

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

# REALPOLITIK IN THE REVISIONARY PROCESSES OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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THE CASES OF SPAIN AND ARGENTINA

**María Grossi**

(s2210800)

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**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands

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*When I told a classmate that my thesis was on the Armenian Genocide,  
she asked me: "Oh, are you Armenian?"  
My answer was: "Do I have to be Armenian to care about the Armenian Genocide?"*

*Thanks to my colleagues from the UN Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific,  
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## ABSTRACT

The killings of Armenians by the government of the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923 fit all the given definitions of genocide. However, many states from the international community have not recognized the Armenian genocide, and few have explicitly expressed recognition. This paper will analyze the revisionary processes within two countries (Argentina and Spain) that have come to different outcomes (recognition and non-recognition, respectively) and will provide preliminary evidence in response to this main puzzle: “*Why has Argentina recognized the Armenian genocide, while Spain has not?*” This research’s main argument revolves around the concept of *realpolitik*, specifically around the interests and powers that this paper will demonstrate to have a direct relation to the outcomes of the revisionary processes of the Armenian Genocide by different states.

**Keywords:** Armenian genocide; recognition; ignorance; denial; Argentina; Spain; *realpolitik*; power; interests

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Asociación Cultural Armenia (Armenian Cultural Association)
ARI	Coalición Cívica para la Afirmación de una República Igualitaria (Civic Coalition for the Support for an Egalitarian Republic)
ARMH	Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory)
C's	Ciudadanos-Partido de la Ciudadanía (Citizens-Party of the Citizenry)
CAF	Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles
CiU	Convergència y Unió
CNA	Consejo Nacional Armenio (Armenian National Council)
EH	Euskal Herritarrok (Basque Citizens)
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia)
EU	European Union
FPV	Frente Para la Victoria (Front for Victory)
H.I.J.O.S.	Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (Children for Identity and Justice against Forgetfulness and Silence)
IAIA	Institución Administrativa de la Iglesia Armenia (Administrative Institution of the Armenian Church)
IARA	Instituciones Armenias de la República Argentina (Armenian Institutions of the Republic of Argentina)
ICC	International Criminal Court
INTA	Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (National Institute of Agricultural Technology)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
OHL	Obrascón Huarte Lain, S.A.
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PJ	Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party)
PNV	Partido Nacionista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)

PP	Partido Popular (People's Party)
PRO	Propuesta Republicana (Republican Proposal)
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Worker's Socialist Party)
UCR	Unión Cívica Radical (Radical Civic Union)
UGAB	Armenian General Union of Beneficence
UPN	Unión del Pueblo Navarro (Union of the Navarrese People)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US/USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War I

## INTRODUCTION

The Armenian genocide fits all the existing definitions of genocide. The Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin was the first to coin the term “genocide” in 1944 and he cited the Turkish extermination of the Armenians as a defining example of what he meant by “genocide”. In fact, his thinking “was significantly shaped by the Armenian Genocide”<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, the International Association of Genocide Scholars recognizes the Armenian genocide as one of the major genocides of the modern era.<sup>2</sup> The Armenian genocide also fits the definition of genocide adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in the “Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide” on 9 December 1948<sup>3</sup> as much as the Holocaust does. However, only three countries – France (2001), Uruguay (2004) and Argentina (2007) – have expressed explicit recognition of the genocide by law. Other countries have referred to those events by the term “genocide” but have never passed a resolution for its recognition.<sup>4</sup>

Turkey still denies that it was genocide,<sup>5</sup> and many powerful nations play the game according to Turkey’s rules. The USA, for instance, avoids using the term genocide when referring to the treatment of Armenians, and the White House annually beats back efforts in Congress to pass a resolution that would recognize the Armenian massacres as genocide.<sup>6</sup> Israel has not only avoided using the term but they support Turkey in its denialism<sup>7</sup>.

Turkey has made efforts to avoid other countries recognizing the genocide. The case of France, for instance, is very striking. Even though the country was the first to explicitly recognize the genocide (2001), in 2012, due to Turkish pressure, the French court overturned the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Balakian, “Raphael Lemkin, Cultural Destruction, and the Armenian Genocide,” *Holocaust And Genocide Studies* 27, no. 1 (2013): 57-89, doi:10.1093/hgs/dct001.

<sup>2</sup> Desmond Fernandes, “Denialism and the Armenian genocide,” *Variant Issue* 30 (2013): 4. <http://www.variant.org.uk/30texts/AHDenialism.html>.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, “Convention”, Article I.

<sup>4</sup> Glenn Kates, “Armenian Mass Killings: Who Says 'Genocide' And Who Doesn't,” *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, April 23, 2015. <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-genocide-recognition/26974215.html>

<sup>5</sup> Deutsche Welle, “Erdogan: Turkey Will 'Never Accept' Genocide Charges,” June 4, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/erdogan-turkey-will-never-accept-genocide-charges/a-19307115>

<sup>6</sup> CNN, “How will Armenian genocide bill affect France-Turkey relations?” January 24, 2012. <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/23/world/europe/turkey-france-genocide-bill-q-and-a/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> Eldad Ben Aharon, “A unique denial: Israel's foreign policy and the Armenian Genocide.” *British Journal Of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (2015): 638-652. doi:10.1080/13530194.2015.1043514.



Armenian genocide denial law<sup>8</sup> that had been passed by the congress, stipulating that the bill is contrary to freedom of expression. However, if it is illegal in France to deny the Holocaust of World War II, which is considered a crime with fines of 45,000€<sup>9</sup>, we must consider why the same standard does not apply to the Armenian case as well.

This paper is based on the following hypothesis which it intends to prove: “*The recognition of the Armenian Genocide does not obey justice and morality values. Instead, such is often controlled by powers and interests.*” If this hypothesis is proved to be true, it would be possible not only to explain the different drivers that have led to the generalized lack of recognition of the Armenian genocide, but also to set the basis for a critical analysis of policies regarding human rights issues.

This paper takes the case of the Armenian genocide because, as previously stated, many different actors seem to actively continue to deny the genocide despite widespread knowledge of it. Therefore, it provides a solid case study in order to understand the motives of state governments. Although the status of recognition of the Armenian genocide is highly characterized by most countries’ ignorance of it, this thesis focuses on two countries that have debated this issue within their respective parliaments but have arrived at different outcomes. Whether the indifference of other countries can be linked to *realpolitik* is something that will remain as a gap in the literature for future research as this paper specifically analyses the different responses of two countries towards this issue: Argentina and Spain, thus constituting a between case study.

While Argentina is one of the few countries that has recognized the Armenian genocide, but also explicitly created a legal framework to acknowledge it, Spain has brought this issue to the table of its congress on three occasions but has always ended up rejecting its recognition. This research provides preliminary evidence and conceptual arguments in response to this main puzzle: “*Why has Argentina recognized the Armenian genocide, while Spain has not?*” It is difficult to pin down specific reasons for this. However, this paper revolves around the concept of *realpolitik*, a word of German origin which has expanded and been adopted in other languages within the field of International Relations. Although in Germany *Realpolitik* has a less negative

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<sup>8</sup> CNN, “French court overturns Armenian genocide denial law,” February 28, 2012. <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/28/world/europe/france-armenia-genocide/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

connotation, since it is understood as an opposite of idealistic politics, in the United States the term is analogous to *power politics*<sup>10</sup>, an IR theory which suggests that distributions of power and interests are the main cause of war or stability within the system. Note that in this definition of power politics the two aforementioned terms, power and interests, are important to the understanding of such theory<sup>11</sup>. This paper will use the term *Realpolitik* to refer to the politics and diplomacy that put their material interests and practical objectives above moral principles and will refer to this term in order to explain how this directly affects the outcomes from the revisionary processes of genocides by different states, and to give some causal relationship between two variables influencing the decision taken in such processes: power and interests.

Although “power” can be defined in several different ways, this paper will use such term to refer to the ability of some actors to exercise influence or control over other actors’ decisions or actions. This paper will specifically examine what kind of power is exercised by whom, as well as which actor has a lack of power in each of the cases. Further, when discussing “interest”, this paper refers to the seeking of some kind of benefit (mostly economic or political) by the actors. As it will more broadly be seen in the following sections of this paper, these two lead countries to take one or another decision in accordance with *realpolitik*.

Due to the nature of the research question, a qualitative research methodology seems to be the most adequate to be used here. That is, the paper will make a systematic collection, organization and interpretation of textual information.

It is important to note that this paper does not aim to analyze all aspect of the genocide in order to establish whether it should or should not be understood as genocide. On the contrary, for the purposes of this paper it is assumed that what occurred does in fact constitute genocide.

In order to reinforce the design that this paper will be characterized by, it is necessary to specify the variables. The dependent variables in the paper are, as already seen, Argentina’s recognition and Spain’s non-recognition of the Armenian genocide.

In contrast, the independent variables are:

- Argentina and Spain’s interests in recognizing/not recognizing the genocide.

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<sup>10</sup> G. John Ikenberry, Review of *Realpolitik: A History*, by John Bew. *Foreign Affairs* 96. N° 3 (2017): 1, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2017-04-14/realpolitik-history>

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Lemke, “Power Politics and Wars without States,” *American Journal of Political Science*. 52. *Midwest Political Science Association* 52, no. 4 (2008): 774.

- Turkey and Armenia's (or other actors) power to influence the decisions by Argentina and Spain.
- Moral values/convictions that might have influenced some Spanish or Argentinean actors in the discussions.

Researching on those independent variables is thus the key to answering the research question. For that reason, this thesis will introduce each of the cases and their procedures for the recognition of the Armenian genocide and collect qualitative data on the possible interests for a recognition/denial of the Armenian genocide in each of the cases. Concrete actors who appear to have some kind of interest in the recognition or denial of the genocide will be noted; and a comparative analysis on the power that these may have had to influence the decision will be done to reveal whether it is because of such power (or lack of it) that they have achieved (or failed) to pursue their interests. After analyzing the two given cases, this thesis will respond to the research question, hopefully contributing to the literature in four ways: 1) by filling a gap in the literature regarding the cases of recognition of the Armenian genocide by Argentina and the Spanish denial; 2) by further developing the terms of *realpolitik*, power and interests in the context of the recognition of genocides; 3) by constructively criticizing the current 'morality' of international politics; and 4) by giving visibility to the unfairly ignored Armenian genocide.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is little direct academic reference to the recognition, denial or ignorance of genocides as a consequence of *realpolitik* as well as to the reasons or drivers for why some genocides have been recognized while others have not.

One of the few authors to have dealt with that issue is M. Cherif Bassiouni, In "Justice and peace: The importance of choosing accountability over *realpolitik*", he describes the tension that exists between "the attraction of *realpolitik* and the demand for accountability" within the human rights arena. According to Bassiouni, after the Second World War, there stood a moral commitment of post-war pledge for peace, justice and truth. In spite of this, "impunity, at both the international and national levels, is commonly the outcome of *realpolitik*". The conflict

between interests and justice is also one of the central points of this paper. To exemplify that tension, Bassiouni's work contains a section talking about "Realpolitik and the Failure to Face the Armenian Genocide," where he mentions the fact that the lack of international condemnation of Turkey's crimes against the Armenians is due to its geopolitical position and the interest that Western countries have in it.<sup>12</sup> Jackson Nyamuya Maogoto, in his book "War Crimes and Realpolitik", makes an analysis on how realpolitik plays a main role within the international processes of penalization for violations of laws of war and for crimes against humanity<sup>13</sup>. However, he focuses on the international law tribunals, such as the ICC or the UN War crimes Commissions rather than the processes of recognition of such crimes against humanity within each particular country, which is what this paper is mainly going to focus on.

Israel Charny, a scholar and director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, in his work "A classification of denials of the Holocaust and other genocides" has also contributed to the literature on this issue, although quite briefly. He focuses mainly on the denial of genocides and he makes a distinction between the different types of denials. One of these types is what he calls "self-serving opportunism", which is fairly close to the type of denial this paper aims to approach. For Charny, some denials are made by governments "which do not sympathize or condone the genocide, but support denials for reasons of realpolitik".<sup>14</sup> He also makes reference to the Armenian genocide, the denial of which, he says, "has been accompanied by an incredible political process to gain the cooperation even of democratic governments like the US and Israel and of international bodies such as the UN".<sup>15</sup>

Another scholar who talked about this issue is José Pablo Feinmann, an Argentinean philosopher who included the case of the Armenian genocide in his TV program about philosophy<sup>16</sup>. According to Feinmann, the reason why Turkey can continue denying the Armenian genocide is that there are no costs to them for doing so, as Turkey is an important ally

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<sup>12</sup> M. Cherif Bassiouni, "Justice and peace: The importance of choosing accountability over realpolitik," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 35, no. 2 (2003): 194-195.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson Nyamuya Maogoto, *War Crimes And Realpolitik*. Boulder, Colo.: Rienner, 2004: 1-15.

<sup>14</sup> Israel Charny, "A classification of denials of the Holocaust and other genocides," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 1 (2003): 30.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>16</sup> Jose Pablo Feinmann, "El genocidio contra los armenios." *Filosofía aquí y ahora*. (2008) CA: Canal Encuentro. <http://encuentro.gob.ar/programas/serie/8011/4784>

to the Western powers, while Armenia does not have the same political significance. He also compares the Armenian genocide to the Holocaust, justifying the disparity between the recognition of the two genocides by claiming that the Jewish Holocaust is useful for USA, which sustains Israel, and Israel, to justify the crimes against the Palestinians. In contrast, recognition of the Armenian genocide does not prove ‘useful’ to any significant powers. This paper will focus only in the Armenian case. However, it is important to point out that what Feinmann was actually making reference to, although not explicitly mentioning, was the role of *realpolitik* in the recognition of genocides.

Comparatively, the author Vahagn Avedian specifically emphasizes the notion of *realpolitik* as the main reason for the denial of the Armenian genocide. In “Knowledge and Acknowledgement in the Politics of Memory of the Armenian Genocide”, he mentions that “the Armenian Genocide is mainly anchored in concrete *realpolitik* considerations.”<sup>17</sup> However, he does not analyze the particular interests a specific country might have had to deny the genocide.

The fact that many countries rather reject to recognize the Armenian genocide, has been categorized by some scholars as a game, where the rules are set by Turkey and the international community plays according to those rules, which correspond to a series of arguments on which the Turkish government bases itself in order to deny that the massacres of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire were genocide.

Some authors have talked about the possible interests and motivations that some countries might have to play by the Turkish rules of the game. According to authors like Rupen Boyadjian or Israel Charny, Great Britain and Israel have denied this crime moved by interests such as the wish not to upset a military ally and a developing trade partner. Israeli government’s rejection to recognize the Armenian genocide has been said to potentially undermine the uniqueness of the Holocaust,<sup>18</sup> which highlights the role of *realpolitik* in the case.

It is quite evident that Turkey is also motivated by certain interests when it actively denies, and threatens third actors into denying, an Armenian genocide. An official recognition would pose a real concern for Turkey because of the potential demands for reparation, not only

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<sup>17</sup> Vahagn Avedian, *Knowledge and Acknowledgement in the Politics of Memory of the Armenian Genocide*. New York: Routledge, 2019: 53.

<sup>18</sup> Rupen Boyadjian, “Great Britain’s denial of the Genocide against the Armenians,” in *Life After Death: Rebuilding Genocide Survivors’ Lives: Challenges and Opportunities*. Proceedings of the Kigali Conference 25-30 Nov. 2001 (2004): 1.

financial but also territorial.<sup>19</sup> However, an official recognition would not only be a problem for Turkey but also for major powers such as USA or UK, which abandoned the Armenians after the WWI peace negotiation period to secure instead their relations with the new Republic of Turkey. These powers, which “had a direct responsibility in suffocating the Armenian issue,” might also be required for compensations<sup>20</sup>. According to Avedian, “it is an issue of *realpolitik*, about financial and political interests outweighing the humanitarian ones”.<sup>21</sup>

As already said, all these authors do mention the role of *realpolitik* in the decisions taken over genocide such as the Armenian. However, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to applying those ideas to concrete cases. In that sense, this paper aims to contribute to fulfilling the gap by analyzing the case of Spain, which has not yet recognized the Armenian genocide, to prove that the country is also playing the aforementioned “rules of the game” and that *realpolitik* has played a key role in Spain’s refusal to recognize the crime. The second case study, Argentina’s recognition, will serve to compare the motivations of both countries as drivers of the different outcomes of their debates.

## CASE STUDY I: SPAIN’S DENIAL

As mentioned in the introduction, “certain governments [...] have actively chosen not to interpret these events as genocide<sup>22</sup>” and Spain is part of that group. The Spanish congress has debated on whether to recognize the Armenian genocide three times. The first debate took place in the Congress of the Deputies on March 9, 2011, when the nationalist party Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) took the initiative to propose a non-legislative motion suggesting that the

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<sup>19</sup> News.am, “Turkey must return Armenian land – Attorney General,” July 5, 2013. <https://news.am/eng/news/161272.html>

<sup>20</sup> Vahagn Avedian, “Recognition, Responsibility and Reconciliation: The Trinity of the Armenian Genocide.” *Europa Ethnica* 70, no. 3/4 (2013): 82.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>22</sup> Fernandes, “Denialism,” 4.

Chamber recognize the existence of the Armenian genocide; urging the Government to act pre-emptively to the Turkish government in recognizing the genocide; and to requiring that European Institutions work as a mediator between both States.<sup>23</sup> The proposal was supported by the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). However, the right-wing People's Parliamentary Group (PP) and the centre-left Socialist Parliamentary Group (PSOE), which held a huge majority of the seats, voted against the motion, and the proposal was rejected with only 2 votes in favor and 31 against out of the 33 deputies that were attending the session.<sup>24</sup>

The PP gave several arguments to justify its vote against the motion: that the issue should be addressed by historians; that they should let wounds heal instead of “racking the muck,” that the role of the chamber was to get both countries solve their problems instead of focusing on whether the facts constituted genocide; and that today's Turkey is not the same as the old Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the PP clearly denied the genocide when questioning the intention of destruction and saying that “there were Armenian deaths but there were also deaths from the Ottoman side,” and that “the term genocide requires that there was a clear intention of destruction, which is rather subjective.”<sup>25</sup> The PSOE justified its negative vote by claiming that the motion would not reduce tensions and that the resolution of this issue could be achieved only by the two countries.

The second debate took place in the Senate on May 13, 2015, with a motion presented by the leftist Catalan coalition Entesa for the Progress of Catalonia (Entesa) “urging the government to adopt certain measures in relation to the commemoration of the centenary of the genocide committed against the Armenian population in the territory of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>26</sup> In this occasion, the PSOE presented an amendment that cited the Zurich protocols, which were signed

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<sup>23</sup> Congress of Deputies of the Kingdom of Spain. *On the recognition of the Armenian genocide presented by the parliamentary group of Esquerra Republicana-Izquierda Unida-iniciativa per Catalunya Verds.* (File nº 161/001571.) IX Legislature, Nº 725, March 9, 2011: 2. [http://www.congreso.es/public\\_oficiales/L9/CONG/DS/CO/CO\\_725.PDF](http://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L9/CONG/DS/CO/CO_725.PDF)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Senate of the Kingdom of Spain. *Motion by which the government is urged to adoption of certain measures in relation to the commemoration of the centenary of the genocide committed against the Armenian population in the territory of the Ottoman Empire* (File nº 662/000190) X Legislature, Nº 155, May 13, 2015: 15008-15023. [http://www.congreso.es/public\\_oficiales/L10/SEN/DS/PL/DS\\_P\\_10\\_155.PDF](http://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L10/SEN/DS/PL/DS_P_10_155.PDF)

in 2009 by Armenia and Turkey for the normalization of the relations between both countries.<sup>27</sup> This party suggested to focus on the improvement of the relations,<sup>28</sup> which was rejected by Entesa, considering that it still ignored the need for justice and truth, and that “the real problem were the Turkish authorities not recognizing that the facts constitute genocide.”<sup>29</sup> Here, the Catalan group also made an interesting input it highlighted the wrongness of doing *realpolitik*, claiming that by denying the genocide, the senate would be transmitting that certain geopolitical/geostrategic interests are above other issues. Once again, nationalists were the first to support the motion. ERC also intervened to ask other members of parliament to “leave aside their calculations and political and economic interests” and the Basque nationalist coalition Basque Citizens (EH) claimed that “there are no historical reasons to deny this genocide, probably there are political reasons that have not been confessed.”<sup>30</sup> PNV also supported the motion, while the Catalan nationalist party Convergència I Unió (CiU), believed that the two options were not contradictory and instead could be complementary. That is, urging the Turkish Government to recognize the genocide could actually be favorable for international relations. Once again, these parties were just a minority in the Senate while PP (153 seats) and PSOE (66 seats) held the majority of the seats. For that reason, the proposal was rejected with 14 voted in favor, 130 against and 68 abstentions.<sup>31</sup> Most members of the PSOE had abstained from voting, and most of the PP members had voted against. The arguments given by the PP to reject the proposal were that it did not contribute to the rapprochement of Turkey and Armenia; that determining how to manage the conflict corresponds to these two countries; and that it was not a political but a historical and judicial issue.<sup>32</sup>

After its rejection, the issue did not come up again in the congress until the XII legislature on April 12, 2018 when, one more time, ERC proposed a non-legislative motion that urged the state of Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide and to demand EU’s mediations between

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 15010.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 15019.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 15011.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 15012.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 15023.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 15020-15022.



both states for the definitive overcoming of the conflict.<sup>33</sup> Despite recognizing the existence and veracity of the Armenian massacres, the PSOE gave two arguments that had been already given in the previous to explain why it would refrain from voting in favor of the motion. For its part, the PP, which had a majority of 135 deputies in the congress, also opposed the motion, which was claimed to be “inopportune,”<sup>34</sup> mentioning that a formal recognition of the genocide would lead to a confrontation between Spain and Turkey right before the intergovernmental summit between both countries that was to take place on April 24, with the visit of Turkey’s first minister.<sup>35</sup>

The leftist party Unidas Podemos (Podemos), supported the motion based on morality and claimed that “the way politics works according to each one’s own interests is shameful.”<sup>36</sup> Nationalist PNV adhered to this view and argued that “such diplomatic delicacy has not been applied other times.”<sup>37</sup> PNV also referred to the interests Spain had in Turkey as he mentioned that the reason why many treat the issue with so much delicacy is that, strategically speaking, Turkey is much more important than Armenia for the EU.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the liberal right Ciudadanos Parliamentary Group (C’s), intervened to express its opposition to the motion and compared the approach of the motion to previous nationalist motions<sup>39</sup> and stated that “it is not clear if one is going to actually vote on the genocide” and that “to avoid that the decision is misinterpreted, the vote is negative.”<sup>40</sup> After the third debate, there were just 9 votes in favor; 17 against; and 9 abstentions.<sup>41</sup> One more time, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was rejected.

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<sup>33</sup> Congress of Deputies of the Kingdom of Spain. *On the recognition of the Armenian genocide presented by the group parliamentary of Esquerra Republicana*. (File nº 161/000273) XII Legislature, N° 480, April 12, 2018: 9-10. [http://www.congreso.es/public\\_oficiales/L12/CONG/DS/CO/DSCD-12-CO-480.PDF](http://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L12/CONG/DS/CO/DSCD-12-CO-480.PDF)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

As shown so far, many of the arguments provided by the Spanish parliamentary groups that opposed the approval of the motions recognizing the genocide can be linked to many of the arguments that other powers gave in order to oppose recognition. These arguments are:

1. The discontinuity between the Ottoman Empire and the current Turkey
2. The factor of time (the facts occurred too long ago)
3. The issue having to be resolved by themselves
4. The facts not fitting the definition of genocide
5. The ‘forgive and forget’ policy
6. The issue having to be left to historians<sup>42</sup>

The fact that Spain’s government and major political actors have given the same arguments as other powers to deny the Armenian genocide highlights that Spain is following a precedent established by the Turkish government. However, there are extra arguments, such as the unwillingness to damage the Spanish-Turkish relations or the fear of emboldening Nationalist movements, which show the role of *realpolitik* as a main driver of the negative outcome of the debates. In fact, as has been shown, the debates regarding the recognition of the Armenian genocide in Spain appeared to oppose Nationalists and anti-Nationalists, with both sides probably having their own interests.

The following sections are aimed at further exploring the possible powers and interests that might have influenced Spanish politicians to oppose the recognition of the Armenian genocide. Before starting to analyze such interests, it is worth stressing that there are no large Armenian or Turkish communities in Spain.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, unlike in Argentina, there was no diaspora factor to influence the outcome of the Spanish debates.

### **Bilateral relations**

One of the main interests that has undoubtedly influenced the outcome are the bilateral relations between the governments of Spain and Turkey. Both countries signed their first “Peace, Friendship and Trade Agreement” in 1782, which allowed them to have free trade, among other benefits. Since then, competition between Spain and the Ottoman Empire (nowadays, Turkey)

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<sup>42</sup> Avedian, “Recognition,” 81.

<sup>43</sup> National Statistical Institute, accessed May 13, 2019. <http://www.ine.es/>

for the control of the Mediterranean has changed to a close friendship.<sup>44</sup> New partnership agreements were signed in 1924 and 1959 and, in 1951, their legations in Ankara and Madrid, respectively, were substituted by embassies as their diplomatic relations got to a higher level.<sup>45</sup> Today, their relations are positive, and visits by various personnel (ministers, deputy ministers, secretaries, observers, etc.) occur in both directions several times a year.<sup>46</sup> Since the 1980s, all Spanish governments, PP and PSOE, have supported Turkey's request to become a member of the EU.<sup>47</sup> Also, the "Alliance of Civilizations" project initiated in 2005 by the Spanish president Mr. José Rodríguez Zapatero, with the support of the Turkish president Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, upgraded their bilateral relations to the highest level. Both countries have signed several declarations, treaties and agreements, some aiming to address the improvement of their economic cooperation while others linking to transport, delinquency, culture, education, science and technology.<sup>48</sup>

In terms of commerce, the Official Spanish-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry was officially inaugurated in Madrid in 2011, with the purpose of strengthening relations in all sectors<sup>49</sup>. Spanish imports from Turkey are equivalent to 6,307 million USD, and exports 6,373 million (2017 est.), being Turkey the number two after China in Spain's imports for textile and made-up clothes and the biggest third export market for Spain.<sup>50</sup> The first Spanish debate on the Armenian genocide took place in 2011, a moment when both countries were achieving the consolidation of their good relations and Turkish exports to Spain were "only surpassed by the United States among the non-EU countries."<sup>51</sup> In investment terms, 29 million in 2001 rose to more than 1 thousand million euros by 2007, and Turkey became a very attractive market for

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<sup>44</sup> Eduard Soler i Lecha, "Spanish-Turkish Relations: In Tune Despite the European Stalemate," *CIDOB International Yearbook*. (2011): 201, <https://www.cidob.org/en/content/download/57701/1495398/file/SOLER+Relations+Spain+Turkey.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Office of Diplomatic Information of Spain, "Ficha País: Turquía," 2019, accessed May 19, 2019: 3-4. [http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/TURQUIA\\_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf](http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/TURQUIA_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Soler i Lecha, "Spanish-Turkish Relations," 204.

<sup>48</sup> Office of Diplomatic Information of Spain, "Ficha País: Turquía," 6.

<sup>49</sup> Spanish-Turkish Commerce Chamber. Accessed May 13, 2019. <http://camarahispano-turca.org/>.

<sup>50</sup> Turkish Statistics Institute, "Main Statistics," accessed May 13, 2019. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>

<sup>51</sup> Soler i Lecha, "Spanish-Turkish Relations," 204.

Spanish investors. Spanish infrastructure companies, such as OHL or CAF, were in charge of renovating and constructing important railway lines between Istanbul and Ankara, in a country that was emerging as a business opportunity at the same time as the Spanish construction market was collapsing. In 2009, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the representative bodies of the Spanish and Turkish construction sectors. Construction, however, was not the only Spanish investment in Turkey in those years, as banks and insurance companies, among others, were also benefitting from investments.<sup>52</sup>

It is thus evident that economic interests must have influenced the decision on a controversial topic such as the recognition of the Armenian Genocide which, as mentioned in the debates, would have damaged all the progress in the relations between both countries. Due to the rejection of the motion within the first debate, the Spanish-Turkey relationship continued improving and both countries have shown support to each other in some of their critical moments. In October 2017, for example, Turkey's Minister for the EU, Mr. Omer Celik, said that the Catalan Parliament's declaration of independence was an "error" and that Turkey would continue to support the territorial integrity of Spain<sup>53</sup>. The good bilateral relations would then also be a key influencing factor within the 2015 and 2018 debates. Contrary to this, Spanish-Armenian relations did not begin until 1992, and although Armenia has had an embassy in Madrid since 2010, Spain does not yet have one in Armenia. Although their diplomatic relations are not bad, they are still limited. Additionally, their economic relations are also minimal both in terms of institutional and business contacts, while investment flow between Spain and Armenia is almost non-existent and trade is small and unconsolidated<sup>54</sup>.

In summary, the notable Spain-Turkey relations, combined with pressures from the Turkish government towards other countries that have recognized the genocide, such as France<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Spanish Commerce Chamber. "Análisis de mercados: Turquía, un mercado atractivo para exportar e invertir." Accessed May 13, 2019. <https://www.camara.es/blog/comercio-exterior/analisisdemercados-turquia-un-mercado-atractivo-para-exportar-e-invertir>

<sup>53</sup> Satuk Bugra Kutlugun, "Turquía ve declaración de independencia catalana como un "error." AA, October 28, 2017. <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/turqu%C3%ADa-ve-declaraci%C3%B3n-de-independencia-catalana-como-un-error/950540>

<sup>54</sup> Office of Diplomatic Information of Spain. "Ficha País: Armenia". 2017: 4-5. [http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/ARMENIA\\_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf](http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/ARMENIA_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf)

<sup>55</sup>Sputnik, "El genocidio armenio enfrenta a Francia y a Turquía," January 26, 2012. <https://sptnkne.ws/kwF4>

or Germany<sup>56</sup>, might therefore have influenced Spain's decision against acknowledging the genocide.

## Geopolitics

As already mentioned, Turkey is of great geopolitical importance for several countries in the West, including the United States and the EU. It is a bi-continental country located at a crossroads between two worlds: the west and the east. Its geopolitical position has helped it become a nation of relevance in "Eurasia".

Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, as Minister of Foreign Affairs and chief advisor to Erdogan, designed the new Turkish foreign policy strategy, based on the idea of "zero problems with neighbors",<sup>57</sup> to position the country, which was a member of NATO but also a Muslim country with the need to maintain good ties with the Middle East, as a regional power. Turkey has served as a mediator in the region. This policy has allowed it to position itself as a key player in all types of relations or conflicts between the West and the Middle East, including the material interests that some powers might have in the region. On the other hand, Turkey, with an army of 735,000 people, has the second largest military force in NATO, after the US, and one of the ten most powerful in the world.<sup>58 59</sup> Turkey also authorizes the operations that NATO carries out from the Incirlik base, which is located in its territory, and plays a key role when it comes to conducting the actions carried out by some countries of the coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>60</sup> Since terrorism threatens not only its NATO allies but its own internal stability, the Turkish state has been actively involved in the fight against the Islamic State. In this line,

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<sup>56</sup> Philip Oltermann, "Turquía se enfrenta a Alemania por reconocer el genocidio armenio." *El diario*. June 2, 2016. [https://www.eldiario.es/theguardian/Turquia-resolucion-Parlamento-reconoce-genocidio\\_0\\_522498691.html](https://www.eldiario.es/theguardian/Turquia-resolucion-Parlamento-reconoce-genocidio_0_522498691.html)

<sup>57</sup> Juan C. Sanz, "¿Nuestra política? 'Cero problemas' con los vecinos," *El País*. November 17, 2009. [https://elpais.com/diario/2009/11/17/internacional/1258412403\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/2009/11/17/internacional/1258412403_850215.html)

<sup>58</sup> Global Fire Power, "Turkey military strength," accessed May 15, 2019. [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country\\_id=turkey](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=turkey)

<sup>59</sup> Yaprak Gürsoy, "Turkish Defense Policies and Armed Forces: Continuities and Changes since the Cold War." *ECPR General Conference*. Aston University. (2017): 25. <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/8770b528-53dd-4ccf-8bc1-9c01f2cfd1ce.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Selin Bolme, "The Politics of Incirlik Air Base." *Insight Turkey* (2007): 82-84. [https://www.academia.edu/4485712/The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Incirlik\\_Air\\_Base](https://www.academia.edu/4485712/The_Politics_of_Incirlik_Air_Base)

NATO General Secretary, Jens Stoltenberg, said that Turkey is a country of key importance for the Alliance. "It is enough to study the map to understand the importance of Turkey," he said, pointing to the substantiality of the country located next to Iraq and Syria, where the violence that poses a threat to NATO occurs.<sup>61</sup>

Spain, as a member of NATO, is part of several of the operations that are carried out in Ottoman territory and shares many of the interests of the organization. For example, Spain was involved in the Turkish support operation (initially called Active Fence), launched in December 2012, deploying a ballistic missile defense system in Turkey.<sup>62</sup> In addition to its enormous importance within NATO and the fight against terrorism, the increase in Turkish influence is mainly due in the last decade to the refugee crisis that looms over the old continent. While Europe often debates about the issue of mass immigration to the continent, for many Turkey represents a solution since, with the EU-Turkey agreement, Turkey has hosted more than half of all Syrian refugees. This agreement has given Turkey some management power since Ankara is the one that sets the conditions.<sup>63</sup> In fact, Erdogan has threatened several times to suspend it, denouncing the lack of commitments on the part of the EU.<sup>64</sup>

It should also be noted that Europe is partially dependent on the energy coming through the Southern Gas Corridor in Turkey, which has become a key player in the transport of energy to the EU. In views of a new "cold war" based on the control of energy sources, Anatolia is destined to become the capital of energy.<sup>65</sup>

One thing that should also be considered when determining the interests that Spain has in Turkey is its Mediterranean policy, through which Spain has been trying to gain importance within the EU and NATO by playing a role as a mediator between these western international

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<sup>61</sup> TRT, "Turquía es un país de importancia clave para la OTAN," April 30, 2018. <https://www.trt.net.tr/espanol/turquia/2018/04/30/turquia-es-un-pais-de-importancia-clave-para-la-otan-961064>

<sup>62</sup> Spanish Ministry of Defense, "Operación 'Apoyo a Turquía.'" Accessed May 13, 2019. <http://www.emad.mde.es/MOPS/041-Turquia-AT/>

<sup>63</sup> Dogukan Akdeniz, "EU-Turkey Agreement On Refugees; Assesment Of The Deal." *Eastern Mediterranean University* (2017).

<sup>64</sup> Andrés Mourenza, "Turquía amenaza a la UE con abrir las fronteras a los refugiados si continúan las críticas," *El País*. November 25, 2016. [https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/11/25/actualidad/1480064543\\_937083.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/11/25/actualidad/1480064543_937083.html)

<sup>65</sup> Nicolò Perazzo, "Turquía, actor de relevancia en el panorama geopolítico global," *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*. Documento Opinión 51 (July 2012): 12. [http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_opinion/2012/DIEEE051-2012\\_TurquiaPanoramaGeopoiticoGlobal\\_NicoloPerazzo.pdf](http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2012/DIEEE051-2012_TurquiaPanoramaGeopoiticoGlobal_NicoloPerazzo.pdf)

bodies and the rest of the sea-surrounding countries. Thus, after joining NATO and the EU, Spain has tried to make the Mediterranean "its place of international manoeuvre", working as a bridge to connect Europe and North Africa but also as a solution for the region. Such a policy would not only provide Spain with a more plausible role within those organizations, but it would also help to defend its own interests. The means to do that is to convert the area into a "zone of economic prosperity and political and social stability". To achieve that aim, good relations with countries bordering the sea was required<sup>66</sup>. One of those countries, and probably the most important in the region for Spain, is Turkey, since it is the only country in the Eastern part of the sea with which Spain has achieved a high "level of political contacts". Thus, Spain has the objective to maintain regional stability in order to defend both its own interests and the geopolitical interests its allies have in Turkey, since that would grant Spain with a more determining role. Applying this logic to the recognition of the Armenian genocide, Spain is not willing to take any actions that could damage its relations with Turkey.

As mentioned by the professor and human rights activist M. Cherif Bassiouni, it is then logical to think that impunity regarding the Armenian genocide is the consequence of a new geopolitical reality where Turkey became a necessary ally and the first line of Western defense, reason why certain Western countries have tried not to "offend the sensitivities of the country's nationalistic government who openly denied the mass murder of Armenians."<sup>67</sup>

## **Francoism and Impunity**

Another factor that must have influenced the debate on the recognition of the Armenian genocide in Spain is that of the conflicts of the historical memory. The Franco regime, which was born of a military coup against the democratic republican regime, created a repressive network with the objective of physically and ideologically eliminating the Republican enemy and terrorizing the entire population. Repression by the dictatorial military government was

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<sup>66</sup> Jesús A. Núñez Villaverde, "The Mediterranean: A firm priority of Spanish foreign policy?" *Mediterranean Politics* 5, no. 2 (2000): 129-130.

<sup>67</sup>Bassiouni, "Justice," 194-195.

extremely harsh not only during the civil war (1936-1939), but also afterwards, during the entire dictatorship. It is estimated that the victims of the Franco dictatorship were five times more than the victims of the dictatorships of Pinochet in Chile and the militaries in Argentina, altogether.<sup>68</sup> During the Franco regime, there were 30,000 missing people; 150,000 people shot for political reasons; 500,000 inmates in concentration camps who remained there until 1947; tens of thousands of people driven into exile; thousands of teachers and "purged" concessionaires and a repression against women that reached extremes of cruelty including the theft of their children in prisons.<sup>69</sup> For all this, some authors have even talked of a Spanish Holocaust.<sup>70</sup> In Andalusia, the commander of the Nationalist Army during Franco's regime, Gen. Gonzalo Queipo de Llano,<sup>71</sup> claimed that the fascist uprising was a "purifying movement of the Spanish people."<sup>72</sup> The military psychiatrist Mr. Antonio Vallejo Najera deduced from his studies on republican prisoners that "the Reds" –term used to refer to the leftists– were intellectually inferior, degenerate individuals, as well as "ugly and low".<sup>73</sup> He proposed to purge the "Red Gene" by separating the children of the vanquished from their parents. However, despite the atrocities committed by the Francoist government, to this day the perpetrators have been totally unpunished thanks to the 1977 amnesty, or 'Pact of Oblivion', which granted amnesty to all the crimes of the dictatorship. In fact, in 2010 Judge Baltasar Garzón began to investigate these crimes but he was suspended from the judiciary and accused of breaking the amnesty. It has had to be the Argentine justice that opens a case against those who committed crimes during the Franco regime.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the Argentine complaint, which maintains that the Spanish government "acts as a lawyer for the Francoists"<sup>75</sup>, started promoting the case investigated by Judge Ms.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Preston et al. "The Spanish holocaust: inquisition and extermination in twentieth-century Spain" *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, No. 1 (2012): 139-168, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2014.878120>

<sup>72</sup> Aurora G. Morcillo, "Memory and cultural history of the Spanish Civil War." Leiden. Boston: *Brill* (2014): 125

<sup>73</sup> Esperanza Bosch Fiol, Victoria Ferrer Pérez, and Capilla Navarro Guzmán, "La psicología de las mujeres republicanas según el Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nájera," *Revista de historia de la psicología* 29 (2008): 34-40.

<sup>74</sup> Amnesty International, "El tiempo pasa, la impunidad permanece," Executive summary. Madrid, June 2013: 6-7. [https://www.es.amnesty.org/uploads/media/AI-El\\_tiempo\\_pasa\\_la\\_impunidad\\_permanece\\_Resumen\\_ejecutivo.pdf](https://www.es.amnesty.org/uploads/media/AI-El_tiempo_pasa_la_impunidad_permanece_Resumen_ejecutivo.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> Ana Delicado, "El Gobierno actúa como abogado de los franquistas," según la querrela argentina," *Público*. April 23, 2015. <https://www.publico.es/politica/memoria-publica/gobierno-actua-abogado-franquistas.html>



María Servini in 2010 under the principle of universal justice, which defends that crimes against humanity must be persecuted at all times and in all places by different courts of the world. Ms. Servini, who is still dealing with this case, explains that "Spain's amnesty law has made it impossible for Spanish judges or Spanish courts to investigate, but crimes against humanity never expire and there is no amnesty that can cover them."<sup>76</sup> In 2018, Judge Servini asked the Argentine consulate in Madrid to provide videoconferences to listen to the testimonies of the witnesses. However, the videoconferences were finally canceled due to the threat from the Spanish government of breaking relations with Argentina if the videoconferences were carried out. This threat on the part of the Spanish government is reminiscent of the Turkish government's policy on the recognition of the Armenian genocide, based on threatening countries that intended to recognize it.

Jean-François Macé mentions that, although Spain is currently a democracy and the Francoist policies do not exist today, there is still a trace of those decades of dictatorship and the political and institutional consensus of the transition, which erased the memory of the past.<sup>77</sup> To better understand this, it is necessary to emphasize that the nature of the so-called "Spanish Transition", materialized in the 1977 amnesty and the 1978 constitution could be described as "consensual" as there was no radical break with the previous military regime, which has rather tried to regulate its self-dissolution guaranteeing itself a minimal control over power. The conditions of the transition and the new key political actors and institutions, including the monarchy, were established before Franco's death<sup>78</sup> and one of the conditions established was the absence of any judicial processes against the militaries and members of the pro-Franco administration. In this way, the political elites committed themselves to a progressive and definitive amnesty of the Francoists.

Both the press and cultural circles have denounced such "pact of silence", which would limit the opportunities to debate the past and prevent the adoption of norms of justice for the

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<sup>76</sup> Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar, "El silencio de otros." CA: RTVE, April 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Jean-François Macé, "Los conflictos de memoria en la España post-franquista (1976-2010)," *Bulletin Hispanique* 114, no. 2 (2012): 749-774.

<sup>78</sup> Alejandro Torrús, "Pérez Royo: "Para tener un ajuste de cuentas con la Monarquía se necesita celebrar un referéndum," *Público*. June 1, 2019. <https://www.publico.es/politica/retirada-rey-juan-carlos-i-perez-royo-ajuste-cuentas-monarquia-necesita-celebrar-referendum.html>

victims of the dictatorship.<sup>79</sup> According to the Spanish philosopher José Vidal Beneyto, "the democracy that governs Spain was built on the slabs that cover the tomb of the collective memory".<sup>80</sup> In fact, after Franco's death, many of the regime's judges and politicians, such as the ex-minister Mr. Martín Villa, simply continued in office.

In 2002, the most notable memorial organization, the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH) demanded means for the exhumations of mass graves of the Franco regime. However, it was rejected at the same time as the government of the PP, led by President Aznar (1996-2004), assigned an annual subsidy of €150,000 to the creation and development of the activities of the Francisco Franco National Foundation, presided over by Franco's daughter, the Duchess Carmen Franco Polo. According to its own statutes, the foundation is aimed at "exalting" the dictator as "*a model of virtues put at the service of the fatherland*"<sup>81</sup> and achieving the repeal of the Law of Historical Memory, approved in 2007, which recognises and broadens the rights and establishes measures in favour of those who suffered persecution or violence during the Civil War and the Dictatorship.<sup>82</sup>

To understand the interests that the PP could have for not recognizing the Armenian genocide in relation to the Spanish dictatorial past, it is important to emphasize that this party "*was born out of the ashes of the Franco regime*"<sup>83</sup>. In fact, Mr. Manuel Fraga, the main founder of the party, had served Franco as a minister<sup>84</sup>. For the PP, the recognition of the Armenian genocide could pose the risk of strengthening the struggle for truth and justice, which would threaten not only certain party leaders for having been responsible for the crimes against humanity committed by the Franco regime, but to the very existence of the party, since it counts

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<sup>79</sup> Jean-François Macé, "Los conflictos de memoria en la España post-franquista (1976-2010)," *Bulletin Hispanique* 114, no. 2 (2012): 753.

<sup>80</sup> José Vidal Beneyto, *Diario de una ocasión perdida: materiales para un principio*. Barcelona: Ed. Kairos, 1981: 33.

<sup>81</sup>El Periódico, "Pagar por ensalzar a Franco desgrava," April 16, 2018.

<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/opinion/20180416/editorial-pagar-por-ensalzar-a-franco-desgrava-6762499>

<sup>82</sup> Pedro González-Bueno Benítez, "Reflexiones sobre la Memoria Histórica," *Fundación Francisco Franco*. July 31, 2015. <https://fnff.es/memoria-historica/486603573/reflexiones-sobre-la-memoria-historica.html>

<sup>83</sup> Macé, "Los conflictos," 763.

<sup>84</sup> Ádam Anderle, "De la dictadura a la democracia: Manuel Fraga Iribarne". [http://acta.bibl.u-szeged.hu/618/1/hisp\\_013\\_007-012.pdf](http://acta.bibl.u-szeged.hu/618/1/hisp_013_007-012.pdf)

with Franco supporters as a part of its electoral basis.<sup>85</sup> Despite the Law of Historical Memory being finally approved in 2007, during the next government, under the PP administration, it was repealed de facto, since it was left without budget for its implementation.<sup>86</sup> The PP, which has been the largest political party in Spain for many years refused to condemn the Franco regime every time it was discussed in the parliament and refused to extradite or prosecute the Francoist ministers when this was requested by the Argentine complaint.<sup>87 88</sup>

According to Amnesty International, "the rights to truth, justice and reparation for victims of crimes under international law committed during the Civil War and the Franco regime (1936-1975) continue to be denied in Spain," and it warns that it is failing to comply with international obligations and the duty to exercise its criminal jurisdiction against impunity for crimes under international law.<sup>89</sup>

In conclusion, the path to exhume the Francoist past in Spain is still long and there are many interests that make it difficult. Spain has a past of repression and crimes against humanity that some are still not interested in uncovering. What's more, the largest right-wing party in Spain, PP, has shown itself against the movements for historical memory. Coincidentally, the PP was also the first to deny the Armenian Genocide when the debates took place in the parliament. The possible relationship between the interests to silence the Francoist past and the decision to oppose the recognition of the Armenian Genocide is, thus, quite evident. Given the case that Spain recognized the Armenian genocide, a better framework for that type of complaint would be established and a stronger movement might appear to claim for historical memory in Spain, which would mean the end of impunity for many.

## **Nationalisms and Complaints**

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<sup>85</sup> Macé, "Los conflictos," 763.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 749-774.

<sup>87</sup> Marta Monforte Jaén, "Todas las veces en las que el PP ha rechazado condenar el franquismo en el congreso," *Público*. November 21, 2018. <https://www.publico.es/politica/veces-pp-rechazado-condenar-franquismo.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Miquel Alberola, "El Senado condena el franquismo con la abstención de PP y Ciudadanos," *El País*. November 22, 2018. [https://elpais.com/politica/2018/11/21/actualidad/1542812383\\_600299.html](https://elpais.com/politica/2018/11/21/actualidad/1542812383_600299.html)

<sup>89</sup> Amnesty International, "El tiempo," 5.

As said before, during the last parliamentary session where the recognition of the genocide was debated, Mr. Maura Brandiarán (C's) mentioned an issue which is worth considering in this paper: Nationalist movements.<sup>90</sup> C's stated that they did not want to vote something that could be used afterwards as a framework for Nationalists to claim independence. This fear is based in the facts that, for instance, the Catalan president Quim Torra has, on several occasions, compared Catalans and Armenians in terms of their suffering. In this line, many have compared the fact that they both constituted linguistic and cultural minorities within a larger state, by which they were persecuted and repressed.

As a matter of fact, throughout the history of coexistence of Spain and the rest of cultures and languages within its territory, there have indeed been dozens of laws and regulations to try to submit these to the Spanish culture and language. During the Franco dictatorship, culture suffered control and repression throughout the country, but especially in Catalonia and the Basque country. For many years it was forbidden to speak in Catalan, especially in Public Administration, schools, radios, television and newspapers. Authors such as Francesc Ferrer i Gironès and Josep Benet have talked of “linguicide” and “cultural genocide.”<sup>91</sup> The Franco regime also abolished Catalan autonomy and its political institutions and Catalonia suffered a great social and cultural decline for more than 40 years. However, Ferrer i Gironès maintained that this not only occurred during the Franco regime but "it has been permanent" and that Franco only "put into practice everything that had been historically programmed".<sup>92</sup>

The attack to the Spanish national interests comes when these claims start being materialized in official complaints. For example, the afore-mentioned “linguistic-cultural genocide” was denounced at the United Nations in 2012 by the PEN Català, a framework for the international projection of the Catalan literature.<sup>93</sup> Mr. Lluís Botinas, author of the blog "La gota catalana," has been gathering some weighty arguments to denounce the "Catalan genocide" committed by the Spanish State, under the exhaustive analysis of the articles of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide approved by the UN General

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<sup>90</sup>El Diario, “El Parlamento catalán apela a la "mediación" de Europa en el proceso independentista,” May 4, 2018. [https://www.eldiario.es/politica/Parlamento-catalan-mediacion-Europa-independentista\\_0\\_767823508.html](https://www.eldiario.es/politica/Parlamento-catalan-mediacion-Europa-independentista_0_767823508.html)

<sup>91</sup> Josep Benet, *Catalunya sota el regim franquista*. (Editorial Blume, 1979): 13.

<sup>92</sup> Francesc Ferrer i Gironès, *La repressió de la llengua catalana*. (Serra d'Or, 2002): 20-21.

<sup>93</sup> Bernat Ferrer, “Volent que l'ONU investigui el «genocidi cultural» del català,” *Nació Digital*. March 27, 2012. <https://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/41240/volen/onu/investigui/genocidi/cultural/catala>

Assembly in 1948.<sup>94</sup> More recently, in 2018 and 2019 respectively, Mr. Puigdemont, former president of the Generalitat, also denounced Spain before the UN Human Rights Committee<sup>95</sup> and before the EU Court of Justice in Belgium.<sup>96</sup> Following this line, the director of the Center for Folklore and Cultural Heritage, Michael Atwood Mason, invited both Catalans and Armenians to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival as he considered that the two nations had many things in common.<sup>97</sup>

To summarize, nationalisms and their complaints are clearly a problem for the interests of the Spanish State. Far from aiming to support the nationalist arguments to denounce the Spanish State, what this section intends to show is that regardless of whether they are right or wrong in their claims, complaints against the Spanish State exist and they are a problem that the Spanish government needs to face. In this sense, recognizing the killings of the Armenians as genocide, could give more room for claims for a recognition and compensation.

It is also necessary to highlight that ERC was the party to present the motion for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in two sessions of the congress which this paper mentioned previously and that, according to its own electoral program, this Catalan party's main objective is to achieve the independence of Catalonia. This shows how *realpolitik* is paying a role not only from the Spanish side, but also from the Nationalist side.<sup>98</sup> The nationalists struggle for independence could be, thus linked to its support to the Armenians. In fact, it should be noted that while the Spanish parliament has not recognized the Armenian genocide, the Catalan and Basque parliaments have, as well as those of the Balearic Islands, Navarra and Aragón communities. As a response, the Armenian government also showed its support to the Catalan separatists in October 2017, when the declaration of independence of Catalonia took place.

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<sup>94</sup> Lluís Botinas, "La Gota Catalana," accessed June 9, 2019. <https://lagotacatalana.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/cuaderno-la-gota-catalana-161111-76pg.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> Jaume Pi, "Puigdemont acusa a España ante la ONU de impulsar "una estrategia para someter al pueblo catalán." *La Vanguardia*, March 3, 2018. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20180303/441189902637/puigdemont-acusa-espana-onu-impulsar-estrategia-someter-pueblo-catalan.html>

<sup>96</sup> La Razón, "Puigdemont denuncia a España en Bélgica por "violaciones sistémicas" del derecho europeo contra la "minoría catalana," March 15, 2019. <https://www.larazon.es/espana/puigdemont-denuncia-a-espana-en-belgica-por-violaciones-sistemicas-del-derecho-europeo-contra-la-minoria-catalana-BH22434713>

<sup>97</sup> Seda Hakobyan and Alexandre Solano, "Per què Catalunya i Armènia s'entenen tant?" *Vila Web*, June 29, 2018. <https://www.vilaweb.cat/noticies/catalunya-i-armenia-una-lluita-comuna-pel-dret-a-lautodeterminacio/>

<sup>98</sup> Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), "Elecciones a les corts espanyoles 2011. Programa Electoral," 2011. <https://www.elmundo.es/elecciones/elecciones-generales/2011/programas/erc.html>

However, the fact that nationalists could also be behaving in accordance with realpolitik does not detract from the validity of the argument that also the Spanish government is doing so, as recognizing the Armenian genocide could have negative consequences for its interest by emboldening nationalisms and somehow giving legitimacy to their claims.

## CASE STUDY II: ARGENTINA'S RECOGNITION

The second case study in this paper is Argentina's recognition of the Armenian genocide, which will serve to compare the interests (or lack of them) that inspired each of the countries to get to different outcomes.

In 1985, both the Argentinean Chamber of Deputies and the Senate claimed that the executive power should take measures to propose the international recognition of the Armenian genocide at the UN by including the massacres that occurred between 1915 and 1923 in the prescriptions of the 1948 Genocide Convention.<sup>99</sup> The President Raúl Alfonsín, in a speech delivered before the Armenian community in Argentina in 1987, used the term "genocide" to refer to such crime when he said: "I know very well that your parents, your grandparents, maybe you yourselves have reached our land pushed by the painful events in hard times, perhaps the hardest a village has suffered, as was the genocide of 1915".<sup>100</sup> Despite this institutional recognition, however, no law was enacted in this regard.

In 1995, after years of declarations and expressions of solidarity towards the Armenian people by the chambers of the national congress and some provincial legislatures,<sup>101</sup> the Armenian National Council (CNA) promoted the enactment of Law 24,559/95, which declared the 24 of April as "Day of struggle and repudiation against the discrimination of man by man". However, despite being unanimously sanctioned in both Argentine chambers, the law was finally

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<sup>99</sup> Mario Nalpatian, "El Genocidio Armenio, Argentina y la ONU," *Nuevos Papeles*. April 19, 2017. <http://www.nuevospapeles.com/nota/3066-el-genocidio-armenio-argentina-y-la-onu>

<sup>100</sup> Página 12, "El día en que la Argentina reconoció el genocidio armenio," August 31, 2017. <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/60032-el-dia-en-que-la-argentina-reconocio-el-genocidio-armenio>

<sup>101</sup> Mariano Saravia, *El Grito Armenio: Crónica de un genocidio y de la lucha por su reconocimiento*. (Córdoba: El Emporio Ediciones 1, 2007): 199.

vetoed by the then President Carlos Menem (1989-1999).<sup>102</sup> <sup>103</sup>More than a decade later, the CNA would once again try to approve a project on the recognition of the Armenian genocide that would be approved by both chambers of the national congress. First, on November 29, 2006, in the Chamber of Deputies, a motion was presented by the deputy Mr. Agustín Rossi, from the center-left Front for Victory-Justicialist Party (FPV-PJ), to anticipate the consideration of a bill to declare April 24 of each year as “Day of Action for Tolerance and Respect among Peoples.” The proposal was brought up by the deputies from FPV-PJ, the centrist social-liberal Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), the right-wing Republican Proposal (PRO) and the liberal Civic Coalition (ARI), four parties from very different political spectrums.<sup>104</sup> Some of the foundations of the motion were that the Turkish government intends to “silence the killing and horror” and that this has become over the years “in an active policy of pressure and extortion directed towards international organizations and the sovereign States so that neither of them officially relocates the genocide of which the Armenian people fell victim.”<sup>105</sup> Likewise, it was said that “knowing and making history known is a fundamental right of the victims, but also a duty of contemporaries with respect to future generations.”<sup>106</sup> It is also important to highlight that reference was made to the role of the Argentine Republic in the struggle “for the defense of human rights and the search for truth and justice”<sup>107</sup> and to the seat that had been granted to Argentina in the recently constituted Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

The session could not be classified as a “debate” since there was almost complete consensus. Many referred to Argentina’s dictatorial past comparing it to the Armenian sufferings<sup>108</sup> and the need for people to have the right to know the truth and to end impunity was

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 202-203.

<sup>103</sup> Pedro Mouratian, “El genocidio armenio y los argentinos,” *Página 12*, April 24, 2011. <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-166904-2011-04-24.html>

<sup>104</sup> Congress of Deputies of the Republic of Argentina. *Motion of order made by Mr. Rossi to anticipate the consideration of the bill of Mr. deputy Bielsa and others by declaring on April 24 of each year as the Day of Action for Tolerance and Respect among Peoples.* (5.261-D. 2006) Period n° 124, 46<sup>th</sup> meeting, 31<sup>st</sup> ordinary session, November 29, 2006: 75-80. [https://www.hcdn.gob.ar/secparl/dtaqui/diario\\_sesiones/acordeon.html](https://www.hcdn.gob.ar/secparl/dtaqui/diario_sesiones/acordeon.html)

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 78.

emphasized.<sup>109</sup> In this same session, the various mentions that were made regarding the struggle of the Armenian people in Argentina are particularly noteworthy. Moreover, tribute was paid to the presence of members of the Armenian community in the session and acknowledgement was made of "how much their representatives have fought in our country and in other nations of the world to achieve this recognition."<sup>110</sup> The Deputy for Córdoba, Ms. Amelia Milagros López, also expressed her "recognition of the important Armenian community that in Córdoba has worked with a great vocation of integration and perseverance to maintain the collective memory."<sup>111</sup> These comments, which came from different parties regardless of their ideology, clearly showed an influence of the Armenian community and its representatives in the recognition of the genocide by the Argentine Congress. After voting, as expected since there was no voice to oppose it, the proposal was approved with 175 affirmative votes, two abstentions and no votes against.<sup>112</sup>

After the bill was approved in the Chamber of Deputies on November 29, 2006, the issue was presented in the Senate on December 13 of the same year.<sup>113</sup> In this occasion, the consensus was even clearer since, with 57 affirmative votes, the bill was approved unanimously, and the law was passed instantaneously.<sup>114</sup> After the positive outcomes of both the Congress and the Senate, the project was promulgated by the national executive power, led by President Néstor Kirchner on January 11, 2007 creating the Law 26,199 that declared April 24 as "Day of action for tolerance and respect for peoples", in commemoration of the genocide suffered by the Armenian people. After this, the different Argentinean provinces have gradually adhered to the law.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>113</sup> Senate of the Republic of Argentina, *Declaration of the Day of Action for the Tolerance and Respect among Peoples*. Period n° 124, 31<sup>th</sup> meeting, 28th ordinary session, December 13, 2006: 66-67. <http://www.senado.gov.ar/parlamentario/sesiones/busqueda>

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>115</sup> For a complete list of provinces that have adhered to the law 26,199, see *appendix A*.



Finally, in 2011, the Judge Norberto M. Oyarbide ruled a decision that held Turkey responsible for the crime of genocide against the Armenians.<sup>116</sup> In this way, the Argentine recognition of the Armenian genocide was carried out in the three branches of the state, with the Argentine justice system being the first jurisdictional body in the world to issue a resolution of this kind.<sup>117</sup> The following sections will serve to analyze the powers and interests that might have influenced Argentina's recognition.

### **The power of the Diaspora**

As a consequence of wars and poverty, people from all over the world (especially Europe) have immigrated to Argentina. Together with them came the Armenians, who were fleeing persecution by the Ottoman Empire, mainly during the decade of 1920.<sup>118</sup> Argentina welcomed them as it held an open immigration policy and constitutionally guaranteed equal civil rights to Argentineans and foreigners.<sup>119</sup> Thanks to that, the Armenians began arriving in the country after the first massacres at the end of the 19th century and many more arrived during and after the genocide of 1915-1923.<sup>120</sup>

Today, Argentina has the largest Armenian community in Latin America, with approximately 100.000 Armenians living mainly in the cities of Buenos Aires and Córdoba.<sup>121</sup> The neighborhoods mentioned above have been transformed into points of cohesion for the unity of the Armenian Diaspora and the preservation of its culture, identity and religion, including churches, schools and institutes, as well as various associations such as the Armenian General Union of Beneficence (UGAB) and the Armenian Cultural Association (ACA), among many

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<sup>116</sup> Infobae, "Argentina: un juez responsabilizó a Turquía por el genocidio del pueblo armenio," April 1, 2011. <https://www.infobae.com/2011/04/01/1022193-argentina-un-juez-responsabilizo-turquia-el-genocidio-del-pueblo-armenio/>

<sup>117</sup> Ramy Wurgaft, "El juez argentino Néstor Oyarbide declara a Turquía culpable del genocidio armenio," *El Mundo*, April 1, 2011. <https://www.elmundo.es/america/2011/04/02/argentina/1301701485.html>

<sup>118</sup> Nélide Boulgourdjian, "Del Imperio otomano a la Argentina. Recepción de los armenios postgenocidio: ¿Inmigrantes o refugiados?" *Diversidad* 10 (2015): 66-67. [https://ri.conicet.gov.ar/bitstream/handle/11336/13766/CONICET\\_Digital\\_Nro.17017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://ri.conicet.gov.ar/bitstream/handle/11336/13766/CONICET_Digital_Nro.17017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-70.

<sup>120</sup> Saravia, "El Grito," 208-209

<sup>121</sup> Embassy of Armenia in Argentina. "Información general: La comunidad armenia de la Argentina," accessed May 20, 2019. <http://argentina.mfa.am/es/community-overview/>

others.<sup>122</sup> In fact, Armenians in Argentina created a pretty well-established framework to try to fight for their cause. In 2016, for instance, representatives of the different Armenian organizations in Argentina<sup>123</sup> signed a basic consensus demanding moral and material restitution of the consequences of the genocide and the repudiation of any attempt to silence, question or deny it, among other claims. Also, the first Museum of the Armenian Genocide outside of Armenia is expected to be built in Argentina soon.<sup>124</sup>

The Armenian community constitutes an important minority in the country and the Argentinean government, which has been very welcoming of immigrants ever since, has always tried to appease their needs and objections. Such scenario could be understood as a power that Armenians might have used to influence the outcome of the decisions regarding the recognition of the genocide by Argentina. In fact, the pressure exerted by the Armenians in this sense is not insignificant since the Armenian community in Argentina has often mobilized through demonstrations and protests. Armenians in Buenos Aires have undertaken several demonstrations in front of the Turkish embassy and every April 24 a march is held in the city of Buenos Aires to the residence of the Turkish ambassador.<sup>125</sup> The last demonstration of this type was on the 26<sup>th</sup> November of this year, when the aforementioned Armenian Institutions mobilized themselves through the avenues of Buenos Aires to reject the Erdogan's visit to the country for the G20 summit.<sup>126</sup>

It should be noted that the Armenian community has been working to achieve the recognition of genocide for more than 30 years both globally and, specifically, in Argentina. To begin with, the project that would later be transformed into law 26,199 by decree of President Néstor Kirchner on January 11, 2007, was first promoted by the Armenian National Council of

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<sup>122</sup>Instituciones Armenias de la República Argentina (IARA), "Nosotros," accessed May 10, 2019. <https://www.iara-argentina.com/nosotros>

<sup>123</sup> See *appendix B* for a list of Armenian organizations/institutions in Argentina.

<sup>124</sup> Nueva Ciudad, "Construirán un museo sobre el Genocidio Armenio en Villa Crespo," March 19, 2019. <https://www.nueva-ciudad.com.ar/notas/201903/40165-construiran-un-museo-sobre-el-genocidio-armenio-en-villa-crespo.html>

<sup>125</sup> Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, "Masiva marcha por el centenario del genocidio armenio en Buenos Aires," *La Nación*. April 29, 2015. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/buenos-aires/masiva-marcha-por-el-centenario-del-genocidio-armenio-en-buenos-aires-nid1788534>

<sup>126</sup> Clarín, "Protesta anticipada por el G20: el 26, la comunidad armenia repudia la visita del presidente de Turquía," November 21, 2018. [https://www.clarin.com/politica/comunidad-armenia-llama-repudiar-visita-presidente-turquia\\_0\\_HbaYr5gUS.html](https://www.clarin.com/politica/comunidad-armenia-llama-repudiar-visita-presidente-turquia_0_HbaYr5gUS.html)

South America.<sup>127</sup> The fact that the project was presented by five deputies of different political blocks and extractions was the result of the work of a sector of the Armenian Community to achieve such recognition.<sup>128</sup> Thus, the Armenian community in Argentina has always had the aspiration of obtaining a condemnation by law from the State, and its high level of pressure finally paid off in 2007. On this occasion, the Armenian community took advantage of "a political moment prone to issue of human rights in general"<sup>129</sup> so that the proposal of recognition of the genocide was approved in the congress and in the Senate, and later transformed into the law.

In a speech by President Raúl Alfonsín before the Armenian community of Buenos Aires in 1987 he recognized the genocide saying that he wanted to thank the Armenians for "everything they do for the country, what they have done for Argentina. The way in which their work, their industry, their intelligence, have enriched our society, in short, that we all conform."<sup>130</sup> These words highlight, in the first place, the important role that the Armenian community has in the country and, secondly, the receptive characteristic that the Argentine nation has had throughout its history, since it is a country made up of immigrants. This characteristic, without a doubt, is something that the Armenian community of Argentina has taken advantage of. Concretely in Córdoba, back in 1986, the Deliberative Council of the city of Córdoba unanimously approved an ordinance to establish the obligatory nature of teaching the topic "Armenian Genocide" in the schools of the municipality. In addition, an attempt was made to include the subject in the press and each year the CAN publishes hundreds of prominent signatures in the local newspapers that recognize the existence of the genocide and promote its claim. Their influence has been such that in September 2006, the CNA, invited the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Vladimir Kamirshalian, to the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Armenian community of Córdoba to meet with Lieutenant Governor Mr. Juan Schiaretto to raise the need for a provincial law and the following day the project was announced by the Lieutenant Governor and presented in parliament by the legislator Ms. Alejandra Vigo (PJ), being finally approved unanimously creating the Law 9.315 of the province of Córdoba, which instituted April 24 as

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<sup>127</sup> Saravia, "El Grito," 195.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 201.

"Commemoration Day of the Genocide against the Armenian people executed by the Turkish-Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923. "<sup>131</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that Judge Oyarbide's aforementioned sentence of April 1, 2011 was also achieved thanks to the insistence of the Armenian community in Argentina. Specifically, it was Mr. Gregorio Hairabedian, director of the Luisa Hairabedian Foundation, who, in his capacity as direct descendant of genocide survivors, denounced this crime before the Argentine justice exercising the Right to Truth on December 29, year 2000, being the complaint later accredited by several other Armenian organizations in the country.<sup>132 133</sup>

In conclusion, as stated by the international politics specialist Mariano Saravia, the Argentine recognition of the Armenian genocide is, to a large extent, "the result of decades of tireless work by the Armenian community in Argentina [...] which had the intelligence to work on all possible fronts and with different strategies."<sup>134</sup>

Finally, it is necessary to highlight that the Turkish offspring in Argentina is small. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates there are 635 Turkish immigrants in Argentina (2015 est.), while the descendants do not reach two thousand inhabitants.<sup>135</sup> In addition, the Turks have not come to form a community and there was no Turkish group that exerted pressure and tried to avoid the recognition of the Armenian genocide. For all things mentioned in this section, this thesis identifies the Armenian community in Argentina and its leaders, as a strong and versatile pressure group that has definitely had a lot to do with the recognition of genocide in the country.

## External relations

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 204- 205.

<sup>132</sup> See *Appendix 3* for a list of the Armenian organizations that took place in the judgment.

<sup>133</sup> Judicial Power of the Nation, 'Resolución declarativa de los sucesos históricos conocidos como el Genocidio del pueblo armenio – años 1915/1923,' Buenos Aires Federal Court No. 5 for Criminal and Correctional Matters (case No. 2.610/2001). April 1, 2011. [http://files.comunidades.net/massacres-e-genocidios/LA\\_SENTENCIA\\_COMPLETA\\_DEL\\_JUICIO\\_POR\\_LA\\_VERDAD\\_DEL\\_GENOCIDIO\\_ARMENIO.pdf](http://files.comunidades.net/massacres-e-genocidios/LA_SENTENCIA_COMPLETA_DEL_JUICIO_POR_LA_VERDAD_DEL_GENOCIDIO_ARMENIO.pdf)

<sup>134</sup> Saravia, "El Grito," 210.

<sup>135</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), "Migration Data Portal," accessed May 15, 2019. <https://migrationdataportal.org/>

Argentina and Armenia initiated diplomatic relations in 1920, not long after the Democratic Republic of Armenia was formed. However, it soon joined the USSR and it was only after their independence in 1991 that both countries could reestablish direct relations. In 1992, they signed the Agreement on Cooperation between both nations and other agreements of all types were signed in the following years to cooperate in the fields of investments, trade, science and technology and the development of nuclear energy, as well as culture, education and tourism.<sup>136</sup> Since the reestablishment of the relations, representatives of the Armenian government have visited Argentina on 14 occasions, and there have been 12 visits from Argentina to Armenia. Furthermore, a total number of 23 agreements and 5 memorandums have been signed as well as 2 programs on cooperation and a Joint Statement on the Basis of Friendly Relations (1998).<sup>137</sup> In other words, Argentina and Armenia cooperate successfully in several fields.

It is also worth highlighting the south-south cooperation between both countries, mainly in the framework of the Project "*Strengthening agricultural extension policies of Armenia.*"<sup>138</sup> The Armenian community in Argentina has a lot to do with such cooperation.<sup>139</sup> While Armenian associations began to appear in Argentina as a way of supporting the diaspora that came to the country fleeing from the war and the massacres, they evolved to have different objectives and purposes. Some of them, such as the Luisa Hairabedian Foundation, oriented their objectives to the issue of human rights and the memory of the Armenian Genocide, while other such as the Murekian Foundation oriented their activities to the development and deepening of cultural relations between Argentina and Armenia.<sup>140</sup> Another example is the Armenian Argentine Chamber for Industry, Commerce and other Economic Activities, founded on

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<sup>136</sup> Ministry of foreign affairs of the Republic of Armenia, "Bilateral Relations: Argentina," accessed May 20, 2019. <https://www.mfa.am/en/bilateral-relations/ar>

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Embassy of Argentina in Armenia, "Cooperación sur-sur Argentina Armenia: los especialistas armenios en Argentina," accessed May 20, 2019. <https://earme.cancilleria.gob.ar/es/cooperaci%C3%B3n-sur-sur-argentina-armenia-los-especialistas-armenios-en-argentina>

<sup>139</sup> Diario Armenia, "Argentina – Armenia: 25 años de relaciones diplomáticas," December 2017. <http://www.diarioarmenia.org.ar/argentina-armenia-25-anos-de-relaciones-diplomaticas/>

<sup>140</sup> Nélide Boulgourdjian, "Rol de las redes asociativas y vínculos con la "madre patria" en la conformación y la permanencia de la diáspora armenia en la Argentina," Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero – UNTREF, Argentina. E.I.A.L., Vol. 24. No. 2 (2013): 24.

December 11, 1986, to occupy a space until then vacant in the Argentine Republic, in order to achieve a harmonious and balanced growth and promote the development of new economic activities in Argentina and Armenia.<sup>141</sup>

As it comes to investments, Argentina is the fifth country to invest the most in Armenia, with over 400 million US dollars of investments in the Asian country<sup>142</sup>. Eduardo Eurnekian, an Argentinean businessman of Armenian origin and the second richest person in Argentina, has made important investments in Armenia, contributing to the development of its economy as one of the main investors in the country, owning airports, post services, banks and other investments in agricultural industry and infrastructure,<sup>143</sup> being distinguished as a National Hero by the president of Armenia, Serzh Sargsian, for his investments.<sup>144</sup>

Opposite to the good relations kept by Argentina and Armenia, Argentina-Turkey relations have until now been rather poor, with a trade which is “relatively low in comparison to the market” and “concentrated on a limited number of commodities/sectors”.<sup>145</sup> Due to the cold relations between Argentina and Turkey and the friendship with Armenia, it is not surprising that Argentina did not have the feeling that national interests would be negatively affected by the recognition of the genocide.

## **Political agenda and Historical memory**

This paper has so far provided some argumentations on the possible factors which might have influenced the decision in terms of interests and power. This section will complete such

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<sup>141</sup> Argentine-Armenian Chamber, “Institucional,” accessed May 20, 2019. <http://www.camaramenia.org.ar/?seccion=institucional&nc=2028170054>

<sup>142</sup> Guía Armenia Menc, “Las inversiones argentinas en la economía armenia alcanzaron los 400 millones de dólares,” July 10, 2014. <http://guiamenc.blogspot.com/2014/07/las-inversiones-argentinas-en-la.html>

<sup>143</sup> El Cronista, “Distinguieron a Eurnekian como Héroe Nacional en Armenia”, September 21, 2017. <https://www.cronista.com/economiapolitica/Distinguieron-a-Eurnekian-como-Heroe-Nacional-en-Armenia-20170921-0091.html>

<sup>144</sup> Horizon, “Eduardo Eurnekian named National Hero of Armenia,” September 21, 2017. <https://horizonweekly.ca/fr/eduardo-eurnekian-named-national-hero-of-armenia/>

<sup>145</sup> Ministry of foreign affairs of the Republic of Turkey, “Relations between Turkey and Argentina.” Accessed May 11, 2019. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/reasons-between-turkey-and-argentina.en.mfa>

argumentation by analyzing Argentina's different governments' interests in relation with the processes of *historical memory*, understood as the political acknowledgement of acts of violence and state repression and as an exercise in reflection and review of certain events of the past that influence the present life and that is essential so that the crimes of the past do not happen again in the future. Such analysis will serve to determine whether and how those interests have influenced the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

On March 24, 1976, the Argentine State suffered its last military coup, giving rise to one of the darkest periods in the country's history, the so-called "national reorganization process", which was characterized by extreme military violence and state terrorism. There was between 1976 and 1983 an absolute violation of human rights, including thousands of killings, missing people, kidnappings, tortures, rapes, theft of babies, etc.<sup>146</sup>

Despite the terror, since back in the dictatorial years, the families of the victims began to demand memory and justice and an increasingly consolidated civil society was formed for human rights, with the leadership of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.<sup>147</sup>

In 1983, a democratic government was established, with Raúl Alfonsín as president (1983-1989) and the so-called "Truth-Finding Trials" appeared in different cities thanks to the efforts of Human Rights organizations and survivors and relatives of the victims. The main objective of those trials was to clarify the crimes committed during those years, when Argentina lived through the disappearance, tortures and killings of around 30.000 people in the self-called "Process of National Reorganization". However, only two of the military were sentenced to a life imprisonment, while the rest were left free or given very light punishments. In addition, the laws of 'Punto Final and Obediencia Debida', which gave impunity to the crimes of the dictatorship, were approved.<sup>148</sup> To fight against the denial of such facts, president Alfonsín created the National Commission on the Disappearance of people with the objective of documenting the cases of Human rights violations. That same commission wrote a report entitled

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<sup>146</sup> Diana Ramos, "Memoria Histórica: el caso argentino (I)." *Mito Revista Cultural* (2015): 21. <http://revistamito.com/memoria-historica-el-caso-argentino/>

<sup>147</sup> Ramos, "Memoria," 21.

<sup>148</sup> Diego Galante, "Los debates parlamentarios de "Punto Final" y "Obediencia Debida": el Juicio a las Juntas en el discurso político de la transición tardía," *Clepsidra. Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios sobre Memoria* 4 (2015): 12-33.

“Never Again”,<sup>149</sup> which became a well-known phrase to repudiate State terrorism. Despite these achievements, however, Raúl Alfonsín also promoted the theory of the two demons, which stated that, while the military committed crimes, the Montoneros, an Argentine leftist urban guerrilla group, active during the 1960s and 1970s, had also been violent and both sides were, thus, to blame. In this way, a climate of impunity began to take shape and more protest groups began to emerge.

Impunity went further during the government of Mr. Carlos Menem (1989-1999), who took a position more similar to the Spanish one, supporting that forgetting would allow reconciliation, and he granted pardons to the military and guerrillas between October 1989 and December 1990.<sup>150</sup> Faced with this situation, the group H.I.J.O.S., among other organizations, highlighted a continuity between the socio-economic project of the dictatorship and that of subsequent democratic governments, emphasizing that "the struggle against neoliberal policies was the prolongation of the struggles of their parents"<sup>151</sup>.

It was during Néstor Kirchner's government (2003-2007) that this part of the society's need for truth and justice was addressed.<sup>152</sup> The Kirchner administration took those people's claims for justice as one of the main points in its political agenda, publically supporting the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and other movements to uncover the truth. In this way, the claims that had existed for decades were finally heard and the struggle for historical memory, justice and human rights, turned into tangible public policies. During Kirchner's government the laws of 'Punto Final and Obediencia Debida' ('Full stop and Right obedience') were repealed and an initiative was established to define March 24 as "National Day of Memory for Truth and Justice", reopening the "Trials for the Truth" and qualifying the crimes of the military dictatorship as "crimes against humanity".<sup>153</sup> The struggle for human rights became a central part of Kirchner's

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<sup>149</sup> Comisión sobre la desaparición de personas (CONACEP), "Nunca Más," Argentina, 1983. <http://www.derechoshumanos.net/lesahumanidad/informes/argentina/informe-de-la-CONADEP-Nunca-mas.htm>

<sup>150</sup> Mercedes Barros, "El discurso de los derechos humanos en la Argentina de la post-transición: un análisis discursivo de Alfonsín a Kirchner," *IX Congreso Nacional de Ciencias Políticas: Centros y periferias: equilibrios y asimetrías en las relaciones de poder* (August 2009): 6. <http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/src/inicio/ArtPdfRed.jsp?iCve=90215158004>.

<sup>151</sup> Mariela A Coudannes Aguirre, "Historiografía y políticas de memoria en la Argentina (1977-2013)." *Historia Actual Online* 33. Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Argentina (2014): 111-112.

<sup>152</sup> Ramos, "Memoria," 21.

<sup>153</sup> Coudannes Aguirre, "Historiografía," 112.



speech, which differed not only from the dictatorship but also from previous democratic presidents.<sup>154</sup> On several occasions, Néstor Kirchner apologized in the name of the State "for the shame of having been silent for 20 years of democracy."<sup>155</sup>

The new regime sought to differentiate itself from the legacy of previous governments and to show itself as the representation of the reappearance of human rights in public space. The Kirchnerist leadership assumed, in this way, the fight against impunity. According to the author María I. Fernández Peychaux, mentions that "in the Kirchnerist discourse (...) human rights configure the basis from which the citizen demand, to which their project responds, are activated and manufactured."<sup>156</sup>

Kirchner also broke with "the theory of the two demons" by Raúl Alfonsín and proclaimed the generation of the seventies as an example of the struggle of a group of young idealists against injustice. He defined the struggle of these young people as a cause against the dictatorship and against the exclusionary system that had been forged in the 1970s, but had been consummated in the 1990s.<sup>157</sup> In this way, either for the interests of gaining legitimacy or for true convictions, the Kirchner government managed to unify the struggle for human rights on the same front as its economic ideals.<sup>158 159</sup>

There are two major political projects: "one based on orthodoxy, market fundamentalism, impunity and a uniform discourse" and the other as a model of building a "serious capitalism (...) of reactivation of the internal economy, of justice and with a promoter and essential role on the part of the State".<sup>160</sup> In this way, Kirchner built a political-judicial framework that favored not only the struggle for acknowledgment of the crimes occurred in Argentina, but also in other parts of the world. By the middle of his term, most of the judicial obstacles that impeded the trials of

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Clarín, "Kirchner en la ESMA: "En nombre del Estado, vengo a pedir perdón," March 25, 2004. [https://www.clarin.com/ediciones-antiores/kirchner-esma-nombre-vengo-pedir-perdon\\_0\\_H1aZQ9pyAKg.html](https://www.clarin.com/ediciones-antiores/kirchner-esma-nombre-vengo-pedir-perdon_0_H1aZQ9pyAKg.html)

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 1699.

<sup>157</sup> Fernández Peychaux, "Política y justicia," 1707-1708.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 1708.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 1709.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 1709.

the criminals of the dictatorship had been reversed. The victims were compensated and spaces and laws were created for the reconstruction of memory.<sup>161</sup>

The Armenian community knew the possibility of using the framework that had been generated by the Kirchner government to enhance their own struggle, comparing the Armenian genocide with the tragedy suffered by the Argentinians. This comparison was also made by deputies and senators during the debates on the recognition of the Armenian genocide.<sup>162</sup> This became a tool of power for the Armenian community and its cause. This is reflected in the fact that Gregorio Hairabedian used his "right to the truth"<sup>163</sup> to demand the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Argentine justice, which finally in 2011, judge Oyarbide would sentence in a trial that was cataloged as one more of the "trials for the search for truth" that had been taking place in the country.

While Argentinean politicians based themselves on moral argumentations to support the recognition of the Armenian genocide, it is true that Argentina, as has been shown, does not have a *raison d'etat* to position itself in favor of Turkey and therefore, it was easier for morality to have influenced its decisions regarding the recognition of the Armenian genocide. It should also be noted that the interests of each government also had a clear influence on the issue. This is seen, mainly, if we compare the discourse and actions of Carlos Menem with those of Néstor Kirchner. While the second recognized the genocide as part of his human rights agenda, and therefore in alignment with his interests, the first vetoed the law as he promulgated a policy of 'forgive and forget' very similar to that of the government of Spain, probably because during his government, there was an "unrestricted and uncritical alignment of Argentina with the foreign policy of the United States,"<sup>164</sup> known as the "theory of carnal relations" with the United States, which dictated that Argentina should, under any circumstance, align itself with the central countries. Therefore, a recognition of the genocide would go against this theory since it would condemn Turkey, which was an unconditional ally of the USA.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 1712.

<sup>162</sup> Senate of the Republic of Argentina, "*Declaration*," 66-67.

<sup>163</sup> Wurgaft, "El juez argentino."

<sup>164</sup> Saravia, "El Grito," 203.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 202-203.

## CONCLUSION

This paper was aimed at responding to the main research question of “why has Argentina recognized the Armenian Genocide while Spain has not?” with the main hypothesis that “the recognition of the Armenian Genocide does not obey justice and morality values. Instead, such recognition is often controlled by powers and interests.” The concept of *realpolitik* (with powers and interests being part of it) was used to explain this phenomenon.

The different parliamentary sessions of both countries regarding the recognition of the Armenian genocide have been used as a primary source to relate the arguments given and decisions taken by each of the actors with concrete interests that could explain the nature of the outcomes.

In order to prove the hypothesis and therefore give an answer to the research question, an analysis has been made to uncover which kind of power is exercised by whom and which actor lacked power to control the outcome of the revisionary processes of the genocide in Argentina and Spain, as well as which were the interests influencing the decision. In that line, this paper has come to four main interests and two main powers.

The first interest is shared by both Spain and Argentina but in a totally opposite way: Bilateral relations. This type of interest’s strongest case is the Spanish one since the two largest parties, PP and PSOE, shared the vision that they had to protect Spanish-Turkish relations, leaving morality values in a second stage. This interest had a stronger role within the 3<sup>rd</sup> debate, which took place right before the intergovernmental summit between both Spain and Turkey. The PP did not hesitate to claim that the motion was inopportune since it would damage the good bilateral relations between both countries. As explained in other sections, both PP and PSOE governments have promoted good relations with Turkey. Contrary to this, Spanish diplomatic relations with Armenia were very limited, their economic relations were minimal and investment flow between both countries was almost non-existent. As it comes to Argentina, Turkey was not a key actor within its external relations as it is for Spain. Although currently they share a few agreements,<sup>166</sup> these were signed after the parliamentary sessions and they did not exist in the moment when the recognition of the Armenian genocide was presented in the parliament.

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<sup>166</sup> Ministry of foreign affairs of the Republic of Turkey, “Relations.”

Therefore, relations with Turkey did not pose a need for Argentina to deny the genocide in order to protect its interests. Opposite to this, Argentina did have good relations with Armenia so this logic becomes even clearer.

Secondly, geopolitics was proved to have constituted one of the interests influencing Spain's decision as both, Spain and Turkey are allied at NATO. Also, Turkey is of great importance for the EU, in relation to the refugee crisis and energy provision, and it is also a key actor within the Spanish Mediterranean policy which had the aim to keep stability in the region. Conversely, Armenia, as stated by José Pablo Feinmann, "is not important for the plans of any big power"<sup>167</sup>. It is not part of NATO, it is not important for the EU, and it is not a key country as Turkey is for the maintenance of the regional stability. On the other hand, Argentina is not part of the same geopolitical arena as Spain. Argentina is not a member of NATO, not the EU and it is not affected by the regional stability in the Mediterranean region. Therefore, geopolitics does not constitute an influencing factor in this country's decision to recognize the genocide.

Something very similar occurs with interest regarding 'nationalisms and complaints', which only takes place in the side of the Spanish state, but they do not pose a problem for Argentina. As explained above, nationalisms and the several complaints they have undertaken before organizations such as the UN or the EU, are a problem for the Spanish interests. Therefore, the Spanish government needs to avoid emboldening nationalist movements. The case of Catalan nationalists is somehow linkable to Spain's interest to deny the Armenian genocide since nationalist have compared Catalans with the Armenians in several instances, and Armenia has been supporting the Catalan independence claims. This interest was not even hidden in the last parliamentary session when the main argument given by C's to oppose the recognition of the genocide was that such recognition could serve to strengthen the nationalist demands. On the contrary, there are no secessionist moments within Argentina. Therefore, the recognition of the Armenian genocide did not threaten Argentina's interests as they did the Spanish ones. In fact, when the Argentinean government was conducted by Mr. Menem and his "theory of carnal relations" which was based on aligning with the central countries, the Argentinean president behaved similarly to the Spanish politicians by vetoing the law that recognized the Armenian genocide.

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<sup>167</sup> Feinmann, "El genocidio."

Finally, the fourth interest that was considered in this paper links to the different ways that each of the countries (Spain and Argentina) dealt with their own dictatorial pasts. As has been shown, the path to exhume the Francoist past in Spain is still long and there are many interests that make it difficult, particularly from the PP which was the largest political party in parliament during those years. To compare the situation of historical memory in both countries, it should be noted that, when the Argentine complaint requested the extradition of those accused of Francoist crimes, the Spanish government rejected it and the Minister of Justice, Rafael Catalá, justified such rejection by claiming that Argentina was a country with a “democratic deficit that intends to prosecute what democratic countries, with functioning rule of the law, carry out (...).” To this, the State Coordinator of Support to the Argentine Complaint against the Crimes of the Francoism recalled that “in Argentina there are more than six hundred sentenced, more than a thousand defendants and numerous trials throughout the country for the crimes against humanity committed in its territory”, while “in Spain there is no one responsible for the innumerable crimes against humanity committed by the Franco regime”.<sup>168</sup> This shows that the framework for any type of claim regarding historical memory and the end of impunity would be much more favorable in Argentina, where the Kirchnerism made of human rights a main point of its political agenda.

As mentioned in the corresponding section, we can more clearly notice the role of realpolitik in the case of Argentina if we compare the discourse and actions by the different governments. Unlike Carlos Menem, for whom a recognition of the Armenian genocide would have threatened his interests of both the promotion of a ‘forgive and forget policy’ and the ‘theory of carnal relations’, for Kirchner, the recognition of the genocide was simply one more part of his human rights agenda, which also legitimized his government not only in terms of human rights but also in the way Kirchnerism linked that issue to the struggle against Neoliberalism.

As it comes to powers influencing the revision of the Armenian genocide in these two countries, this thesis has found that there existed a different type of power influencing each of the cases. Regarding Spain’s denial, Turkey clearly held the power to pressure Spain and its allies in case of an attempt of recognition of the genocide. Thus, this paper has come up with an

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<sup>168</sup> Delicado, “El Gobierno.”

unexpected conclusion: X's power to influence Y's actions or decision is variable and dependent on Y's interests in X. That is, given the fact that Spain had several interests in Turkey, Turkey had the power to influence Spain. Following this logic, as Spain did not have any interests in Armenia or the Armenians, these did not have any power to influence on Spain's decisions or actions.

Contrary to the case of Spain, but making use of the same logic, the Armenian community in Argentina has struggled for the recognition of the state for many years and, given the fact that Argentina had interests in Armenia mainly in terms of investments, but also and principally in appeasing the Armenian community within its territory, the Armenian community was able to translate that into a power tool to achieve the desired recognition by all three branches of the Argentinean government. Argentina does not have such a powerful Turkish community in its country which made Armenians even more powerful. Spain, on its part, does not have an outstanding Armenian or Turkish community and therefore the Diaspora factor has not been part of the drivers of the outcome of the Spanish parliamentary sessions.

In conclusion, this paper has given preliminary evidence that the reason why Argentina and Spain have taken different actions regarding the recognition of the Armenian genocide is linked to *realpolitik*, understood in terms of powers and interests influencing such outcomes. In this way, according to an inductive logic, this paper's hypothesis could be claimed to have been proved. The revisionary processes of the Armenian genocide in the different countries are, thus, controlled by the *realpolitik* and only obey the principles of justice and morality when this does not pose a threat to their interests.

## **APPENDIXES**

### **Appendix A**

### **Argentinean provinces that have adhered to the law 26.199 (ordered by year):<sup>169</sup>**

- 2007
  - Chaco (Law 5.882)
  - Chubut (Law 5.611)
  - Santa Cruz (Law 2.984)
- 2008
  - Santa Fe (Law 12.917)
  - Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Law 2.675)
- 2009
  - Córdoba (Law 9.585)
  - Neuquén (Law 2.641)
- 2011
  - La Pampa (Law 2.619)
  - Río Negro (Law 2.619)
  - Corrientes (Law 6.043)
- 2012
  - Mendoza (Law 8.450)
- 2013
  - Tierra del Fuego, Antártida e Islas del Atlántico Sur (Law 954)
- 2015
  - Buenos Aires (Law 14.755)
  - Misiones (Law VI-186)
  - Jujuy (Law 5.872)
  - Salta (Law 7.877)
  - La Rioja (Law 9.685)
  - San Juan (Law 1.298)
- 2016
  - Catamarca (Law 5.472)
  - Entre Ríos (Law 10.428)
- 2017
  - San Luis (Law I-0983)

### **Appendix B**

#### **List of Armenian institutions in Argentina (original names in Spanish):**

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<sup>169</sup> Consejo Nacional Armenio de Sudamérica (CNA), “Declaraciones del congreso y leyes provinciales y municipales en la república argentina,” accessed May 25, 2019. <http://cna.org.ar/index.php/declaraciones-del-congreso-de-la-republica-argentina/>

- Asociación Cultural Armenia
- Institución Administrativa de la Iglesia Armenia
- Centro Armenio de Argentina
- Fundación Armenia
- Logia Ararat
- Organización Demócrata Liberal Armenia
- Unión Cultural Armenia
- Unión Cultural Armenia “Sharyúm”
- Unión General Armenia de Beneficencia
- Agrupación Scout Antranik
- Agrupación Scout Ararat
- Agrupación Scout San Vartán
- Asociación Civil Armenia de Beneficencia para América del Sur “HOM”
- Asociación Cultural Armenia
- Asociación Residentes Armenios de Mar del Plata
- Cámara Argentino Armenia de Industria y Comercio
- Cátedra Armenia de la Universidad Nacional de Rosario
- Colectividad Armenia de Córdoba
- Colectividad Armenia de Rosario
- Deportivo Armenio
- Fundación Arzoumanian
- Fundación Armenia
- Fundación Memoria del Genocidio Armenio
- Fundación Educacional Vicente López
- Institución Administrativa de la Iglesia Armenia - Centro Armenio de Argentina
- Jóvenes del Centro Armenio
- Juventud de la Unión Cultural Armenia
- Liga de Jóvenes de la UGAB
- Logia Ararat
- Organización Demócrata Liberal Armenia
- Organización Juvenil de la Iglesia Apostólica Armenia
- Unión Compatriótica Armenia de Marash
- Unión Cultural Armenia
- Unión Cultural Armenia Sharyum
- Unión General Armenia de Beneficencia
- Unión General Armenia de Cultura Física “Homenetmen”
- Unión Juventud Armenia
- Unión Patriótica Armenia de Aintab
- Unión Residentes Armenios de Hadjín



## **Appendix C**

### **Armenian organizations which adhered to the Trial for the Truth undertaken by Judge Oyarbide in 2011:**

- La Institución Administrativa de la Iglesia Armenia, representada por el Sr. Armenak Mezdouran
- La Asociación Cultural Armenia, representada por el Sr. Carlos Lázaro Seferian
- La Cámara Argentino Armenia de Industria y Comercio, representada por el Sr. Arslanian
- La Unión Cultural Armenia, representada por el Sr. Adrián Norberto Lomlondjian
- La Unión Compatriótica Armenia de Marras, representada por el Sr. Luis Carlos Sandjian
- La Asociación Tekeyan, representada por el Sr. Sergio Carlos Nahabetian
- La Unión de Residentes Armenios de Hadjin, representada por el Sr. Shake Kopoushian.

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