The Israeli national identity

Media content analysis of the public opinion in Israel regarding the Armenian genocide, 2000s - 2010s

Master Thesis
International Relations in Historical Perspective
Faculty of Humanities

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Words:	12515
Date:	06-06-2018

Abstract

This thesis examines to what extent the Israeli public opinion complies with the Israeli foreign policy during the 2000s and 2010s regarding the Armenian genocide. The research is carried out by means of media content analysis, using news and opinion articles published by the Jerusalem Post. The time frame was chosen because of the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, which caused the relationship between Turkey and Israel to deteriorate. It was found that the Israeli policy on the issue, which entails non-recognition, could be convincingly explained by the balance-of-threat theory since Israel views Turkey as a necessary ally in a predominantly hostile environment. By means of the media content analysis it was discovered that the Israeli national identity played a large role in the shaping of the public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide and with respect to the policy of the Israeli state. The collective memory of the Holocaust and the significance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were both of critical importance in shaping the public opinion. When comparing the 2000s with the 2010s, it was found that after 2010 the frame used by the Jerusalem Post was more in accordance with the public opinion than with the policy of the state whereas this was not the case before this period. Overall, the analysis showed that the Israeli public opinion did not comply with the foreign policy. The credibility of the findings is however limited by the time frame and due to the sole use of the Jerusalem Post as a source for the media content analysis.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is the final research product of my master program International Relations in Historical Perspective at Utrecht University. I can honestly say that is has been quite a tough process. While this was the most challenging project for me to accomplish within this master program, at the same time it has also been one of the projects which has taught me the most. First of all, I gained more insight into the concept of national identity, which was relatively new for me as well. Through this, I have been able to expand my knowledge on a subject in which I developed a broad interest over the past few years; the state of Israel and its interesting history as well as its ever changing position in the international arena. Besides that, I have been able to further develop my skills in terms of researching and writing. Furthermore, and perhaps even more important, I have learned a lot about myself and my strengths and weaknesses when it comes to accomplishing a challenging project. In the end, writing this thesis has provided me with more confidence regarding my own skills. I even have to admit to myself that, through the many ups and downs, I even started to enjoy the process once certain pieces of the puzzle fell into place.

I want to thank everyone who helped me in any way during the process of writing this thesis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people in particular. First of all, I want to express my gratitude for my supervisor, dr. Geraldien von Frijtag Drabbe Kunzel, for her advice regarding my subject and for the constructive feedback regarding the process of researching and writing. Also, I would like to thank my peers, Leon Arnts and Betti Csiba, for our fruitful peer-review cooperation. Furthermore, I am appreciative of the continuous support from my roommates and from my friends. I want to thank one of my friends in particular; Loulou Wong, without your motivation and your presence my days in the library would have been much less fun. Furthermore, I am grateful for my boyfriend, Davey Oogjes. Thank you for your love and for always putting a smile back on my face when I felt stressed at times. Last, I would like to thank my mom for her endless support and motivation; I could not have accomplished this without you.

Esmée van Weenen

1. Introduction

1.1 Research question

Even today, the labelling of the massacre of 800,000 to 1 million Armenians by the Ottoman empire during WWI in 1915 as genocide is a highly politicized issue, not only between Turkey and Armenia but among many other states as well as within the academic world. Denial of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish state is based on controversy around whether 'genocidal intent' can be proven and the avoidance of a moral stigma as well as a fear of possible retributive and restorative measures.[1] While this topic has many different elements to it, this thesis focusses on a particularly interesting paradox regarding the politics of recognition; Israel being among the states which employs a policy of non-recognition regarding the Armenian genocide.

Non-recognition by the state of Israel may seem surprising, since the Holocaust is one of the main foundations of the Israeli state itself. Several scholars argue convincingly that the Israeli foreign policy regarding the Armenian genocide is a strategy founded in the realist theory, in order to strengthen its ties with Turkey.[2] In addition, research shows that there has not been much political debate about the possibility of recognizing the Armenian genocide, albeit the amount of attention has been slowly growing since the 2000s and the debate resurfaced predominantly on the political agenda in a reaction to the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, during which the Israeli defence forces killed nine Turkish activists on board of a passenger ship which tried to break the Israeli sea blockade of Gaza.[3] In addition to this research, my aim is to analyse the Israeli public opinion as expressed by the Israeli media regarding the Armenian genocide and with respect to the foreign policy of the state to examine how the frame which is used by the state resonates with the Israeli people. Successive Israeli governments have used the Israeli national identity to legitimize their policy, by framing the Armenians as similar to Palestinian terrorists.[4] Using different theories on national identity, public opinion, mass media, foreign policy and on the relationships between these concepts, this thesis aims to provide a

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[1] P. Malcontent, 'Facing the Armenian Genocide. A History of Denial and Politics', in: Peter Malcontent (red.), *Facing the Past. Amending Historical Injustices through Instruments of Transitional Justice* (Intersentia 2016) 341-362, 351-353.
[2] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 14.
[2] Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', 14.
[3] Ibidem, 14.
[4] Ibidem, 4-5.

comprehensive answer to the following research question: To what extent does the Israeli public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide comply with the official position of the Israeli state during the 2000s and 2010s?

The academic relevance of this particular research lies within the possibility of providing valuable insights into the Israeli national identity. Besides, this thesis offers a better understanding into the role of mass media and its relationship with public opinion and foreign policy. The societal value of this thesis lies within the possibility of expanding the knowledge on how the Israeli foreign policy regarding the Armenian genocide is formed and the possibility of gaining a better understanding of the public opinion on this issue.

Due to the time and scope of this thesis, there are certain limitations to my research. First of all, as the focus of this thesis is on the Israeli public opinion and national identity, the research will be carried out by means of Israeli newspapers only. More specific, The Jerusalem Post was chosen as a source since their articles are published in Hebrew as well as English. The time frame, 2000s and 2010s, was chosen because issues revolving around recognition of the Armenian genocide fist appeared in The Jerusalem Post during the 2000s. Additionally, the period of the 2010s is interesting to examine and compare with the 2000s due to the Mavi Marmara incident and its implications for the relationship between Turkey and Israel.

1.2 The relationship between national identity, public opinion and foreign policy

With his book 'Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations' which was published in 1990, William Bloom was the first scholar to introduce identification as a theory in international relations. He came up with a method for understanding the psychological relationship between the national population and the state, its foreign policy and international relations.[5] According to Bloom, his Identification theory bridges the gap between realist theories and idealist theories and provides a norm-free method of analysis because it focusses solely on a social-psychological level.[6] Bloom essentially distinguishes three types of relationships between the national identity of a state and its foreign policy decisions. The first type is the national identity as a foreign policy resource. This means that states use the national identity to legitimize their foreign policy. While the foreign policy itself may not be motivated

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[5] William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge 1990) 3.
[6] Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations,* 117.

by the national identity in this case, it is still used as a frame by the state to gather public support. Other scholars who have noticed the national identity as a legitimizing tool are William Wallace and Ilya Prizel.[7] The second type of relationship is the foreign policy as a tool for nation-building. This means that the government uses its foreign policy to control the national identity or to mobilise it. Finally, the third type of relationship distinguished by Bloom works the other way around; national identity dynamic triggered by non-government actors influences foreign policy.[8] This way, the national identity is capable of being a delegitimizing factor to foreign policy as well. According to him, the national identity of a state has so much power that it may even dictate how a foreign policy is formed.[9] As democratic governments need the support of the people to survive, they cannot propose foreign policies that are not in line with the national identity because the national public will most likely be opposed to it. Thus, according to Bloom in formulating a foreign policy a democratic government always has to take the national identity of the state into consideration.[10]

Dov Waxman takes on much of Bloom's theory in 'The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity' which was published in 2006. He particularly agrees with Bloom's view on the national identity as a possible delegitimizing factor on foreign policy. Besides that, Waxman mentions constructivism as a theory in international relations which describes another way in which the national identity influences foreign policy. According to Alexander Wendt, one of the main introducers of the constructivist theory, the interests of the state are derived from what the state views as its own identity.[11] Waxman however argues that most of the time, several different policies or actions will be compatible with the national identity. Therefore, he states that the national identity does not fully determine the direction a government chooses to take.[12] Upon looking at the Israeli foreign policy regarding the Armenian genocide however, it becomes clear that the constructivist theory fails to explain the position of the Israeli government. The Israeli position can be explained through a theory which fits within the realist tradition instead; the balance-of-threat theory. This theory is derived from the balance-of-power theory and implies that balancing strategies will dominate foreign policy when one or several

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[7] Dov Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity. Defending/defining the nation* (New York 2006) 9.
[8] William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge 1990) 89.
[9] Dov Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity. Defending/defining the nation* (New York 2006) 10.
[10] Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity. Defending/defining the nation,* 10.
[11] Ibidem, 11.
[12] Ibidem, 11.

states become more powerful and when their location and behaviour feed threat perceptions. This theory also explains why some countries seek preventive alliances when they fear that one state will gain more power in the future.[13] How this fits with the Israeli foreign policy will be explained in more detail in the next chapter.

It is important to be aware of the fact that national identity and public opinion are not the same concepts and therefore cannot be used interchangeably. In his book 'Public Opinion', Walter Lippmann explains the concept of public opinion. First, he describes public affairs as 'those features of the world outside which have to do with the behaviour of other human beings, in so far as that behaviour crosses ours, is dependent upon us or is interesting to us'. Public opinions then, are 'the pictures inside the heads of these human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes, and relationship.'[14] Messages that are received from the outside are affected by images, preconceptions and prejudices people already have inside their heads. Consequently, this process affects our vision and directs what grasps our attention. Furthermore, in this process we identify the message with our own interests.[15] While all these variables in the process differ per person and their eventual opinion may differ as well, in the end a common idea known as the general public opinion is formed through the finding of a stimulus which arouses the same emotion.[16] A public opinion is thus formed through a process of many different variables, national identity being one of these variables.

1.3 Methodology and sources

Several scholars have examined the relationship between mass media and public opinion. According to John Tosh, newspapers are the most important published primary source for a historian. He describes their value as threefold. First, newspapers record the most important societal and political views. Besides that, a day-to-day record of events is provided. Lastly, sometimes newspapers also present the results of more thorough inquiries by journalists.[17] However, the researcher should always stay aware of the interpretation by the narrator or commentator. [18] According to Anthony D. Smith, the mass media, as an agency of popular

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[13] Christian Reus-Smith, Duncan Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford University Press 2008) 141-142.
[14] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (Roudledge 2017) 29.
[15] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion,* 30.
[16] Ibidem, 205.
[17] John Tosh, *The pursuit of history* (Roudledge 2013) 63-64.
[18] John Tosh, The pursuit of history, 59.

socialization, holds the task of ensuring a common public, mass culture.[19] Similarly, in their article 'Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach', William Gamsom and Andre Modigliani state that the media reflects the public opinion as well as contributes to its creation.[20] Moreover, Gurevitch and Levy argue that the media are a site on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality.'[21] Furthermore, Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur introduced the media-dependency hypothesis. This hypothesis entails that the importance of the media discourse for the public opinion depends on to which degree there are meaning-generating experiences in people's lives.[22] Applied to the subject of this thesis, this entails that since most Israelis do not regularly get in touch with the Armenian population, they are more dependent on the media for shaping their opinion.

On the other hand, there is also a relationship between mass media and foreign policy. According to Matthew Baum and Philip Potter who wrote the article 'The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis' the media is the primary link between leaders and the public. Therefore, the media is a central actor with respect to foreign policy.[23] They argue that the media primarily relies on leaders for access to information. However, leaders usually provide this information in a frame which they would like the media to retain. According to RM. Entman, the ability of the media to influence foreign policy behaviour is dependent on whether leaders deploy culturally ambiguous or culturally congruent frames.[24] Culturally congruent frames are frames which are in accordance with the beliefs and views of society. When leaders make use of a culturally congruent frame, it is very difficult for the media to independently influence foreign policy. In contrast, when leaders use a culturally ambiguous frame, the media will likely be responsive to market pressures stemming from the public opinion and offer a different frame which is more in accordance with the public opinion.[25] One of the sub-hypotheses of this thesis is that the

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[19] Anthony D. Smith, *National identity* (University of Nevada Press 1991) 11.
[20] William Gamsom and Andre Modigliani, 'Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constuctionist approach', *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1989) 1, 1-37, 3.
[21] William Gamsom and Andre Modigliani, 'Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constuctionist approach', 3.
[22] Ibidem, 9.
[23] Matthew A. Baum and Philip B.K. Potter, 'The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis', *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008), 39-65, 50.
[24] Matthew A. Baum and Philip B.K. Potter, 'The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis', 51.
[25] Ibidem.

Jerusalem Post offers a frame which differs from the frame used by the Israeli government, a frame in which the Armenian genocide is compared to the Holocaust, because the frame used by the Israeli government in which the Armenians are described as terrorists and compared to Palestinians is culturally ambiguous.

On the basis of these theories, I decided to conduct my research using news articles, editorials and opinion articles which were published in Israeli media. The newspaper chosen for the research is The Jerusalem Post, which was founded in 1932 by Gershon Agron as the Palestine Post and switched its name to The Jerusalem Post in 1950. Nowadays, it is one of the leading mainstream newspapers in Israel. In the beginning, it was considered a left-wing newspaper but after a brief shift to the right during the 1980s, nowadays it is known as taking a centrist stand in world affairs, albeit they are considered biased towards Israel. The articles which were analysed were published on JPost.com, the online edition of the Jerusalem Post which was launched in 1996.[26] Furthermore, the Jerusalem Post is intended for an international Jewish audience, hence why the paper is only published in English.

All of the articles were accessed through the archive of the website of The Jerusalem Post, JPost.com, using both 'Armenian question' and 'Armenian genocide' within the time frame of the 2000s and 2010s. The words 'Armenian' and 'genocide' or 'question' did not necessarily appear next to each other in the articles. After filtering out very short and descriptive news articles (e.g. four sentences or less), eighty news articles, three editorials and thirty-eight opinion articles as well as letters to the editors were analysed.

	Total number of articles	During 2000s	During 2010s
Type of article			
News articles	80	29	51
Editorials	3	0	3
Opinion articles	38	13	25
Background author opinion article			
Jewish	24	10	14
Armenian	6	1	5
Turkish	4	1	3
Other	4	1	3

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[26] World Heritage Encyclopedia, 'Jerusalem Post', Http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Jerusalem_Post (May 11th, 2018).

The research method can be described as media content analysis, which is a specialized sub-set of content analysis introduced by Harold Lasswell in 1927.[27] Within this method, it was decided to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis to pay attention to contextual factors as well, instead of only looking at the text itself.[28] The research will specifically focus on whether a link is made with the Holocaust or with Palestinian terrorism, as well as whether the term 'genocide' is being used an whether the government policy is often criticized.

1.4 Key concepts

This thesis is embedded in theories about the concept of national identity. Therefore, this concept will be outlined below as well as relevant elements of the Israeli national identity in particular.

<u>National identity</u>

To be able to fully understand the relevant aspects of the Israeli national identity which will be described hereafter, we need a definition of the concept of national identity itself. In his book 'National Identity' which was published in 1990, Professor in Sociology Anthony D. Smith lists what he describes as fundamental features of a national identity[29]:

1. A historic territory, or homeland
2. Common myths and historical memories
3. A common, mass public culture
4. Common legal rights and duties for all members
5. A common economy with territorial mobility for members

It is important to note that what the members of the community identify as their homeland or historic territory, may not necessarily find expression in a state of their own. Furthermore, he argues that a national identity is multi-dimensional; it is always comprised of different elements.[30] According to Amelia Gentleman, a national identity is a nation's self-image or self-

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[27] Jim R. Macnamara, 'Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology', *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal* 6 (2005) 1, 1-34, 1.
[28] Jim R. Macnamara, 'Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology', 5.
[29] Anthony D. Smith, *National identity* (University of Nevada Press 1991) 14.
[30] Anthony D. Smith, *National identity*, 14.

conception, meaning the socially shared set of ideas that make up how a nation imagines itself.[31] According to Yaacov Yadgar, a national identity is just as much made up of 'who we are' as of 'who we are not'. In other words, national identities are predominantly based on whom we include and whom we exclude. They are explicit identifications of a designated collective as the 'other'.[32] States play a big role in creating and sustaining the national identity, for instance through public ceremonies and by means of history education.[33] Furthermore, it is important to note that national identities are not fixed, they are subject to change over time.[34]

In accordance with the set time frame the focus will mainly be on the Israeli national identity during the period of the 2000s-2010s, with some exceptions to provide a bit of background information. Since a national identity, just like any individual or collective identity, is comprised of many different aspects, only these aspects of the Israeli identity which are relevant for the research into the Israeli public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide will be discussed: the presence and significance of the memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The collective memory of the Holocaust

Since its founding in 1948, the Israeli state is the home of the largest community of Holocaust survivors and their descendants.[35] For many years, the Holocaust did not really have a presence in everyday Israeli life however. In their article 'The ''Never Again'' State of Israel: The Emergence of the Holocaust as a Core Feature of Israeli Identity and Its Four Incongruent Voices', the Israeli researchers Yechiel Klar, Noa Schori-Eyal and Yonat Klar present the research of many different scholars on how the Holocaust slowly became a part of the Israeli national identity. It wasn't until the Eichmann trial in 1961 that the Holocaust started to have a more visible presence in Israeli society. The trial took place in Jerusalem and the testimonies

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[31] Amelia Gentleman, 'Summertime, and Living Is Not Easy for French Racked with Self-doubt' (version August 10th, 2018), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/aug/10/france.ameliagentleman (May 14th, 2018).

[32] Yaacov Yadgar, 'Between 'the Arab' and 'the Religious Rightist':'significant others' in the construction of Jewish-Israeli national identity', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9 (2003) 1, 52-74, 52.

[33] Dov Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity. Defending/defining the nation* (New York 2006), 8.

[34] Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity. Defending/defining the nation,* 12.

[35] Yechiel Klar, Noa Schori-Eyal and Yonat Klar, 'The ''Never Again'' State of Israel: The Emergence of the Holocaust as a Core Feature of Israeli Identity and Its Four Incongruent Voices', *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2013) 1, 125-143, 125.

of over one hundred Holocaust survivors were broadcasted by the Israeli radio stations.[36] Later on, the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kipur War in 1973 caused the Israeli population to start to identify even more with the Holocaust because it evoked the same emotions which were formerly only attributed to the horrifying events of WWII.[37] During the 1990's, the remembrance of the Holocaust became even more apparent due to the Gulf War during which the Israeli's frequently had to take shelter in sealed rooms and were provided with gas masks.[38] More recently, during the 2000's and 2010's, the fear of Iran's nuclear capability contributes even further to the idea that the Holocaust is not just something which happened in the distant past.[39] Apart from the existential threats, the presence of the Holocaust also grew due to the efforts of the second and third generations in Israel. Over the years, the survivors themselves started to be more open about their experiences as well.[40]

Several studies have shown how the presence of the Holocaust is visible in everyday Israeli life. For instance, in 2008 the word 'Holocaust' was mentioned almost as much as the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz and numerous new books are being published in Hebrew about the Holocaust each year. Furthermore, since 1980 raising awareness about the Holocaust is one of the main goals of the Israeli educational system and this also includes organized school trips to Holocaust sites each year. Most importantly, since the 1960's there is an annual remembrance day during which every aspect of society such as the media and educational programs are devoted to the Holocaust.[41]

The Arab – Israeli conflict

According to researchers Neta Oren, Daniel Bar-Tal and Ohad David enduring conflicts have a profound effect on identity.[42] Several scholars have studied the position of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Israeli national identity. In 1999, Herbert Kelman, a researcher in psychology at

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[36] Yechiel Klar, Noa Schori-Eyal and Yonat Klar, 'The ''Never Again'' State of Israel: The Emergence of the Holocaust as a Core Feature of Israeli Identity and Its Four Incongruent Voices', *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2013) 1, 125-143, 130.
[37] Yechiel Klar, Noa Schori-Eyal and Yonat Klar, 'The ''Never Again'' State of Israel: The Emergence of the Holocaust as a Core Feature of Israeli Identity and Its Four Incongruent Voices', 133.
[38] Ibidem.
[39] Ibidem, 134.
[40] Ibidem, 132.
[41] Ibidem, 127-128.
[42] Neta Oren, Daniel Bar-Tal and Ohad David, 'Conflict, Identity, and Ethos: The Israeli-Palestinian Case', *Psychology of ethnic and cultural conflict* (2004), 133-154, 133.

Harvard University, wrote an article in which he argues that there is a negative interdependence between the national identities of the Israeli's and the Palestinians.[43] Because of the fact that both national groups focus on the same land, they perceive the conflict as a zero-sum conflict. Consequently, they perceive their own national identities and existence from this perspective as well, meaning that both groups perceive the existence of the other as a threat to its own existence.[44] According to Kelman, 'fulfillment of the other's national identity is experienced as equivalent to destruction of one's own identity.'[45] In 2003, Yaacov Yadgar, a professor of Israel studies at Oxford University, published an article in which he sought to describe the Israeli national identity through what it defines as its 'significant others'. According to him, within the Israeli national identity, since the late 1970's there is a slow but gradual shift taking place from 'the Arab' as the main (external) 'significant other' towards an internal 'significant other', defined as the nationalistic and religious objector to peace.[46] Neta Oren, a researcher at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, also notes that there has been a growing acceptance of the Palestinian identity by the Israeli's during the 1980's and 1990's. According to her, this growing acceptance is continuing, despite of the collapse of the peace process in 2000.[47] During the years 2000s-2010s the Arab-Israeli conflict is still an important part of the Israeli national identity, but there is less of a negative interdependence between the Israeli and Palestinian national identity nowadays. It should be stressed however that recent events, notably the relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, could possibly reverse this process. Nevertheless, it is too soon to be able to draw conclusions for the Israeli national identity based on these events.

1.5 Hypotheses

On the basis of the research question and the key concepts, a main hypothesis and several sub-hypotheses were formulated. The main hypothesis is that the Israeli national identity plays a dominant role in the shaping of the public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide. A sub-hypothesis is that within this variable of the national identity, the collective memory of the

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[43] Herbert C. Kelman, 'The Interdependence of Israeli and Palestinian National Identities: The Role of the Other in Existential Conflicts, *Journal of Social Issues* 55 (1999) 3, 581-600, 583.

[44] Herbert C. Kelman, 'The Interdependence of Israeli and Palestinian National Identities: The Role of the Other in Existential Conflicts, 583.

[45] Ibidem, 589.

[46] Yaacov Yadgar, 'Between 'the Arab' and 'the Religious Rightist':'significant others' in the construction of Jewish-Israeli national identity, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9 (2003) 1, 52-74, 69.

[47] Neta Oren, 'Israeli identity formation and the Arab-Israeli conflict in election platforms, 1969-2006', *Journal of Peace Research* 47 (2010) 2, 193-204, 199.

Holocaust is dominant over the significance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Palestinian terrorism. The Israeli public opinion will therefore not be in compliance with the position of the Israeli state and the frame which is used by the state. An additional sub-hypothesis is that the Israeli public opinion is not significantly altered by the deteriorated relationship between Turkey and Israel after the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010; before this event, the public opinion already differed from the official position of the state. The last sub-hypothesis uses the theory of R.M. Entman on the ability of mass media to influence foreign policy, and entails that the Jerusalem Post offers its readers a frame which expresses the Israeli public opinion and thus differs from the frame used by the Israeli state.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

In order to be able to answer the main research question, a couple of subsidiary questions should be answered first. Therefore, the structure of the thesis is as follows. The next chapter will provide an answer to the first sub question; how the Israeli foreign policy regarding the Armenian genocide was formed during the 2000s and 2010s. In order to be able to do so, the paragraphs of this chapter briefly cover essential background information on the Armenian genocide, the concept of genocide and the official Turkish position. Most importantly, the political as well as the economic relationship between Israel and Turkey will be discussed. The third chapter contains the media content analysis of articles published by The Jerusalem Post and deals with the second sub question; how the Israeli public opinion was formed during the with regard to the Armenian genocide and with respect to the foreign policy of the state during the 2000s and 2010s. Subsequently, the conclusion will answer the research question to what extent the Israeli public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide complies with the official position of the Israeli state during the 2000s and 2010s. The hypotheses which were formulated in the last paragraph will then be reflected upon.

2. Background: The Armenian genocide and politics

2.1 Historical background

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was made up of a broad variety of people with different religions and ethnicities. Identity was based on ethno-religious and local ties. Approximately 2 million people were identified by the Ottoman state as Armenian.[48] With the emergence of nationalism, the Ottoman Empire lost more and more of its territory; during the 19th century several states gained independence and during the Balkan wars the Ottoman empire lost its most important territories.[49] At the end of the 19th century, a small elite group of Armenians wanted to gain independence as well. They adopted a strategy of using violence to gain the attention of the great European powers, which they believed would help them to create a nation state for themselves.[50] For this reason, the Armenians were not only regarded as separatists but also as collaborators by the Ottoman leaders.[51] To stop this from happening, in 1891 the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II organized an army of predominantly Kurdish militias, called the Hamidiye, who were given carte blanche to knock down the Armenian nationalists. In the following years, this resulted in a great number of Armenians murdered by the Hamidiye (estimated numbers vary between 50.000 to 200.0000) followed by a lot of Armenian terrorist attacks, even on sultan Abdülhamid himself but he survived.[52] In April of 1913 however, a secretly formed party called the Young Turks Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) committed a coup and became the ruling party of the slowly collapsing Ottoman Empire.[53]

Most members of the CUP came from regions that were lost during the Balkan wars. Due to these wars, they did not trust the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire anymore. Their mission was Turkification: the radical transformation of the society into an ethnically homogeneous state.[54] When WWI broke out, the Ottoman Empire sided with the Germans. During the war, the Ottoman army lost 78.000 soldiers against a confrontation with the Russian army in East-Anatolia. The CUP blamed the Armenians, who they said betrayed them and

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[48] Ugur Ümit Üngör, *Vervolging, Onteigening en Vernietiging: de deportatie van Ottomaanse Armeniërs tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg 2007), 27-28.
[49] Ugur Ümit Üngör, *Vervolging, onteigening en vernietiging: de deportatie van Ottomaanse Armeniërs tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 33.
[50] Ibidem, 36.
[51] Ibidem, 41.
[52] Ibidem, 41.
[53] Ibidem, 47.
[54] Ibidem, 49.

fought together with the Russians against the Ottomans.[55] This is the breeding ground on which in 1915 the Armenian genocide could take place. Out of fear for Armenian separation, the CUP gave orders to deport all of the Armenian population towards the Syrian desert. During these deportations, most of them died before they reached the Syrian desert. In some cases, such as in the province Bitlis, the Armenians were not deported but they were murdered right away.[56] The property of the Armenian people was confiscated by the state and a large part was sold to Turkish people.[57] In total, the estimated number of Armenians who have died during the murders and deportations varies between 800,000 to 1 million.[58] The few Armenians who were not murdered or deported, were forced to convert to Islam and carry new Turkish names.[59]

As mentioned before, the question of the recognition of the Armenian genocide is a highly politicized issue. This does not only count among states, but it is also the case within the academic world. The next paragraph will shortly explain the legal concept of genocide as well as the specific issues surrounding the Armenian case.

2.2 The legal concept of genocide

Already during WWII, many felt as if there was no adequate word available to describe the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime on the Jewish people, the Roma and other minorities. Because of this problem, in 1944 the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin introduced the term 'genocide' for the first time.[60] He derived the term from the Greek word 'genos', meaning race/people, and the Latin suffix 'cide', which means killing.[61] In an article he published in 1946, he argued that genocide should be adopted by the international community as an international crime, in the first place because genocide is committed by states or at least by very powerful groups who are supported by the state. It is thus very unlikely that a state would convict itself of genocide, hence why the international community should be able to convict

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[55] Ugur Ümit Üngör, *Vervolging, Onteigening en Vernietiging: de deportatie van Ottomaanse Armeniërs tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg 2007), 68-69.
[56] Ümit Üngör, *Vervolging, onteigening en vernietiging: de deportatie van Ottomaanse Armeniërs tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 61.
[57] Ibidem, 74.
[58] P. Malcontent, 'Facing the Armenian Genocide. A History of Denial and Politics', in: Peter Malcontent (red.), *Facing the Past. Amending Historical Injustices through Instruments of Transitional Justice* (Intersentia 2016) 341-362, 341.
[59] Ugur Ümit Üngör, *Vervolging, Onteigening en Vernietiging: de deportatie van Ottomaanse Armeniërs tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg 2007), 76.
[60] Raphael Lemkin, 'Genocide', *The American Scholar* (1946), 227-230, 227.
[61] Raphael Lemkin, 'Genocide', 228.

states of this crime.[62] It is interesting to mention that in the same article, when describing the term genocide, Lemkin does not only refer to the Holocaust. He states that although the genocide committed by the Nazi's is the biggest example both in terms of planning and result, there are other examples of genocide which can be found in history. Among a few of these examples, such as the crusades, he mentions 'the massacre of the Armenians' as the most recent example before the Holocaust took place.[63] As a reaction to the Holocaust and as a result of this proposal, the United Nations adopted the Genocide Convention on December 9, 1948. This convention is currently ratified by 146 states, but it is considered to be binding on all states.[64] While the definition of genocide itself is quite straightforward and clear, there have been some issues regarding the application of the term for legal purposes. The first issue has to do with the common practice in law to not apply rules of law retrospectively. For example, the United Kingdom has used this as a rationale for not taking a position on whether the tragedy of the Armenians should be labelled as a genocide. They argue that since the Genocide Convention entered into force in 1948, it can only apply to events that happened after that.[65] While it is true that it is common practice not to apply law in retroactively, the prevailing view is that this does not count for the Genocide Convention.[66] This has also been stated in an authoritative opinion from the International Centre for Transitional Justice.[67] The second issue revolves around the discussion on what is necessary to prove 'genocidal intent'. For a conviction based on the crime of genocide, there has to be a 'double intention'. First, there has to be an intention to do any of the things as listed in article 2 from (a) to (e), such as killing members of the group. Second and more difficult to prove, in doing so there has to be an intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. This issue is the reason why there is still an academic debate among scholars researching the history of the Ottoman Empire, including Turkish nationalists and Armenian nationalists.[68]

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[62] Raphael Lemkin, 'Genocide', *The American Scholar* (1946), 227-230, 228.
[63] Raphael Lemkin, 'Genocide', 227.
[64] G. Robertson, 'Armenia and the G-Word: The Law and the Politics', in: Alexis Demirdjian (red.), *The Armenian Genocide Legacy* (Springer 2016) 69-83, 70.
[65] William A. Schabas, 'Retroactive Application of the Genocide Convention', *University of St. Thomas Journal of Law and Public Policy* 4 (2010) 2, 36-59, 37.
[66] G. Robertson, 'Armenia and the G-Word: The Law and the Politics', in: Alexis Demirdjian (red.), *The Armenian Genocide Legacy* (Springer 2016) 69-83, 78.
[67] G. Robertson, 'Armenia and the G-Word: The Law and the Politics', in: Alexis Demirdjian (red.), 78.
[68] P. Malcontent, 'Facing the Armenian Genocide. A History of Denial and Politics', in: Peter Malcontent (red.), *Facing the Past. Amending Historical Injustices through Instruments of Transitional Justice* (Intersentia 2016) 341-362, 342.

2.3 The Turkish policy regarding Armenian genocide

It was not until the 1970s that the Turkish state developed a policy on the Armenian genocide of 1915 for the first time. During the 1970s, the Armenian Diaspora communities started to raise awareness about the genocide in an attempt to gain recognition by the international community, and most importantly to gain recognition by Turkey.[69] In 1973, a 77-year-old survivor of the Armenian genocide murdered two Turkish diplomats in the United States. In the years that followed, there were several terrorist attacks by Armenians on Turkish diplomats in Europe and the Middle East. They were carried out by two terrorist organizations, the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) and the ASALA.[70] As a reaction, the Turkish state developed two strategies. The first was to conduct a strategic narrative to frame the Armenian genocide as a problem of terrorism. The second strategy entailed the sponsorship of academic research that would deny the Armenian claim that a genocide had taken place. A group of scholars, trained by the Turkish Foreign Ministry, participated in conferences which were frequently organized by universities and international organizations to represent the Turkish vision of the events.[71] During the 1980s and the 1990s, Turkey did not alter its policy of denial, despite the official recognition of the Armenian genocide by several states and by the European Parliament. However, during the first years of the beginning of the new millennium, Turkey's candidacy for the European Union became a more prominent issue on the political agenda of both the European Union and Turkey itself. Within the EU, the recognition of the Armenian genocide was framed as a necessary condition for Turkey to qualify as 'European'.[72] This, along with France's official recognition in 2001, eventually forced Turkey to develop a different policy.

The new Turkish policy entailed rapprochement with Armenia. A Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission was created (TARC), in which both states were represented. The commission made recommendations to the governments of both states to work closer together. In the end, these recommendations however did not lead to much change in the relationship between Turkey and Armenia, because they were never turned into an official policy.[73] In 2005,

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[69] S. Bayraktar, 'The Politics of Denial and Recognition: Turkey, Armenia and the EU', in: Alexis Demirdjian (red.), *The Armenian Genocide Legacy* (Springer 2016) 197-211, 197.
[70] S. Bayraktar, 'The Politics of Denial and Recognition: Turkey, Armenia and the EU', 199.
[71] Ibidem, 200.
[72] Ibidem, 202.
[73] Ibidem, 204.

when the Turkish EU-candidacy was still high on the agenda and also the year of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan decided to be more pro-active. He invited the Armenians into a joint history commission to solve the conflict. Furthermore, he issued a plan to restore Armenian cultural and religious artefacts that had been left damaged after the Armenian genocide. According to Seyhan Bayraktar, these changes should however be viewed as tactical moves in order to please the international community, because the Turkish government did not undertake any valuable steps towards recognition.[74] In 2009, official diplomatic relations were established between Armenia and Turkey. A protocol was signed in which the states agreed on a dialogue on their past. This protocol has however never been ratified, neither in Turkey nor in Armenia.[75]

Currently, the official Turkish position regarding the Armenian genocide can still be seen as a position of denial. The website of the Turkish Foreign Ministry categorizes 'Controversy between Turkey and Armenia about the Events of 1915' under 'Main Issues', listing several state documents and chapters from mainly Turkish researchers contradicting the Armenian genocide. The webpage also contains a message from Prime Minister Erdogan from April 23rd, 2014 in which he says among other things: 'Any conscientious, fair and humanistic approach to these issues requires an understanding of all the sufferings endured in this period, without discriminating as to religion or ethnicity.'[76] It remains clear that the Turkish government frames the deportation and murder of the Armenian people in 1915 as something that happened under the fog of war and does not constitute genocide, especially since Prime Minister Erdogan emphasized the suffering of other peoples during the war several times during his speech.

2.4 The Mavi Marmara incident

As will be further explained in the next paragraph, this thesis partly relies on the assumption that the Mavi Marmara incident has significantly changed the relationship between Turkey and Israel. Therefore, the current paragraph briefly describes the incident.

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[74] S. Bayraktar, 'The Politics of Denial and Recognition: Turkey, Armenia and the EU', in: Alexis Demirdjian (red.), *The Armenian Genocide Legacy* (Springer 2016) 197-211, 205.
[75] S. Bayraktar, 'The Politics of Denial and Recognition: Turkey, Armenia and the EU', 208.
[76] Republic of Turkey. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The unofficial translation of the message of The Prime Minister of The Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the events of 1915, April 23rd, 2014, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-prime-minister-mr_-recep-tayyip-erdo%C4%9Fan-published-a-message-on-the-events-of-1915_-23-april-2014.en.mfa (May 3rd, 2018).

While Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, it remained in control of its borders. According to Israel, this was an act of self-defence, as Hamas had become a major actor in the territory and Israel wanted to prevent arms from reaching Hamas. At the same time, Israel hoped to weaken the public support for Hamas by the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Since June 2007, Hamas had forcefully taken control of the territory. After Israel's military offensive, Operation Cast Lead, which caused more than 1,000 Palestinian deaths and resulted in the destruction of most of the infrastructure and buildings in the territory, they tightened the control of the borders. Israel and the international community, including the United Nations, differed about the effects of the blockade. Humanitarian aid groups tried to send ships with supply and activists, but they were under inspection by Israeli defence forces (IDF) before being allowed to enter the territory. All goods which could possibly be used for the forging of weapons instead of rebuilding, were prohibited by Israel.[77] The Mavi Marmara incident took place on May 31, 2010. A six-ship flotilla had set sail for the Gaza Strip, including a former passenger ferry from Istanbul called the Mavi Marmara, which was owned by the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation. On board of these six ships, there were about 700 activists from several countries and 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid. The Mavi Marmara was the largest ship and contained over 600 activists.[78] The flotilla refused inspection by the IDF, as their intention was to break the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. Five ships were taken over by the IDF without incidents, but some activists on board of the Mavi Marmara resisted. While there is considerable debate on who attacked first, the activists or the IDF, in the end nine activists were killed. Eight of them were Turkish and one was Turkish-American. According to the IDF, weapons were found among the cargo of the ship such as Molotov cocktails, slingshots and rocks and sharp metal objects.[79] Turkey contradicts this, by stating that the ships were already inspected at the port of Antalya where no weapons were found.[80]

2.5 The political relations between Turkey and Israel

As already mentioned before, the Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide is first and foremost based on its relationship with Turkey. This paragraph will therefore discuss Israel's

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[77] Carol Migdalovitz, 'Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara incident, and its aftermath', *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East* 3 (2012) 3, 1-17, 1-2.
[78] Ufuk Ulutas, 'Turkey and Israel in the aftermath of the flotilla crisis, *Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research* 43 (2010), 3-11, 3.
[79] Carol Migdalovitz, 'Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara incident, and its aftermath', *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East* 3 (2012) 3, 1-17, 2-3.
[80] Ufuk Ulutas, 'Turkey and Israel in the aftermath of the flotilla crisis, *Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research* 43 (2010), 3-11, 5.

political relations with Turkey. In some cases, the large ideological divides between the two countries hampered the relationship, but up until today Israel chooses to tolerate much of Turkey's criticism because it views Turkey as a necessary strategic ally in a hostile environment. At the same time, the Turkish military continuously puts pressure on the Turkish government to stress the importance of an alliance with Israel and to prevent the Turkish government from being too harsh in its criticism of the Israeli state.[81] Among other things, the predominantly secular military admires Israel for their military and technological prowess.[82] Strategically however, Israel has more to gain by a relationship with Turkey than the other way around because the neighbouring countries in the Middle East are generally more hostile towards Israel than towards Turkey. It is therefore not an equal relationship and Israel is much more careful than Turkey in threatening the relationship.[83]

There are two main issues that are capable of affecting the relationship between the two countries. The first issue is Turkey's and Israel's different view regarding the Kurds in the region. According to Itamar Rabinovich, a researcher at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings' Institute, supporting the Iraqi Kurds in their aspirations for an independent state is in line with Israel's strategic goal of creating and maintaining ties with minorities in the region to strengthen its position against the hostile Arab countries and Iran. This strategy is commonly referred to as the strategy of the Peripheral Alliance and was mainly used by Israel during the 1950's and 1960's. Other scholars, such as Yoel Guzansky and Gallia Lindenstrauss, recognize a return of this strategy in Israel's foreign policy since the Arab spring in 2011.[84] However, according to Efraim Inbar, a professor in political science at the Barr-Lan University in Israel, since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 Israel has had no interest in supporting a new and weak Kurdish state. A newly independent Kurdish state would likely fall within the sphere of influence of Iran and Israel will therefore not risk its relationship with Turkey by supporting the Kurds. Furthermore, a side-effect of Iran's growing influence is the growing military capabilities of Hezbollah and Hamas, which particularly scares Israel.[85] Support of the Iraqi

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[81] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* p. 9.
[82] Ilker Aytürk, 'The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish-Israel Relations Since 2002', *Turkish Studies* 12 (2011) 4, 675-687, 679.
[83] E. Inbar, 'Israel's Strategic Relations with Turkey and India', in: Robert O. Freedman (red.), *Domestic politics, foreign policy and security challenges* (Westview Press 2009) 227-251, 230.
[84] Yoel Guzansky, Gallia Lindenstrauss, 'Revival of the Periphery Concept in Israel's Foreign Policy?', *Strategic Assessment*, 15 (2012) 2, p. 29.
[85] Itamar Rabinovich, 'Israel and the Changing Middle East', *Middle East Memo*, 34 (2015), 4.

Kurds will likely anger Turkey due to their own struggle with the Kurdish population within Turkey. Until now, Israel has been moving relatively carefully regarding this issue as to prevent affecting the relationship with Turkey.

The relationship between Turkey and Israel is most sensitive however to the ups and downs in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[86] This becomes clear by looking at the general timeline of the Israeli-Turkish alliance. Full diplomatic relations between the two countries started after the cold war and during the 1990s a close relationship emerged.[87] Several changed circumstances after the cold war made this possible. First, the Arab states, and predominantly the oil-producing states, lost a lot of their influence on Turkey which made it easier for Turkey to move closer to Israel. Secondly, during the 1990s Israel had a very close relationship with the United States, the country which reactivated the Arab-Israeli peace process. Due to this, there were generally less objections from neighbouring countries to closer ties with Israel at the time.[88] There were also a lot of similarities between Turkey and Israel. They were the most democratic countries in the region, with the most dynamic economy. Furthermore, they both had a pro-Western orientation. Most importantly, they shared similar regional concerns. Both Turkey and Israel were concerned over Syria, Iran's quest for nuclear weapons and the rise of Islamic radicalism.[89] These shared characteristics made Turkey and Israel important trade partners to each other, but the relationship was and still is most useful for both states in terms of security.[90] Especially during the 2000s, the two countries developed mutual concerns over international terrorism.[91]

On the other hand, during the 2000s the relationship started to show its first cracks due to the collapse of the peace talks at Camp David followed by the second intifada. In 2002, Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit described Israeli policies in the occupied territories as 'genocidal' and in later years, succeeding Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan regularly described the Israeli policies as 'state terrorism'.[92] However, these criticisms did not prevent the countries

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[86] Ilker Aytürk, 'The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish-Israel Relations Since 2002', *Turkish Studies* 12 (2011) 4, 675-687, 675.
[87] E. Inbar, 'Israel's Strategic Relations with Turkey and India', in: Robert O. Freedman (red.), *Domestic politics, foreign policy and security challenges* (Westview Press 2009) 227-251, 228.
[88] E. Inbar, 'Israel's Strategic Relations with Turkey and India', 228.
[89] Ibidem, 229.
[90] Ibidem.
[91] Ibidem, 232.
[92] Ilker Aytürk, 'The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish-Israel Relations Since 2002', *Turkish Studies* 12 (2011) 4, 675-687, 676.

from working together in the form of arms deals and intelligence.[93] In 2003, the two countries differed over the invasion of the US in Iraq, but after the fall of Saddam Hussein they quickly reaffirmed their relationship.[94] Under the government of Erdogan however, Turkey started to slightly move away from its orientation on Europe and started to focus more on the Middle Eastern region and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[95] In 2005, Turkey heavily criticized Israel's Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.[96] Furthermore, Turkey does not regard Hamas as a terrorist organization, unlike most other countries.

Ultimately, the tensions in the relationship between Turkey and Israel reached a boiling point with the Mavi Marmara incident in May 2010. Carol Migdalovitz, a specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs from the Congressional Research Service, has described the incident as 'undoubtedly a turning point in Turkish- Israeli relations'.[97] Similarly, Ilker Aytürk, a researcher at the Department of Political Science in Ankara, argues that 'not only was the fabric of the bilateral relationship completely rent, but now it was also soiled with blood'.[98] In a response to the incident, Turkey recalled its ambassador and cancelled other forms of cooperation.[99] Furthermore, Turkey's foreign ministry vowed to isolate Israel in the international community if an international investigation were not established.[100] They denounced the aggression and called it 'state terrorism', demanding for the release of the detained, return of the dead and wounded victims and an official apology by the state of Israel.[101] Despite of this sensitive issue, both countries still decided to work together with regard to the Syrian civil war which started in 2011.[102] Nevertheless, a normalization agreement to restore the relationship was not signed

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[93] Ilker Aytürk, 'The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish-Israel Relations Since 2002', *Turkish Studies* 12 (2011) 4, 675-687, 677.

[94] Gregory A. Burris, 'Turkey-Israel: Speed Bumps', *Middle East Quarterly,* 10 (2003), 1.

[95] Itamar Rabinovich, 'Israel and the Changing Middle East', *Middle East Memo*, 34 (2015), 1.

[96] Carol Migdalovitz, 'Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara incident, and its aftermath', *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East* 3 (2012) 3, 1-17, 13.

[97] Carol Migdalovitz, 'Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara incident, and its aftermath', 13.

[98] Ilker Aytürk, 'The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish-Israel Relations Since 2002', *Turkish Studies* 12 (2011) 4, 675-687, 679.

[99] Carol Migdalovitz, 'Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara incident, and its aftermath', *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East* 3 (2012) 3, 1-17, 14.

[100] Carol Migdalovitz, 'Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara incident, and its aftermath', 14.

[101] Ufuk Ulutas, 'Turkey and Israel in the aftermath of the flotilla crisis, *Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research* 43 (2010), 3-11, 3.

[102] Dan Arbell, 'Tensions over Jerusalem expose vulnerability of Turkey-Israel relations, one year after normalizing ties' (version July 31st, 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/07/31/tensions-over-jerusalem-expose-vulnerability-of-turkey-israel-relations-one-year-after-normalizing-ties/ (May 5th, 2018)

until 2016.[103] Tensions emerged again in 2017, when Turkey criticized Israel's handling of the protests over the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem.[104]

2.6 Economic relations between Turkey and Israel

Economic relations between Turkey and Israel were at a high point during the 1990s, due to the circumstances which have already been described in the previous paragraph. In March 1993, Israel and Turkey signed a bilateral trade agreement. Additionally, in 1996 a comprehensive military coordination agreement was signed and military relations steadily improved over the years.[105] Especially during the 1990s, Turkey was dependent on Israeli arms production to fight against separatism.[106] Remarkably, after the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010 which caused Turkey to downgrade its diplomatic ties with Israel, the bilateral trade relations between the two countries were not affected. In fact, bilateral trade has even increased since 2010.[107] Israel's two main products of export to Turkey are chemical products and plastics, while Turkey's main export product to Israel is base metal.[108] In 2017, Turkey was Israel's sixth largest trading partner.[109] Furthermore, major companies in both Israel and Turkey have not let the incident affect their business.[110] However, tourism from Israel to Turkey has severely dropped, mainly because the Israeli foreign ministry has changed its travel advisory.[111] Perhaps even more important, the defence trade was affected because Turkey announced the suspension of defence ties with Israel in September 2011.[112] The Mavi Marmara incident did put an end to trade at the

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[103] Dan Arbell, 'Tensions over Jerusalem expose vulnerability of Turkey-Israel relations, one year after normalizing ties' (version July 31st, 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/07/31/tensions-over-jerusalem-expose-vulnerability-of-turkey-israel-relations-one-year-after-normalizing-ties/ (May 5th, 2018)

[104] Dan Arbell, 'Tensions over Jerusalem expose vulnerability of Turkey-Israel relations, one year after normalizing ties' (version July 31st, 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/07/31/tensions-over-jerusalem-expose-vulnerability-of-turkey-israel-relations-one-year-after-normalizing-ties/ (May 5th, 2018)

[105] Cenap Cakmak and Murat Ustaoglu, 'Politics vs. trade: a Realist view on Turkish-Israeli economic relations', *Israel Affairs* 23 (2017) 2, 303-323, 308.

[106] Cenap Cakmak and Murat Ustaoglu, 'Politics vs. trade: a Realist view on Turkish-Israeli economic relations', 308.

[107] Soner Cagaptay and Tyler Evans, 'The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade', *Research Notes. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* 16 (2012), 1.

[108] Soner Cagaptay and Tyler Evans, 'The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade', 2.

[109] Dan Arbell, 'Tensions over Jerusalem expose vulnerability of Turkey-Israel relations, one year after normalizing ties' (version July 31st, 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/07/31/tensions-over-jerusalem-expose-vulnerability-of-turkey-israel-relations-one-year-after-normalizing-ties/ (May 5th, 2018)

[110] Soner Cagaptay and Tyler Evans, 'The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade', *Research Notes. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* 16 (2012), 2.

[111] Soner Cagaptay and Tyler Evans, 'The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade', 3.

[112] Ibidem.

level of the government, although with the signing of the normalization agreement in 2016 trade between the two governments was resumed.[113]

A study by the researchers Cenap Cakmak and Murat Ustaoglu shows that while occasionally the economic relations between Turkey and Israel have been negatively affected by the deterioration of the political relationship, the general trend over the years has been an increase in bilateral trade.[114] This illustrates that both Turkey and Israel greatly value the economic relationship between the two countries. Nevertheless, Menashe Carmon, the chairman of the Israel-Turkey Business Council and Chamber of Commerce & Industry, has noted that the attitude of the leaders of both countries has had some negative influence on the public opinion of ordinary citizens. According to him, this ultimately has an effect on the willingness of private businesses to cooperate with each other and will likely deteriorate the economic relationship in the future.[115]

2.7 The Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide before the 2000s

Although the media content analysis focusses on the periods of the 2000s and the 2010s, this paragraph contains some background information on the Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide prior to the research period. In the United States, there had been two attempts, one in 1985 and one in 1987, to establish a resolution to adopt an annual memorial day for the Armenian genocide. After a third attempt in 1989, which was unsuccessful as well, Israeli newspapers reported that Jews and Israeli diplomats had put in an effort to prevent the adoption of the resolution, in cooperation with Turkish Jewry.[116] This sparked a debate in Israel and in the Knesset, after which on October 23, 1989 the Israeli Foreign Ministry issued a statement on the issue for the first time. The statement read that the state of Israel was sensitive to the suffering of the Armenians, but it did not contain the word 'genocide'.[117] Furthermore, then

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[113] Menashe Carmon, 'Turkish-Israeli Economic Relations in a Period of Turbulence and Political Uncertainty', https://dayan.org/content/turkish-israeli-economic-relations-period-turbulence-and-political-uncertainty (May 22nd, 2018).

[114] Cenap Cakmak and Murat Ustaoglu, 'Politics vs. trade: a Realist view on Turkish-Israeli economic relations', *Israel Affairs* 23 (2017) 2, 303-323, 316.

[115] Menashe Carmon, 'Turkish-Israeli Economic Relations in a Period of Turbulence and Political Uncertainty', https://dayan.org/content/turkish-israeli-economic-relations-period-turbulence-and-political-uncertainty (May 22nd, 2018).

[116] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey 2003) 104.

[117] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide,* 110.

Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the state of Israel would only get involved in the legal process of another country in issues which are related to Israel.[118] While there was no official Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide before this statement, behind the scenes the Turkish government had occasionally tried to pressure the Israeli government to take action against signs of sympathy with the Armenians by the Israeli people as well as demonstrations and other initiatives by Israeli Armenians. [119]

2.8 The Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide during the 2000s

In spite of the fact that more and more countries started to recognize the Armenian genocide, not much changed in the Israeli policy during the 2000s.[120] There were however two members of the Knesset who actively questioned the Israeli policy. One of them, then minister of education Yossi Sarid, made an attempt to include the Armenian genocide in the Israeli history textbooks. Besides that, he participated in the commemoration ceremony which was organized by the small Armenian community in Jerusalem on April 24, 2000. During his speech he stated that he was there 'as a human being, as a Jew, as an Israeli, and as Minister of the State of Israel.'[121] Furthermore, the then deputy foreign minister Yossi Beilin occasionally used the wording 'Armenian genocide' to refer to the issue in the Knesset.[122] The Turkish government was angered by the statements of these two ministers and asked the Israeli ambassador in Ankara to clarify the Israeli position. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), who considered the statement disastrous for the bilateral relationship, issued a statement saying that the words of Sarid and Beilin did not represent the Israeli policy on the matter.[123] Later on, in 2001 an interview with Shimon Peres, then foreign minister in the government of Ariel Sharon, appeared in the Turkish Dailey News in which he actively denied a genocide of the Armenian people had taken place.[124] After sparking a debate in Israel, this interview was subsequently corrected by the MFA, stating that Peres had been misquoted but that the state of Israel would

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[118] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey 2003) 110.
[119] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 6-7.
[120] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey 2003) 102.
[121] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 8.
[122] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey 2003) 120.
[123] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 9.
[124] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey 2003) 123.

take no position on the issue, since it regarded the issue as a matter for historians.[125] After this, it took a couple of years before the Armenian genocide became a prominent issue in the Knesset again.

2.9 The Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide during the 2010s

When the relationship between Turkey and Israel deteriorated as a result of the Mavi Marmara incident on May 31, 2010, new discussions emerged in the Knesset for the recognition of the Armenian genocide. In 2011, the inclusion of the Armenian genocide in history textbooks was debated in the Education Committee again.[126] Nevertheless, no resolution was passed in the Knesset because of the growing alliance between Israel and Azerbaijan, a country which has a dispute with Armenia about the province of Nagorno-Karabakh.[127] This time, it could be said that the Israeli government prioritized its relations with Azerbaijan over the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

As has already been mentioned in paragraph 2.5, Turkey and Israel signed a normalization agreement in 2016. However, paradoxically 2016 was also an important year for the Israeli policy regarding the Armenian genocide. On august 1, 2016, the Education Committee of the Knesset discussed the Armenian genocide again. After one of these meetings, the chairman of the committee, Ya'acov Margi, expressed the wish of the committee that the Armenian genocide would be recognized by the Knesset. Until then, the committee itself would start by recognizing the events as a genocide.[128] Ultimately, the bill for recognition by the state of Israel as a whole was voted down again by the Knesset, but recognition by the Education Committee can be seen as a substantial step in the process.[129]

Even more recently, on May 29, 2018 the Knesset had planned to vote again over the recognition but last-minute it was pulled from the agenda due to concerns over Turkey and

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[125] Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial. Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey 2003) 127.
[126] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 11.
[127] Eldad Ben Aharon, 'Between Ankara and Jerusalem: the Armenian Genocide as a Zero-Sum Game in Israel's Foreign Policy (1980's-2010's)', 11.
[128] Ibidem, 13.
[129] Lahav Harkov, 'Knesset votes down bill recognizing Armenian genocide' (version February 14th, 2018), https://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Knesset-votes-down-bill-recognizing-Armenian-genocide-542609 (June 1st, 2018).

Azerbaijan.[130] Earlier, on May 23, for the first time in history it became possible to approve a motion to hold a plenary discussion about the recognition in the Knesset, because the government did not respond to it. According to the Jerusalem Post, the lack of response by the Israeli government is a result of the heightened tensions between Turkey and Israel over protests at the border with Gaza.[131] This shows that the Israeli policy is still very much based on its relationship with Turkey, albeit this also means that while this relationship remains restrained, opportunities are growing for the state of Israel to ultimately recognize the Armenian genocide.

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[130] Lahav Harkov, 'Knesset speaker pulls Armenian genocide recognition from Knesset agenda' (version May 28th, 2018), https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Knesset-Speaker-pulls-Armenian-Genocide-recognition-from-Knesset-agenda-558560 (June 1st, 2018).
[131] Lahav Harkov, 'Knesset approves motion on recognizing Armenian genocide' (version May 23th, 2018), https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Knesset-approves-motion-on-recognizing-Armenian-Genocide-558191 (June 1st, 2018).

3. Media content analysis: The Armenian genocide in Israeli media during 2000s

3.1 News articles

Within the set time frame, the Armenian genocide was mentioned for the first time in the Jerusalem Post on September 30th 2006, when former French President Jacques Chirac had said that he was of the opinion that Turkey should recognize the Armenian genocide as a condition for being able to join the European Union.[132] In subsequent news articles, the Armenian genocide is referred to as 'mass deaths that Armenians contend was genocide', 'the 1915 Armenian massacre' and 'mass killings of Armenians by Turks'.[133] However, already on October 17th 2006 an article was published containing a long interview with a Turkish novelist who was charged under article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, because she wrote a novel in which one of the fictional characters states she is the grandchild of survivors of the Armenian genocide.[134] This shows that there was a certain interest to hear the other perspective as well. In an article published on March 22nd 2007, the describing line about the Armenian genocide has been changed into 'Armenian advocates, backed by many historians, contend they died in an organized genocide'.[135] Later on, from October 11th 2007 onwards, the Armenian genocide is consistently referred to as 'the killing of up to 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks around the time of World War I, an event widely viewed by genocide scholars as the first genocide of the 20th century.'[136] Furthermore, the debate in the United States regarding a congressional resolution that called for the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the administration was covered extensively, as well as the position of the Jewish lobby within this debate. While this can be explained partly by the international audience of the Jerusalem Post, it should also be noted that the Jewish community in the United States is especially important

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[132] The Jerusalem Post, 'Chirac: Turkey should admit genocide' (version september 30th, 2006), https://www.jpost.com/International/Chirac-Turkey-should-admit-genocide (May 15th, 2018).
[133] The Jerusalem Post, 'First Turkish ground forces arrive in Lebanon' (version October 10th, 2006), https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/First-Turkish-ground-forces-arrive-in-Lebanon (May 15th, 2018). The Jerusalem Post, 'In Turkey, writing history's wrongs' (version October 17th, 2006), https://www.jpost.com/Arts-and-Culture/Entertainment/In-Turkey-writing-historys-wrongs (May 15th, 2018). The Jerusalem Post, 'Turkey: three arrested for murder of journalist' (version January 20th, 2007), https://www.jpost.com/International/Turkey-Three-arrested-for-murder-of-journalist (May 15th, 2018).
[134] The Jerusalem Post, 'In Turkey, writing history's wrongs' (version October 17th, 2006), https://www.jpost.com/Arts-and-Culture/Entertainment/In-Turkey-writing-historys-wrongs (May 15th, 2018).
[135] The Jerusalem Post, 'US shouldn't be involved in Armenian genocide' (version March 22nd, 2007), https://www.jpost.com/International/US-shouldnt-be-involved-in-Armenian-genocide (May 15th, 2018).
[136] The Jerusalem Post, 'US Congress approves resolution calling killings of Armenians genocide' (version October 11th, 2007), https://www.jpost.com/International/US-congress-approves-resolution-calling-killings-of-Armenians-genocide-77946 (May 15th, 2018).

for Israel since the United States is its most important ally. Several articles outline the Armenian position as well, which largely comes down to the opinion that the Jewish lobby has a moral responsibility in supporting them because of their own people's experiences with genocide.[137] Overall, the news articles during this period were found to be rather factual and unbiased, simply covering the opinions as they were being expressed by the different parties. However, the article which was published on the 24th of April, 2009, the international Armenian remembrance day for the genocide, is telling. The article is particularly small and its headline states 'Thousands of Armenians mourn WWI-era mass killings'. Also, in the article itself the Armenian genocide is referred to as 'what they call the 1915 genocide', as opposed to the more elaborate line which was used before.[138] By refraining from using 'Armenian genocide' directly in its news articles, it does not appear that the Jerusalem Post is actively denouncing the Israeli policy of non-recognition during this period.

3.2 Opinion articles

Within the same time frame, thirteen opinion articles and letters to the editor regarding the Armenian genocide were published on the website of the Jerusalem Post as well. Out of them, ten opinions were written by Jewish authors. Interestingly, there were essentially two types of context in which the Armenian genocide was being mentioned during these years. The Armenian genocide was either described while appealing to the unique Israeli identity by making a clear connection with the Holocaust, or it was used in a reaction to criticism by the Turkish government of the state of Israel. In the latter case, most of the time no emphasis was put on the Holocaust or on the Israeli identity in general. However, it should be noted that none of the authors with a Jewish background made it clear that they approved of the governments policy as well as they never denied the appropriateness of describing the Armenian case as a genocide. Some examples which were found to be illustrating for the overall findings of the research will be described hereafter.

For instance, in 2006 Israel Charny, the president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars wrote a reaction to an opinion article by the American scholar Guenther Lewy who

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[137] Michel Lando, 'ADL's Boston Director rehired after dispute' (version August 29th, 2007), https://www.jpost.com/International/ADLs-Boston-director-rehired-after-dispute (May 15th, 2018). Matt Rand, 'Boston Armenians: ADL guilty of genocide denial' (version September 2nd, 2007), https://www.jpost.com/International/Boston-Armenians-ADL-guilty-of-genocide-denial (May 15th, 2007).
[138] The Jerusalem Post, 'Thousands of Armenians mourn WWI-era mass killings' (version April 24th, 2009), https://www.jpost.com/International/Thousands-of-Armenians-mourn-WWI-era-mass-killings (May 15th, 2018).

questioned the validity of the Armenian genocide. In his reaction, Charny wrote 'How would I have felt if on arrival in Yerean I had found an article in a major newspaper questioning the validity of the Holocaust?' and 'In my opinion an Israeli newspaper should not be publishing denials of the Armenian genocide any more than we approve of other newspapers in the world publishing denials of the Holocaust'.[139] Later on, in 2009, Jack Cohen, a resident from Netanya, wrote in a reaction to an article about Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan insulting Israeli Prime Minister Peres, 'We Jews, who suffered a genocide of our own during WWII, have restrained ourselves in relation to the genocide carried out by the Turks against the Armenians during WWI because we were persuaded that it was politic not to affront our Turkish ally.'[140] Similarly in 2009, the director of the Jewish Outreach Center of Ra'anana Steward Weiss wrote in a reaction to Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan accusing the state of Israel of genocide that 'sadly, despite our own tragic experience with holocausts, we suppressed our ethical responsibility to condemn the Turks, and at times even lobbied other countries to downplay the issue'. Furthermore, in 2009 an article written by Marilyn Henry, who was a Jewish American advocate for Holocaust survivors, was published in which she states that 'We surely remember our own battles against Holocaust denial. And as we are aggressive in protecting our history and in protesting contemporary atrocities such as in Darfur, so should we protest the denial of other atrocities of the past.'[141]

Other articles which were examined, did not contain any references to the Holocaust. Instead, they were written in reaction to accusations by Prime Minister Erdogan against the state of Israel which were related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The broader message the authors of these articles seek to convey is that Turkey's Prime Minister should not accuse Israel of war crimes or genocide while they do not recognize the Armenian genocide themselves. More straightforward, in these articles the Armenian genocide is being used as an 'insult' of the Turkish state or Prime Minister Erdogan himself. For instance, in 2009 Jeffrey Shames, a resident of Rehovot, wrote that 'the best defense is a good offense' and therefore an active program should be initiated by the pro-Israel lobby in the US to have congress recognize the

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[139] Israel Charny, 'Letters tot the editor, May 28' (version May 27th 2006), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Letters-to-the-Editor-May-28 (May 20th, 2018).
[140] Jack Cohen, 'February 3: No more Mr. Nice' (version February 2nd, 2009), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Letters/February-3-No-more-Mr-Nice (May 20th, 2018).
[141] Marilyn Henry, 'Metro Views: Denying the 'other' Holocaust' (version August 29th, 2009), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Metro-Views-Denying-the-other-Holocaust (May 20th, 2018).

Armenian genocide.[142] Likewise, in 2009 a resident from Jerusalem wrote a letter to the editors stating 'For the record: in 1915 the Turks carried out one of the most barbaric acts of genocide ever on the Armenians during which they massacred more than 60,000 civilians. They also deported a population of some 1.5 million to Syria and Mesopotamia.' Then he rhetorically asks 'Are we to be taught lessons by such people?'.[143]

Apart from the opinions which were mostly written by Jewish authors, the Jerusalem Post chose to publish one opinion from a Turkish author and one from an Armenian author. While the focus of this research is on the Israeli public opinion, it is interesting to mention that both the Armenian and the Turkish author use the Holocaust as an argument either for or against Israeli support for recognition of the Armenian genocide. In a letter to the editor which was published on September 25th 2007, Momo Uzsinay, the President of the Association of Turkish Jews in Israel Bat-Yam argues that it is wrong to 'let Armenians exploit the historical context of the Holocaust by comparing their version of the events of 1915 to the Shoah'.[144] Miran G. Ternamian, an Armenian who wrote a response to Uzsinay's letter argues that 'for some Israelis to doggedly defend genocide-denying regimes like Turkey while chastising the Iranian regime's outlandish campaign of Holocaust denial is as hypocritical, ludicrous and sinister as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's shameful denial of the Holocaust.'[145]

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[142] Jeffrey Shames, 'November 1: An opportunity' (version October 31st, 2009),
https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/November-1-An-opportunity (May 20th, 2018).
[143] E. Munk, 'February 3: No more Mr. Nice' (version February 2nd, 2009),
https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Letters/February-3-No-more-Mr-Nice (May 20th, 2018).
[144] Momo Uzsinay, 'September 26: God help democracy' (version September 25th, 2007),
https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Letters/September-26-God-help-democracy (May 20th, 2018).
[145] Miran G. Ternamian, 'October 2: No pain, no gain' (version October 1st, 2007),
https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Letters/October-2-No-pain-no-gain (May 20th, 2018).

4. Media content analysis: The Armenian genocide in Israeli media during 2010s

4.1 News articles

During the second time period which was researched, the 2010s, the Jerusalem Post occasionally changed its tune when covering news regarding the Armenian genocide. First of all, since there was considerable more political attention for the issue, also within Israel itself, significantly more news articles were published on the subject. The article published on April 24th, 2010, for the Armenian genocide commemoration day, especially marks a huge difference when compared to the article which was published in 2009 for the same occasion. Not only is the article which was published in 2010 much longer, there is also a considerable difference in how the Armenian genocide is described. It should be noted that this difference was thus noticeable before the Mavi Marmara incident, which happened on the 31st of May in 2010. For instance, the headline of the article states 'Armenians mourn victims of genocide' and within the article the Armenian genocide is referred to as 'slaughter', 'the slaying' and 'mass slaughter'. Also, the main focus of the article is on the events which happened around 1915.[146] In subsequent articles however, between 2010 and 2015, the words used to refer to the Armenian genocide vary from using 'genocide' to 'alleged genocide' to refraining from using 'genocide' at all. It seems as if the editors from the Jerusalem Post were struggling during this period as to which words to choose. Also, when comparing the articles which were published from 2011 onwards about the Armenian genocide commemoration day with the article which was published in 2010, the articles remain considerably longer than before but they can be described as more 'neutral' since they focus not so much on the past events themselves but more on the ways in which these events are commemorated by the Armenian community.[147]

From 2016 onwards, the events are almost exclusively referred to as 'Armenian genocide'. Over these years, the debate within the Knesset to recognize the Armenian genocide is extensively covered, particularly outlining the position of several Knesset members who make a link with the Holocaust. For example, Nachmann Shai from the Zionist Union is quoted

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[146] Associated Press, 'Armenians mourn victims of genocide' (version April 25th, 2010), https://www.jpost.com/International/Armenians-mourn-victims-of-genocide (May 20th, 2018).
[147] Udi Shaham, 'Commemoration marking 101 yeras to the Armenian genocide held in Jerusalem' (version April 24th, 2016), https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Commemoration-marking-101-years-to-the-Armenian-Genocide-held-in-Jerusalem-452134 (May 20th, 2018).

calling the event 'the Armenian Holocaust'.[148] Furthermore, several articles are devoted to the arguments used by Yuli Edelstein, Speaker of the Knesset, who for instance argued that 'we Jews who are still suffering from the impact of the Holocaust cannot minimize the tragedy.'[149]

While no evidence was found that the Israeli people regarded Armenian terrorism as similar to Palestinian terrorism just as the Israeli government occasionally did, one article especially points towards the assumption that this was indeed not the case. The specific article, which was published on December 22nd, 2011, mentions the assassination of a Turkish diplomat in Paris in 1979. Within the article, the evicted are referred to as 'militants' instead of 'terrorists', while attacks by Palestinians are often labelled as terrorist attacks. [150]

4.2 Editorials

During the 2010s, the Jerusalem Post also published three editorials on its website in which the Armenian genocide is mentioned. These have been found to be particularly useful for the research, since they explicitly express the newspaper's own stand regarding the issue. It can be assumed that these editorials are indeed reflecting the views of the editorial board of the Jerusalem Post, as it was not otherwise stated in the articles. In contrast with the rather neutral covering of the issues revolving around the Armenian genocide in the newspaper articles, these articles are more outspoken on the topic.

The first editorial in which the Armenian genocide was mentioned was published on June 1st 2010 and described the possible future relations between Israel and Turkey as uncertain due to the Mavi Marmara incident. According to the editor, the deterioration of the relation did not start with the Mavi Marmara incident however. He blames Turkey's support of Hamas, Turkey's shift to radical Islam and its growing alliance with countries such as Russia and Iran. The Armenian genocide is mentioned as the cause for Turkey's deteriorating relationship with the US. Furthermore, according to the editor Turkey missed the opportunity to reach an agreement with Armenia because it got involved in Armenia's dispute about the Nagorno-

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[148] Lahav Larkov, 'Israel and the Jewish people can't ignore the Armenian Holocaust' (version April 14th, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israel-and-the-Jewish-People-cant-ignore-the-Armenian-Holocaust-398053 (May 20th, 2018).
[149] Gil Stern Hoffman, 'Knesset speaker Edelstein calls for Israeli recognition of Armenian genocide' (version May 13th, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Knesset-speaker-Edelstein-calls-for-Israeli-recognition-of-Armenian-genocide-402878 (May 20th, 2018).
[150] Reuters, 'Turks slam French genocide bill as racism, cut ties' (version December 22nd, 2011), https://www.jpost.com/International/Turks-slam-French-genocide-bill-as-racism-cut-ties (May 20th, 2018).

Karabakh region.[151] Both the Mavi Marmara incident and the Armenian genocide are mentioned in the article. However, the editor refrains from using the Israeli/Jewish identity to gather support for the recognition of the Armenian genocide by Israel.

In the second editorial, which is exclusively devoted to the Armenian genocide and was published on April 13th 2015, this was radically different. The title of the article is 'Israel should recognize the Armenian Genocide' and it is written in a reaction to Pope Francis who labelled the Armenian genocide as the first genocide of the 20th century. The article lists a number of reasons why the Israeli government should recognize the Armenian genocide. Most importantly, the editor states that Hitler looked at the Turks for inspiration for the Holocaust. Along with this, the editor argues that 'beyond the moral obligation to acknowledge and denounce genocide, which applies equally to all humanity, Israel has a special duty.' This 'special duty' comes from Israel's founding in the shadow of the Holocaust and because both the Jews and the Christians belong to religious minorities in the region.[152] In contrast to the first editorial, in this article the editor clearly puts emphasis on the Jewish/Israeli identity to persuade the Jewish audience to support recognition of the Armenian genocide. This article contains important evidence pointing towards public pressure on the Israeli government to recognize the Armenian genocide.

The third editorial was published on the 26th of March 2016, and it mentions the Armenian genocide in the broader context of fighting genocide. It is written in a reaction to former Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic who had been convicted of genocide. While the Armenian genocide is only briefly pointed out as one of the genocides that should have been prevented by the international community, the editor does quote World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder saying 'As Jews, we know what genocide is. As Jews, we also know what happens when many of the perpetrators are exempted from punishment because of belated and sluggish efforts to bring them to trial.'[153] Albeit this editorial is not directly about the Armenian genocide itself, it clearly conveys the message that Jews should actively fight genocide because of their own experience with the Holocaust.

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[151] JPost Editorial, 'A turning point for Turkey' (version June 1st, 2010), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/A-turning-point-for-Turkey (May 15th, 2018).
[152] JPost Editorial, 'Israel should recognize the Armenian Genocide' (version April 13th, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Israel-should-recognize-the-Armenian-Genocide-397970 (May 15th, 2018).
[153] JPost Editorial, 'Jerusalem Post Editorial: Fighting genocide' (version March 26th, 2016), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Jerusalem-Post-Editorial-Fighting-genocide-449255 (May 15th, 2016).

In sum, two out of three of the editorials express the view of the Jerusalem Post that the Israeli people should actively stand up against genocide because of their own people's experience with the Holocaust. Moreover, the second editorial was clearly written as a criticism of Israel's foreign policy regarding the Armenian genocide.

4.3 Opinion articles

Within the same period, twenty-five opinion articles and letters to the editor regarding the Armenian genocide were published on the website of the Jerusalem Post, out of which fourteen opinions were written by Jewish authors. Just as during the 2000s, within these articles there were either arguments containing a connection with the Holocaust, or the Armenian genocide was used to get back at Turkey for criticizing the state of Israel. Still, in none of the articles which were written by authors with a Jewish background any sign of denial of the Armenian genocide was found. Since a description of all the opinion articles which were published during the 2010s would be superfluous, in the following part some examples will be outlined which are in accordance with the overall arguments which were found to be used by Jewish authors.

A prominent example of using the similarities with the Holocaust as an argument for recognition of the Armenian genocide is expressed by Emily Schrader, a freelance writer and social media director for an Israeli non-profit organization, whose article was published on April 7th, 2015. She wrote 'Where is the 'Never Again' for the Armenian people? We cry out against the horrors of the Holocaust – and we rightly demand reparations.' She then goes on to list other atrocities committed in the world and how the Israeli government has recognized and condemned them, but how the government has failed to do so with the Armenian genocide.[154] Similarly, in an article which was published on April 22nd, 2015, Douglas Bloomfield, who is a Washington lobbyist and consultant, stated 'Can you imagine the Germans bullying and threatening the United States and other countries and world leaders not to call that slaughter genocide because they find it offensive? Well, that is exactly what the Turks have been doing, and it works.'[155] Moreover, in an article published on April 20th, 2015, Tal Harris argues 'as the grandson of two Holocaust survivors, it is clear to me that some things are too important for

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[154] Emily Schrader, 'Lessons not learned: The Armenian Genocide' (version April 7th, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Lessons-not-learned-The-Armenian-genocide-396478 (May 15th, 2018).
[155] Douglas Bloomfield, 'Washington Watch: Time to stand up to the bullies' (version April 22nd, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Washington-Watch-Time-to-stand-up-to-the-bullies-398964 (May 15th, 2018).

politics to get in the way: the world must face up to Turkey and recognize the Armenian genocide.[156]

On the other hand, similar to the 2000s, there were also articles related to the Armenian genocide in which the Holocaust was not mentioned. Rather, the Armenian genocide was used out of anger directed at Turkey's criticism of Israel. For instance, Isi Leibler, who wrote a letter to the editor in a response to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's reaction to the Mavi Marmara incident, argued that 'Erdogan recalled his ambassador, orchestrated show trials against IDF personnel, and sought to exclude Israel from global organizations, including NATO – this, from a leader who has never acknowledged his country's massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in World War I.'[157]

Moreover, just as during the 2000s, the Jerusalem Post also decided to publish opinions from Armenian and Turkish authors. Turkish Professor M. Hakan Yavuz, whose article was published on Januari 14th, 2012, uses the Holocaust in his argument against recognition of the Armenian genocide and simultaneously implies that recognition of the Armenian genocide by Israel opens the door for genocide accusations against Israel as well: 'By blurring the differences between the Holocaust and the massacre of the Armenians, Israel is harming itself by lending a hand to the continued practice of irresponsible use of the term genocide in other arenas of conflict, such as the conflict Israel itself has with the Palestinians.'[158] On the other hand, one of the Armenian authors, Anna Borshchevskaya, quotes an Armenian bishop making a statement about Jews and Armenians, saying 'These peoples in this region, I think they have to support each other… they ended up having a similar destiny.'[159] Similarly, another Armenian author, Jano Boghossian states that discovering the Sephardic Jewish heritage on his trip through Iberia carried a special meaning for him since he is a descendant of survivors of the Armenian genocide. He empathized with them because of their similar fate.[160] One could say

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[156] Tal Harris, 'Too important for politics to get in the way' (version April 29th, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Too-important-for-politics-to-get-in-the-way-400621 (May 15th, 2018).
[157] Isi Leibler, 'Candidly speaking: Turkey's Erdogan – An autocratic Islamist bigot' (version October 28th, 2013), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Candidly-Speaking-Turkeys-Erdogan-An-autocratic-Islamist-bigot-330005 (May 15th, 2018).
[158] M. Hakan Yavus and Tal Buenos, 'Amenian genocide: Israel must maintain its moral compass' (version January 14th, 2012), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Armenian-genocide-Israel-must-maintain-its-moral-compass (May 15th, 2018).
[159] Anna Borshchevskaya, 'Jewish Armenia' (version February 11th, 2013), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Jewish-Armenia (May 15th, 2018).
[160] Jano Boghossian, 'Requiem for a homeland' (version April 30th, 2015), https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Requiem-for-a-homeland-400688 (May 15th, 2018).

that both Armenians and Turks are using the Israeli national identity to try to influence the Israeli public opinion on the Armenian genocide.

5. Conclusion

The research question of this thesis is derived from the seemingly paradoxical issue that the Israeli state does not formally recognize the Armenian genocide. The aim was to analyse the Israeli public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide and the foreign policy of the state on this issue, in order to be able to answer the research question to what extent the Israeli public opinion regarding the Armenian genocide complies with the official position of the Israeli state during the 2000s and 2010s. The answer to this question gives us valuable insights into the Israeli national identity as well as the relationships between mass media, public opinion and foreign policy. The method chosen for the analysis was media content analysis, a sub-set of content analysis which uses both quantitative and qualitative techniques by means of which special attention could be paid to contextual factors.

The first chapter sought to explain how the Israeli foreign policy on the Armenian genocide was formed. It became clear that the policy could be convincingly explained in light of the balance-of-threat theory. Predominantly Israel viewed (and still views) Turkey as an important ally against more hostile countries such as Iran and Syria. Between 2010 and 2016, diplomatic relations reached a low point due to the Mavi Marmara incident and even after signing a normalization agreement in 2016 there has been much tension between the two countries. Before the 2000s, the official Israeli policy was not to get involved in the issue, but behind the scenes Israeli diplomats and Jewish lobbyists worked to keep the United States from formally recognizing the genocide. This did not change during the 2000s, in spite of some attempts by Knesset members. After the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, the subject was debated in the Knesset much more often than before. This has already resulted in recognition by the Education Committee of the Knesset. After heightened tensions between Israel and Turkey over protests at the border of Gaza in 2018, for the first time in history the Israeli government did not vote down a motion to hold a plenary discussion about the genocide. Although Israel has not formally recognized the Armenian genocide during the 2010s (yet), this shows that the Israeli policy is still very much dependent on its relationship with Turkey; when the relationship between Turkey and Israel deteriorates, it becomes more likely that Israel will recognize the Armenian genocide.

In the last two chapters, the media content was analysed to answer the question of how the Israeli public opinion was formed regarding the Armenian genocide and with respect to the foreign policy of the state during the 2000s and 2010s. In line with one of the hypotheses, it was found that the Israeli national identity indeed played a key role in the shaping of the public opinion regarding this topic. Through the analysis of opinion articles and letters to the editor, it was discovered that authors either sympathised with the Armenians because they made a connection with the Holocaust, or they used the Armenian genocide to criticize Turkey for lecturing Israel and its actions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It can be said that this was almost equally the case throughout both time frames. In contrast with one of the sub-hypotheses, this shows that the collective memory of the Holocaust is not significantly dominant over the significance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Palestinian terrorism in the formation of the public opinion regarding this subject. While in none of the articles Armenians were compared with Palestinians, as was the initial assumption, Turkey's criticism of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often resulted in Israeli people advocating for the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Upon further comparing the 2000s with the 2010s, a difference could be found in how the Jerusalem Post decided to cover the news regarding the subject. It became clear that the Jerusalem Post did not actively denounce the Israeli policy through its news articles during the 2000s. For example, they refrained from using 'Armenian genocide' to describe the events and no editorials were published on the issue. During the 2010s however, the words used in the news articles to describe the Armenian genocide differed from time to time. A news article published on the Armenian genocide commemoration day in 2010 stood out from the rest as it was particularly more outspoken on the subject. It should be noted however that this article was published before the Mavi Marmara incident had taken place. From 2016 onwards, the events are consistently described as a genocide. More importantly, during the 2010s the Jerusalem Post published three editorials regarding the Armenian genocide. In the second editorial, which was published in 2015, the Israeli policy is severely criticized. To reflect on the theory of R.M. Entman on the ability of mass media to influence foreign policy, the sub-hypothesis that the Jerusalem Post offers its readers a frame which differs from the frame used by the Israeli state proved only to be partly true. In spite of the public opinion during the 2000s, the Jerusalem Post largely retained the frame used by the Israeli state during this period. While the frame in which the Armenians were compared with Palestinians was not used by the newspaper, the policy of

non-recognition was not criticized. Only during the 2010s, the Jerusalem Post slowly shifted towards using a frame which was more in accordance with the public opinion.

Overall, in line with the main hypothesis the media content analysis shows that during the researched periods, the Israeli public opinion does not comply with the Israeli policy on this issue. Although the additional sub-hypothesis that the Israeli public opinion was not significantly altered by the Mavi Marmara incident is also confirmed, the analysis further showed that next to the collective memory of the Holocaust the public opinion is very much based on Israel's political relationship with Turkey. This can be explained by the significance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the Israeli national identity, since the political relationship between Turkey and Israel is particularly sensitive to the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There are however certain limitations to this research, first and foremost because only English written articles published by the Jerusalem Post were used for the analysis. Further research into the Israeli public opinion regarding this subject could enlarge the scope by using articles written in Hebrew as well. By doing so, the findings from several Israeli newspapers could be compared with each other to further enhance the credibility of the conclusions. Furthermore, with the use of Hebrew newspapers the time frame of the research could be extended as well.

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   Date: 2000 – 2018
   Categories: All

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