

Armenia and Armenians, Turkey and Turks in Armenian Media



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Hrant Mikaelian

Editor – Nina Iskandaryan

Research team: Ani Haroutyunyan, Ella Karagulyan, Arshaluys Mghdesyan, Johnny Melikyan, Arkady Movsesyan



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Introduction

In this publication, we present the results of a project implemented by the Caucasus Institute with the support of the UNDP from January until March 2010. The aim of the project was to see how Armenia and Armenians, on one hand, and Turkey and Turks, on the other, were presented in the media coverage of the ongoing Armenia-Turkey rapprochement.

Efforts at Armenia-Turkey normalization happened in a very interesting period in Armenia's history. The Republic of Armenia and its civil society are in the process of formation, which is accompanied by an identity crisis. The questions "who is an Armenian" and "what is Armenia" are very important in contemporary Armenia, as are the questions "who is a Turk" and "what is Turkey" in connection with the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement.

Parallel to debates over Armenia-Turkey relations, there is an ongoing discussion about Islamized Armenians currently living in Turkey. Meanwhile, the political polarization of the Armenian society persists, as the result of which the political forces and a major part of the population, the media, and even the expert and cultural communities have split up into de-facto opposing camps.

In such circumstances, Armenia-Turkey rapprochement could not fail to induce Armenian society to review its own identity and the place of Turkey both on the modern map and in the historical dimension.

1. Methodology

For the purposes of this study, we conducted a content-analysis of the media, identifying and analyzing images and opinions concerning Armenia, the Armenians, Turkey, the Turks, and the ongoing Armenia-Turkey rapprochement. We studied all articles in our selection of print and online media that saw light during the month of December 2009. On TV, we monitored the period from 7 until 31 December 2009 including the summing-up programs at the end of the year. We were much more interested in what was said than in who said it, therefore we do not mention the authors of particular statements but only their profession or position, as it can be important. Sometimes a point of view expressed by an individual is determined by their position in the society: some opinions were expressed solely by public officials and some, by members of the opposition.

As the study is qualitative and not quantitative, the selection of media for the analysis didn't aim to be representative. During the draft of media we used the following criteria:

a) media (TV stations, sections/columns of print/online media or the entire publication) that do not only publish news but also analytical reports in which the author can express their point of view, or detailed interviews, including ones in Q&A format.

b) The author belongs to the "Armenian information space". As relative criteria, we chose residence in Armenia or declaring oneself to belong to the Armenian Diaspora.

c) The report (article or TV program) has Armenia-Turkey rapprochement as its topic or analyzes the role of Turkey for Armenia and the region from the historical or any other perspective.

Blogs were not analyzed, but some posts from the blogosphere were published by the media; some media even review blogs and copy the posts they consider especially interesting. Such posts were also covered by the study.

The following programs and media were analyzed:

TV Programs		
Yerkir-Media	Plaza ("Hraparak")	Monday, 21:15
	Question of the country ("Erkri harts")	Monday – Friday, 22:00
Kentron	Silhouette ("Urvagits")	Monday – Friday, 21:21
Shant	Horison ("Horizon")	Monday – Saturday, 22:00
	Perspective ("Herankar")	Monday – Thursday, 23:55
H2	The Messenger ("Lraber"), the analytical part	Monday – Friday, 20:45
Armnews	Interviews from the news programs	Monday – Sunday, 21:00
Armenia	Really ("Irakanum")	Monday – Wednesday, 23:30

Online and Print Media		
“De-facto” news agency	Commentary, Interviews, Analytics	http://defacto.am
7 days (“7 or”)	Editorial, Commentary, Details, Interviews, Crooked mirror	http://7or.am
Morning (“Aravot”)	Analytical articles, Editorial, Interviews	http://aravot.am/
A1+	Interviews	http://a1plus.am
Armenian World (“Hayots Ashkhar”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://armworld.am/
Nation (“Azg”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://azg.am/
Voskanapat	Analytical articles	http://voskanapat.info
Voice of Armenia (“Golos Armenii”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://golos.am
Business express (“Delovoy express”)	Analytical articles, Editorial, Interviews	http://express.am
Armenian Time (“Haykakan Zhamanak”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://hzh.am
Free-thinking (“Azatamtutyun”)	Everything except the news	http://azatamtutyun.com
Taregir	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://taregir.am/
Law- de-facto (“Iravunk de facto”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://www.idefacto.am/
168 hours (“168 zham”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://168.am
Plaza (“Hraparak”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://hraparak.am/
Noah’s ark (“Noev Kovcheg”)	Analytical articles, Interviews	http://noev-kovcheg.ru/
Regnum – Armenian editorial office	Interviews	http://regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/armenia/
“Noravank” AC	Analytical articles	http://noravank.am
4 th Power (“Chorrord inknishxanutyun”)	Analytical articles; Interview	http://chi.am
“Mitq”	Analytical articles	http://mitq.org
New Time (“Novoe Vremya”)	Analytical articles; Interview	http://nv.am
News Armenia	Analytical articles; exclusive	http://newsarmenia.ru/
News.am	Analytical articles	http://news.am/
PanArmenian.net	Details; Interviews	http://panarmenian.net/
ArmToday.info	Analytics and Interviews; In the blogs; Week’s commentary	http://armtoday.info

2. Armenia-Turkey Protocols and the Normalization Process. General Observations

Armenia-Turkey normalization is perceived as a very important issue by Armenian society. Interestingly, opinion polls show that the numbers of proponents and opponents of unconditional normalization and opening of the border have stayed roughly the same during the last few years:

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“Should Armenia open the border with Turkey without preconditions with regard to the Genocide?”

Date	Yes, should	No, shouldn't	No answer	Author of the research
March 2010	31%	29%	40%	AMA
September 2009	48%	41%	9%	ASA (Yerevan only)
July 2007	45%	51%	4%	IRI, Gallup, ASA
March 2007	42%	45%	15%	IRI, Gallup, ASA
November 2006	43%	47%	10%	IRI, Gallup, ASA
August 2006	39%	57%	4%	IRI, Gallup, ASA
May 2006	42%	49%	9%	IRI, Gallup, ASA

Observations we made during this study show to a large extent the general perceptions of Armenia-Turkey rapprochement in Armenia. But, as we only analyzed media content in December 2009, only this period of time shall be discussed below.

2.1. The discussion in the society

The media were covering an active discussion going on in the society. However, direct debates were very few, a fact pointed out by some opponents of the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement. According to some authors, the government did not lend an ear to their arguments; instead of direct debates, discussions in absentia were taking place. In articles or interviews, stakeholders would express their own points of view and argue against those of their ideological opponents, sometimes imaginary ones. Below is a typical quote:

“
...I do not harbor any illusions concerning the hasty and pompous improvement of relations between our nations, and am surprised by the optimism of those who think that our eastern neighbors have so very radically changed their attitude to us compared to their late 19th – early 20th century policies.”

(Golos Armenii. TEAM JOURNALISM PROJECT. ARMENIAN-TURKISH. Author: a journalist. Dec 19)

The debates were often manifest in radical forms, including labeling and a quest for “traitors” (we can surmise that this is a result of the youth of Armenian political culture). Ever since the announcement of the Road Map, the Armenian government was regularly accused of having betrayed national interests. Serzh Sargsyan was also accused of treason by members of the Diaspora who held rallies during his visits to New York, Paris, Beirut etc. Against the background of the discourse on Armenia-Turkey rapprochement, the Armenian-American historian Richard Hovannisyan was accused of falsifying Armenian history and political scientist Alexander Iskandaryan, of denying the fact of the Armenian Genocide; the second case was even filed to court.

There are opposite examples too. In one publication, “Turkophobia” was named as the cause of the attitude of Dashnaktsutyun Party and its protests against the Protocols:

“...ARFD decided that the Armenia-Turkey Protocols don't have anything in common with the our constitution, and should the Constitutional Court decide otherwise, the next question on the agenda will be the Constitutional Court itself and not the protocols. One can easily understand the Dashnak activists. How can one judge a document in which such notions as “Armenians” and “Turks” are viewed in the same dimension, right next to each other, to be constitutional?”

(Azatamtutyun. ARFD will “celebrate” Old New Year with a protest rally. Author: a journalist. Dec 15)

In many media reports, the attitude of particular people or groups is explained by various ad hominem arguments: personal abuse (the opponent is stupid, corrupted or mercenary), reference to circumstances (the opponent says so because he or she is from the Diaspora/ Karabakh/ government) or associative accusations (the opponent thinks so and so does group “x”, therefore he/she is a member of that group or is paid by them). The theme of “treason” also has to do with Armenian auto-stereotypes which use Turks as the reference group; we shall touch upon this below.

Another peculiarity of these in-absentia discussions is that opposition to Armenia-Turkey rapprochement failed to instill any dissent in the government circles. In all media reports analyzed during this project, the ruling party and ruling elites expressed a strongly consolidated, almost identical viewpoint on what the process means and how it should be understood. Exerted on an already weak and ideologically split opposition, this consolidated pressure had visible impact on the media coverage of rapprochement.

2.2. The international community as the object of rapprochement

Many experts and journalists expressed the opinion that the protocols were not an Armenia-Turkey related problem but an international concern (the opposite opinion – that the process is strictly Armenia-Turkey – was also voiced but much less often). What's important here is that the process was perceived by a large segment of the expert

community and the political circles as addressed to the “civilized world”, which “must see” Armenia’s constructive position and support it:

“
...Civilized world approved protocols at the same time having criticized Turkey for trying to retroactively link ratification of the protocols with Nagorno Karabakh settlement”

(Delovoy Express. Sigh: A Crawling Tiger. Author - Editor. Dec 29, № 48)

Most of the statements made by public officials (the president, government members and MPs) had roughly the following form: “The West supports us because we implement correct policies”. For example:

“
...Armenia presented itself to the world as one of the regional leaders, as a country which sets the regional agenda...”

(Shant, Horizon Author: public official. Dec 28 22:00)

From this perspective, the current Armenian policy does not target not Turkey or Armenia’s domestic political field but external actors who are involved in the region and the process. The common perception is that Armenia must implement a certain action plan as the result of which Turkey will ratify the Protocols; otherwise the USA will put pressure on Turkey and coerce it to ratify them. Some publications contained the idea that the overall goal is not just the result but the process itself. It was also mentioned that should the process fail, Armenia will lose or gain nothing whereas Turkey’s losses will be sizeable.

2.3. Transfer into the domestic discourse

Armenia-Turkey rapprochement, in itself a foreign policy development, became part of the domestic policy discourse in Armenia. For example, the Dasnaktsutyun Party left the coalition right after the publication of the “Road Map” in April 2009. The rapprochement affected other political forces too.

In December 2009, some authors mentioned the emergence of a “constructive opposition”, in which they usually included the Heritage party and Dashnaktsutyun. According to these authors, what made this segment of the opposition constructive was its behaviour with regard to Armenia-Turkey rapprochement: the parties appealed to the authorities and the Constitutional Court instead of fully refusing to cooperate with them.

Dashnaktsutyun demanded the resignation of the Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandyan, a demand for which it was regularly criticized by a whole range of media: in their opinion, the process had been initiated and was controlled by the president of Armenia, and Eduard Nalbandyan only played a technical role. Starting from December,

Dashnaktsutyun began to say that it could put a change of power in the country on its agenda as a measure for preventing the ratification of the Protocols.

“
...If the parliament ratifies the protocols anyway, the only remaining solution will be a change of power; we have no other options. It's still not too late to abandon this process.”

(IA “Regnum”, Armenia News. *The opposition parties of Armenia called to the Constitutional Court to reject the Armenia-Turkey protocols.* Author – politician. Dec 1)

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According to one of the points of view, the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement has reformed the Armenian domestic field, weakening or nearly killing the opposition. The Armenian National Congress used to be in favor of Armenia-Turkey rapprochement, but being in opposition, it had to criticize the government on that count. That's why some authors viewed ANC's reaction with distrust.

“
...Bearing in mind the position of the ANC leader on to the most important question of the year (the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement), in this issue we can scarcely consider the ANC to be the most radical of actors, as it is impossible to be in favor of the ratification of the protocols and the stabilization of the Armenia-Turkey relations and at the same time demand the resignation of the president who started the process which is in fact welcomed by the Congress.”

(Azatamtutyun. *The most influential, or the most radical?* Author – a journalist. Dec 10)

By the end of 2009 the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement had thus thoroughly merged with domestic political developments, and the position of different political forces around this question became an argument in forming an domestic political discourse.

2.4. Location of the process: the center or the periphery?

Armenia-Turkey rapprochement held a very important place in Armenian media coverage in December 2009. It was especially important where two former allies in coalition, Dashnaktsutyun and the ruling Republican Party, were concerned. In December 2009, the media covered the activities of both these parties chiefly in connection with Armenia-Turkey rapprochement.

A rather common point of view was that the process had priority over domestic developments:

“... To assess how important this process really is for the nation, one should not be misled by the mercenary enthusiasm of overexposed female activists from the radical camp, but judge, for example, by the number of people who gathered at Tsitsernakaberd to protest against the signing of the Armenia-Turkey protocols on October 9, 2009.”

(Golos Armenii. *The investigation is shining with ignorance.* Author: a journalist. Dec 12)

As to the other segment of the opposition, its attitude was somewhat different. According to them, Armenia-Turkey rapprochement was secondary to the domestic life of the country, the investigation of March 1 events, corruption etc. This position was expressed in a whole range of media, for example, in Aravot, 168 zham etc.

2.5. *The zero-sum-game approach*

During the month of December 2009, the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement was covered in the media as a zero-sum game in which one side must win and the other, lose. The debates were mostly about which side is winning. Opposition actors and some journalists and experts believed that Armenia was losing, and that its positions in the region and in the whole world only worsened since the beginning of the process. Contrastingly, public officials expressed the opinion that Armenia had already won the game, regardless of its result, and this opinion was also shared by some journalists and experts.

The opponents of the protocols said that Armenia was in fact fulfilling Turkish preconditions by recognizing the Armenia-Turkey border and giving up the move for acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide; meanwhile, the protocols were giving Turkey the opportunity to interfere in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. The opponents of the protocols also believed that the historical committee was a method which Turkey would use to abort the process of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. They argued that Turkey was merely pretending to participate in the rapprochement in order to conceal its true goals. For example:

“... Using these protocols, Turkey has ensured prerequisites for itself to impose its own two preconditions: discussion of the fact of the Armenian genocide, which will stop the process of its international recognition, and legalization of the currently “illegal” Armenia-Turkey border. ... By the day, Turkey receives more and more opportunities to interfere in the Karabakh conflict and, using the fact that both processes are unfolding very actively and international bodies and foreign countries are involved, Turkey is aiming to coerce Armenia to make concessions in favor of Azerbaijan...”

(Novoe Vremya. *Dashnaktsutyun shall go the “the only true way.”* Author: politician. December 3)

“ . . . the historical committee hampers Armenian Genocide international recognition process.”

(Yerkir Media, Yerkri harts. Author: political actor, Dec 8)

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According to the opponents of the current format of rapprochement, the protocols pose a threat to Nagorno-Karabakh and to the recognition of the Genocide. Moreover, according to some of them, the opening of the border promises no economic benefits and may even pose some risks. These authors dispute the economic advantages of rapprochement, and the absence of direct debates fortifies their position. In their eyes, the cons of rapprochement outweigh the pros; in the eyes of some, there aren't any pros at all.

Their opponents insist that the protocols do not contain any preconditions. According to them, Armenia has already recognized the Armenian-Turkish border by defining its territory in its Declaration of Independence. They also believe that the government shall not make any concessions that go against national interests. According to the proponents of rapprochement, Armenia has come forward as the leading country of the region and has boosted its standing. Armenia-Turkey normalization will deprive Baku of its main bargaining chip in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, boding the demise Azerbaijan's foreign policy. The protocols, according to their opinion, have placed Turkey in a predicament; the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border will be highly beneficial for the Armenian economy. It will open up new export routes, both into Turkey and via Turkey to Mediterranean ports.

Many actors insisted that Armenia was winning in the rapprochement and Turkey was losing. Public officials frequently inferred that rapprochement creates a historical opportunity for establishing long-term peace in the region.

“ . . . we must not miss the historical opportunity to normalize Armenia-Turkey relations; we must not leave this problem to the next generations ”

(Novoe Vremya. Edward Nalbandyan: “We mustn't miss the historical opportunity.” Author – governmental official. Dec 19)

2.6. The Kurdish question and the Armenia-Turkey protocols

In December 2009, Armenian media showed some interest in the Kurdish question in Turkey. On December 11, 2009, the Turkish government banned the Kurdish Democratic Society Party, which had 21 seats in the parliament. Some observers perceived an indirect connection between this event and the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement. They also saw a connection between Turkey's future actions towards

Armenia and its treatment of the Kurdish minority, as Ankara's new "Kurdish initiative" began in July 2009 and was unfolding parallel to Armenia-Turkey rapprochement.

However, there was a difference between various stakeholders' assessment of the possible consequences of the prohibition of the Kurdish party. According to some, the prohibition of the Kurdish party showed that Ankara would fail in settling the more difficult Kurdish issue but would succeed with the ratification of Armenia-Turkey Protocols which they believed was an easier task. Others argued that Armenia-Turkey rapprochement would be postponed because the actions of the Turkish Constitutional Court reflected an overall radicalization of Turkish government policies. Some also believed that as a result of the ban, Armenians had lost their potential allies in the Turkish parliament:

“ ... Another reason why we are closely following the deepening of the political crisis in our neighbor country is that the Democratic Society Party has lately poised itself as an pro-Armenian political force ready to represent not just the interests of the Kurdish minority but also those of Turkey's Armenian community.

... the twenty members of the Mejlis representing the Democratic Society Party had the potential to become Armenia's partners ”

(Novoe Vremya. Will the failure of the "Kurdish initiative" affect the prospects of the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations? Author: journalist. Dec 17)

2.7. A toning-down

Depending on the phase of Armenia-Turkey rapprochement, the media coverage thereof intensified or subsided; opinions expressed in the media were gradually becoming less emotional and less uncompromising. At the beginning of the process, many media commentaries were full of apprehensions and even panic, but by December their number decreased, and continued to decrease from the beginning of December to its end. As time went by, alarmist scenarios didn't come true, and the overall tone of publications became less emotional. The percentage of radical publications which said that Turkey was engaging in the rapprochement with the aim of absorbing Armenia was already quite low in December.

Alarmist cries were replaced by milder warnings, for example, that the process shouldn't be used for other goals, like aborting the international recognition of the Armenian genocide or allowing Turkey to interfere in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Some publications suggested that Armenia should be extremely wary in its dealings with Turkey.

3. Insights. Turkey

Most perceptions of Turkey that we encountered in the Armenian media were negative ones. The central image is that of a powerful and aggressive Turkey aiming to destroy Armenia. This image also includes the perception that Turkey is harboring secret plans with regard to Armenia.

In this context, sports events were also politicized, including the soccer match between Armenia and Turkey, women basketball matches between the Armenian and Turkish clubs, a boxing match etc. A range of articles pointed out that sports games with Turkey had special importance, and some sportsmen also adhered to that point of view; in one of the publications, the defeat of the Armenian football team was deemed symbolic for the political process.

We have identified three major images of Turkey and a whole range of points concerning Turkey in the Armenian media.

3.1. *Three images of Turkey*

Three different images of Turkey served as the background for the media coverage of Armenia-Turkey relations in December 2009. One of them is set at least a hundred years back in time; the two others are modern, but very restricted. The first two lie within the paradigm of “Armenia-Turkey/Armenians-Turks”, the third one, in a wider “Armenia-other countries” paradigm.

The first image we met was a historical one: Turkey, perceived strictly in historical categories, chiefly memories of the Genocide, which are fully transposed on the apprehension of modern Turkey and the Turks. It is symptomatic that in this context we encountered reprints from articles written by Armenian politicians in the 1920s and 1930s about Turkey and Turks and how Armenians should treat them. The visions of Garegin Nzhdeh, Zarevand and Shagan Natalie were presented by the media as fully relevant for the current moment. This image lies within the paradigm of “Armenia-Turkey/Armenians-Turks” (the relations of Turkey with other countries and nations are not taken into account).

The second image is modern Turkey viewed exclusively in the context of “high politics” and intergovernmental relations (which media usually refer to as “geopolitics”). This simplified pseudogeopolitical image boils down to Turkey being hostile towards Armenia, supporting Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict and correspondingly designing its alliances and policies on the international arena. It is a minimalistic image, reduced to a sum of political vectors between regional and external players (primarily the U.S., Russia, Europe and Iran). This image also lies in the “Armenia-Turkey” paradigm; moreover, in this context Armenia is very important for Turkey, because Turkey’s many political actions and decisions in different spheres are explained by its hostility towards Armenia.

The last and third image is an extremely simplified economical image of rich resorts and buzzing capitals. This image only includes perceptions of Istanbul, Antalya and, to a lesser extent, Ankara, and some statistics (geographical, economical and demographical). It relies on a very vague understanding of realities behind the numbers, because authors of media reports about Turkey very often possess little knowledge about this country, mostly from books or websites. This image appears almost glossy (a developed tourist industry and large rich cities where Armenians go in search of work) and totally disregards the heterogeneity of Turkey's economic development and its multiple social and economic problems. What is interesting, the third image is barely connected to the first two and lies in a different paradigm: the dichotomy here is not "Armenians-Turks" or "Armenia-Turkey" but "poor undeveloped Armenia – rich developed foreign countries".

The Armenian media do not create – and apparently do not strive to create – a holistic image of Turkey with its problems, governmental structure, economy, population etc.

In the next sections (3.2 – 3.12), we list the various theses and ideas that we found in the Armenian media. They were very numerous and varied; we did our best to group them up in order to present the reader with a general picture.

3.2. Turkey as an epitome of evil

Turkey is hostile towards Armenia and possesses a whole range of negative qualities. Turkey is hypocritical, uncivilized, unreliable, ungrateful, undemocratic, fanatic and intolerant. For example:

“...Coordinating and disseminating lies about the groundlessness of true historical facts that had led the parliaments and governments of authoritative countries to recognize the Armenian genocide is a task that can only be handled by modern Turkey and its satellite and oil barrel – Azerbaijan”

(News.am “A factory of lies,” or the mutations of the Azerbaijani-Turkish propaganda. Author: journalist. Dec 7)

The history and the modernity of Turkey are depicted in the media as a reign of barbarism and aggression, unavoidably leading to attempts to eradicate neighboring non-Turkish nations. According to some of the authors, Armenia is also affected by Turkey's low culture: Turkey is causing the Armenians' alleged moral decadence, Asiatic values, corruption and even bad musical taste:

“ . . . We have reached a very painful theme: the degradation of Armenian culture under Asiatic influences, with lowly plebeian tastes dictating its tempo and its mood. Audiences suffering from an excess of the “Turkish” gene only help these trends to spread...”

(Novoe Vremya. Interview with a cultural figure. Dec 17)

Various actions committed by Turkey are explained by malice. Both confrontational actions and positive steps in the wake of the ongoing Armenia-Turkey rapprochement are explained by the load of historical problems. Historical parallels to ongoing developments are easily found; they prove that “nothing changes in Turkey’s policy, and its goal is, as before, to destroy the Armenian nation”. This thesis is closely connected with the next one which concerns the unchangeable nature of Turkey’s policy and the psychology of the Turks (“a Turk remains a Turk”).

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3.3. Turkey has not changed since the Genocide and cannot change

“A Turk remains a Turk” is very probably the pivot thesis of this discourse. A key story in this context dates back to the early 19th century, when a part of the Armenian political elite (the Dashnaktutyun party) put its stake in cooperation with the Young Turks’ Unity and Progress Party. A vision popular between 1908 and 1915 was that “Turkey has changed and progressed, and the massacres shall never happen again.” Yet the developments that promised democratization in fact resulted in even greater cruelties than those committed in the reign of the “bloody sultan” Abdul-Hamid, and eventually culminated in the Genocide. This story, combined with the perceived relevance of century-old events for modernity (the historical image of Turkey) and Turkey’s active hostility to contemporary Armenia (the “geopolitical” image of Turkey), leads to the conclusion that Turkey’s policy with regard to Armenians cannot change and will always stay hostile.

The idea that “a Turk remains a Turk” partly relies on a tradition, widespread in the Armenian media discourse, of understanding political developments in ethnic categories. In many articles and discussions, we found a typically 20th-century discourse in which the actors of international politics are not governments but consolidated nations (ethnic groups) that possess characteristic qualities reflected in the policy of respective states. This understanding was perhaps encountered most often with regard to Turkey. Correspondingly, the blame for the Genocide lies on a consolidated image of the Turkish nation and not on its leaders, ruling system or particular individuals. The same image is extrapolated onto modernity, including Armenia-Turkey normalization efforts.

Accordingly, we frequently encountered the phrase “a Turk remains a Turk” both in explicit and indirect forms:

“... Let's put it straight, Erdogan would not mind a full capitulation of Armenia and the eradication of the Armenian factor in the region. Nothing has changed here since Hamid”

(News.am. Turkey-Azerbaijan vs. Armenia-Diaspora: the war goes on. Author: journalist. Dec 5)

“... To me, a Turk will always remain a barbarian who is only afraid of the spiritual awakening of the descendants of the nations he exterminated..”

(Golos Armenii. I came to the place where I should've been born. Author: civil society actor (from an ethnic minority group), Dec 3)

3.4. *Modern Turkey bears responsibility for the Genocide*

The question of Turkey's responsibility for the Armenian Genocide is very interesting: its comprehension in the Armenian society varies from modern Turks not being responsible but obliged to admit the deeds of their grandfathers as genocide to modern Turks' full responsibility for the Genocide on the grounds that they continue to use what was taken away from the Armenians.

Amongst the publications analyzed during this study, there was a prevalence of opinions closer to the second, more radical statement. Below are two typical quotes:

“... "Nobody is blaming Erdogan's ancestors for committing the Genocide. More, no one blames today's Turkish generation for the Armenian Genocide. But, although today's Turks aren't guilty of the crimes of their ancestors, they are still responsible for them. Nowadays, Turkey is not only the legal heir of the Ottoman Empire but also remains attached to the last power structure of that empire – the Young Turks - by a umbilical cord of politics and ideology”

(taregir.am. Dashnaksutyun promises a restless January. Author: expert. Dec 15)

“... Erdogan and Gul probably still haven't managed to see the ruins of Ani, the hundreds of destroyed churches and monasteries. They haven't noticed that their predecessors, also advocates of democracy, have faith in both God and Allah drowned in blood, committing a crime that nowadays even their children cannot wash off their hands.”

(News.am. Shame to Turkish leaders! Gul and Erdogan have forgotten their history and are teaching Europe democracy. Author: journalist, Dec 2)

The first and stronger statement infers that Turkey and modern Turks are still unable to shake off the problem of the Armenian Genocide. In the second one, the author states that the modern Turks are not guilty of the crime committed by their ancestors but are nevertheless responsible for the Genocide (in terms of possible reparations etc.).

Concerning collective responsibility, we encountered the opinion that the whole nation is to blame because its “more advanced” members did nothing to stop the massacres, and the opinion that particular “bad people” were to blame; however, the first view was more common.

3.5. *Turkey is trying to fool Armenia*

Because “a Turk remains a Turk”, or, in other words, Turkey’s policy cannot change, any de-facto changes in Turkish policy are interpreted as cunning intrigues: “Turkey is hypocritical and has always been deceiving us...” In the Armenian media, Turkey appears scheming, cheating and misleading Armenia and the international community; its initiatives are not aimed at normalizing relations or restoring the cultural heritage but at deceit.

In this context, any disagreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan is also ascribed to an evil design the goal of which is to make Armenia ready for dialogue and compromises. Distrust towards Turkish policy is augmented by emotional reactions to the Turkish “diplomacy of April 24”. Turkey’s wide publicity of the restoration of the Armenian Surb-Khach Church on Akhtamar Island still perturb a part of the Armenian society, a fact mentioned by various stakeholders in December.

“... Today we are made to believe that the consent of the Turkish government to put the cross back on the Akhtamar Church on Lake Van is a great act of charity.

... And the people that allow themselves to judge European democracy, under whose hard pressure they are now forced to look straight at the results of their civilization, to twist and invent diplomatic schemes, to hide their barbaric history, to put crosses back where they belong and to rewrite their laws. “Shame!”, - we will cry, and we will be a hundred times right...”

(News.am. Shame to the Turkish hypocrites! Gul and Erdogan have forgotten their own history and are teaching Europe democracy. Author: journalist. Dec 2)

In the eyes of various strata of the Armenian society, Turkish normalizations initiatives thus come across as a well-planned design to cheat the Armenian society. Turkey is also suspected of designing to mislead the international community concerning the truth of certain facts about Turkey, the history of the Genocide, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the regional situation etc.

“ . . . Not only did Turkey have no intention to implement its own initiative but it also used this initiative as a temporary cover-up for Ankara’s true intentions. What matters most, as we have said many times before, is the realization of Ankara’s policy aimed at coming to the frontline on the international scene. This is the ultimate goal. ”

(Azatamtutyun. Progress backwards. Author – expert. Dec 24)

Such perceptions further intensified when following the signing of Armenia-Turkey protocols, Turkey began to tie their ratification to the Karabakh conflict, thus imposing a precondition not mentioned in the protocols themselves. A point of view common in Armenian media was that in reality Turkey had not changed its position as it had been planning to lead the process into a deadlock from the very beginning.

3.6. Turkey does not have moral rights to anything

Prevailing negative perceptions of Turkey affect the discussion of Turkey’s foreign policy in Armenian media. Whenever Turkish leaders make moral arguments, Armenian media react with harsh commentaries. Some stakeholders see Turkish foreign policy in general through the prism of the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement and the Armenian Genocide.

When Turkey accused Israel of committing genocide of the Palestinians, the Armenian media reacted with a flow of comments demanding that Turkey first look back at its own history. Similar comments were made on statements by Gul and Erdogan in connection with the Swiss referendum that prohibited the building of minarets on mosques in Switzerland.

Any steps made by Turkey are also commented in a similar way and are presented as immoral and hypocritical. This way, Turkey has no chance to do the “right thing” unless, of course, this is a radical concession to Armenia, but even that will be viewed with suspicion and fear of being tricked.

As to Armenia, according to the authors of some publications, the Armenian nation has the “moral rights” to many things. This thesis is expressed circumstantially and thus does not allow us to assess exactly what its supporters consider permissible. Since the media that we studied did not express either any wishes that the Turks should suffer or any joy about catastrophes in Turkey, we can suppose that the perceived moral rights concern the right to dislike Turks and the right not to forgive.

This partly explains some stakeholders’ exasperation with the rapprochement. The process itself, including the probable opening of the border, irritates many stakeholders because the normalization of intergovernmental ties also involves normalization of relations with the Turkish society. For this very reason, both real and imaginary instances of contacts between Armenians and Turks are discussed in a negative tone; there are apprehensions that negative stereotypes existing in the society may dissolve.

3.7. *The opening of the border as a threat to identity*

Many publications express a fear of Turkey and its potential actions towards Armenia. Perceived threats coming from Turkey vary; they include potential threats to physical security. A very special type of threat are threats to identity, including the following:

- Absorption of Armenian economy by Turkish companies;
- Demographic expansion from districts of Turkey adjacent to Armenia;
- Takeover of Armenia's information space;
- Loss of the Armenian cultural heritage that Turkey is either destroying or presenting as its own;
- Rupture between Armenians in Armenia and in the Diaspora inspired by Turkey.

“ ... Yerevan will have to show its ability to resist a possible flow of immigrants from the underdeveloped regions of Turkey. ”

(IA “Regnum”, Armenia News. Baku views the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement as a project to strengthen Armenia: expert. Author: expert. Dec 24)

“ ... Turkish propaganda is already actively working to drive a wedge between Armenia and the Diaspora. Now they are using disagreement amongst Armenians about the Armenia-Turkey protocols.

...In a very short time, the Turkish information space can almost entirely absorb the Armenian information space. Turkey's information space is very varied and dynamic, and will demand much more harsh competition than, for example, Azerbaijan. ”

(SEF “Noravank”. Information threats from the possible opening of borders with Turkey. Author: expert. Dec 10)

The opinion that Armenians need not fear Turkey because Turkey is not as dangerous as it seems, or because Armenia is ready for equal dialogue, was also present in the media, but much less frequently, and it was only expressed by government officials who also suggested that Armenians need to “get over our fixations regarding Turkey”.

“ ... I agree, Turkey is a large country with a special diplomatic style. I completely agree with these remarks. But I do not agree with the conclusion made from these remarks that we should keep a distance from Turkey as it can deceive us. It is a wrong conclusion. ”

(Novoe Vremya. Dashnaktsutyun shall go the “the only true way”. Author: public official. Dec 3)

3.8. *Azerbaijan is Turkey's creation*

Azerbaijan and its policy are frequently perceived as non-independent. In a number of publications, the authors argued that Turkey has assigned Azerbaijan the task of implementing its anti-Armenian policy. Azerbaijan is strongly connected to Turkey, and many believe it was even created by Turkey, while other authors consider Azerbaijan to be Turkey's satellite. We encountered an opinion that the main purpose of the alliance between Turkey and Azerbaijan is their anti-Armenian policy, and the two countries are a well-coordinated tandem.

We found two opinions concerning the Azerbaijan-Turkey relationship in the context of the ongoing rapprochement. First, the controversies between Azerbaijan and Turkey were caused by Turkey's position and Azerbaijan's fear to lose its leverage over Armenia. According to the second view, there are in fact no controversies between Turkey and Azerbaijan, as these two countries are merely the "two faces of one enemy", and any disagreement between them is a planned set-up meant to cheat the "gullible Armenians". The media often refer to the Azerbaijanis as Turks or Azerbaijani Turks, with the same frequency in Russian and Armenian.

According to these opinions, the resolution of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and the fate of the rapprochement depend on Azerbaijan's decision, which will be supported by Turkey:

“ . . . Until Azerbaijan accepts the fact that Karabakh can remain outside its borders, no solutions can be found ”

(Yerkir Media, *Question of the Country*. Author: politician. Dec 8)

3.9. *Western Armenia does not belong to Turkey*

Quite regularly, we encountered mention of Western Armenia as a part of the homeland of the Armenian nation. In some publications, the current Armenian-Turkish border is considered unjust and illegal, and the loss of the Armenian historical homeland is said to be the main result of the Armenian Genocide. Such views were expressed in reports about history which are not uncommon in the Armenian media, but also in commentaries on current events:

“ . . . Armenians were massacred and exiled from their country, Western Armenia; Turkey and bolshevist Russia bled and subdued Armenia, and then joined forces to cut up the territory of the Republic of Armenia, thus taking control over lands they had never owned before. ”

(Mitq.org. *How much longer must we wait?* Author: expert. Dec 18)

Territorial claims to Turkey are not limited to Western Armenia and Cilicia. Turkey is also blamed for the transfer of Nakhichevan and Karabakh to Azerbaijan by the Soviet government by agreement with Turkey.

We encountered two stories that had the form of futuristic scenarios about a breakdown of Turkey followed by territorial claims made by Armenia with the support of the West. Example:

“ . . . Speaking in general about what can happen in the Southern Caucasus and even in the Near East in general, including Turkey, Iran, Syria etc., in this scenario, if the border between Turkey and Armenia opens, Turkey will fall apart, Iran will democratize, and a new state of Kurdistan will emerge, we can be sure that this is what will really happen.”

(Delovoy Express. View: the world as a blockbuster. Author: editor. Dec 22, #47)

3.10. Turkey as a large and developed country

Most of the images and comments about Turkey are negative. But the third image of Turkey in our list (3.1.), is a neutral-positive one: a primarily economic image of Turkey as a country with large resorts and buzzing capitals. The vision behind this is that Turkey is a developed country with stable relations with the West; it is also Turkey is a democratic country, more effective than Armenia, and the leading actor in the region. According to the proponents of this point of view, Armenia has a lot to learn from Turkey not only in terms of implementing a more nationalistic policy but also in terms of social and economic development.

This thesis does not lie within the “Armenia-Turkey” paradigm but in the “Armenia-other countries” paradigm, in which weak, corrupt and non-democratic Armenia (and Armenians) is opposed to richer and better developed “other countries” whose population is not inclined to corruption, is consolidated etc.

These media reports also stress Turkey’s strong economic development and “geopolitical position”.

“ . . . No one needs a new war, least of all western companies and Turkey itself, which is becoming one of the leading countries of the region and an important country for transit of energy resources to European markets.”

(SEF “Noravank”. “The Cold War” in Armenia-Turkey relations must give way to regional cooperation. Author – expert. Dec 16)

The next thesis is similar.

3.11. *Turkish media and politicians deserve to be trusted*

Some opponents of the protocols combine two types of logic in their publications. On the one hand, they sustain an image of a hypocritical Turkey which aims to mislead Armenia. On the other hand, they quote Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan to prove that Turkey is in fact imposing preconditions on Armenia-Turkey rapprochement.

“ . . . We have actually been implementing the preconditions desired by Azerbaijan ever since Erdogan announced in April that as long as there is no progress in the Karabakh conflict, there will be no progress with Armenia. We continue implementing that precondition.”

(Yerkir Meia, *The Question of the Country*. Author – politician. Dec 8, 22:00)

We can thus see that perceptions of Turkey’s shrewdness coexist with trust towards Turkish media and the positions and propaganda of the Turkish government:

“ . . . Maybe we should finally investigate the true degree of connection between the two processes and stop hoping for the Turkish media to publish another information leak, most of which unfortunately turn out to be true?”

(News.am. *Should Yerevan continue to remain silent in response to the harsh comments of the Turkish leaders?* Author: journalist. Dec 8)

This fact was mentioned in the media by Armenian officials who expressed their indignation at the fact that in Armenia, Turkish officials are sometimes trusted more than Armenian leaders.

Just like the previous one, this thesis lies within the “Armenia-other countries” paradigm, and consequently contradicts another thesis (about the treachery of Turkey and the Turks), which lies within the “Armenia-Turkey” paradigm.

3.12. *Consolidated Turkey vs. disunited Armenia*

In the media coverage, we found a dichotomy of “consolidated Turks vs. disunited Armenians”. Interestingly, it lies in two paradigms: both “Armenians-Turks” and “Armenians-others.”

According to this thesis, the Turkish nation is united in its position (hate towards Armenians and the wish to destroy them), and the authorities only reflect the wishes and aspirations of the nation (in contrast to the Armenian authorities that pursue mercenary goals only). All Turkey’s actions are comprehended as artfully planned and being a part of a general policy of deceit and aggression against Armenia.

Two factors are important in this context: first, the insufficiency of information about the Turkish agenda and decision-making procedures, wide awareness of confrontational steps and unawareness about their reversal, and second, limited contacts. Most people who travel to Turkey from Armenia are migrant workers or tourists, whose experience is very limited. Contacts between experts became active only lately, and there are very few experts on Turkey in Armenia who relate to the media. Many of those who speak about Turkey and rapprochement have never even been to Turkey.

“...Our Turkish colleagues do not lapse in the slightest from their national and governmental interests (in which nothing has changed in the last century, I will repeat myself), and our authors just write in this compilation about wonderful prospects and how neighbors should be friends etc..”

(Golos Armenii. Journalists Team Project. Armenian-Turkish. Author: journalist. Dec 19)

Some holders of these opinions say that Armenia should use Turkey as a role model and learn to pursue a more proactive, assertive and aggressive foreign policy. It is symptomatic that the suggested role model is the virtual demonized Turkey that “lies to everybody, pursues an aggressive national policy and has expansionistic plans with regard to its neighbors”.

4. Armenia's image

4.1. *Turkey is anti-Armenia, Armenia is anti-Turkey*

The image of Armenia that was most frequently encountered in the media was very different from that of Turkey. Whereas Turkey has strong diplomacy, Armenia has weak diplomacy or none at all; Turks are consolidated and Armenians are disunited; Turks are assertive and militarized, Armenians are peaceful and passive; the Turkish government represents its nation and cares about its interests, the Armenian government cares only about itself and represents the interests of external forces; a Turk is a destroyer, an Armenian is a creator; Turks are newcomers on their lands, Armenians are autochthonous; Turks are aggressors, Armenians are victims. The overall picture is quite pessimistic and has a touch of despair, and probably also a general weariness with politics.

Since this dichotomy occurred very often, it implies that for many Armenians the Turks are the reference group to which they refer when defining their identity: this way, their Armenian identity relies on denying and being different from an imagined Turkey.

We also encountered an opposite view in which the image of Turkey and Turks was based on that of Armenia.

“ . . . He have grasped the meaning of the fight clearly and unambiguously: we must fight, the dirty boot of a Turkish Asker shall never step on Armenia's holy rocky ground again ”

(Vosanapat.Info. Akopyan Norayr Lendroshevich. Author: blogger. Dec 2)

It should be noted that this is to a great extent result of our selection of media: we chose only those stories which mentioned Turkey or the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement. Some of the dichotomies (the ones which were more relevant to the image of Turkey than that of Armenia) are listed above. Below we list the most common ones concerning Armenia.

4.2. *Armenian government as an external actor*

The Armenian government and various branches of power were the most heavily commented objects in December 2009. Most stakeholders agreed that public officials do not think in terms of national interests and only care about personal gain. This way, the Armenian government is presented as an external actor of ongoing developments and not as part of Armenian society. Armenia's participation in the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement was frequently said to be the result of insufficient domestic legitimacy of

the Armenian authorities, who were therefore looking for legitimacy outside the country.

Extremely negative attitudes to the government and governmental officials that we encountered in many publications frequently come with a conspiracy theory, just the way it happens with the image of Turkey.

For example, in one story the author dwelled on the family backgrounds of the current and previous presidents of Armenia, and inferred that their backgrounds may have been the cause of their alleged hate towards the Armenian nation:

“
... At some point of time, various news were circulated concerning the ancestors of Robert Kocharyan and Serge Sargsyan. Perhaps Ara Papyan should do another study about their backgrounds that might give us the opportunity to understand the logic of their actions, and help us find the answer to a very painful question: why do they hate the Armenian nation so much?”

(Taregir. *The best thing that happened to our country in 2009 was Nazik's victory*. Author: journalist. Dec 16)

The Armenian government was frequently presented as “an enemy as bad as the Turks”. Some authors said that authorities also harbor hidden plans: their interests differ from those of the nation and they are trying to make the people love Turks at a time when anti-Armenian sentiment is being widely advocated in Turkey. According to these authors, while the interests of the Turkish nation are well protected and Turkey is committing various aggressive acts towards Armenia, the interests of the Armenian nation are unprotected and traded by the government like a commodity.

Below are a few characteristic quotes:

“
... In the meantime no campaigning against it is going on in Armenia; moreover, there is advocacy of tolerance towards Turks

... 1. the Turkish side, which constantly pursues its huge interests, which are naturally the exact opposite of the interests of the Armenian nation; it shouldn't be trusted in any issue;

2. the Armenian side is the other “devilish” side: our own authorities: they are not trusted, and if they say something, they are merely hiding the true meaning, which is explained by their lack of legitimacy; they are vulnerable and all their decisions are imposed from the “outside” and cannot proceed from national interests...”

(Armenia Today. *The psychological peculiarities of the “normalizing” Armenia-Turkey relations*. Author: expert. Dec 1)

“ . . . What is the point of constantly reassuring the Armenian society which is already for the most part in favor of normalization of ties with Turkey and of a peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict?”

(News.am. *Should Yerevan continue to keep mum against tough statements by Turkish leaders?* Author: journalist. Dec 8)

In other publications, we encountered a point of view that “the government is concealing from the nation the true connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and the protocols.” “The government does not present the interests of the nation”, “the government swapped the arguments during debates about the protocols: instead of discussing the text of the protocols they are debating the problem of opening the border”.

Although the media published many negative comments on the actions of the government, we also encountered the opposite opinion: the government is aware of potential risks and is proceeding from national interests. This view was expressed chiefly by public officials but also by a number of journalists and experts.

4.3. *Armenia is a failed state*

The feeling that Armenian government is not doing its job to protect the nation against various perceived threats coming from Turkey are combined with a perception of Armenia as a failed state, expressed in the popular phrase “this country is not a country”. According to opinions expressed in December 2009, in Armenia irresponsibility is the rule and public officials are just random people; there is much less corruption in Turkey and the Turkish state is much more efficient.

A point of view frequently expressed in December was that Armenian diplomacy is no good in contrast to traditionally strong Turkish diplomacy. Showiness is sometimes confused with effectiveness, and many authors assume that tough statements made by Turkish (and Azerbaijani) leaders imply that these countries are doing well whereas Armenia is not.

As the rapprochement is perceived to involve Armenia and the international community rather than Armenia and Turkey, the media often mention external pressure which is exerted on Armenia, and the inability of the Armenian authorities to withstand it:

“
...But I am not sure that the Armenian authorities can manage to withstand the pressure of the international community which is more than obvious today”

(Golos Armenii. Dashnaktsutyun promises a restless January. Author: politician (opposition). Dec 15)

We also encountered the opposing point of view: the Armenian state and nation are competent and willing to live a “grown-up life” and react to modern challenges. This point of view was much less common and for the most part expressed by public officials, and only sometimes by journalists and experts.

4.4. Armenians pursue mercenary interests only

This image is deeply connected with the thesis “consolidated Turkey vs. disunited Armenia”. Turkey, observed from the outside, comes across as much more consolidated than Armenia when seen from the inside, “In Armenia, every snob has their own opinion, and in Turkey they do not, that’s why Turkey is stronger.” There is a perception that Armenian society is not mobilized enough to handle national problems in the way some authors see them, and is not concentrated and motivated enough, which poses great risks at a time when its enemy is the strong and consolidated Turkey.

“
...Shouldn't the Armenian social organizations, mostly too busy fooling overseas funds into giving them grants, begin to file justified claims against Azerbaijan and Turkey to international courts? Or we should wait until the victims of the Genocide get labeled as the slaughterers?”

(News.am. “The factory of lies” or the mutations of the Azerbaijani-Turkish propaganda. Author: journalist. Dec 7)

If Turkey acts cruelly towards Armenia, it is the fault of the Armenians who allow them to do it. It is not only the fault of non-governmental organizations but also of the authorities that advocate concessions to Turkey. In more radical publications, both NGO and the government are accused of betraying the national interests.

4.5. The Armenian nation is a victim

Although the Armenian Genocide happened 95 years ago, after which Armenia was annexed by the Soviet Union, survived World War II, an earthquake and a blockade, and even won a war, the identity of a victim is still relevant in Armenian public perceptions. We regularly encountered stories in which Armenians were positioned as victims. Example:

“ ...in a country that suffered indescribable agony and sustained heavy losses with the help of Gorgulu's predecessors.”

(Golos Armenii. Criminal. Author: journalist. Dec 5)

This image comes up especially frequently in stories about history of which there were quite a few in December. In a way, the image of a victim is inherent to public perceptions of Armenian history.

The opposite point of view was also expressed but much less often.

“ ...We must break free from this victim fixation, we must break free from the fixation of the killed and raped. We are a winning nation ”

(Golos Armenii. 9th conference of the Orinats Yerkir party: fewer words, more deeds. Author: public official, Dec 15)

4.6. *Armenia must conduct a tougher policy*

Against the background of Turkey's tough foreign policy, Armenia's mild one gives many observers the feeling of injustice and leads to persistent demands to take a more harsh line in the negotiations. This point of view dominated in the media that we researched; demands to toughen Armenia's stand continued even after the toughening actually took place (for example, when Armenia threatened to revoke its signature from the protocols).

Demands for tougher politics varied from general statements that Armenia must be tougher and more consistent to demands to impose particular preconditions on Turkey.

“ ...If we decide not to sign the protocols, revoking our signature back would be the more aggressive and right thing to do. It is normal in international practice but not in our legislation. We will probably soon fill this gap in our legislation.”

(Armnews TV, News /interview/ Author – expert in the constitution Dec

“ ...The Armenian parliament can dictate preconditions for the ratification of the protocols... Armenia can state that it will only ratify the protocols after Turkey recognizes the Genocide... Armenia can impose a precondition about the handover of occupied lands... Armenia must not ignore the demarche made by the Turkish prime minister...”

(Hayoc Ashxarh. Erdogan's American dead end. Author: journalist, Dec 9)

The fact that Turkey was imposing preconditions was viewed as an insult, because, as shown above, “Armenia has the moral right to make demands and Turkey does not”. Accordingly, Armenia must not make any concessions in the rapprochement.

The opposite point of view was encountered much less often. According to it, Turkey’s claims will be settled if Armenia makes territorial concessions in the Karabakh conflict. For example:

“...If Turkey closed the border because of “occupation of Azerbaijani territory”, and we remind you that it was closed after the Army of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic entered Kelbajar, the move back of the Armenian forces from the territories around Karabakh automatically settles all the claims of Ankara to our country. The problem which is raising Turkey’s concern will be closed. ...The Madrid approach is at the same time the background of the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement. The compromise reached by the authorities is a hard one. But it lets us keep what is most important – Karabakh, and settle a century-long controversy with a powerful western neighbor.”

(Novoe Vremya. Nagorno-Karabakh: does an alternative to the resolution exist? Author: journalist. Dec 3)

4.7. *The opinion of the Diaspora is important*

The importance of the Diaspora for Armenia was discussed a lot in connection with the rapprochement, because the Diaspora also tried to participate in the process and expected its opinion to be taken into account. In early October, president Sargsyan toured the most active Armenian communities of the world in order to show that their opinion is indeed being heeded; he was met with protest rallies.

Many points of view about this issue were expressed in the media in December 2009. According to some, the position of the Diaspora is unacceptable and is similar to the position of Azerbaijan. According to others, Armenia-Turkey rapprochement is very emotional for the Diaspora. The most common opinion was that Armenia and the Diaspora must continue to cooperate, and the Diaspora must continue efforts to achieve international recognition of the Armenian Genocide regardless of the rapprochement.

On the whole, the role of the Diaspora for Armenia is perceived as large; some authors believe that Armenia cannot efficiently develop without the Diaspora:

“...Indeed it is very sad, but today there are two totally different Armenian societies – Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian. They have completely different values and sorrows. Even our cultures are different. While we cannot move forward without the Diaspora, the Diaspora is a part of Armenia.”

(Aravot. If there is no God you can do anything. Author: cultural figure. Dec 12)

Conclusion

As we can see, many stakeholders were disappointed by Armenia's insufficiently tough stance as compared to Turkey. Debates of Armenia-Turkey normalization were heated, leading mutual accusations. The media studied during this project contained numerous stereotypes about Turkey, perceived as a "strong evil force" parallel to stereotypes about Armenians as "gullible victims." What matters that on almost every issue, there was a variety of opinions, including attempts to look at things from a different angle.

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Many stakeholders expressed direct or indirect wishes that Armenian society should be more actively involved in politics in general and Armenia-Turkey relations in particular. The fact that society is passive paves the way for the spread of conspiracy theories concerning Armenia's involvement in the rapprochement.

Some conclusions were unexpected; we consider this a success of this study. Of course, it was not possible to list all the viewpoints that we encountered and present them in a short research paper. We did our best to summarize and categorize them and allow the readers to judge for themselves.



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Armenia and Armenians, Turkey and Turks in Armenian Media

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Author: Hrant Mikaelian

Editor: Nina Iskandarian

Research team: Ani Haroutyunyan, Ella Karagullyan, Arshaluys Mghdesyan, Johnny Melikyan, Arkady Movsessyan (data collect and processing)

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Eznik Koghbatsi, 39
0010 Yerevan
Republic of Armenia

Tel: (374 10) 540631, 540632

Fax: (374 10) 540632

E-mail: contact@caucasusinstitute.org

Website: www.caucasusinstitute.org

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