlin stattfinden. Treffpunkt ist der "Brunnen der Völkerfreundschaft". Gemeinsam sollen Ideen entwickelt werden, wie die Aktivisten die sich für Gerechtigkeit einsetzen unterstützt werden können.
>
> Riots in Armenia: tomorrow 25.06.2015 at 20:00 a meeting will take place in Berlin at Alexanderplatz. The venue is the "Brunnen der Völkerfreundschaft" ("Fountain of International Friendship"). Together we will develop ideas on how the justice activists can be supported.
>
> (Extracts from Facebook notes: June, 2015

The purpose was first, to encourage protesting Armenians in Armenia, and second, to inform Armenians in Germany about the initiative, and thereby, indirectly invite them to join the action.
The support from compatriots around the world filled the Armenian youth in Armenia with lots of inspiration and happiness.

Retrospective observations

A particular characteristic of events, getting quick publicity and reflection on Facebook or generally on any online social network, is the so-called euphoria of the first burst. After a while, as a rule, the wave of fascination goes down. Sometimes the public interest decreases even before the end of the cause. Accordingly, during the first week of the protest against the increase in electricity prices, German–Armenian Facebook pages were full of information, photos, live broadcast links, videos, and links from online newspapers highlighting the situation from Baghramyan Avenue, and the publicity they received from the diaspora. Updates were coming every single minute, and the latest and most fresh information was available 'here and now'. After some time, however, the number of remarks on that topic began to decrease, and after a while disappeared completely (probably in parallel to the decrease of euphoria in Yerevan). The same thing happened in the case of the Genocide centennial commemoration, with a slight difference. In the case of the centennial commemoration the diminishing attention to the issue to some extent was a logical outcome of events. During the preparation period of activities, organization of events, demonstrations, and lobbying, the *agiotage* was self-evidently rather big, and it was also obvious, that after *The Day* had come and gone, the level of attention to the issue would be reduced. The case of the civic protest was different in this sense. The decrease of euphoria happened not after the problem had been solved or the protesters had gone home with or without some results, but in the middle of the protest. That was exactly when the government took a step back, promising to invite an internal audit, and afterwards, leaning on the audit results, to reconsider

the decision. Evidently, under the pretext of the audit the government intended to calm the public, and 'to pull the wool over demonstrators' eyes. On this ground, some contradictions arose among the movement participants, and the euphoria dramatically reduced. Strategic nationalism aspirations got saturated, and the performance was over.

Another interesting observation worth mentioning is the involvement of *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis* in each of the mentioned events. Thus, in the case of the Genocide commemoration both *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis* almost equally took on the role of active initiators and organizers, while the support action to the movement in Yerevan against the rise in electricity prices mainly got reactions among *hayastantsis*. It does not mean, however, the absence of any interest in the protest action from the side of *arevmtahays*; rather it is to indicate that the involvement and contribution of *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis* were not equal in each case. Eventually, the demand for acceptance of the massacres of Armenians as genocide with all the following consequences is the major priority for *arevmtahays* as well as for *hayastantsis*, whereas *hayastantsis* live also with other big and small issues of Armenia.

To conclude, I do not intend to diminish the role and significance of transnational practices in this scope, be it demonstrations or other support actions to reveal the solidarity of the Armenian diaspora with compatriots in Armenia. The point of my critique is not the sense of these transnational actions, but their continuity and sustainability. As a consequence of their euphoric burst and sudden death, they leave the impression of ad hoc initiatives, rather than of ideas with further goals and objectives.

Concluding remarks

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe various modes of representation— frames, cultural idioms, etc.—that play an important role in determining and interpreting social practices of actors. The chapter began with the analysis of self-identification issues, and with the distinction of some typical ways of being, accentuating the interconnection of these two notions. In the second part of the chapter, the analysis of the role of media as a mode of representation followed. In this realm, I have presented a short reflection on types of media, which my interview partners consume and consider significant in their daily life. From that point, I have proceeded with the analysis of two cases, i.e. two examples of online social-network-related transnational activity.

To make one's self-identification clear, my interviewees distinguished some typical Armenian and German ways of being, and comparatively situated themselves near or far from each category. Therefore, for my interview partners,

those comparisons served as external points of departure on the way to self-identification. From this perspective, the analysis of how the research participants represent and interpret various ways of being (their own and others') helps to better understand and interpret specific features of self-identification. Moreover, self-identification and ways of being are not independent notions. They are interconnected, and for that reason, representations of ways of being are important factors to take into consideration when interpreting specificities of self-identification.

My research data evidences a special characteristic of Armenian ways of being—*manoeuvre not to be different*—which presumes practicing different behavioural patterns in different countries and social environments, and easily switching from one to another, on account of the given situation and context. This kind of manoeuvre presumes some awareness of acceptable and appreciated ways of being in corresponding social environments. Deliberate switching, depending on the demand of the target audience, becomes possible only in that case.

The analysis of self-identification through imagining a situation, when my interview partners are asked who they are, has untangled another feature of the self-identification (particularly with respect to the second generation), which I have called *manoeuvring with self-identification*. This can roughly be interpreted as, taking advantage of Armeninanness and Germanness, given the situation. Thus, in some cases my interviewees would deliberately manoeuvre with self-identification, depending on what and how is asked. This kind of manoeuvring has the purpose to meet the requirements of different circumstances and contexts, to mute or to emphasise certain aspects of origin, status, etc.

Regarding the core components of my research participants' self-identification, the first-generation interviewees mostly identify themselves with Armenian ways of being. Although they have incorporated some patterns of German ways of being, and might disapprove of some typical Armenian behavioural patterns, the latter still plays a dominant part in social practices of the first generation. Self-identification of the second generation is also, to some extent, at the intersection of two countries. They bear cultural imprints of two countries. It easily fluctuates either more towards Armenia or Germany, given the situation and the social environment they have grown up and live at present.

Having analysed issues of self-identification, I have turned to another important mode of representation—the media—in the name of online social networks, and more precisely, Facebook pages of German–Armenian associations. Online social networking is not only a quick means of communication, but also a suitable field of representation of the self and of others. Besides, it reflects dynamics inside transnational social fields – articulations of the symbolic capital

(Armenianness), relationships between Armenians in Armenia and abroad, and other related issues. Main dynamics in virtual transnational fields rotate around such points as German–Armenian partnership and commonly organized projects; conviviality, everyday life and current problems/issues; 'the ugly truth'; discourse around the 'Armenian Question'.

In order to understand how social network web-pages promote transnational activity, and how they might influence the dynamics of transnational social fields, I have analysed two cases—the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, and the protest against the rise in electricity prices—respectively referring to their representations on Facebook pages of German–Armenian associations. The movement against the price augmentation of electricity in Armenia emerged in the Republic of Armenia: it was an absorbing bottom-up civic protest, flowing from interests of Armenians in Armenia; however, the Armenian diaspora also, to some degree, reacted to the movement. The centennial of the Genocide, in contrast, equally touched interests of the Armenian diaspora and Armenians in Armenia. From this perspective, the involvement of *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis* in each of the mentioned cases was not the same. The centennial of the Armenian Genocide equally captured attentions of *arevmtahays* and *hayastantsis*. Whereas, main activists and organizers of the support action against the price increase of electricity were *hayastantsis*. The Genocide commemoration also had (and always has) the demanding message for recognition of the massacres as genocide and for restitution, which is the concern of Armenians all over the world, while the civic movement articulated narrower problems of Armenia, and consequently, captured mainly the attention of *hayastantsis*.

Media related transnational activity—at least in case of Armenians—has to a great extent a situational and context-driven character, and thereby serves as a good pattern of strategic nationalism. Two aforementioned examples discussed in this chapter demonstrated, in general, the euphoric rise of strategic nationalism aspirations. In other words, these cases represented "suitable" situations or events to awaken patriotism and concern for the homeland.

To summarize, along with the previous and this chapter I have completed the analysis of the three domains of the conceptual triad 'configurations–representations–encounters', which has provided a complete and thorough understanding of my research participants' transnational and local-diasporic fields, everyday routines, diverse encounters, and modes of self-identification, and which allows me to proceed with the analysis of components of belonging, and such issues as home, homeland, feeling home, and belonging somewhere. I will complete my analysis with some reflections on *fluctuating transnationalism.* Those are the key issues to be addressed in the following chapter of this work.

6 Components of Belonging

> Պապաս ասում է՝ որ հողը, որ գնագիր, պետք է այդ հողը սիրես, ու հողն էլ քեզ կսիրի (...): Որ հակառակվեգիր, քեզ համար ավելի վատ կլինի: Քանի որ ապրում ես ու վաստակում այս հողում, պետք է իրենց օրենքներով շարժվես ու պետք է սիրես ամեն ինչը:
>
> My father says, you should love the land you live in, and that land will love you back (...). If you oppose, it will be worse for you. As you live and earn money in this land, you should act in accordance with their rules and you should love everything.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female, first generation)

In the previous chapter I have analysed the interconnections of self-identification and sense of belonging. Self-identification might flow out from the sense of belonging. However, the more ambiguous the sense of belonging is, the vaguer the self-identification will be. Self-identification is based on ways of being. To put it differently, associating with or distancing from one way of being or another might signify or highlight specific aspects of self-identification. In this case, as shown in the previous chapter, self-identification becomes a specific mode of representation of the self, and might depend on the context, situation, and/or other circumstances. In this chapter, I will analyse components of belonging: I will address two important axes of Armenian national belonging – the Armenian language and religion, and their role in maintenance of Armenianness. Furthermore, I will touch upon such integral parts or elements of belonging as home and homeland, and will discuss questions as to which country feels more homelike, or how these feelings change after back-and-forth travels. With this regard, I analyse specificities of Armenian transnationalism, which I have named *fluctuating transnationalism*. I have already touched upon this in previous chapters of my work in relation to various issues, and here I will provide a more profound explanation of the notion.

6.1 Mother tongue and religion as symbols of Armenian belonging

In this subchapter I address two important identifiers of Armenianness, or two core components of Armenian belonging: the religion and mother tongue which are important manifestations of Armenianness, and strongholds of Armenian

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national pride. Moreover, throughout the history, religion and language have always been two indicators of Armenian national belonging. For centuries the Armenian Apostolic Church has undertaken a specific role in the Armenian diaspora – the role of a teacher of the Armenian language, the mother tongue. Of course, the Church itself has not been teaching the language, but it has been patronizing Armenian schools or classrooms abroad.

Efforts and activities of the Armenian diaspora, regardless of the time period and country of residence, have always been devoted to introducing the history and culture of the historical homeland to the young Armenian generations, as well as representing Armenian traditions to the world, presenting Armenian national identity, fundraising for different activities in Armenia, making lobbying to advocate Armenian interests in the countries of diaspora's residence, etc. The important resistant symbol of the solidarity of the Armenian diaspora has always been the religion, and its significance and meaning has endured to this day. Moreover, history witnesses that Armenian diaspora communities used to emerge around the Armenian Church in host countries. This, once more, proves the importance of religion or religious leaders for the Armenian diaspora. Regardless of the size, almost all diaspora communities unify around transnationally active religious leaders. The role of religion, and efforts to maintain national characteristics, are especially evident in those host countries where the dominant religion is not Christianity. However, in Christian countries too, stimulators and keepers of transnational activities are mainly religious leaders. In various cities of Germany, for example, Armenian communities gather together on different occasions, such as celebrating Christmas or Easter. As usual, those meetings start with a Church service held in Armenian, and then participants celebrate the occasion with some music, dancing, and singing, more or less in the same way those holidays would be celebrated in Armenia. Thus, religion is not only one of the core components of Armenian belonging; it also becomes the cornerstone of Armenian transnational life in Germany. According to Levitt (2004), transnational religious practices are one of the important connectors of migrants and their home countries. These practices may be driven from individual piety, or some organizational context might reinforce them (Levitt 2004, p. 5). Transnational religious organizations may open better access to different resources in the host country (Warner 2007; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In this sense, they perform a dual function: on the one hand, they facilitate and empower transnational membership and ties to the homeland; on the other hand, they try to foster the incorporation of immigrants into the receiving countries.

From this perspective, immigrant churches[62] are one of the important institutions linking origin and host countries of immigrants. An important mission of immigrant churches is affirmation of nostalgia for the homeland (Wessendorf 2013, p. 27). Immigrant churches and religion develop an 'intricate welfare system' to serve needs of migrants (Menjívar 1999, p. 591), and contribute to incorporating immigrants and especially newcomers into the host society.[63] In addition, religious institutions of immigrants produce new mixes of religious beliefs and practices (Levitt 2003a, p. 849). Those are fields in which social-cultural heritage of migrants encounter new patterns, and resulting in a mixture of both, new practices and ways of being are emerging.

Thus, immigrant churches are important objects of social research: they not only contribute to understanding of various migration-related issues, but also represent a transnational field, which provides a range of possibilities to engage in transnational activity.

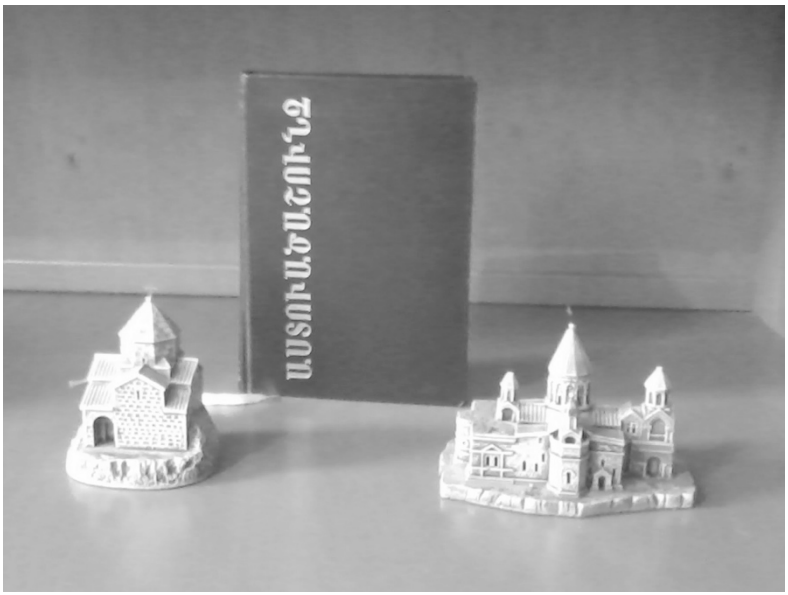
6.1.1 Armenian Church and Christianity

In order to have a thorough understanding and a complete idea of why religion and the Church play such an important role for Armenians, I will briefly introduce some historical facts about Christianity and the Armenian Church. This will show how the importance of the religion for Armenians has developed, and how it became an irreplaceable symbol of Armenianness.

Armenia was the first country in the world to convert to Christianity, and to officially adopt Christianity as a state religion. Two Apostles of Jesus (Thaddeus and Bartholomew) brought the religion to Armenia, and for that reason, the Armenian Church is called the Armenian *Apostolic* Church. Christianity became a state religion in the Kingdom of Armenia in 301 C.E. (Petrosyan 1990; Ormanyan 1952). From then on, the religion and the Armenian Apostolic Church have been the red threads of celebrating Armenianness and sustaining the sense of national belonging. The Armenian people still view Christianity as an important identifying feature of their culture.

[62] See e.g. Dolan 1975; Kim 1991; Casanova 1994; Pattie 1997a, b; Menjívar 1999; 2002; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Levitt 2003a; Glick Schiller and Caglar 2008; Ben-Rafael 2009; Crisan 2013; Sheringham 2013

[63] For a review, see e.g. Tomasi 1970; Berthoud 2000; Model and Lin 2002; Koenig 2005; Beyer 2005; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Aleksynska and Algan 2010; Connor 2011; Voas and Fleischmann 2012; Connor and Koenig 2013; Sheringham 2013



Picture 6: Home decorations – the Bible in Armenian and figures of Armenian churches

Armenia has always been a homogenous country, as the vast majority of its population have been Armenians (ethnic Armenians), professing Christianity. Historically, Armenia has been surrounded by neighbouring countries—mostly non-Christian—which continually tried forcing Armenia to adopt their religion and to establish their hegemony in the country. Thus, for years and centuries Armenia and Armenians have lived under foreign domination and under the threat of physical extermination of their nation. In these circumstances the religion and their own unique language have become tokens of maintaining Armenianness *(*Armenian: *հայապահպանություն, ազգապահպանություն, hayapahpanutyun, azgapahpanutyun).* Hence, the importance of religion has passed from generation to generation through collective memory, and until nowadays the religion—Christianity—has remained an important part of self-identification for Armenians all over the world. Arsiné, a woman in her 50s came with her parents to Germany from Iran when she was a teenager. She has been living in Germany since then, and perfectly describes what the religion and the language mean for Armenians:

> Քրիստոնեությունը հայոց մաշկի գույնն է: Եթե կարողանաք փոխել մաշկի գույնը, կկարողանաք նաև հայի հավատքը փոխել: Մենք գոյատևել ենք ի շնորհիվ մեր հավատքի: Ուր որ հայը գնում է, առաջինը դպրոց է կառուցում, կողքը՝ եկեղեցի...
>
> Christianity is the skin colour of Armenians. If you would be able to change the skin colour, than you could also change the faith/religion of an Armenian. We have survived due to our faith.Wherever Armenians go, the first thing they do is to build a school and nearby a church.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Arsiné's words express the importance of religion and mother tongue in lives of Armenians. Building a school *wherever Armenians go,* has rather a metaphorical meaning, which highlights the importance of reproduction of the mother tongue and efforts to prevent its forgetting or vanishing. Comparison of Christianity with the skin colour of Armenians emphasizes that it is taken for granted, and is by default accepted as integral part of the Armenian being. For some Armenians, the significance and the role of Christianity are especially considerable. As some of my interviewees stated, being an Armenian means being a Christian, a Christian not with words, but with acts. To put it otherwise, being an Armenian means acting as a Christian, living within the rules of Christianity.

Going further, a question arises: What is the specific direction of the Armenian Apostolic Church? Sometimes people think that Armenians are Orthodox, but the Armenian Church has another direction indeed. The following short reference to historical evidence will provide some help to better understand the origins of these differences. The roots date back to the Council of Chalcedon held in 451, where some important statements of divine nature were discussed and decided. The Armenian Bishop (*Catholicos*) could not attend the Council, because of the war with the Persians (known as *Battle of Avarayr*) endeavouring to force Armenians to renounce Christianity. Afterwards, Armenian Bishops rejected decrees of Chalcedon, and thus the Armenian Church split from the Churches of Rome and Byzantium (Petrosyan 1990; Hay yekeghetsu patmutyun 2002). However, there is also a catholic branch or direction of the Armenian Church: some Armenians (at home and overseas) are Catholics in communion with Rome. These Catholic and Apostolic branches of the Armenian Church are, de facto, identical in tradition, liturgy, and spirituality.

In Germany, as noted earlier, there are three Armenian Apostolic Churches which are part of *Diözese der Armenischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany): *Saint Sahag-Mesrop (Սուրբ Սահակ-Մեսրոպ)* Church in Cologne; *Surp Harutyun (Սուրբ Հարություն)* Church in Halle/Saale; and *Surp Khatsch (Սուրբ Խաչ)* Church in Göppingen.

As explained, immigrant churches are a specific 'intricate welfare system' (Menjívar 1999, p. 591), carrying the mission of supporting and caring for the wellbeing of immigrants of particular groups, and evidently the church served as a centre or a unique axis for gathering immigrants together. Consequently, throughout the history of Armenian migration, dispersed Armenians, as many other migrant groups (Italian Catholics, Jews, Dominicans, Salvadorians, etc.), have always gathered around the church. In other words, Armenian communities were emerging around the church, and were always getting support from it. The Armenian Church has historically been the primary formal institution initiating activities and events for learning more about the culture and history of the homeland. In this way, the Armenian Church has always been carrying the initiative of maintenance of Armenianness and prevention of forgetting the origins. Even though there are not many Armenian churches in Germany, church services are held on the occasions of big religious holidays, such as Easter or Christmas. Communities in each federal state have religious leaders who are responsible for organizing these events. Hence, one priest is in charge of holding church services in the territory of East and North Germany, the other priest in South and West, etc. Armenian and German pastors cooperate with each other, and sometimes German priests are present at Armenian masses. If in the area there is no special Armenian church, Armenian religious leaders rent a German church to hold the service. As a rule, an agreement exists between this church and Armenian religious leaders, according to which, Armenians have the right to use the territory of that German church for their own purposes on agreed upon dates. In general, Armenian communities gather together for celebrating religious holidays, commemorating sad events or victims, or for learning and reading Armenian literature and poetry.

As Arsiné described above, Christianity is the skin colour of Armenians, which indicates the fact that religion is taken for granted by Armenians. To be a believer, to go to church, to follow masses, and to worship, however, are somehow different. The results of my research show that many Armenians are believers without going to church. They believe in God and pray for themselves, but do not go to church regularly (e.g. every Sunday). This tendency is noticeable equally in cities and towns with and without Armenian Churches, which indicates that infrequent church attendance is not directly connected to the existence of an Armenian Church in the place of residence.

Indeed, Armenian church construction is different from Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches—the architecture of the church exterior and interior is different—and my interviewees sometimes mentioned that in German churches they did not have the feeling of being next to the God. More generally, the feelings they experience are not similar regarding churches in Armenia and

churches in Germany. Nevertheless, this is not the main determining reason for church attendance.

Picture 7: The interior of the Armenian Church in Halle-Saale

In parallel, another group of respondents mentioned that Christianity is one religion for them, and they did not make a difference between various types of Christian churches. It is to say, when they feel like going to church, the type of church (Catholic, Protestant, Evangelic, etc.) will not influence their decision. For those who go to church frequently or regularly, the type of church does not play a significant role.

Although the Armenian Church has historically been the main responsible institution to preserve Armenianness, and prevent its dissolution, nowadays a tendency to separate perception of the church itself and the religion becomes more and more actual. Susan Pattie (1997a, p. 231) in her research about Armenians in Cyprus and Cypriot-Armenians in London noticed the same tendency about the changing role of the church. She came to the conclusion that in the 1990s, the Armenian Apostolic Church in Cyprus and London was in a bind. It provided links to the past—which is appreciable and important in order not to

forget the roots—however, church attendance and participation dwindled with each generation. Diehl and Koenig (2013) also write about the decrease of religious practices of migrants, however, their target group is newly arrived migrants. They find that religious practices are decreasing at the early stage of migration. The reason for this is the occupation with secular options, such as finding accommodations, jobs, learning the language, etc., which hinders newcomers' participation in religious activities at the beginning of residence in the host country. This argument is true for migrants at an early phase of migration, when they have not yet established contacts with compatriots in the host country.

Regarding Armenians, as mentioned above, church attendance decreases, but the faith and belief remains the same. It is to say, religion and church are somehow becoming separate from each other, but it does not necessarily mean that they are becoming less important. In other words, in order to practice their religion, people do not necessarily attend church and church gatherings. Looking from another perspective, it might be because of the changing role of the church. Because of its function and devotion to unify Armenians in the country of residence, the church (in this case it will be more precise to say religious leaders on behalf of the church) undertakes the organization of various events on the occasion of religious holidays. As a result, the latter are sometimes accepted and perceived simply as get-together occasions. Nevertheless, despite these perceptions, the church remains one of the most important institutions, which undertakes the function of transmitting cultural and historical heritage from generation to generation. Realizing this role, the church also, to some extent, contributes to the development of strategic nationalism.

The role of the church in strategic nationalism

As mentioned, immigrant churches have always played a prominent role in maintaining links with sending countries, or with the country of origin. The Armenian Church is well-known as one of the major advocates for the maintenance of national characteristics and belonging. Pattie concludes that the Armenian Church serves as a refuge against change and assimilation (Pattie 1997a, 237). This anti–assimilationist role was especially important for post–Genocide Armenian diaspora, i.e. the first and second generations of the Genocide survivors, who escaped to various countries. Under these circumstances, when the threat of physical annihilations was fresh and still actual, the main concern of Armenians was to prevent dissolution and to maintain historical and cultural heritage of the nation. The church undertook this function by unifying two important symbols of Armeniannes – the religion and the language.

Fulfilling the role of the mother-tongue teacher and of transmitter of cultural-historical heritage, the church facilitates emergence and development of strategic nationalism. Hence, in order to fulfil maintenance of Armeniannes and to bequeath Armenian history to young generations, the church refers to the historical past of Armenia and Armenians. Thus, it teaches to be proud of the history, achievements of ancestors, etc. As a result, the church indirectly contributes to the development of strategic nationalism. As described in one of the previous chapters, Armenian strategic nationalism obtains sources and power from collective memories of the Armenian past. Pattie (1997a), studying Armenians in Cyprus and Cypriot-Armenians in London, came to the conclusion that Armenian national pride dates back about 2,500 years ago to the kingdom of Urartu. Indeed, Armenians always mention the king Tigranes the Great (Armenian: *Տիգրան Մեծ, Tigran Mets*), who was reigning in Armenia in 140–55 BC. He was one of the most powerful kings in Armenian history, and under his reign the Armenian Kingdom extended its boundaries and spread from the Mediterranean to the Black and Caspian Seas. Although nowadays only a small part of this has remained as a territory of the present Republic of Armenia, the Armenian people still continue remembering these times of prosperity, and referring to these years as a period of *from sea to sea Armenia*. This is probably one of the oldest memories awaking the national pride. Past achievements, which Armenians are proud of, are described in the chapter on core aspects of Armenian collective memory as underlying conditions for strategic nationalism. The role of the church in nurturing strategic nationalism is expressed by transmitting these collective memories from generation to generation. It introduces to the young generations evidence of the historical past of Armenia, which has played a considerable part in Armenian fate, and which Armenians would by no means wish to forget. By doing so, the church passes collective memories to the young generation, and, in parallel, it indirectly teaches them to be proud of being Armenian which might develop into a form of strategic nationalism.

Celebration of religious holidays: fusing religiosity

Types of holidays and the ways they are celebrated in the country of residence can highlight specificities of a transnational lifestyle and the extent of transnationalization. National and religious holidays are equally important in this case, however, religious holidays are of more interest, because apart from possible ways and modes of transnationalization, they also indicate features of religiousness and religious practices of migrants in the host society. In the case of Armenians in Germany, it is especially interesting, because first of all, Armenians and

Germans profess the same religion, and second of all, both have almost similar religious holidays. Most importantly, the main big feasts—Christmas and Easter—are the same. Nevertheless, ways of celebration might slightly differ, for example, in some cases the same holiday may have different dates in Armenia and in Germany (e.g. Christmas). Taking into account these factors, it is interesting to see whether and to what extent habitual Armenian ways of Christmas and Easter celebrations are being mixed with German traditions.

Christmas is celebrated on different dates in Armenia (6th of January) and in Germany (25th of December); yet, the meaning of the holiday, its sense, and rituals of celebration are the same. In order to supersede the Roman solar holiday, it was agreed to replace the celebrations of the birth of Christ on 25th of December (Roll 1995; McGowan 2002). Because of not having such a feast, Armenian Church refused to accept this change, and continued celebrating Christmas on 6th of January, on the same day as Christ's baptism.

Taking into consideration the different dates of one the most important and most celebrated religious holidays for all Christians, it is especially interesting to study how residence in Germany has changed (if it has) traditional and habitual ways of the Christmas celebration. Hereby, the results of my research show a tendency of fusion in celebration of this holiday. They go into the realm of cultural hybridity,[64] which cannot be avoided when two and more cultures live side by side. The phenomenon of cultural change and exchange has always existed, and it should not be viewed only one-sidedly. It is to say, cultural hybridity should not be viewed only as something negative. On the contrary, it might provide some opportunities for development and enlargement for each culture (Burke 2009). Groups of migrants who encounter a variety of multiple cultural practices in host societies may undergo major cultural changes, however, without disappearing completely (Ben-Rafael 2003). This kind of fusion in the realm of religion manifests especially clearly in cases of celebration of important religious holidays. Studying elements of fusion becomes more interesting, taking into account the fact that Armenians and Germans confess the same religion in general. Thus, my interview partners celebrate both Christmases (German and Armenian), but the celebration habits and traditions have become mixed, i.e. Armenian and German ways of celebration have intervened in the spaces of one another. Interestingly, this does not refer to traditional food, which is usually prepared on Christmas Eve: Christmas dishes have remained Armenian. Thus, for Armenians as for Germans, Christmas is a holiday, which is mostly celebrated amongst the family and with close relatives. This tradition is transmitted to the 25th of December as well. Living in a festivity atmosphere, it would be

[64] For a review, see Berry 2005; Burke 2009; Mabardi 2010; Stockhammer ed. 2012; Chan 2012

rather unusual to stay away from engaging in the celebration rush themselves. In addition, the holiday has the same religious origins, the same meaning, and mostly similar traditions of celebration in both countries. For these reasons, Armenian families started to celebrate both Christmas days. In this realm, however, some differences between generations become evident. For the second generation, even though both dates have the same meaning, 25th of December has more associations with Christmas, than 6th of January.

Here it is necessary to mention that for quite a long period—during the Soviet Regime—in Armenia celebration of Christmas was suppressed because of atheistic ideology. For this reason, the celebration of the New Year came to replace it and gained on a large scale. Moreover, traditions of Christmas celebration, to some extent, were transmitted to New Year celebration. Thus, the New Year's celebration has become a family holiday, followed by visits to relatives and friends. Of course, very traditional and religious families continued celebrating the 6th of January in narrow family scope, but in those days the holiday did not receive much attention from people.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, religion officially returned to people's homes, and celebration of Christmas day on 6th of January started to gain more and more attention, and its meaning increased gradually. As a result, both feasts—Christmas and New Year—have become family holidays, with the difference that for the New Year there remained a tradition of visiting and hosting guests—relatives and friends—on the first week of the new year, whereas Christmas day was mostly and exclusively celebrated in the family more narrowly. Nowadays there is a tendency to differentiate between the New Year and Christmas celebration, however, New Year's Eve continues to be celebrated mostly in the family with big enthusiasm and pathos.

Mixed ways of Christmas and New Year's celebration amongst my research participants manifest not only in a combination of German and Armenian celebration traditions. Habitual ways of celebrating both Christmases and the New Year are becoming mixed too. Thus, some families have transferred the habitual Armenian New Year celebration traditions to the German Christmas. It is to say, on 25th of December they visit family members and relatives living in Germany and sometimes even in other countries. The New Year (or as it is called in German, *Silvester*) is celebrated with friends mostly outside the home. The day of Armenian Christmas has become an additional occasion, when family members gather together. Some families go to church on German Christmas Eve (*Heiliger Abend*) and then continue the holy evening with a family dinner and opening of presents. Church attendance on Armenian Christmas Eve is more frequent in these cities, where on that day an Armenian mass is held. Usually it takes place in big cities, where Armenian communities are relatively big and

institutionalized. In other cities, where no special church service is held on 6th of January, Armenians very rarely go to church on that day.

Easter**,** in contradistinction to Christmas, is celebrated on the same day in Armenia and in Germany. In both countries it is a family holiday too, which starts with the church service and continues with traditional Easter dinner. The fusion of ways in celebrating Easter is less compared to Christmas, perhaps because the holiday falls on the same day. Besides, there is a liturgy in every church on Easter week. Therefore, Armenians, who do not have the opportunity to be present at the Armenian mass, can go to any German church and participate in the liturgy. Accordingly, Easter celebration gives the feeling of being unified with the homeland and Armenians all over the world. Essential parts of traditional Easter food—coloured eggs and Easter cakes—are present in both cultures. Apart from those, other habitual Armenian Easter dishes appear on tables of almost every family.

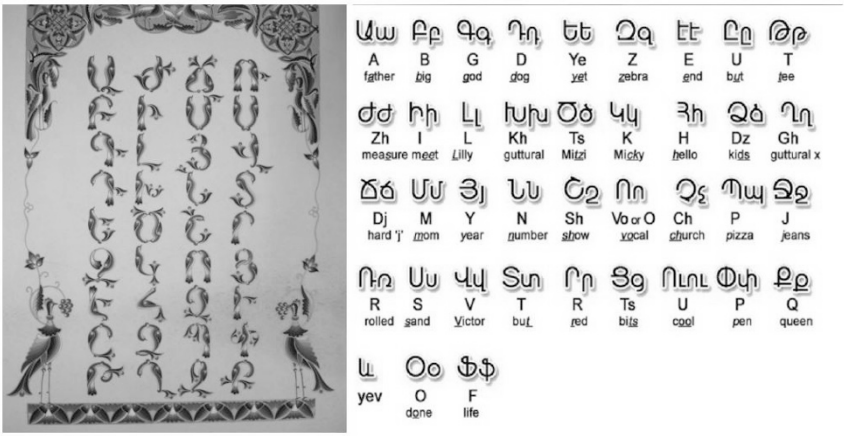
Hence, the examples of Christmas and Easter envisage how incorporation of different habits of the same holiday celebration might result in fusing religiosity. The choice of these two religious feasts is conditioned by their importance for Armenians and Germans, which merit large scale celebrations with equal enthusiasm among the population. Apart from Christmas and Easter, some other Armenian and German public holidays and feasts—Mothers' Day, Valentine's Day, etc—were also quite popular among participants of my research.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the religion and mother tongue are two important symbols of Armenianness. Religion and language have rescued Armenians throughout their long history, and thereby have become sacred values for the nation. Religion and language are interconnected, and in many Armenian diaspora communities the primary role of a mother-tongue teacher belongs to the Armenian Church. There are special Saturday or Sunday schools, which in most cases are annexed to the Armenian Church. The thematic of the role and importance of the mother tongue will follow in the section below.

6.1.2 Armenian language and writing

Armenian language is almost as old as the religion, with its unique and distinct alphabet used only by Armenians. Armenian is an ancient language and belongs to the big family of Indo-European languages; however, it has no close linguistic relatives. Mesrop Mashtots, an Armenian linguist, theologian, and statesman invented the Armenian alphabet in 405 C.E. (Abrahamyan 1973; Sanjian 1996). The idea and aim of Mashtots was to have a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. After studying all the alphabets of the existing languages, Mashtots created the Armenian alphabet, which at the beginning had 36 letters,

and now it includes 39 (Akinian 1938; Sanjian 1996). According to a myth, the invention of the alphabet was a result of an inspiration sent by God: Mashtots saw it in his dream (Akinian 1938, 1949). The legend highlights that interconnection of the Armenian language and religion came from the very beginning: Mashtots was a monk and saw the alphabet in his dream, sent by God. Armenians believe that their alphabet is a divine invention, and this belief increases their pride in the mother tongue even more.



Picture 8: The Armenian alphabet

Armenian has two branches: *Eastern Armenian*, which is spoken in the Republic of Armenia and in Nagorno Karabakh; and *Western Armenian,* which is the language of the Armenian diaspora in most countries. The alphabet and grammar are the same for Eastern and Western Armenian, however, some letters are pronounced slightly different, and some words are spelled in a different way. Each of these branches has its own dialects; however, they are mainly mutually comprehensible. Different versions of Western Armenian exist depending on the country. For example, Armenian spoken in the USA, France, Syria, Iran, Turkey, etc is not the same. Some words have completely different meanings, or sometimes different words are used to indicate the same phenomenon. Some misunderstandings might therefore occur not only between Eastern and Western Armenian but also between the different dialects within the two branches. In colloquial language, especially, Western Armenians might use some Arabic or Turkish words, whereas Eastern Armenians use some Russian words in everyday spoken language. This might be one of the causes of misunderstandings.

Language has been one of the most important symbols, due to which the Armenian nation could survive until present, withstanding all invasions and attempts of other big and powerful countries to conquer Armenia. For that reason, diasporized Armenians have always paid special attention to the learning of the mother tongue. Thus, Pattie (1997a) mentions that even Turkish speaking Armenian families in Cyprus (families who fled from Turkey) insisted on speaking Armenian at home. My fieldwork indicates some similar evidence, such as the case of an Armenian couple in Germany, whose mother tongue was Western Armenian, however, not the same branch of it. Both migrated to Germany for educational purposes, and there got acquainted with each other. As they got married, they preferred speaking mostly German with each other, due to some misunderstandings caused by differences between dialects of Western Armenian. However, the desire that the children learn Armenian was so strong that after the birth of children, they made an effort to speak only Armenian at home so that the first language of the children could be Armenian. Now only Armenian is spoken in this family, and their children are proficient in Western Armenian and German.

Mother tongue, or as Shankar mentions, heritage language, (Shankar 2011) is an important determinant of belonging and carries several functions. Firstly, it connects young generations to their land of origin and to their roots. As Portes and Rumbaut (2001) in their study of immigrant children in the United States point out, children who preserve the language and culture of ancestors, experience less generational clash, than those, who cut connections with their past. Thus, maintenance of the mother tongue contributes also to better transmission of national values and traditions from generation to generation. Secondly, knowledge of the mother tongue is an important symbol of engagement in transnational activities. In this sense, durability of transnationalism depends on maintenance of the heritage language (Rumbaut 2002).

Speaking and writing in their mother tongue, however, might become a challenge for children of migrants. For that reason, the majority of Armenians residing in various countries of the world have done and do their best to teach the children speak, write, and read Armenian. The second-generation Armenians who participated in my research are generally proficient in spoken Armenian. It is mostly the dominant spoken language at home, but not everyone practices writing and reading in Armenian (also see, Chaloyan 2015, p. 122). There are some Saturday and Sunday classrooms, where Armenian children can learn to write and read. Almost all Armenian communities in big German cities have these kinds of classrooms. In 2014 *Armenisch–Akademischer Verein* established two Armenian-teaching classrooms, which successfully function until present. Since these Armenian classrooms are situated mainly in big cities, the second

generation in small cities or suburban regions mainly speaks but cannot write and read Armenian, unless parents force them learn the alphabet. Nevertheless, not every child in the big cities attends those Saturday and Sunday schools. This means while the second-generation Armenians have good or sufficient conversational skills of their mother tongue, the knowledge in reading and writing is, nevertheless, limited. In order to write in Armenian they use the Latin alphabet. In other words, they write Armenian words and sentences in Latin letters. This relates to colloquial written communication with Armenian peers via Internet or cell phone. The main responsibility for passing the mother tongue through generations lies on the family, and mainly mothers. Parents always insist on speaking only Armenian at home and try to encourage children to do so, but it is impossible to keep it entirely under control, especially when everyday life of the second generation is inevitably mostly in an 'outside environment'.

Since the Armenian diaspora in Germany is young, and most of my first-generation research participants migrated with their nuclear families, the second generation from bilingual families (in the framework of my research) is at an early age. It is to say, children born in mixed marriages are still quite small – mostly under and of school age.

Interestingly, there are no evident correlations between proficiency in the Armenian language and categories of children from the local or family environment. In both cases, Armenian is the spoken language at home, and in both cases parents are paying equal attention to children to speak Armenian, and in both cases conversational use of the language is quite sufficient for the second-generation participants of the research. However, communication is the best way to practice a language, and lack of communication correspondingly leads to forgetting the language, or to some difficulties in speech fluency. Thereby, it is more likely that for those having more contact with Germans, at some point expressing thoughts in German became easier than in Armenian. Hereinafter the discussion of some peculiarities of the use of the language in everyday life will follow.

Language in daily use

Armenian (Eastern and Western) and German were the two most spoken languages among my interview partners. As stated above, the main language spoken at home is Armenian: parents speak Armenian with each other and with children, and generally insist on speaking Armenian at home. However, despite their efforts, children sometimes simply reply in German. Moreover, siblings easily and often unconsciously switch to German while talking to each other, and continue the conversation in German. As a rule, this happens because speaking German

and expressing thoughts in German is much easier for the majority of the second generation who took part in my research. Thus, my young interviewees pointed out the feeling of self-confidence while communicating in German.

The tradition, or maybe better to say, the unwritten rule to speak Armenian at home refers to *hayastantsi* and *arevmtahay* families equally. Nevertheless, because of the historical past and reasons of flows of *arevmtahays* from their historical fatherland (violent evictions and massacres), they have always paid and still pay more attention to the mother tongue. It was and still is an obligation for children to master conversational and written Armenian. It is also noteworthy that generations of *arevmtahay* had better conditions to learn Armenian. The first immigrants have established elementary and secondary Armenian schools in their host countries (e.g. in Syria, in Lebanon, in the USA), and Armenian children were attending those schools. Thus, the first language they were learning and hearing at home and schools was Armenian. From this point, some of my second-generation *arevmtahay* respondents have better knowledge of the mother tongue (in their case Western Armenian), than some second-generation *hayastantsi*.

In general, Armenian and German have their own place in the daily life of each generation; however, they might mutually intervene into each other's spaces. This happens mostly when German words appear in Armenian speech. Some extracts and quotes from my interviews presented in this work envisage these kinds of interventions. It happens mainly because certain German words specifically refer to typical situations of life in Germany—*Termin* (appointment), *Versicherung* (insurance)*, Ausländer* (foreigner)*, etc.* Due to these borrowings, a kind of mixed or inter-language is created.[65]

It is notable that the first-generation Armenians, who participated in this research, have a good command of German. Their knowledge of German varies from sufficient to very good. Most of them learned the language after already residing in Germany. Before the immigration, some had absolutely no knowledge of German, and some had basic skills still from school years. In order to learn German, my interview partners either attended special language courses or studied the language independently on their own.

As the second generation mostly starts to think and learn in German language, the latter has become more familiar and more preferable. Therefore, German occupies the dominant part in their daily life. Besides, professional and entertaining readings are also in German. Of course, Armenian-written newspapers and literature can be easily found on the Internet; nevertheless, they do not read in Armenian on account of either poor (or no) knowledge of the alphabet or

[65] For a review, see Jacobson ed. 1998; Myers-Scotton 1993; 2002; Ben-Rafael 2001; 2004; Ben-Rafael and Schmid 2007

lack of Armenian vocabulary, or low speed of reading Armenian text. During my fieldwork, two interesting manifestations of proficiency in German language emerged:

- *German as a means to increase the feeling of self-confidence*. This tendency refers to both generations; however, it is more evident among the first generation. Good command of German is associated with the ability to articulate one's own interests, to argue and present one's point of view. Accordingly, mastering the language of the country of residence makes migrants more self-confident in various encounters and in different situations.
- *German as a way of self-presentation*. It expresses more apparently among the second generation, and especially regarding small children. With every suitable opportunity, they are apt to show good knowledge of German and pride themselves in this ability. Generally, this kind of demonstrative behaviour is directed to the Armenian audience. It is to say, the second generation (especially at an early age) tends to express their knowledge of German especially in an Armenian environment or in the presence of an Armenian person. Speaking German especially in the presence of a third person who understands German, seems especially enjoyable for children. Doing so, they seek attention from others, and are apt to boast of their proficiency in German language. Hence, knowledge of German manifests itself as a way of self-presentation.

Interesting enough, Shankar's study of language use among immigrant youth points out that for them, heritage language is an important tool for performance (Shankar 2011, p. 654), whereas the results of my research show that the *host language* can also be a specific way of self-presentation.

To summarize, the German and Armenian languages do not occupy an equal place in daily life of the first and the second generations. Obviously, the proportion of Armenian used is much greater in the daily life of the first generation, as compared to the second generation. Most transnational activity rotates around the Armenian language, for example, reading online newspapers, listening to the news in Armenian in satellite television, speaking by Skype with friends and relatives, and sometimes even listening to Armenian radio online, etc. All above-mentioned activities are an integral part of the first-generation research participants' daily routines, whereas the second generation mostly engages in activities where German dominates in all its manifestations (speaking, listening, reading, writing, etc.).

Mother tongue in perspective

Caring about the survival of the Armenian language becomes the mission of the second generation. Despite the fact of not being able to read and write in

Armenian, the second-generation interviewees very clearly claim their will to teach own (future) children Armenian. Talai also mentions that London-Armenians were very determined and intentional about maintenance of the mother tongue – the Armenian language. Speaking Armenian thus becomes a symbol of rearing children as Armenians (Talai 1989, p. 108).

This reverent attitude toward the mother tongue has been passing from generation to generation through collective memory embedded in stories and fairy-tales about the homeland. Nevertheless, this attitude is rather mythical than real. It is very similar to the idealized image of the homeland among the diaspora. The same is about the language. The second generation expresses the desire to save it from being forgotten, however, sometimes this desire sounds more grandiose than realistic: how are they going to do it, if they already do not master it completely and sometimes even feel more comfortable to communicate in German?

Marriage might be one of the factors conditioning the survival of the Armenian language for future generations. More precisely, it depends on the spouse, whether he or she will be an Armenian or a German. Indeed, as my interview partners mentioned, it would be much more difficult to maintain the language when the spouse is not Armenian. Regarding the spouse, my second-generation interview partners have no obvious preferences. Some of them are quite determined, and by all means, want to marry only an Armenian. This preference is due to the assumption that belonging to the same culture and mentality will contribute to better understanding. Meanwhile, for others, only personal sympathy matters. For some, however, a person's will to learn Armenian and to get acquainted with Armenian culture is above all other criteria. When asking Partev (some extracts from his interview I have introduced in previous chapters) if he would prefer to marry a German or an Armenian woman, his first and immediate answer was an Armenian, but thinking a bit, he added that in fact, it would not matter: the most important thing would be that his wife would either speak Armenian or have the interest to learn the language.

> Ճիշդն որած, ես չեմ մտածած, որ կինս պիտի գերմանուհի ըլլայ: Մտածած եմ, որ ազգութեամբ պիտի հայ ըլլայ: (…) Կարևորը, որ հայերէն գիտնայ. ես կուզեմ, որ իմ պապենական լեզուս ապրի. չէ՞ որ հայ եմ (...) ու չեմ ուզեր, որ հայութիւնս վերջանայ: Պարտադիր է առոր համար, որ կողքս հայ ըլլայ: Չնայած կայ գերմանացի, որ հայերէն գիտէ, կամ ալ կը սորվի…. Կարևորը մէջը հայկականի յանդէպ սէր մը ըլլայ: Եթէ կինս հայ ալ չըլլայ, զաւակներս կուզեմ, որ հայերէն գիտնան:
>
> To tell the truth, I have not thought yet, that my wife is going to be a German. I have thought that she will be an Armenian. (...) The most important is to know Armenian, because I want the language of my ancestors to live, because I am

> Armenian (...) and I want my Armenianness not to end. For that reason, it is obligatory that a person beside is an Armenian too. However, there are Germans who know Armenian or will learn… The most important is the love toward Armenian, if my wife is not an Armenian. I want my children to know Armenian.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, second generation)

Of a particular interest is that wishing themselves an Armenian spouse, my interview partners were referring to Armenians born or grown up in Germany. In other words, they prefer someone who will be in the same category as they are, someone who will have passed the same way as they did, and will have the same experiences. Understanding each other would be easy in this case. Some of the second-generation informants expressed fears not to be able to make good matrimony with young people growing up in Armenia. This is due to some cultural or habitual differences that young people raised in Germany and in Armenia might have.

The perspective of the first generation in the respect of maintenance of the mother tongue and marriage of the children is quite patriotic. In regard to Armenian, they claim that young generations should not forget the language, because first, the more languages one knows, the better, and second, they should know the language of their homeland in order not to feel as a foreigner there. Referring to marriage, in general, the parents' desire would be to see an Armenian as a son- or daughter-in-law, nevertheless, they would never insist on it, or force the children to marry an Armenian. Remarkably, the marriage of boys with a foreigner is considered more 'painful', because new-born children will start to speak the language of mother, and thereby, the risk of losing Armenian as the mother tongue would be higher.

Thus, leaning on the results of my research regarding the destiny of the Armenian language in perspective, and maintaining it throughout the generations, the outlook is not consoling. Conversational skills have more possibility and probability to survive than the written language. Considering the fact that Saturday and Sunday schools cannot alone bear the function and responsibility of teaching the mother tongue, families should be the core axis of social reproduction of the Armenian language, even when everyday reality counteracts their efforts.

6.2 Home, homeland, and belonging

Throughout the course of a long period of life in a new country, people incorporate new ways of being, behavioural patterns, and as a result, develop such characteristics as manoeuvring with self-identification—a characteristic described in

the previous chapter. It gives the opportunity to manipulate with the fact of living or being born in Germany and having Armenian origin. In other words, cultural heritage of the country of origin on the one hand, and new incorporated items of behaviour on the other, make manoeuvring with self-identification possible. Evidently, this is a result of transnational lifestyle.

However, from this viewpoint, transnational lifestyle might have a versatile impact on the definition of the sense of belonging, as well as on the changes people might experience over a length of time. From this point of view, self-identification and the sense of belonging might be different.

Identifying themselves as Armenians, or more precisely, identifying themselves with Armenian ways of being (which my interview partners distinguished themselves) does not necessarily mean also feeling belonging to Armenia. It is to say, if a person identifies himself or herself as an Armenian, it does not consequently mean that he or she will feel belonging to Armenia more, than to Germany. Rather, self-identification as Armenian does not self-evidently lead to feeling home in Armenia.

In social psychology literature the sense of belonging is described from different perspectives. It is constructed due to affiliations (McCelland 1987), relatedness to something or someone (Deci and Ryan 1991, Vallerand 1997), regard given from others—as a rule positive regard—(Rogers 1951), or feeling of connectedness to a social milieu (Vallerand 1997). In other words, the sense of belonging develops upon feelings of affiliation, stability, and continuation into the foreseeable future (Baumeister and Leary 1995, p. 500). Results of the research on the sense of belonging conducted by SIRC (The Social Issues Research Centre) distinguished trajectories of belonging, among which friendships and nationality are important ones in defining or conditioning the sense of belonging (SIRC Report 2007, p. 4–5). All mentioned perspectives and trajectories include the factor of social connectedness, which contributes to the formation of a sense of belonging. When the feeling of connectedness and various expressions of the above-mentioned other factors (stability, affiliations, regard form others) to different extents and in different aspects relate to various places or social milieus, the sense of belonging to these various places also manifests in various modes. As a result, a person feels a belonging to several places at the same time, however in different modes.

This is articulated especially more clearly in the case of immigrants, since their trajectories of belonging spread between homelands and countries of residence; correspondingly, their sense of belonging also ‘travels’ between countries of origin and residence. Moreover, they experience differently their connectedness to the homeland and to the country of residence. As a result, the feeling of being somewhere in between appears.

From the perspective of definition of belonging through various attachments and connectedness, issues of home, homeland, and meanings put in them play a significant part in the studies of diasporic groups and long-term immigration.[66] In the framework and context of this work, I interpret *home* as a place where a person feels comfortable and where he or she feels to belong. *Homeland* is the place or the country of birth, or the country of ancestors. In this sense, it is the indicator of origins and past. Assuming that for the first and the second generations, the sense of belonging may manifest itself differently, in the paragraphs below the analysis about home, homeland, and attachments to them will separately follow for each generation.

6.2.1 Where the home is

First generation

The question of belonging or feeling homelike in one place rather than in another is quite complicated. Interestingly, in order to understand which country or which environment feels more comfortable, the first-generation Armenians, who took part in this research, were trying to identify what kind of personal changes they had confronted after moving to Germany. Changes they have mentioned in this scope did not refer to personal characteristics or qualities, but to juridical aspects of life in a different country. These changes are regarding issues for example, which follow the change of citizenship, or obtaining a permanent residence permit in Germany. Regarding changes in the sphere of so-called *juridical belonging* the main argument of the interviewees was an enlarged sense of freedom, which gave them the feeling of being a world citizen.

> Ամենամեծ, ամենահրաշք զգացումր, որ այստեղ ապրում ես, ազատության զգացումն է, որ դու ուր ուզում, գնում ես ամբողջ աշխարհով մեկ: Ցույց ես տալիս քո այստեղի անձնագիրն ու գնում ես: Անգամ մեր հայկական անձնագիրը, երբ գերմանացին խփեց մշտական ապրելու իրավունքը, առաջին ազատության զգացումն էր: Դա էլի նույն հայկական անձնագիրն էր, բայց այդ մի կնիքով դու դառնում ես ազատ մարդ, քեզ էլ պետք չի, որ գնաս ինչ-որ տեղ վիզա բացես… Զգում ես, որ դու աշխարհի քաղաքացին ես, կարող ես գնալ ուր ուզում ես, և ոչ ոք քեզ չի կանգնեցնի:
>
> The greatest and the most wonderful feeling that you have here is the feeling of freedom that you can go wherever you want in the world. You show your passport from here and you go. The first feeling of freedom was when Germans

[66] See e.g. Cohen 1997, 2008; Pattie 1997a, b; Tölölyan 1996, 2010; Safran 2001, 2009; Wolf 2002; Baser and Swain 2009; Ben-Rafael and Sternberg eds. 2009; Laguerre 2009; Berg 2011; Wessendorf 2013

> put the permanent residence permit in our Armenian passports. It was the same Armenian passport, but just due to that stamp you become a free person, you do not need to go somewhere to open a visa... You feel that you are a world citizen; you can go wherever you want, and no one will stop you.
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Life in Germany has opened horizons for activities and initiatives that might be impossible living in Armenia. It gives the sense of freedom and independence; however, it does not mean that these feelings give the sense of being home. It is notable to mention that no correlations or connections exist between the sense of belonging, and the fact of owing a German citizenship or a permanent residence permit. The complexity of the sense of belonging is not conditioned only by juridical belonging, and goes to the realm of emotional attachments to the homeland.

Nevertheless, even if the first generation has more and concrete attachments (emotional and material) to the homeland than the second generation, their sense of belonging is still rather ambiguous. Although many Armenian traditions have remained the same, for example, ways of keeping household or preparing food, it is not quite univocal and obvious that Armenia would feel completely homelike and comfortable, especially after dwelling in Germany for many years. Although some of my interviewees stated that they have maintained the Armenian soul, Germany and the German environment have also become familiar to some extent. Indeed, these mixed feelings or vague sense of belonging are integral parts of migrants' lives. Moreover, they indicate transnationalized lifestyles, when physically dwelling in a host country, and getting accustomed to its rules and reality, migrants are simultaneously present in parallel realities of the homeland. These feelings might find expression either in the sense of simultaneous belonging to both countries or, in contrast, it might lead to the sense of belonging nowhere or feeling foreign in both countries.

Reflecting on changes in their lives after moving to Germany Mher, whom I have already introduced earlier, explained that in his house and family, ways of being have remained Armenian, and he feels to be the same Armenian man who has only changed his place of residence. On this point Mher mentioned:

> Իմ մեջ ամեն ինչը հայկական է, ու հայկական էլ կմնա... Հա՛ եմ, հա՛ էլ կմնամ, թե՛ իմ շարժուձևով, թե՛ իմ սանրվածքով, թե՛ իմ հայկական օջախով, որն ընդունված է, որ այդպես էլ կմնա, *egal* (գերմաներենից՝ միևնույնն է) մենք որտեղ ենք:
>
> Everything in me is Armenian and will remain Armenian... I am Armenian and I will remain Armenian with my behaviour, my gestures, my hairstyle, with my

> Armenian 'hearth'[67]. It is admitted, that it will remain like this, *egal* (from German – all the same) where we are.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Haykuhi, a middle-aged Armenian woman whose family have a small business in Germany, shares Mher's opinion. For more than eight years she has been residing in Germany, but her habits, behaviour, and family traditions have remained Armenian. As Haykuhi stated:

> Հայկական մնացել է ամեն ինչը. թեկուզ խոհանոցը հայկական, թե՛ ընտանիքին նվիրվածությունը, թե՛ որպես կին՝ ամուսնուն նվիրվածությունը, երեխաներին դաստիարակելը:
>
> Everything remained Armenian: even the Armenian cuisine, devotion to the family, as a wife devoted to her husband, and upbringing of children.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

In these two excerpts the main accent is on Armenian ways of being, which has not changed after many years of life in Germany. Moreover, they refer to manifestations of Armenianness in family life, keeping traditions of homeland cuisine, upbringing of the children, etc. From this perspective, Armenia feels more homelike than Germany, although in Germany as well, everything has become familiar and sometimes even more acceptable. Apart from that, Haykuhi's and Mher's stories not only express the sense of belonging to Armenia through maintenance of homeland traditions, but also they reflect on issues of self-identification of the first generation as Armenians, which was addressed in the previous chapter.

In some other cases, the sense of belonging manifests even more particularly: the interviewees associate with home their house in Armenia or the place of their birth (city, town or village). This kind of strong attachments to the place of origin Wessendorf conceptualizes as *roots transnationalism* (Wessendorf 2013, p. 31). For example, Melik, his wife and two children have lived in Germany for around ten years, he and his wife have good jobs, and the family owns a nice and comfortable house. Still when asked where he feels more at home, Melik had nostalgia remembering his city, his parents' house there, and answered:

> Գերմանիայում եմ ապրում, բայց հոգով, սրտով, մտքով այնտեղ եմ: Այնտեղ՝ տանը, որ բազմոցին կամ խոհանոցում նստում եմ, ես հոգեպես հանգստանում եմ:

[67] In Armenian the word 'hearth' is used to signify totality of home, family, home comfort, family traditions, etc.

> I live in Germany, but I am there (in Armenia) with my soul, with my heart, with my thoughts. There, at home, when I sit on the sofa or in the kitchen, I rest spiritually.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Nonetheless, the sense of belonging to Armenia, and feelings of being home in Armenia is not the major tendency among the first-generation interviewees. Very often it is difficult to purely determine the sense of belonging. To put it otherwise, it is impossible to claim that a person absolutely belongs to Armenia or to Germany. The sense of belonging, thus, is rather *dual* than absolute pure. Everyday life in Germany, family members residing in the country, job, friends, and simple daily routines create the feeling of being at home. At the same time, Armenia remains the home country – *the* sacred land for which Armenians have tender feelings. Below is a passage from my interview with Aram, who was introduced earlier, and who compares his belonging to being present in one reality physically, and in another spiritually.

> Արդեն 10 տարի է՝ այստեղ եմ ու ոնց որ ընտելացել եմ, որ սա է իմ տունը, բայց ոնց որ մի ոտքով միշտ այնտեղ լինես, մյուս ոտքով՝ այստեղ: Ամեն վայրկյան մտքով Հայաստանում ես, իսկ մարմնով՝ այստեղ:
>
> I have been here already for 10 years and I have gotten used to it, that this is my home/ house, but it feels like being with one foot there and with another foot here. Every second you are in Armenia with your thoughts and here with your body.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Despite of homelike feelings in both the country of birth and in the country of residence, at some point, migrants start feeling foreign in either one of them. Hence, people might not feel completely at home in the country of residence because of various reasons: a different appearance, specific accent in German, or anything else pointing out their foreign origins, etc. Simultaneously, due to some changed ways of being—worldview, behavioural patterns, or even some changed habits, etc.—neither do they feel completely belonging to the homeland. For example, take Tatev, a young woman who arrived in Germany when she was in her early 20s, and has been living in the country for around 14 years with her husband and children (born in Germany). She indicated that she would feel sort of a foreigner in both Armenia and Germany.

> Հիմիկվա պայմաններում ուր էլ գնամ *Ausländer* եմ (գերմաներենից՝ օտարերկրացի): Այստեղ ասում են՝ Armenisch ես, իսկ այնտեղ էլ, հենց գնում ենք, ասում են՝ գերմանացիք եկան: Դե, Գերմանիա ենք եկել, ահագին տարի էլ այստեղ ենք, դրա համար էլ ասում են՝ գերմանացիք

> եկան: (…) Գերմանացի չենք, պարզապես Գերմանիայում ապրում ենք:
> Գերմանիայում ոնզ էլ յինի Ausländer եմ զգում: Միայն այն հարցը որ տալիս են, թե որտեղից ես դու, արդեն ստիպում է հասկանալ, որ իրենք քեզ այստեղից չեն համարում:
>
> Nowadays, I am an *Ausländer* (German for foreigner) wherever I go. Here they say you are Armenisch (German for Armenian), and whenever we go there (to Armenia), they say Germans have come. We came to Germany, we have been living here for years, for that reason they say Germans have come. (...) We are not Germans, we just live in Germany.
> And in Germany I feel like an Ausländer. Only the question where do you come from already makes you understand that they do not consider you to be from here.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Dual sense of belonging is paradoxical because the feeling of belonging simultaneously to several places or somewhere in the middle in the end results in belonging to nowhere concrete. As the extract highlights, to some extent Tatev feels a foreigner in Germany as well as in Armenia. In Germany her appearance, the accent while speaking German, or some other behavioural differences will always point out her non-German origins. Meanwhile, she does not completely fit in to Armenian environment any more. Susanne Wessendorf's research on Italians in Switzerland shows similar expressions of the sense of belonging. Her research participants interpreted this *belonging in between* in the frames of their uniqueness – as a specific characteristic, making them somehow special (Wessendorf 2013, p. 51).

As mentioned earlier, *perceptions of others*, or as Rogers call it, *regard given from others* (Rogers 1951) also have some impact on the formation of a dual sense of belonging. To put it more precisely, how others represent or perceive the status of migrants in the country of origin and in the country of residence influences the formation of dual sense of belonging.

> Էնտեղի համար մենք դրսի հայ ենք, էստեղի համար էլ՝ արտասահմանցի ենք:
>
> There, we are Armenians abroad, and here we are foreigners.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Confusion about home, homeland, and belonging here *or* there, or here *and* there, simultaneously increases, receiving corresponding reaction from the society.

Apart from external reactions, *the fact of owning a house in Armenia*—an important factor and trajectory of connectedness, feeling of safety and foreseeable future—might have some impact on the phenomenon of dual sense of

belonging. Studying Caribbean migration, Olwig (1997) argues that a family house is a strong determinant linking migrants to their countries of origin (Olwig 1997, p. 35). Wessendorf (2013), in her research on Italians in Switzerland also points out the importance of owning a property in the homeland. For Italians, a house legitimizes extended stays in the homeland, because there is always something to renovate and improve (Wessendorf 2013, p. 31). As my interview results show, the parents' house, or, more precisely, the house where parents live is also considered as one's own house, and is an equally strong determinant of homeland attachments. Respectively, for the first generation, Armenia feels like home when parents still live there. In other cases, they feel only partially belonging, and partially not belonging to Armenia. As Aram mentioned:

> Էնտեղ այնպիսի զգացում ունես, որ դու և՛ էնտեղից ես, և՛ էնտեղից չես: Այսինքն՝ որ դու քո սեփական տունը չունես, չես գնում քո դուռը բացում, մտնում, արդեն էն չի:
>
> There you have the feeling that you are both from there, and not from there. If you do not have your own house, to not go and open the door of your house and enter, that does not feel good.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Generally, my interview results allow one to determine some interesting specificities of the first-generation research participants' sense of belonging. Hereby, even in cases when both countries to some extent feel to be homelike, interpretation of this feeling is different. Armenia is the homeland and home at the same time. Nevertheless, Germany has also become home to some extent; besides, it is also a workplace. Hence, Armenia is the homeland and in part home, whereas Germany is the workplace and also home to some extent. The notion of home is being divided between two countries. Speaking in metaphors, Germany is a type of home for the weekdays, and Armenia is home for the weekends. This metaphor expresses different meanings of home as attached to Germany and to Armenia. So-called holiday transnationalism (Wessendorf 2013, p. 33), homeland or roots tourism (e.g. Basu 2004; Darieva 2011; Powers 2011) might contribute to the emergence of this feeling. These notions mainly refer to diasporic generations who travel to countries of their descent or to their ancestral homeland as tourists. Nonetheless, younger generations of immigrants also tend to spend significant time in homelands, and this time generally corresponds to holidays. Some families send children for the whole summer to their grandparents' places. On the one hand, holiday transnationalism strengthens emotional and practical attachments to the homeland, and on the other hand, it develops and affirms the feeling that the country of origin is a kind of weekend home—allegorically speaking, whereas the country of residence corresponds to a weekday home.

Summarizing where the home is for the first-generation participants of this research, it is becoming clear that they *feel at home in Germany when it is about work and rules of organizing a weekday routine, however, they feel home in Armenia when it is about everything else—family traditions, mode of life, etc.* It might mean belonging emotionally to Armenia and pragmatically to Germany. Evidences of this argument are also interestingly displayed in linguistic expressions when talking about both countries. Armenia is described in more emotional linguistic terminology, whereas speaking about Germany the research participants mostly used pragmatic utterances. For example, tender words and expressions related to Armenia show emotional connectedness of the first-generation interviewees to the country of their origin. Such phrases as *my Armenia is my home, I miss the soil and the water of my Armenia, my heart aches for Armenia,* etc. reveal emotional connectedness to the country of origin. In addition, in most cases, Armenia is associated with relatives residing there, and thereby symbolizes a feeling of homesickness, and attachments to those relatives left there. Emotional kinship connections are thus projected on the whole image and meaning of the homeland, and they become a condition of emotional belonging to Armenia.

Another point also expresses these two-folded sides of belonging: interest in news and developments in the social, political, and economic spheres of both countries. As participants of my research stated, they reside in Germany, but also live with everything happening in Armenia. They are interested in events and developments in Armenia because, as some of them said, 'My heart beats for Armenia and each bad news about and from the country makes me very upset.' In parallel, the interviewees are also interested in social, economic, and political situation in Germany since it directly relates to and also affects them.

Second generation

As the case of the first generation has shown, dual sense of belonging makes the question of home, or where the home is, quite non-univocal and ambiguous. However, for the second generation, this question might be either more vague or just the opposite—more clear. Considering the fact, that the second generation practically has less attachment to Armenia (both emotional and pragmatic), and started their independent steps already in Germany, it might seem obvious that Germany feels more homelike. Nevertheless, they grew up in transnational families, and some of them regularly travel to Armenia with parents, spend holidays there, and thereby get acquainted with culture, traditions, and people in Armenia personally. From this perspective, it is interesting to see which factors were/are influential for formation of the second generation's sense of belonging, and whether travels back to Armenia change it to some extent. I will address

questions of back-and-forth travels and fluctuating transnationalism in the following sections of this chapter. Now I will discuss where the second-generation interviewees consider being home.

Hence, leaning on the results of my research, I presume that the sense of belonging of the second generation is ambiguous too, and it is different for the children from the local and the family environment—types of the second generation I distinguished in the previous chapter. Children from the local environment consider Germany their home, since they grew up in that country, have incorporated its ways of being, its value system, and also some traditions and habits. Thus, Armenuhi, whom I wrote about in the section devoted to children from the local and the family environments, talks here about the question of where she feels better in Armenia or in Germany. She points out that she feels comfortable among Germans and loves the country, but she will never forget Armenia as her homeland.

> Էստեղ սովորել եմ ու իրենց մեջ ինձ լավ եմ զգում: Ես սիրում եմ Գերմանիան: Բայց Հայաստանն իմ հայրենիքը կմնա, ես չեմ մոռանա:
>
> I have been accustomed to here and I feel good among them. I like Germany. But Armenia will remain my homeland, I will not forget it.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

The interview excerpt expresses not only feelings of comfort and convenience in Germany, it also emphasizes that Armenia is the homeland, which Armenuhi claims not to forget. From this perspective, of a specific interest is the meaning or understanding of homeland. The image of Armenia as the homeland, as perceived by the children from the local environment, is formed due to parents, their stories, and also travels to Armenia and time spent with grandparents and other relatives there. These representatives of the second generation feel emotionally attached to Armenia, because as Eduard indicated:

> Այն իմ պատմության, իմ անցյալի ու իմ արմատների մի մասն է...
>
> It is a part of my history, my past and my roots…
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

In this scope, Armenia is a ‘sacred’ or ‘mythical’ land, which points out the origins and the past, but rarely future. It is to say, the second-generation Armenians who took part in my research, do not connect, or rather, do not see their future in Armenia. They do not consider the idea of permanently settling in Armenia, even taking into account the possibility of returning to Germany at any time. Interestingly, this statement regards equally children from the local and family environment.

Thus, for children from the local environment, Germany feels homelike and comfortable; however, the opposite claim for children from the family environment is not necessarily true. From one point of view, some aspects of life in Armenia are familiar, and some are irritating. From another point of view, the same might also refer to Germany. It is to say, children from the family environment have rather mixed feelings about where they belong. Comparative examples from my interviews highlight modes of feeling homelike in each country. For example, some of my interview partners stated that they feel better in Armenia because of being surrounded with relatives. From this point, a person does not feel lonely, whereas sometimes a feeling of loneliness might be quite typical for life in Germany. Another point, which makes Armenia and sometimes life among and with Armenian relatives uncomfortable for the second generation, is that older generations usually try to intervene and/or control younger generations. This intervention refers to the private sphere of life, touching upon such questions as choice of a life partner, marriage, etc. It becomes especially obvious during stays in Armenia, when grandparents try to find a good match for their grandchildren, or at least to put pressure on them in order not to delay that matter. From this perspective, distance reduces possibility and frequency of interventions into personal life, which makes young Armenians feel more comfortable in Germany. Notably, they do not feel this kind of pressure directly from parents. Even if the latter have their own ideas about the choice of their children's life partner, they would generally not do matchmaking, and would provide children with freedom (as much as it is possible).

Therefore, the paradoxical phenomenon of belonging to nowhere finds some expression also amongst the second-generation Armenians who participated in this research. Hence, when travelling to Armenia, relatives call them Germans, whereas in Germany, in some situations, they would feel to be different from Germans. Apart from being considered German in Armenia, they are Armenian in Germany. Nevertheless, this does not have much impact on their sense of belonging.

Thus, comparing the sense of belonging of the first and the second generations, the following assumption becomes evident. For the first generation, *Armenia includes notions of home and homeland;* whereas *Germany appears to be a unifying notion of home (to some extent) and a workplace.* For the second generation, Armenia is an *exotic land, named homeland or fatherland* (*Armenian: հայրենիք, hayrenik*)**,** the image of which has been embedded in their consciousness for years. In Armenian the notion *homeland* is called *fatherland* (*հայրենիք*), and therefore, both notions are completely synonymous. As explained at the beginning of this subchapter, I take *home* as a place where a person feels comfortable and *homeland* as the place of birth, or the country of

ancestors. From this perspective, for the first generation home and homeland intersect with each other in the notion of Armenia. Regarding the second generation, Germany is home and Armenia is the sacral and mythical homeland/fatherland, where they stem from. Germany, however, also fits into the category of homeland, since it is the country where they were born and have grown up, and spent all their conscious life. In parallel, again referring to some ideas of my second-generation interviewees, Armenia is and will always be something that belongs to them, and that no one can ever take away from them.

Notions of home and homeland for *arevmtahays*

As shown, the first- and second-generation participants of the research define differently where the home and homeland are, and Germany and Armenia appear differently in these roles. Questions of differentiation between notions of home and homeland might be even more ambiguous and obscure in the case of *arevmtahays*. The latter, in the scope of my research, are so-called twice diasporized Armenians. Thereby, they were already representatives of the Armenian diaspora before the immigration to Germany. It means that already in some third country they were experiencing dual sense of belonging. For them, immigration to Germany makes issues of belonging or feeling homelike in one place rather than in another even more obscure. In this case, analysing different interpretations of the notions of home and homeland, the fact whether *arevmtahays* have previously been to Armenia before is to be taken into account. This mainly plays a considerable part for the second-generation *arevmtahay* interviewees. Some of them have never been to Armenia, and have only heard about the country, its history and merits from parents. From this viewpoint, their perception of what Armenia means to them, and to what extent it might be their homeland is of a special interest. Armenia is embedded in their consciousness as a land of ancestors, which has a rich history and has suffered a lot in its historical past. Nostalgia about this sacred land has been transmitted from the generation of parents to the generation of children through stories and collective memories of this past and lost home. Therefore, Armenia becomes something mythical and intangible for those second-generation *arevmtahays* who have not been to Armenia. The symbolic image of this sacred land of ancestors becomes the major association related to Armenia. Those who have never been to Armenia desire to travel there one day in order to see with their own eyes and experience everything they have been hearing from parents since childhood. Hence, Shahan, a Syrian-Armenian respondent of mine, who appeared in early paragraphs of my analysis, has never been to Armenia, but has rich knowledge of Armenian history and considers the country to be partly his homeland or, more precisely, the land his roots come

from. He said that one of his greatest desires would be to see with his own eyes the country from his childhood fairy-tales.

> Այդ պատմութիւններդ, որ մայրս ու հայրս ինձի պատմած էին պզտիկ ժամանակ Հայաստանի մասին, Խոր Վիրապի ու Սասունցի Դաւիթի մասին, կուզեմ աչքովս տեսնալ…
>
> I want to see with my own eyes all those fairytales that my mother and father told me when I was a kid. About Khor Virap, Sasuntsi Davit...
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, second generation)

Shahan listed sights and historical monuments of Armenia *(Khor Virap, Sasuntsi Davit)*, which have important cultural and national value for all Armenians. Moreover, each of them has its own history and meaning, and Shahan knew all about them. Besides, he names fairy-tale stories heard in childhood: not only did those stories sound like fairy-tales, but the entire image of Armenia as a country has also become fabled and mythical – a country which simultaneously is native and foreign. Its image has been created due to the stories of their ancestors and strong collective memory. The young *arevmtahay* feels Armenia is something that belongs to him, but he does not belong to it. Armenia has a specific gravity pulling him in; however, Shahan would hardly call it home.

> Հայաստանին մէջ բան մը կայ, որ ինձի կը ձգէ: Ես կը զգամ, որ այն իմս է. չեմ կորսնցնէ. այնպիսի բան մը չէ, որ օր մը կրնամ կորսնցնել: Բայց, ճիշդն ըսած, չեմ՛ զգայ, որ այն իմ մայր երկիրս է. ես հոն տեղ չեմ եղած, ո՛չ տեսած եմ, ո՛չ ալ ապրած: Թէև բան մը կայ, որ ինձի կը քաշէ, կըսէ՝ պէտք է գոնէ անգամ մը տեսնաս ու ապրիս…
>
> There is something in Armenia which pulls me. I feel that it is mine, that I will never lose it; it is not something I can lose some day. But, to tell the truth, I do not feel that it is my mother land, because I have never been there: I have neither seen it, nor lived there. But there is something that pulls me, that says,you must see it, live there...
>
> (Extract from an interview: male, second generation)

Thus, some second-generation *arevmtahays* have never been to Armenia; however, its image is still very clear in their minds and imagination. They feel a specific connection to that land of their ancestors. They cannot explain this connection, but it is so strong, that it *pulls them,* as mentions the respondent of mine.

In comparison to those who have not been to Armenia, and have created its image only due to stories of parents, young *arevmtahays*, who have already travelled to Armenia at least once, have a different image of it. It is not an intangible idea, but something real, a land which they fell in love with. Interestingly, for these second-generation *arevmtahays,* Armenia tends to be more homelike than the country of their birth. For them, the latter has always had a status of a

host country, although young *arevmtahays* were born and grew up in that third country.

Hence, where is the home for *arevmtahays*? This is quite an entangled question to answer, especially regarding the second generation. In the above-presented interview extracts Shahan mentions he has never been to Armenia, but still has the feeling that Armenia belongs to him, and that it is not something he will one day lose. Nevertheless, he would not call Armenia his home. Germany is home for him, although he was born in a different country. Everything in Germany is familiar to him and he feels comfortable and homelike in this country, which he considers to be his home. If the notion of home is more or less clear, homeland is divided in two parts. One of the irreplaceable parts of the homeland constitutes Armenia, and the second is the country of birth. Notable is that these two do not have the same meaning and value. Hence, Armenia is mythical and the country of birth is real. It does not mean, however, that one has more value than the other. Meanings of both are different, and in this sense, Armenia is associated with dear and tender emotions, although it is has an image of some imagined and symbolical land where his roots come from (or go to).

Feeling that Armenia is something that belongs to them is typical also for those second-generation *arevmtahays*, who have already seen Armenia. The difference is that those young Armenians feel real, and not only symbolic, attachments to Armenia. Real memories accompany emotional attachments. From this perspective, Armenia is not only an abstract symbolical image, but something real and 'sizeable'. Research participants (*arevmtahays*), who had been to Armenia, spoke about their difficulties to differentiate which of the two countries could claim to be homeland – the country of their birth or Armenia. Both feel homelike, however, in a different way. Hence, Armenia is homeland because it is the land of ancestors, the land of origin, and they have heard so much about the country that it became familiar, valuable and dear to them. Meanwhile, the country of their birth also fits into the category of homeland. Young *arevmtahays* born in Germany do not experience this dilemma. In their case the differentiation between the home and homeland is quite distinct: Germany is home for them, and Armenia is a homeland. The third country their parents were born in or from where they immigrated to Germany is a symbolic manifestation of an intermediate homeland.

Armenia has a very important value for almost all *arevmtahays*. It signifies nostalgia about the past and about the home Armenians were forced to abandon, becoming dispersed all over the world. *Arevmtahays* have brought up and still continue to raise their children with the spirit to value Armenia as a land of ancestors, as their historical origins, and as the guarantee for their present being. For that reason, young *arevmtahays* sometimes know more about the history of

Armenia and Armenians, about historical heritage of the country, than some of *hayastantsi* second generations. Armenia is the homeland in the sense of the land of ancestors, country of origin, country that belongs to them and sometimes they also belong to it. Armenia plays rather an important role for their self-identification. However, it is not the home for most of them any longer. The home is where they live nowadays: it is Germany.

To summarize ambiguous arguments about home, homeland, and belonging, some difference in meanings and interpretations of concepts of home and homeland becomes clear; moreover, the difference is especially considerable for the second generation. It is definite that home is the place where they have spent their childhood, and where they live now. Thus, it is Germany, whereas Armenia remains the homeland in the sense of the ancestral land and the country they stem from.

6.2.2 Discourse of return

One of the notable characteristics of belonging among diasporic groups is the discourse of return. According to Tölölyan (2010; 2005), this discourse is based on *exilic nationalism* and the development of an *exilic consciousness* (Tölölyan 2005, p. 44). Tölölyan refers to post–Genocide Armenian communities all over the world, who kept in mind the dream of repatriation. Exiled people always have in their minds the desire to return to the fatherland from where they have been evicted by force. This consciousness has been transmitted from generation to generation through collective narratives, and with the course of time has crystallized in minds of diasporic generations becoming a peculiarity. Return is a mythical desire, which migrants claim unconsciously, and also, to some degree, automatically, and mostly never think it could really happen. However, emotional attachments to the ancestral land fuel the mythic desire to return home one day. As Vertovec (2005) mentions, belonging to diaspora involves the consciousness of, and emotional attachments to common origins and culture. Concerns for development of the homeland and for the wellbeing of the native nation emerge from emotional attachments to the idealized and mythical image of the homeland (Vertovec 2005, p. 5). My interviews with *arevmtahays* witness that they do not theoretically exclude the possibility to return to Armenia one day. The word 'theoretically' indicates that this return discourse flows from the diasporic consciousness, and this *one day* never apparently comes. Some direct questions such as for example: 'Imagine if Armenia had the same level of economic development as Germany, would you go to live there?' come to prove it. This question excludes the matter of facing economic difficulties and some following consequences, such as difficulties concerning employment and providing

good life condition for the family. The question abstractly puts Germany and Armenia on the same level of economic development. Thus, answering it, respondents should picture the return migration only as a change of the place of living. In this case they would have to deal only with cultural differences between German and Armenian societies. However, appearing in an imaginary situation where they had to confront the discourse of the practicality of a possible return, my interviewees hesitated to give direct and univocal answers. Instead, they leaned on different *ifs, in cases* or just said that it was a difficult question to answer because *their life is here*. It means they are already accustomed to the way of life and reality in Germany, whereas returning they would have to start everything all over from the beginning. Whether or not they would succeed, remains an open rhetoric question, which no one would be able to answer.

The return discourse of *arevmtahays* is quite interesting, because as presented, they have strong feelings for both Armenia, as an imaginary-idealistic homeland and also for a so-called third country (from where they have come to Germany). Nevertheless, my *arevmtahay* interview partners of both first and second generations do not consider Armenia as a country they would want to return to some day. Probably, the word 'return' is not correct here either, because they have never inhabited in nowadays Armenia, in order to return.

Thoughts on return appeared during my interviews with *hayastantsis* too. Many of them mentioned that when making a decision to come to Germany, they had in their mind to return to Armenia one day. For those the purpose of migration was to find a job in Germany, to earn money in order to be able to provide good/sufficient life conditions for their children's future after returning to Armenia. These kinds of thoughts were especially typical to those who migrated during the 1990s—the years of political, social, and economic crisis in Armenia, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declaration of independence of Armenia. Some young families still had this idea in their minds during the time of my fieldwork. Nevertheless, when thinking about possible return, the desire meets practical difficulties. For example, in the case of young families with small children, thoughts on returning are sometimes being articulated, however they end up in a deadlock when facing the issues of their children's education, schools, and future life in general. In families where children are already grown up, difficulties related to return to the homeland face the same issues mentioned above but in another realm. Here worries are expressed not by the parents, but by the children themselves. Having spent all their conscious life in Germany, they cannot imagine any future in Armenia. For them, moving back would mean to start everything from beginning, i.e. socializing to a new society with its different values, norms, and patterns of behaviour; making new social contacts and becoming proficient in the language. The last point could be equally

confusing, taking into consideration the fact that many second-generation Armenians are proficient in spoken Armenian, but they do not master the writing.

Therefore, regardless of its origins, reasons and motivations, the return discourse is some ideal dream which is characteristic to long-term or permanent migration, or to diasporas. However, one should be careful judging about the realistic motivations of the return. It seems to be some sort of a topic that the interviewees felt obliged to touch upon when speaking about transnational ties to the homeland, but even the ones who raise it realize the impossibility to turn words into real actions.

To summarize, the practical impossibility of the actual return allows assuming that the discourse of return is tightly related to the image of homeland as something sweet, far, and unreachable. Nevertheless, as soon as those nostalgic feelings (which have the strong power of collective memory) are being projected as possible actions, they fail to become real.

6.3 Manifestations of the sense of belonging

The sense of belonging is a traverse process of learning in two directions: first, toward the culture, traditions and norm-value system of the country of residence; and second, it is learning towards the cultural heritage of one's own nation. This mixture of old and new creates the sense of *negotiated belonging* (Feuchtwang 1992, p. 4–5) and leads to the dilemma of notions of home and homeland. In addition, one of the definitions of transnationalism by Vertovec highlights one's awareness of his or her multiple engagements and belongings (Vertovec 2009, p. 5–6). From the perspective, there is no one unique belonging, instead, people might have several and different claims of belonging. In this realm, of a particular interest is the question of national belonging and its manifestations. With this regard Arsiné described her situation, her sense of belonging, in an expressive metaphorical comparison:

> Կարծես երկու կոստյումով ծնված լինեմ... Գերմանական միջավայրում գերմանական կոստյումս եմ հագնում, հայկականում՝ հայկականը: Երբ երկուսը միասին հագա, նոր երջանիկ զգացի:
>
> It seems I was born with two suits... In the German environment I put on my German costume, in the Armenian environment, the Armenian. When I put on both together, then I felt happy.
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

This interview excerpt clearly expresses the dual sense of belonging, on the formation of which transnational lifestyles have simultaneously direct and

indirect impact. Feeling attachments to both lands and bearing imprints of both cultures and traditions, migrants feel as if they have two personalities. In some cases they are contradictory, and in other cases they are complementing each other. Feeling of completeness comes with putting two *costumes* together simultaneously.

In this section I will address features of the sense of belonging from the perspective of nationhood and will jointly summarize findings for the first- and the second-generation interviewees, as the research results show similar perceptions and answers related to these questions. Thus, I analyse two questions: first, willingness (or not) to be different from or resembling the mainstream population of the host country, and second, possible confusion with other nationalities (and reactions to it). I also asked about situations when my research participants wanted to emphasize or to hide their national belonging. In this realm, the most discussed were so-called confusions with representatives of other nations, and related possible strategies to prevent (or maybe also to encourage) these misrecognitions.

Willingness to be different or similar depends on the basis of differentiation or comparison. For example, because of dark hair colour and mostly brown eyes, Armenians might look similar to Spaniards, Italians, or Turks.[68] Interestingly, women are more often confused with Spanish and Italians, than men. One of my interviewees shared her experience of being mistaken for a Spanish woman. Some Spanish people started to speak Spanish to her on the street, and were completely surprised to learn that she was not Spanish. The possible reason for misrecognitions—as my interviewees explained—might be the lack of knowledge about Armenia and Armenians. Spain, Italy, and Turkey are more well-known countries, and people have some idea how people from these nations look. For that reason, meeting someone with more or less the same appearance, they immediately associate these persons with Spanish, Italian, or some other people with similar traits. Important to mrntion that my interview partners considered confirmative sentences to find out someone's origin (such questions as 'do you come from country X?') especially unacceptable. They believe that it is more polite to ask 'where do you come from?', rather than directly express one's doubts about the origins of the other person. For my interview partners, it was especially unpleasant when confused with some Muslim nationalities. Some Armenians have developed unconscious strategies to prevent these confusions. A typical example is wearing a cross (as jewellery) in a prominent position—generally as a necklace. This is a conscious manifestation of belonging to a particular group (in this case, a religious belonging), which

[68] These are the main three groups mentioned during my fieldwork. My interview partners mentioned mainly examples of being confused with representatives of these nations.

Levitt and Glick Schiller put under the category of ways of belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, p. 1010). For most Armenians wearing a cross is generally a part of daily dressing. What makes wearing a cross a strategy, is the way of doing it, i.e. wearing it prominently, so that everyone can see.

In general, this issue of being confused with other nations not only untangles specificities of interpreting the difference, but it also uncovers some hidden aspects of national pride. The sense of belonging from the perspective of nationhood is a conglomerate of the sense of rootedness, self-identification, and translocation of memories. Here too, a point of departure for my analysis serves willingness (or not) to be different or resembling. This question is quite contradictory, however. On the one hand, women for instance, might colour hair into lighter tones not to look very different from Germans. On the other hand, they tend to avoid diffusion in the overall mainstream, and want to emphasize individuality and exoticness. Furthermore, the research results show, that the desire not be different from Germans is not accompanied by the aspiration to reject Armenianness. It flows out from the desire to avoid the mark of foreignness. The second-generation interviewees experienced these feelings especially strongly during the first years of residence in Germany. For some, lacking perfect knowledge of German language gave rise to an inferiority complex and feelings of foreignness, which, however, was gradually reduced over time. The sense of national belonging became stronger later, mainly when the language barrier was overcome. For example, as one of my interviewees mentioned, she preferred to be different, and to somehow show that she is Armenian, because it is more interesting and exotic to be an Armenian than some other nation, about which more is known.

Inclination to be recognized as Armenians

When (and why) do Armenians tend to somehow emphasize or, vice versa, to hide their national belonging? In this realm, dual standards function. Thus, in some cases emphasizing and articulating Armenianness can be profitable, whereas in other situations Armenians tend to conceal their national belonging. However, my interviewees could hardly remember situations, when they in purpose wanted to hide their nationality. Evidently, the desire to emphasize Armenianness or to be recognized as an Armenian is especially big in those environments, where people know about Armenia and Armenians, and what is more important, where there is some awareness of merits and achievements of the nation. This argument refers to the statement presented in previous chapters of this work, more precisely, in sections referring to Armenian collective memory and strategic nationalism, by stating that Armenians prefer to live in the past.

Being proud of their past accomplishments, Armenians tend to say that their culture is more ancient and has more traditions than the culture of Germany, that Armenian language, literature, and writing are older, than German etc. Furthermore, world-known people of Armenian origin represent important links in the chain of national merits. Good examples are the famous French-Armenian singer Charles Aznavour; the well-known musician, composer, and *duduk*[69] player Djivan Gasparyan; Henrikh Mkhitaryan, a professional Armenian football player in German Borussia Dortmund club; world-known boxer Arthur Abraham, who also represents Germany, and many others. Hence, the sense of national belonging for Armenians reaches its summit or peak when trying to represent Armenians from a better side and make the merits of the Armenian nation known to others. During my interview with Melik, while talking about situations in his life in which he took pride in being an Armenian, he told me that he was always eager to find interesting facts about Armenians and Armenian history, and tell his German friends and acquaintances about these things. Below is a corresponding quote from his interview.

> Բոլորին ուզում եմ ներկայացնել հայերի յավ կողմերը: Մի քանի ամիս առաջ ինտերնետում կարդացի, որ գինին առաջին անգամ հայերն են սարքել: Ինչ-որ հատուկ խաղողի տեսակ կա, որից հայերն են առաջին գինի պատրաստել: Շատ ուրախացա, որ կարդացի դա, ու բոլորին պատմում էի: Կամ ասում են, որ եգիպտացիք շատ հին ազգ են՝ 3000 տարվա պատմություն ունեն, ես ասում եմ, որ չէ, հայերն ավելի հին են՝ 3500 տարվա պատմություն ունեն: Սիրում եմ, որ լավ են խոսում հայերի մասին:
>
> I want to present good sides of Armenians to everyone. Some months ago I read on the Internet that Armenians were the first to make wine. There is a special sort of grape from which Armenians made wine first. I got very happy reading this and I was telling everyone about it. Or, they say, Egyptians are an ancient nation, they have a story of 3000 years. I say no, Armenians are more ancient, they have a story of 3500 years. I like it when they speak well about Armenians.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

Thus, taking into consideration the perspective that the sense of being an Armenian, or, to say it differently, the sense of national belonging becomes stronger when highlighting merits of the Armenian nation, it is interesting to find out whether national belonging somehow or in some situations has played (or still plays) any important role—positive or negative—during the residence in Germany. The results of my interviews show that Armenianness has not had any

[69] *Duduk* (Armenian: *դուդուկ*) is an ancient Armenian flute made of apricot wood. UNESCO has claimed duduk and its music as a Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

explicit positive or negative role. More precisely, the reason for experiencing positive or negative attitudes, or confronting some pleasant or unpleasant situations was not Armenianness in particular, but being a foreigner, in general. In this realm, the most mentioned complaints were referring complicated German bureaucracy, which is even more complex regarding foreigners. The more people confront situations which are independent from them, and in which they cannot change the course of events, the more they tend to accept the situation as deliberately being against them.

Thus, the sense of national belonging with its various manifestations is interestingly expressed also in willingness to be recognized as Armenians, or not. This desire becomes especially strong in situations accentuating national merits and demonstrating national pride.

Name as a determinant of belonging

An interesting and noteworthy manifestation of national belonging appears in the realm of Armenian names and possible pronunciation difficulties related to them. Most of my research participants (both generations of *hayastantsis* and *arevmtahays*) have Armenian names. Basically, *arevmtahays* have more ancient Armenian names, than *hayastantsis*. They have maintained this tradition from generation to generation in their first host countries, and continue it in Germany. Some of my interview partners stated that the right pronunciation of their names was of great importance to them. In this realm, an interesting comparison of my research with the study of Vered Amit Talai (1989) emerges. The author states that Armenians in London may use European equivalents of their first names (Talai 1989, p. 97): for example, Hovhannes becomes Johannes, Hakob becomes Jacob, etc. This, in contrast, is not a tendency among my research participants. They proudly continue wearing their Armenian names also in Germany. Some of them even recalled situations when they were explicitly trying to teach Germans how to pronounce their names and surnames correctly. One of my second-generation interviewee's name is *Khosrov*, which contains the consonant 'kh' *(խ)* which, in combination with the German 'r', is difficult to pronounce for German-speaking people. But Khosrov has no intention to change his name; instead he always takes his time to explain how to pronounce it correctly.

> Անունս էլ դժվարանում են արտասանել, բայց ես սովորեցնում եմ և' անունս, և' ազգանունս, ու ստիպում եմ, որ ճիշտ ասեն: Ես ոնց սովորեցի իրենց լեզուն, իրենց դժվար արտասանվող բառերը, թող իրենք էլ իմ անուն, ազգանունը ճիշտ արտասանել սովորեն:

> They have difficulties pronouncing my name, but I teach them both my name and surname, and force them to say it correctly. I learned their language, their difficult-to-pronounce words, so let them learn to pronounce my name and surname correctly.
>
> (Extract from an interview: male)

This could be interpreted as an expression of the desire to be individual and unique. Hence, the name for a person is one of the most important indicators of national belonging. From this point of view, a name might also, to some extent, influence self-identification and the sense of belonging. If the name is too strange and unusual for the country of residence, it might indicate one's foreignness, and thus indirectly influence the sense of belonging to the country of residence and to the homeland.

Summarizing findings in the scope of manifestations of nationhood and the sense of national belonging, I have shown that generally Armenianness becomes stronger in situations which assume presentation of achievements and historical merits of Armenians, accompanied by the sense of pride and splurge. These feelings strengthen and get affirmation with each back-and-forth travel to Armenia. The sense of Armenianness becomes stronger and sustained for some period after the return to Germany. In course of time, however, it weakens, and dissolves in the everyday routine, and re-awakes in accordance with back-and-forth travels or situations which assume articulations of the strategic nationalism. These ups and downs, strengthening and weakening of transnational activity and practices I have named *fluctuating transnationalism.* The following subchapter addresses features of this fluctuating transnationalism and modes of its manifestations among my research participants.

6.4 Fluctuating transnationalism: continuity principle of transnational ties

Previous chapters of this work contain references to fluctuating transnationalism in various paragraphs. It is a notion distinguished in the results of my research, and regards both generations but is expressed especially clearly among the second generation. Transnationalism literature provides wide-range studies of different types of transnationalism, and explanations about factors influencing intensity of transnational ties.[70] However, not much has been said about periodical strengthening and weakening of transnational ties and practices over time periods and possible factors or circumstances fostering it. For example, Lee (2011), Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2002b) distinguish various types of

[70] For more literature review on the topic and detailed description of transnationalism types, see Chapter 2 on transnationalism and diaspora.

transnationalism (generally regarding the second generation), when transnational ties vary over course of time; nevertheless, these variations do not have a periodical repetitive character. Hence, Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo determine *resource-dependent transnationalism* (2002b, p. 899), which points out the intensification of transnationalism after migrants' incorporation into the country of residence. The argument is that afterwards they have more resources to maintain transnational practices. Thus, resource-dependent transnationalism refers only to a one way process in time, whereas fluctuating transnationalism reveals also decreases of transnational practices, focusing on circumstances different from migrant incorporation. Between increase–decrease intervals, when emotional attachments come to replace direct connections to the homeland, fluctuating transnationalism may relate to or get the form of *indirect* (Lee 2011, p. 306) or *emotional transnationalism* (Wolf 2002, p. 255).[71]

Thus, my research complements the determined types of transnationalism and shows that transnational activity and practices undergo fluctuations (or cross-border ties strengthen and weaken in fluctuations), intensifying and fading away in correspondence with various circumstances. Prime and most common examples of these are back-and-forth travels to homeland, occasions strengthening feelings of national pride, and opportunities to articulate merits of the country of origin.

In the following subchapter I will summarize the notion and meaning of fluctuating transnationalism. I will then analyse some specificities of back-and-forth travels to the homeland, emphasizing the importance of the first after-migration travel, and its role in formation of the image of the homeland (especially for the second generation).

6.4.1 Fluctuations of transnational ties and practices

Fluctuating transnationalism, as a specific mode or manifestation of transnational ties, indicates that border-spanning connections do not have the same intensity in different intervals of migrants' life. For example, transnational activity and practices vary from event to event, or between back-and-forth travels to the homeland. I call these intervals *fluctuations of transnational ties and practices*. Ups and downs of fluctuating transnationalism are in direct correspondence with travels to the homeland and returns, and with outbreak and extinction of some pan-Armenian events.

The concept of fluctuating transnationalism points out the importance of direct connections with homeland for long-term maintenance of transnational

[71] For explanation of terms, see chapter 2.

ties. In her study of Guatemalan-origin children in the United States, Cecilia Menjívar emphasizes the important role of back-and-forth travels to homeland in durability of transnationalism. Due to lack of travels to the homeland, generations of migrants will no longer remember their origins, and for that reason, direct contacts with the homeland are important for continuation of transnational ties (Menjívar 2002, p. 547). My research confirms this importance, since fluctuating transnationalism reveals intensification of transnational contacts in the time period following travels to the homeland (more precisely, time period after the return). Spending some time in Armenia strengthens relations with relatives; consequently, after returning to Germany, ties become more regular and frequent. Nevertheless, they diminish in course of time until the next visit to Armenia. Owing to repetitive intensifications and diminutions of cross-border ties, I call this type of transnational connections fluctuating transnationalism. Interestingly, these fluctuations refer to connections and communication, but not to remittances. If families send some money and/or presents to relatives, they continue doing so independently from back-and-forth travels. Presents for almost every relative are an integral part of visits to the homeland, but it does not determine frequency of any kind of dispatch from Germany.

Travels to the homeland are, indeed, one of the important conditioning factors, or 'levers' of fluctuating transnationalism. The latter, however, also depends on some other, not less important factors. Thus, transnational practices and activity fluctuate also in accordance with outbursts and downturns of occasions and/or events fostering strategic nationalism, national pride, and articulation of national interests. Good examples for this statement represent two cases discussed in Chapter 5. Moreover, annual commemoration ceremonies of the Armenian Genocide awake and foster transnational activity even among those who otherwise prefer not to partake in pan-Armenian gatherings and any other collective transnational activity. The preparation period of commemorations signifies a strong increase in fluctuation intervals, however, as also shown in case of the centennial, after the attenuation of passions, frequency of transnational practices goes down until the next similar occasion or event.

Fluctuations of transnational ties or fluctuating transnationalism might have an interesting impact on the sense of national belonging. As discussed in previous subchapters, the sense of belonging of the first and the second generation is dual; moreover, it changes with respect to the place and social environment. It means that, for example, being in Armenia or in Armenian environment elsewhere (surrounded by other Armenians or participating in events related to Armenia), or articulating interests of the nation (e.g. case of the Genocide), the sense of belonging to Armenia becomes stronger. After the so-called peak of the fluctuation interval—be this in the result of a trip to Armenia, or some event

related to Armenia and articulation of Armenianness—transnational practices of different kinds continue to be intensive for a while. In course of time, however, engagements in daily routine lead to gradual dissolvent of manifestations of Armenianness. In this realm, maintenance of transnational ties, more precisely, their intensity, and generally transnational activity also vary with regard to back-and-forth travels of migrants, as well as outbreak and downturn of pan-Armenian events and occasions.

Fluctuating transnationalism, in the form of strengthening–weakening transnational ties with respect to homeland visits, is especially relevant to the second generation, although to some extent it also refers to the first generation. Types of ties and connections to the homeland have special influence on manifestations of fluctuating transnationalism. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the second generation generally does not have priority contact recipients (parents and siblings) in the country of origin, who are guarantors of sustained and intensive contacts. That is one of the most significant reasons that explains why transnational ties of the second generation have tendency to fade away in length of time. To be more precise, they do not disappear completely, but the frequency of calls, conversations, and other forms of maintaining transnational connections usually dramatically decreases. This decrease, however, lasts only until the next visit to Armenia, after which connections with relatives back in the homeland get a new intensity, and thereafter, they again go down. This is how fluctuating transnationalism manifests. Referring to the first generation, whose social environment in the homeland includes almost all types of contact recipients (priority, primary, and secondary), it is to say, intensity of their transnational ties also fluctuates; yet, fluctuation intervals are not as large as compared to the second generation. According to the first-generation interviewees, reasons for this decrease are engagements in daily responsibilities. Moreover, both sides of transnational contacts get involved in routines, and on a daily basis do not devote much time to communications with relatives and friends abroad. Nevertheless, this reasoning does not provide a thorough explanation of the phenomenon of fluctuating transnationalism. If the reason for fading connections was business and daily occupations, than why would transnational connections be intense right after the return to the country of residence—after a regular visit to Armenia? My argument is that contact recipients are important factors conditioning not only regularity of transnational ties, but also intensity of their fluctuations. This accordingly explaines the reasons of more considerable fluctuation intervals with regard to the second generation. From the perspective of this argument, fluctuating transnationalism is not a one-sided process; rather, it depends on both sides of cross-border connections – the ones who leave and the ones who stay.

To summarize, four main factors are determinant for fluctuating transnationalism: first, *back-and-forth travels*, second, *contact recipients in the country of origin*, third, *daily occupations* on both sides of transnational connections, and last but not least, *events and occasions* directly related to situations presuming demonstration of Armenianness and the strategic nationalism.

6.4.2 Back-and-forth travels to the homeland

Back-and-forth travels and experiences collected during these journeys are important for further manifestations of fluctuating transnationalism, since fluctuations of transnational ties depend on intervals of Germany–Armenia–Germany travels. Furthermore, a direct and reversible connection exists between back-and-forth travels and the sense of belonging. As Nazli Kibria notices in her research on second-generation Chinese- and Korean-Americans, homeland trips foster a sense of affinity, but they also challenge notion of belonging (Kibria 2002, p. 305). Hence, on the one hand, the sense of belonging to Armenia gets stronger while there, but on the other hand, migrants start missing Germany, or their house in Germany, or simply something that connects them to Germany—job, friends, garden, plants, German bread, etc. It is to say, the process of missing has two faces: something Armenian—air, landscape, water, food, view from the window, etc.—is missing while Germany, and vice versa. Therefore, on the one hand, the sense of belonging to the homeland strengthens while in Armenia, and on the other hand, things and phenomena connecting migrants to the country of residence highlight with a stronger intensity, hereby strengthening also the sense of belonging there. The opposite process occurs during intervals of stays in Germany. Therefore, fluctuating transnationalism can also shift the emphasis of the sense of belonging.

Below I will address the aforementioned issues, and will analyse experiences gathered due to these back-and-forth travels. Since these experiences have different meanings and interpretations for the first and the second generation, below separate analysis will follow for each generation.

First generation

After some years of residence in Germany, the first travel back to the homeland awoke different feelings and expectations. Some were enthusiastic to see changes that had taken place in Armenia and particularly, in their home cities/towns/villages, whereas others were only eager to meet relatives after long separation. Some of my interviewees first travelled back to the homeland almost after a decade (sometimes even two) of life in Germany. It is long enough to get accustomed to the new land, and to incorporate its value and norm system, and

thereby not to feel a complete foreigner any more. Moreover, the majority of my interview partners regarded this as a period of personal change, which contributed to incorporation of German ways of being and in the result, to newly interpretation of Armenian ones. During this period, lifestyle and everyday routine of the host country has become familiar to them. In contrast, things in Armenia did not seem to be the same as before. The attitude, perceptions, and worldview have been changed, and for that reason, common things in the homeland did not appear in the same manner as before migration.

Thus, the majority of interviewees stated that the first travel to Armenia was somehow special and different from the following visits in many aspects—expectations, excitement, attitude of relatives, the welcome, etc. The main common reason for the specialness of the first visit was the strong feeling of homesickness. From this perspective, the first-generation interviewees vary on the basis of homesickness feelings: those who had the feeling of homesickness *only towards relatives*, and those who missed *both relatives and Armenia* at the same time. Logically, for the first category, the main pulling factor in Armenia were/are relatives, whereas the homesickness of the second category is expressed not only in desire to be next to parents and siblings, but also they were/are eager to see the country, breathe its air, eat fruits, and vegetables grown in the Armenian soil. Many of my interviewees combined the first travel home with some important family occasion, for example, a wedding or a birthday of some of the relatives. It made memories of the first visit even more special because after a long absence there was an opportunity to see everyone together at the same time. Nevertheless, despite the feeling of homesickness about Armenia itself and about relatives, my interview partners were also looking forward to returning back to Germany. They had left some important parts and aspects of their lives in Germany, and were eager to return to that life. Various occupations, jobs, and family were pulling them back to Germany. Not often my interview partners had the opportunity to travel back to Armenia with all family members together. For that reason, while in Armenia, they were experiencing another kind of homesickness.

Thus, in the result of transnational lifestyle, migrants permanently—irrespective of the place of residence at the given time point—experience feelings of homesickness, the feeling of leaving something behind, which leaves an open-ended edge in order to go back. These feelings accompany migrants equally in the country of residence and in the country of origin. In this respect, Tatev, my interview partner, when asked about her feelings travelling back and forth between Germany and Armenia, said:

> Այնպես եմ զգում, որ ինչ-որ բան թողել եմ հետևումս: Հայացք ես գըցում, որ էլի հետադարձի ճանապարհ կա: Էլի կարոտը…

> I feel so, as if I have left something behind. You throw a glance back, that there is a way back. Again homesickness…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

After-migration travel to Armenia is especially noteworthy for *arevmtahays*. For them it was not going home or visiting their house; it was travelling to somewhere with the status of both an owner and a tourist at the same time. Although they did not have their own house in the ancestral land, the feeling of familiarity with it and belonging to it was and is an integral part of their perception of Armenia. Some of the first-generation *arevmtahays* visited Armenia for the first time while still residing in their first host countries. This visit evoked contradictory feelings towards Armenia—love and devotion, resistance and indifference, admiration or disappointment. These contradictory feelings are reasons of justified or unjustified expectations. Generations of *arevmtahays* have been raised on beautiful stories about Armenia, due to which, a unique image of the country has been formed in their perception—as a rule, a perfect and ideal image. Therefore, visiting their ancestral land for the first time, their expectations from this image were either realized or not.

In summary, back-and-forth travels highlight the important role of both countries as componenets of belonging. While in Armenia, Armenians lack German calmness and order, whereas while in Germany, they miss the Armenian hospitality and cordiality. Germany and Armenia without each other are imperfect and incomplete.

Second generation

First travel back to the country of origin has a different meaning for the second generation. For most of them, it was the first visit to Armenia in their lives. This is also true for those who migrated at an early age, for, to a great extent, they did not have any real memories about the land of their origin. Second generation's perceptions of Armenia and feelings about it are, thereby, different. Armenia has never been a country to which their life has been strongly connected. They accept it as an exotic and unique land, where they are always welcome at the homes of grandparents, uncles and aunts.

The first visit to Armenia was completely a new experience for some of my interviewees, whereas the others could still recall some blurred images from their early ages. For the first category of young Armenians, travelling back was full of excitement to see *The* Armenia with their own eyes. Although having grown up in Germany, they claimed that travelling back to Armenia gave them the sensation of visiting the homeland. Here it is important to mention that for second-generation *hayastantsis* and *arevmtahays,* the notion of homeland flows out from the diasporic consciousness. The latter would supposedly manifest

more self-evidently among *arevmtahay* second generations, given the fact that they are descendants of diasporized generations. My research allows the assumption that the same diasporic consciousness has been forming among the second-generation *hayastantsis*. This, in turn, leads to a further hypothesis that among the third, fourth and following generations of *hayastantsis*, diasporic consciousness would deepen, and they would become new diasporic generations. The word 'become' here indicates perceptions of significant others; in other words, how others identify (or will identify) the third, fourth and further generations of *hayastatsis* residing in Germany. With this respect, one of my first-generation interview partners noticed that she was not a representative of the Armenian diaspora, but her children were, and growing up, they would realize it more and more.

The first travel to Armenia for *hayastantsi* and *arevmtahay* second-generation research participants did not differ principally, since both had mythical perceptions about Armenia. Travelling to the country where the roots of their family stem, a positive shock accompanied their first impressions. Although having heard numerous stories about how Armenia and Armenians are, they were shocked to experience completely different ways of being from the ones they have been used to. As my interview partners stated, the first visit to Armenia gave them the opportunity to newly value, interpret, and reconsider notions of friendship and kinship. The reason for this reconsideration was the warm reception from relatives in Armenia.

Although, in general, encounters with new ways of being and a new social environment with its rules, values, and reception were positive, some differences are noticeable in perceptions of children from the family and local environment. Hence, a cordial welcome from relatives in Armenia was something taken for granted by children from the family environment, although the fact that human relations could be that warm partly surprised them. In contrast, it seemed artificial to children from the local environment. Here are some examples of how and why some common Armenian things seemed strange or fake to children from the local environment. Hence, Mané is a second-generation young Armenian at the age of 22. Her family immigrated to Germany when she was five years old, and after that, she first travelled back to Armenia at the age of 16. Mané told me that she got fascinating impressions, and was very happy during her stay in Armenia; still she noticed some things that were odd to her. The following Armenian manners seemed especially bizarre to her:

> (…) ինձ թվաց, որ դա ավելի շատ էթիկետ էր: Օրինակ՝ որ մեկն ասում է՝ «մեռնեմ ջանիդ», չի ասում, որովհետև մեռնում է ջանիդ, այլ ասում է, որովհետև այդպես են ասում, ու դա իսկական չէ, դա մենակ խոսք է…

> (...) it seemed to me that it was all more about etiquette. For example, when someone says *mernem janid*[72], they do not say it, because they die for you, but they just say so, because everyone does, and it is not for real, it is only an expression…
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

In Armenian language and speech sweet and caressing words are more commonly used, than in German, and hearing them from almost everyone in Armenia sounded odd to Mané – especially when she could not understand some idiomatic expressions. Indeed, these expressions of endearment might sound illogical to the one who tries to interpret it literally, which happened to my interview partner. It seemed especially unusual to her to hear sweet words from almost everyone addressing her in Armenia.

Apart from lingual aspects, some behavioural patterns also seemed unusual and were interestingly estimated as a matter of etiquette:

> Իրենք շատ *nett* (գերմաներենից՝ բարեհամբույր) են ինձ հետ, բայց օրինակ՝ մեկի տուն որ գնում ես, ինքը շատ nett է, որովհետև այդպես պետք է անի: Ոնց որ դա էթիկետ լինի: Այստեղ, օրինակ՝ որ մեկի տուն ես գնում, քիչ է էթիկետը, օրինակ՝ կարող է սուրճ հյուրասիրել, կարող է՝ ոչ, կարող է ասել՝ դու պիտի գնաս… դա *ehrlich* է (գերմաներենից՝ ազնիվ):
>
> They are very *nett* (from German – nice, friendly) with me, but, for example, when you pay a visit to someone's place, they are very net, because they must do so, as if it is etiquette. For example, here when you go to someone's place, there is less etiquette. For example, they might offer you coffee or might not, they might tell you that you must leave… it is *ehrlich* (from German – honest).
>
> (Extract from an interview: female)

Thus, the first travel back to Armenia for the second generation was their first experience of encountering Armenian culture, Armenians, and generally anything Armenian outside Germany. Moreover, the first travel was an opportunity to juxtapose mythical and imagined perceptions about the homeland with its reality. From this perspective, it became the token of either approved expectations or disappointment. For the second generation, Armenia is an exotic land with beautiful landscape, bright sun, and tasty food, which always invites tourists for nice vacations. The second generation, in this sense, is almost similar to tourists, the difference is the feeling of partially belonging to this land, even if

[72] There are some Armenian expressions of endearment which are untranslatable, for example *ցավդ տանեմ* (*tsavd tanem*), *մեռնեմ ջանիդ* (*mernem janid*), etc. Literary *tsavd tanem* would mean I would take your pain away, and *mermen janid* would express the readiness to die for someone. These expressions are very common in Armenian speech. More often they are used by parents, grandparents addressing their children and grandchildren; however, sometimes they are used referring to persons of not direct kinship.

this sense of belonging is rather abstract and more mythical than real. That mythical sense of belonging allows them not to feel foreign in Armenia, which, in a sense, might be almost a foreign country for them.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have discussed important components of belonging, and have analysed where it feels to be at home for the first and the second generations, and how these feelings change after back-and-forth travels to the home country. In this regard, I have addressed so-called increase–decrease intervals of transnational activity, naming it *fluctuating transnationalism*.

The language and religion are two core aspects and indicators of Armenian national belonging. Throughout Armenian history, these two have been symbols awakening national pride, and fostering a sense of nationhood. The Armenian Church has undertaken the important role of teaching the mother tongue and the history of the homeland, and in doing so it has been contributing to the development of the strategic nationalism. The results of my research have shown some decrease in church attendance, however, the faith and belief remains the same. Put differently, tendency of separation of the church and religion is noticeable; nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean a decrease in importance of the church in the lives of research participants. It means, rather, that in order to practice the religion, people do not necessarily go to church and community gatherings on religious holidays. Furthermore, the examples of Christmas and Easter celebrations showed how transnational lifestyles promote fusing religiosity.

Regarding language, German and Armenian occupy their unique spaces in daily life of the first and the second generations. They mutually intervene into each other's spaces; however, the proportion of presence of each language varies in regard to generations. Compared to the second generation, Armenian occupies much more space in daily encounters of the first generation.

Indeed, simultaneous presence in more than one reality influences components of belonging. In the end, the sense of belonging becomes *dual.* Not only the ambiguity, but also paradoxical character of the *dual sense of belonging* is of special interest – simultaneous belonging to several places in the end leads to belonging nowhere. As a result, a person might have various attachments to different places, however, he or she might not feel completely belonging to any of these places. The research results allow concluding that the sense of nationhood or national belonging manifests especially in suitable circumstances to pride oneself in merits and achievements of the country of origin, as well as in situations when someone is being mixed up with other nationalities.

Dual sense of belonging to some extent influences meanings and interpretations of notions of home and homeland. Evidently, these interpretations are slightly different from perspectives of the first and the second generations. Hence, for both generations the notion of home is associated with the place of residence at present. From this viewpoint, Germany is home for the second generation and to some extent also for the first-generation respondents. An important nuance is that for the latter, Armenia continues to be home in any case. Regarding the notion of homeland, the first-generation Armenians, who partook in my research, feel Armenia to be their homeland, whereas for the second generation, both Germany and Armenia are homelands. The peculiarity here is that Germany appears as a real homeland (in the sense of being a birthplace or the country where the conscious life was spent), and Armenia as a mythical, imaginary and sacred land of ancestors, which also belongs to the category of homeland. To put it another way, the discourse goes into the realm of attachments, i.e. emotional attachments to Armenia and pragmatic to Germany. Due to these attachments, the sense of belonging also varies from emotionally belonging to Armenia, and pragmatically to Germany. These attachments might strengthen and weaken in correspondence with several factors, among them events related to articulation of Armeniannes, back-and-forth travels to the ancestral land, etc. The aforementioned results in the emergence of a specific mode of manifestation of transnational connections I have named *fluctuating transnationalism*.

Fluctuating transnationalism shows that the intensity of transnational ties and practices has periodical ups and downs, in accordance with above-mentioned circumstances. In other words, transnational ties do not have the same intensity in the intervals between back-and-forth travels and certain events; and the intervals of increase and decrease are in direct correspondence with events such as travels to the homeland and returns, outbursts and downturns of some initiatives articulating pan-Armenian interests and aspirations. The intensity of fluctuating transnationalism thereby depends on four main factors: first, back-and-forth travels, second, contact recipients in the country of origin, third, daily occupations on both sides of transnational connections, and last but not least, events and occasions directly related to situations presuming demonstration of Armenianness and the strategic nationalism.

Fluctuating transnationalism also impacts the sense of belonging to some degree: participation in some action, initiative, or event concerning the country of origin strengthens the sense of belonging to it. However, engagements in daily routines might shift the strength of this sense. Hence, as the research results show, the sense of belonging to the homeland strengthens while in Armenia. In parallel, phenomena connecting migrants to the country of residence become more intensely highlighted and thereby stimulat the sense of belonging to the

country of residence. As a result, the impact that fluctuating transnationalism can have on the sense of belonging might become reversible, or otherwise said, the sense of belonging may correspondingly undergo fluctuations.

7 Conclusions

This work began with a quote from Charles Aznavour, the famous French-Armenian singer and songwriter who is also a well-known public figure and diplomat. The quote is regarding his self-identification as 100 % French and, at the same time, 100 % Armenian. These words of Aznavour clearly indicate all the complexities around the sense of belonging for those who live outside of the country of origin, and maintain certain attachments to it—be those border-spanning connections on a regular basis, or merely emotional attachment and sentimental feelings towards the ancestral land. Through the lens of transnationalism, this research has provided some insight into the interpretation of tangled and complex identifications and senses of belonging, and has shed some clarification upon understanding which ties (transnational or not), and under which circumstances, survive throughout the generations.

This research was devoted to the studies of manifestations of transnationalism, social formation and reproduction of social ties (be they transnational or non-transnational) among Armenians in Germany—based on the experiences of those who took part in my research. There are a number of studies devoted to Armenian emerging diaspora in Germany;[73] however, they mainly concentrate on the formation of Armenian communities in Germany, and point out their place and specificity in broader context of the Armenian diaspora. Those studies also touch upon the issues of partnerships and relationships between Germany and Armenia, and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, etc. In regards to new studies, this research, in fact, has made steps forward by viewing Armenians in Germany in the context and framework of transnationalism. My work has thus fleshed out new input and a new perspective in the studies of Armenians in Germany, by highlighting processes related to specificity of transnational lifestyles, complexities of belonging, and various modes of attachments and ties to the homeland.

[73] See, e.g., Dabag 1995; Hofmann 1997; 2005; 2007; 2012; Ordukhanyan 2008

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7.1 Studying transnational and diasporic social environments

The case of Armenians, as an emerging diaspora in Germany, has provided solid ground for research, by standing out with a number of characteristics, which not only make the research interesting, but also highlight some conceptual and empirical contributions of this study to the field of transnationalism. The fact that the Armenian diaspora in Germany, compared to other countries with significant numbers of Armenian population (e.g. France, USA, Russia, etc.), is rather young (Dabag 1995, Ordukhanyan 2008) makes this research different and interesting. This fact allows the researcher to study the emergence and formation of the sense of belonging with its complexity, variations of self-identification, and the role of diasporic consciousness in the process of formation of self-identification and the sense of belonging. This, in turn, provides a good opportunity to study various modes of attachments to the homeland, and to point out circumstances under which transnational ties and different ways of attachment to the homeland survive throughout time and generations. Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that diasporic consciousness is not necessarily a prime characteristic of only old diasporic communities, and that even young immigrant communities might already be carriers of this consciousness. The latter is expressed in strong feelings for the homeland, but not necessarily in the form of continuous and sustained transnational engagements on a daily basis.

In the scope of this work, I have defined transnationalism at two different levels – at the level of transnational encounters and engagements, and at the level of representations. The latter refers to attachments to the homeland through imagination. In other words, it is based on an imaginary reference to the homeland – an important feature for diasporic consciousness (Chapter 2). The notion of diaspora has therefore become an interesting point in my research, manifested as a category of practice.

In addition, I have argued that only through an interrelated and interconnected analysis of migrant self-identifications, encounters, social practices, and various configurations, in which those practices and encounters take place, will allow a social researcher to have a thorough and holistic picture of the various aspects of emergence, maintenance, and continuity of transnational ties, attachments to the homeland, and/or loyalties regarding the residence country. To highlight modes of interconnection between migrant practices, their self-identification, and various configurations in which daily engagements of migrants take place, as an analytical framework for my research I have applied the conceptual schema of 'configurations–representations–encounters' suggested by Steven Vertovec. In my research the mentioned three domains of the triad correspond to *transnational social fields* and *local-diasporic fields* (configurations), *self-*

identification (representations), and *social practices* (encounters)—both transnational and non-transnational. Furthermore, I have suggested that in order to interpret specificities of self-identification and belonging, a certain understanding of the configurations is required. The analysis of the latter, in turn, reveals possible modes of representations and everyday encounters, including transnational, as well as non-transnational practices and engagements (Chapter 2, 4). Application of the conceptual schema 'configurations–representations–encounters' allows the mentioned interconnected analysis of the triad's domains, and the interpretation of each in relation and in connection to the others. Leaning on Bourdieu's concept of social fields, I have further considered that habitus (Bourdieu 1977; 1984; 1990; 1993) appears to be an important factor in this inter-relational analysis, able to explain preferences of social practices and daily encounters, as well as transnational activity and engagement.

This approach fosters the emergence of several conceptual, as well as empirical, contributions of this research. Thus, it makes a conceptual contribution to the theoretical heritage of Pierre Bourdieu, and, in parallel, sheds insights on the studies of transnationalism from a new perspective, thereby providing new avenues for research and theorization in the field. Application of the triad 'configurations–representations–encounters' to the study of transnationalism and related topics opens new horizons for further elaborations, not only on the field of transnationalism, but also on such areas of research as belonging, self-identification, and other relevant themes.

My research has also taken into account issues of continuation or endurance of transnationalism, studying why and which kinds of ties are being transmitted (if they are) from generation to generation. Since one of the key points of my research has been to reveal whether or not ties are reproduced inter-generationally, and, if so, which kind, it has therefore considered configurations, encounters, and representations of both generations.

7.2 Multiple realities and representations in various configurations

As mentioned, I have developed a two-level understanding of transnationalism – at the level of real border-spanning practices and engagements, and at the level of representations. It is noteworthy to mention that this two-level interpretation of transnationalism has also emerged from the relational character of the conceptual schema 'configurations–representations–encounters' – it has allowed me to contend that transnational ways of being, as such, are present in (or constitute part of) both encounters—namely social practices and engagements—and representations. Further, this differentiation has allowed me to distinguish two main configurations of my research participants – *transnational social fields* and *local-*

diasporic fields (Chapter 4). The former is a border-spanning configuration which refers to transnational ties and engagements, whereas the latter emerges with respect to in-border connections, and refers to the dynamics of fields within the country of residence. Furthermore, differentiation of the two mentioned fields is of great significance to transnationalism studies, in general, and my research, in particular, for two reasons: first, since it focuses the attention not only on the transnational social fields, where all-encompassing transnational activity, back-and-forth flows, and symbolic struggles take place, but also considers other units of configuration such as the local-diasporic fields. The latter can go parallel to transnational social fields, but they can also intersect in concrete circumstances. Second of all, my research reveals that fields which emerge within the country of residence, due to the communication and ties of compatriots, carry a great transnational potential, though the latter does not *manifest* openly and regularly. This is a hidden potential which awakes in certain situations.

Within configurations of transnational social fields, the so-called Internet-mediated fields appear to be an important category of analysis, and create appropriate stances of representation. In this realm, this work has presented an analysis of two cases of Internet-mediated transnational activity, with regard to the 100th year anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and a civic protest movement emerged in Armenia. Internet forums, blogs, and online social networks enlarge the possibilities of transnational activism, also giving the opportunity to be transnational for those who, in other similar conditions, would prefer to be passive, and not to engage in common transnational practices. In addition, those fields have highlighted the evident and latent articulations of the symbolic capital in the field and symbolic struggles for winning a prestigious position.

Multiple engagements in different configurations and diverse encounters have a considerable impact on the formation of self-identification. The latter is a mode of representing oneself, and in the scope of my research, it refers to social actors' association of themselves with certain ways of being. On the basis of this definition, I have drawn a presumption that the more intensively migrants maintain transnational connections, and the more they engage in transnational social fields, the more ambiguous their self-identification may be. This suggests that social actors who are transnationally active, but also maintain tight/deep loyalties to the residence country, are more probable to face contradictions in the process of self-identification. From this perspective, by juxtaposing two generations, one could assume that the self-identification of the first generation may be more ambiguous, since they have more engagements in various transnational social fields, compared to their children. Nevertheless, the second generation also confronts ambiguity of self-identification, though to a lesser extent than parents. Even though they are emotionally attached to the country of origin, and, to some

extent, carry imprints of its socio-cultural heritage, they have more loyalties to the country of settlement, as it has become the place they can call home. On this basis, a consequent conclusion emerges contending that the second generation will tend to identify themselves more with German ways of being, rather with Armenian ones.

The results of my research have interestingly answered these presumptions, untangling the tendency of *manoeuvring with self-identification* (Chapter 5). It emerges from, and is a consequence of, smooth back-and-forth shifts between certain ways of being, depending on the situation, context, and the social environment. Susanne Wessendorf, for example, in her research on second-generation Italians in Switzerland, identifies a category of the second generation—*typical Italians*—who 'use' Italianness as a principle lifestyle even when it might contradict the Swiss way of life (Wessendorf 2013, p. 140). In contrast, in the case of Armenians, even *children from the local environment* (Chapter 4)—a category of the second generation distinguished in the results of my research—do not always stick to Armenianness, nor celebrate it by all means; on the contrary, the majority of my research participants would, in fact, try not to be different, with respect to the situation and social environment they find themselves. Manoeuvring with self-identification is derived from and also is a continuation of various concepts regarding context- and situation-dependent character of self-identification, such as the shifting self (Battaglia 1995), dialogical self (Hermans and Kempen 1993, Hermans 2002; van Meijl 2006), situational selection (Gluckman 1958 [1940]), or part-time ethnicity (Talai 1989). In this realm, Wessendorf also highlights similar tendencies regarding second-generation Italians in Switzerland. She points out that even in case of engagement in Swiss social networks, second-generation Italians might identify themselves as Italians (Wessendorf 2013, p. 141). Hence, modes of self-identification change in accordance with the context and situation, and in my research this has generally manifested among the second generation. As for the first generation, however, they would mainly identify themselves with Armenian ways of being, in parallel trying to somehow fit into the social environment.

All the above-mentioned circumstances—identification of oneself with certain ways of being, given the situation, and manoeuvre with self-identification—appear as a consequence of simultaneous presence in more than one reality, or to put it otherwise, parallel and diverse attachments to different realities. This, in turn, has an impact on components of belonging, and results in a *dual sense of belonging* – a notion revealed in the results of this research. Dual sense of belonging has a paradoxical character, since it does not only express feelings of being at home in the country of residence and/or in the country of origin, but also simultaneously embodies the sense of not belonging anywhere

concretely. Besides, it has a considerable impact on how the notions of home and homeland are perceived (and on the formation of these perceptions). Moreover, the dual sense of belonging influences and, to some extent, also determines modes of attachments to the both countries. In the end, these modes of attachments result in *emotional belonging to Armenia,* and *pragmatically belonging to Germany.* Attachments to the country of origin may become stronger or weaker, corresponding to situations which awaken national pride, events related to articulation of Armeniannes, and back-and-forth travels to the ancestral land. The aforementioned results in the emergence of an interesting phenomenon I have called *fluctuating transnationalism*.

7.3 Strategic nationalism and fluctuating transnationalism: modes of attachments to the land of origin

The results of this research have revealed two interesting concepts—*strategic nationalism* and *fluctuating transnationalism*—which, at some point, and to some degree, complement each other: situations awakening strategic nationalism contribute to the growth of transnational activity, and thus lead to the increase intervals of fluctuating transnationalism. *Strategic nationalism* (Chapter 3), which has a situation- and context-dependent character, is a manifestation of long-distance nationalism among Armenians, and is based on powerful collective memories, situations that are fraught with some external threat to the nation, and pride in national accomplishments. For Armenians, the most significant and strongest collective memories have two main sources: *events when the nation demonstrated a high level of solidarity*, which is especially strongly expressed in the situations that carry an external threat to the nation; and *memories of the nation's past accomplishments*, which nurture national pride. Collective memories have always eloquently contributed to the maintenance of the sense of Armenianness, and they also identify the framework and areas for manifestations of strategic nationalism. The situational character of the latter expresses itself in most profitable circumstances, and **s**trategically becomes a specific tool to articulate Armenianness in a transnational social field, whenever the situation and consequences dictate such behaviour.

Fluctuating transnationalism (Chapter 6), as an interesting manifestation of cross-border ties, highlights that transnational activity and practices undergo fluctuations (or cross-border ties become stronger and weaker in fluctuations), intensifying and fading away in correspondence with various circumstances, of which the prime and most common examples are back-and-forth travels to homeland, occasions that strengthen feelings of national pride, and opportunities to articulate merits of the country of origin. This perspective points out another

conceptual-empirical contribution of this research, which reveals that transnational ties do not necessarily need to be sustained or intensive (Portes et al. 1999, 2008) in order to survive. Connections to the country of origin can, instead, undergo ups and downs, but still have the 'right' to be called transnational. This, in addition, gives new perspectives and insights to the understanding of second-generation transnationalism, and complements some previously distinguished types of transnationalism (Chapter 2), such as *indirect* (Lee 2011, p. 306) or *emotional transnationalism* (Wolf 2002, p. 255), or *'resource-dependent' transnationalism* (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2002b, p. 899).

Another contribution of this study, related to the above-mentioned, is with respect to the role of *contact recipients* which has been highlighted in the results of this research (Chapter 4). Contact recipients are so-called other sides of a border-spanning communication. During this research three types of contact recipients have come out – *priority* (parents and siblings)*, primary* (uncles, aunts and cousins), and *secondary contact recipients* (friends). Ties with each of these categories have a different intensity; moreover, this intensity varies for the first and the second generations. In this sense, sustainability of transnational connections also highly depends on this other side of transnational connections. In addition, regarding the question of endurance of transnationalism, and, consequently, which kinds of ties and under which circumstances survive, I follow the suggestion of Peggy Levitt (2002), and also consider the importance to accentuate a concrete continuum of separate transnational practices, rather than try to encapsulate the all-encompassing transnational being of migrants. It is more common to be transnationally active in one aspect of life, while being passive in another. Thus, the focus on one or two concrete aspects will provide a more precise picture of transnational ties and their continuity. Perlmann (2002) and Jones-Correa (2002a) also claim that studying the second-generation immigrants, researchers should differentiate between various spectrums of transnationalism. The scholars contend that the second-generation immigrants are inclined to cultural rather than economic aspects of transnationalism. With regard to the second generation, my research also confirms the predominant role of the cultural aspect of transnationalism. That is basically more attractive to the second generation, as it represents a good opportunity to demonstrate their emotional attachments to the homeland, and thus feel that they are part of it. From this viewpoint, the second-generation transnationalism can be perceived, as Vertovec states, as a mode of cultural reproduction (Vertovec 1999; 2000).

In the realm of modes of attachments to the homeland and, from this viewpoint, continuity of transnationalism, my research has revealed that even though a community of immigrants in the host country is small and relatively young, diasporic consciousness can already be formed amongst the first and the

second generations; moreover, it can have a dominant role impacting self-identification and the formation of a sense of belonging. Diasporic consciousness can thus determine both modes of *real* connections and *emotional* attachments to the homeland. This research has pointed out that even when transnational activity undergoes a dramatic decrease—an interval in the concept of fluctuating transnationalism—the strong sense of emotional belonging to the ancestral land remains at the same strength throughout time. In other words, emotional attachments to, and strong feelings for the country of origin significantly influence the sense of belonging. This persistent sense, in turn, gives birth to the strategic nationalism in occasions presuming demonstration of national merits and pride in past accomplishments of the nation. This allows me to conclude that for Armenians, transnationalism, among all its various manifestations, most importantly appears as a type of consciousness (Vertovec 2009a, p. 5–7). Engagements in various realities occur on a real, virtual, and even imaginary basis. In addition, this presumes not only awareness of one's multiple belongings, but also supposes some conscious manoeuvre with self-identification in different configurations. Various modes of attachments to the homeland—whether real or imaginary, emotional or practical—are therefore derived from configurations, namely from transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields, and are conditioned by the modes of consciousness. This is to say, while transnational engagements of the second generation may diminish throughout time, they still retain imprints of a transnational lifestyle, and these imprints are not necessarily expressed at the level of social ties and practices, but rather at the level of representations, as supposed by the engagement in a local-diasporic field. This point goes back to the starting argument in this paragraph which has contended that diasporic consciousness becomes a typical characteristic, as well, for young immigrant generations.

7.4 General considerations and avenues for future research

The purpose of this book has been to reveal the social formation and reproduction of transnational ties, and through this perspective, analyse the sense of belonging and self-identification of the first- and second-generation immigrants. In this realm, my research has pointed out that transnational ties are generally being socially reproduced from generation to generation; however, with a different understanding than that which the classical research regarding transnationalism suggests. This work has highlighted that the core characteristic of transnational ties—which also notably determines their continuity—is not necessarily the sustainability of those connections. They can be sporadic and occasional as well, and still have the 'right' to be called transnational. In addition, the intensity of

maintenance of those ties can be inconstant, undergoing intervals of increase and decrease. Several factors and circumstances influence these fluctuations of transnationalism, among which the most prominent are intervals between back-and-forth travels to the homeland, contact recipients, and situations nurturing manifestations of the strategic nationalism. Thereby, this research makes an empirical and also a conceptual contribution to the understanding of transnationalism by proposing a different starting point for studies in this realm – first, consideration of the fluctuating character of transnational ties, and second, expressions of transnationalism at the level of representations, which do not manifest in real cross-border connection, but rather in some imaginary relation to the homeland. The latter, however, in certain situations, can take the form of real transnational engagements. This point gives rise to another important conceptual and methodological contribution of this research – the claim regarding the necessity of an interrelated analysis of transnational social fields and local-diasporic fields, self-identification and practices of migrants. This becomes possible due to the application of the conceptual triad 'configurations–representations–encounters'.

With regard to some points, my research draws parallels with other topic-related research considered in this work. In particular, from the perspective of relevance to my own research, I would like to put forward studies of Susanne Wessendorf (2013) on Italians in Switzerland; Vered Amit Talai's (1989) research on Armenians in London; and Susan Pattie's (1997a) studies on London-Armenians and Cypriot-Armenians. Similar phenomena have manifested themselves in works of these authors and my own research, with respect to such points as the role and traditions of family in upbringing of children, emotional attachments to the homeland, idealization of the ancestral land, tendencies to distance themselves from compatriots living in the same area, and many other related questions.

Leaning on the results of this research, and taking into account the broader background literature on transnationalism, one can conclude that some modes of manifestation of transnationalism- and belonging-related issues, in general considerations, do not make significant variations among different migrant groups or home/host countries. This presumption arises, due to more or less common manifestations of transnational ways of being, or expressions of the sense of belonging, or the inclination to communicate with, or to distance themselves from compatriots in the same country. Nevertheless, though specificities of each immigrant group (derived from their own cultural heritage and some 'modelled' ways of being) manifest in general tendencies, they also reveal new types and modes of transnationalism, and thereby tend to enlarge traditional points of focus in transnationalism studies.

This research has focused on 'transnationalism from below' (Smith and Guarnizo1998), and although it includes some description of missions and functions of several German–Armenian associations, and also addresses *representations* of some of their initiatives on online social networks, the main emphasis of the research still remains focused upon individuals. My research has, therefore, included the first- and second-generation *hayastantsis* and *arevmtahays,* and within the category of *arevmtahays,* mainly Syrian- and Iranian-Armenians were represented in my sample. I was aware this could bring some limitation to my research—there are other categories of Armenians in Germany who correspondingly constitute the third and fourth generations—but the decision to do so was with the purpose and necessity to narrow down my field and sharpen the angle of my research. Thus, I am aware that it will not be accurate to generalize the results and findings of this research to Armenians in Germany as a whole, or to all categories of Armenians inhabiting in this country.

Taking the findings, as well as the above-mentioned limitations of this research into consideration, some avenues for future studies can be highlighted. For example, this work opens a door for future studies with the focus on transnational associations which are, in fact, primary transnational actors and occupy certain positions in transnational social fields. This will encompass new horizons for research on manifestations of strategic nationalism, and, in parallel, on the dynamics of transnational social fields.

It would also be of particular interest to conduct a comparative study between Germany and some other countries where the size of the Armenian population is larger, and where they have been inhabitants for longer period of time, as compared to Germany. This would help to better understand whether or not the findings of this research (particularly typical Armenian ways of being, manifestations of transnationalism, and specificities of maintenance of cross-border ties) are characteristic only to Germany—meaning emerging or young diasporic communities—or if they also find similar manifestations in the countries with older Armenian diaspora. In addition, this would provide an opportunity to further elaborate on my argument that diasporic consciousness can already be formed among young diasporic communities, as well. A future comparative research can highlight differences and similarities in manifestations of 'old' and 'young' diasporic consciousness.

In addition, the approach employed in this research can provide pathways to the study of such issues as belonging from different perspectives. For example, the application of the conceptual schema 'configurations–representations–encounters' could allow new insights to the study of juridical or religious aspects of belonging, in addition to substantial border-spanning connections and emotional attachments. This could reveal which configurations play a key role in

determining, for example, juridical aspects of belonging, and how it is represented in encounters (and in which encounters), including social ties to the country of origin.

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