

INSIGHTS BEYOND BORDERS
TURKEY - ARMENIA
RELATIONS THROUGH
PUBLIC EYES

analytical report

2024



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After Hrant Dink was murdered on 19 January 2007 in front of the offices of his newspaper Agos, the Hrant Dink Foundation was established with the aim of ensuring that such grief might never be experienced again, and to honour Hrant Dink's outspoken courage in the name of realising his dream of a more just and free world. The fundamental principle of the Foundation is the demand for democracy for everyone, regardless of differences of ethnicity, religion, culture, or gender. The Foundation is working for a Turkey in which freedom of expression is enjoyed to the full; where differences of all kinds are encouraged, thrive and multiply, and where conscience is paramount in our view of the past and of the present. At the Hrant Dink Foundation, the 'cause for which we live' is a future dominated by dialogue, peace, and a culture of empathy.

INSIGHTS BEYOND BORDERS:

TURKEY-ARMENIA RELATIONS THROUGH PUBLIC EYES

Analytical Report 2024

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KONDA
RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

The 2023-2024 research “Insights Beyond Borders: Turkey-Armenia Relations Through Public Eyes” was conducted jointly by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRRC)-Armenia Foundation and the KONDA Research and Consultancy Company, and is published by the Hrant Dink Foundation within the framework of the “Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process: Rapid Responses” programme funded by the European Union.

This report outlines the findings of an original primary research on the public perceptions in Armenia and Turkey of Turkey-Armenia normalisation. The contents of this report are based on two parallel research initiatives, conducted in Armenia and in Turkey simultaneously. Methodological commonalities and differences are transparently communicated in the main sections of the report.

The report in its entirety has originally been produced in English. In case of any inconsistencies between the English version and Armenian or Turkish translations, the English version shall prevail.

Further publishing or reproduction of this report or its chapters, whether in print or electronically, shall assume proper referencing.

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About CRRC-Armenia

The Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation is a regionally focused and Armenia-based independent, non-partisan research institution, where research lives. Our core mandate is to address national and regional socio-economic and political challenges via high-quality data collection, analysis, and enhancement of the scientific capacity of the research community. Our vision is to be recognized nationally and internationally as a leading force in social science research and to influence policy-making agenda in the country by setting the highest international standards and building a vibrant community of outstanding social scientists.

On top of multi-method data collection and analysis, CRRC-Armenia also serves as a resource centre, with open and freely available data, dozens of scientific papers, research reports, and policy briefs. Since its establishment in 2003, researchers engaged with CRRC-Armenia have been benefiting from the Foundation's methodological trainings, local and international conferences, summer schools, and a library with more than 2000 contemporary publications in social sciences and humanities. With this, we strive to achieve excellence in social science research, promoting data and knowledge-based principles of democratic governance in Armenia (and beyond), applying advanced methodologies towards conducting high-quality research, and expanding the culture of transparent data gathering and peer-to-peer learning.

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About KONDA

KONDA Research and Consultancy Company, founded by Tarhan Erdem in 1986, seeks to understand, explain, and thus make society in Turkey understandable through research. Having conducted surveys with more than one million people since its establishment, KONDA can be described as the organisation with the deepest knowledge and experience of the genetic codes of society in Turkey.

KONDA is an organisation that produces information in the most basic way as a research and consulting company and makes sense of this information with its interpretations for the need.

KONDA's analyses and predictions contribute to determining the strategies of institutions of all sizes, private or public, and putting them on a social basis. Reports consisting of surveys and information, along with comments that emerge as a result of KONDA's surveys and different field studies targeting social representation, serve as guides within unpredictable community movements.

KONDA will continue to be the primary source of information for all individuals and institutions that want to understand Turkey, its inhabitants, and what is happening in this land.

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PREFACE

Foreword

The normalisation and development of Turkey-Armenia relations is one of the primary aims of the Hrant Dink Foundation (HDF). The Foundation's work in this field is based on the principle that 'the border first opens in our minds'. Following the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, the perceptions of people in Armenia and Turkey towards each other were severely, negatively affected. Although steps had been taken in the past to increase and promote dialogue between the two peoples, interest and engagement considerably regressed after the 2020 war.

In order to gain a better understanding of the current situation at the civil society level and factors shaping the perceptions of people from Turkey and Armenia, and to ascertain which demographic groups and thematic fields can be pursued as part of HDF's future activities, HDF commissioned a public opinion research in Armenia and Turkey. The research titled "Insights Beyond Borders: Turkey-Armenia Relations Through Public Eyes" was conducted by KONDA in Turkey and CRRC-Armenia in Armenia between 2023-2024 within the "Support to Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process: Rapid Responses" programme, funded by the European Union.

Although research and surveys have been conducted on Turkey-Armenia relations in the past, this research had two distinct objectives. The first of these was to collect information from the general public of Turkey and Armenia regarding their perceptions on normalisation of relations between the two neighbouring countries. The findings are pivotal irrespective of the prevailing political climate; giving an opportunity to learn about the civil society dynamics of the neighbouring countries, they offer critical insights for stakeholders, policy-makers, subject-matter experts, researchers as well as those generally interested in this field. The findings provide alternative perspectives to any aspect of their field of interest, as well as to explore and/or further develop collaborative efforts towards normalisation. Moreover, the results of the joint research project provide data driven information to capitalise on developments and build on existing results while reinforcing connections. The second objective of the research was to foster dialogue and professional exchange between the two research centres, KONDA and CRRC-Armenia. HDF has been continuously implementing dialogue programmes between experts in Armenia and Turkey and has observed that opportunities for experts in the two countries

to interact around a specific, thematic field are one of the most effective means of increasing dialogue, promoting cooperation among professionals, exchanging experiences and know-how and raising awareness.

Publisher's note

In this research, the terms "Turk", "Turkish", "Armenian" are used by the interviewees with alternate meanings. The use or the meaning of the terms "Turk" and "Turkish" is a social and political discussion in Turkey; whether it refers to individuals who identify ethnically as Turk, or if it encompasses a sense of shared cultural and historical heritage. The use of the term is found problematic by many ethnic and discriminated groups in Turkey. In the context of Armenia, the term is used to refer to the citizens of Turkey assuming a homogeneous society of individuals of Turkish ethnicity. Furthermore, the term "Turk" is sometimes extended to refer to Azerbaijanis (Azeris). Conversely, in Turkey, the term "Armenian" may refer to either citizens of Armenia or members of the Armenian minority community who are citizens of Turkey and have been the indigenous people of the land for centuries.

The terminology referring to the people in the neighbouring country in both cases reveals to be part of the conflict. It is important to note that the questions in this research are specifically designed to gauge the society perceptions in each country about the people of Turkey or the people of Armenia, respectively.

Acknowledgements

CRRC-Armenia and KONDA duly recognise the invaluable contribution of several organisations and individuals in support for the successful implementation of this collaborative research initiative. Hereby, both organisations would like to extend their deepest gratitude to:

- all current and former team members from CRRC-Armenia and KONDA who have contributed to the implementation of this project, and the writing of this report;
- the numerous interviewers, data collection specialists, associated researchers and methodologists, as well as expert contributors and reviewers, for their dedicated and continuous efforts towards making this project possible;
- all respondents and key informants who have dedicated their time and have shared their valuable opinions.

How to read the report?

Disclaimer note

While the research in both Armenia and Turkey followed a similar overarching methodology and data collection instrument, while reading this report, it is important to note that there are significant differences in data collection methods, sampling strategies, and contexts. Consequently, the authors do not claim that the survey findings from Armenia and Turkey are directly and necessarily comparable due to such variations. Specifically, in Armenia, a telephone survey using Random Digit Dialling was employed, whereas in Turkey, telephone surveys using a mediated panel method were employed. These methodological distinctions influence the interpretation of results. Therefore, we strongly advise against comparing numbers or percentages of the same variables across countries. Instead, we recommend readers refer to Chapter 3, which provides synthesised insights drawn from both country chapters. This approach will help readers gain a comprehensive understanding of the general picture without falling into the potential pitfalls of direct comparison.

Structure of the report

Country Chapters: There are two such chapters, one for each country. Each of these country chapters contain two major sections on methodology and on results. The results section of each country chapter, in turn, contains four thematic sub-sections where the research findings are analysed from different perspectives. Each chapter includes detailed analyses based on the data collected, highlighting key findings and insights from each country.

Opinion Chapter: The report ends in a conclusive reflective chapter authored by individual experts from both CRRC-Armenia and KONDA. This chapter synthesises the commonalities and differences identified in the previous chapters, offering expert analysis and reflections on the potential paths toward normalisation between the two countries and their societies.

Navigational Guidance

To better assist readers in finding the most relevant sections of the report, here are a few scenarios:

1. If you want an academic perspective on each country's case: Start by reading Chapter 1 for Armenia, followed by Chapter 2 for Turkey. These chapters provide in-depth analyses of public sentiments and perceptions in each country.
2. If you are interested in a comparative view: After reading the individual country chapters, proceed to Chapter 3. This chapter offers a synthesis of the findings, highlighting commonalities and differences between the two countries.
3. If you seek expert opinions and broader insights: Chapter 3 includes expert analysis and reflections on the potential paths toward normalisation, offering a broader context and deeper understanding of the issues at hand.
4. If you need information on the research methodology: Refer to the Synopsis and the methodology sections (1.1 & 2.1) in Chapters 1 and 2. These sections explain the research design, data collection methods, and sampling strategies used in both Armenia and Turkey.
5. If you want to understand the broader and policy-level implications: Read Chapter 3 for a comprehensive view of the policy implications derived from the research findings.
6. If you are short on time and need a quick overview: Start with the Synopsis at the beginning of the report and skip over to Chapter 3. This provides a brief overview of the research goals, methods, and key findings.

Technical Considerations

To aid in the accurate and clear apprehension and interpretation of the data reflected in the report and its chapters, the following technical guidelines should be taken into consideration:

- **Percentages and decimals:** Percentages are used extensively to represent public opinions. Pay attention to the rounding of decimals, as slight variations can occur. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place, and care should be taken when interpreting small differences.

- **Direct excerpts:** Direct quotes from survey respondents are included to provide qualitative insights. These excerpts are selected to illustrate common themes and key points but do not necessarily represent the views of all respondents, hence should be read only in the context provided.
- **Visuals:** Tables, charts, and graphs are frequently used to visualise data throughout the chapters. Refer to these visuals to better understand trends and patterns, however, note that only statistically significant findings are visualised. This is to ensure clarity and relevance, and to minimise further potential misuse or abuse of findings under speculative interpretations.
- **Figure labels:** Labels are not displayed for values under 3% to maintain visual clarity.
- **Age bracket differences:** The Turkish Statistical Institute defines the young population as individuals aged 15 to 24. In Turkey, the 15-17 age group, which comprises 30.3% of Turkey's young population, includes nearly 4 million individuals as of the end of 2023. This necessitates an additional age bracket (15-17) for Turkey, whereas Armenia has three brackets starting from age 18.
- **Significance checks:** Statistical significance is checked and reported where relevant (including group difference tests for all substantial variables). Pay attention to notes on significance to understand the robustness of the findings.
- **Totals (N):** For all questions where percentage calculations are presented, the associated N/n number (total number of responses for a given variable) is included in brackets.
- **Multiple choice questions:** The share of each option is calculated within the total number of respondents the question was asked to.
- **DK/RA (Don't Know/Refuse to Answer):** These responses are displayed unless deemed completely irrelevant for interpretation.
- **Question statement:** Each visualised or referenced variable is accompanied by the question codes and full question statements as they were asked in the questionnaire.
- **Prompts:** Additional prompts that were hinted at during the studies are included in brackets, especially if they matter in interpreting the results.
- **Spelling:** The report uses British English across the entire text.

Synopsis

This synopsis provides an overview of the collaborative research initiative, including its goals, implementers, timeline, research design, and fieldwork, with more details and justifications available in the methodology sections of further chapters of this report.

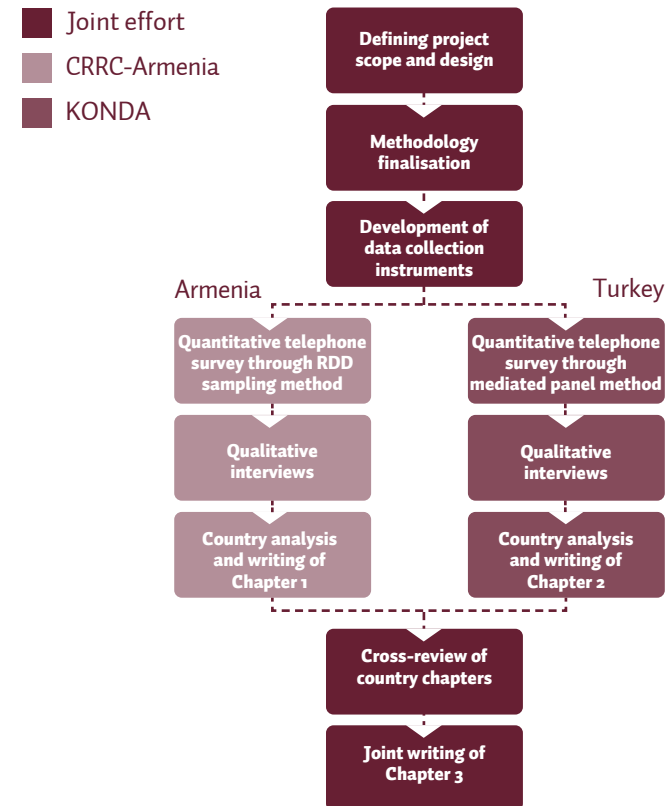
Goal: This research aims at investigating the attitudes of the general public and representatives from relevant target groups (key informants and experts) from Armenia and Turkey regarding the normalisation of relations between the two countries. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the perceptions of the general public in Armenia towards Turkey, and those in Turkey towards Armenia, considering various socio-demographic and geographic factors. Additionally, by seeking to identify the origins of these perceptions, the research aims to elucidate potential grounds, conditions, and areas for normalisation of relations between the two societies.

Implementers: Towards the above-mentioned goal, a collaborative research initiative was co-led by CRRC-Armenia and KONDA, under the close supervision of HDF.

When & where: The research initiative was conducted between July 2023 - July 2024, in Armenia and in Turkey.

Design: The collaboration included undertaking parallel case studies on Armenia and on Turkey, taking on a multi-method research design, combining quantitative and qualitative traditions of data collection. Throughout the collaboration, the research work has assumed both joint and parallel phases (see Figure below). First, research scopes and data collection toolkits were developed through joint efforts, arriving at common research questions, a survey questionnaire, and individual interview guides. Thereafter, separate but parallel data collection efforts were channelled in each country by CRRC-Armenia and KONDA, using similar methodology but somewhat different methods of data collection and sampling. Following the data collection, each implementer prepared respective country analyses separately and simultaneously (Chapters 1 & 2), laying grounds for a cross-review and the joint preparation of an additional reflective analytical piece (Chapter 3).

Flowchart of the collaborative research initiative



Fieldwork: Data collection process in each country was conducted in two major consecutive phases. The first phase consisted of quantitative studies based on the same standardised questionnaire translated into local languages. Different data collection and sampling methods were used in each of the country studies. In Armenia, a telephone survey was conducted through Random Digit Dialling sampling method; in Turkey, a telephone survey was conducted utilising the mediated panel method. The second phase consisted of qualitative studies based, the scope of which was drawn from initial descriptive analysis of the quantitative data collected, in order to facilitate the enrichment and further depth of the quantitative findings. Core interviewing guides for qualitative investigation were developed and adapted to each country's context, utilised in a non-standardised fashion towards conducting in-depth interviews and key-informant interviews.

**CHAPTER 1. ARMENIA UNDER THE LENS:
EXPLORING PUBLIC SENTIMENTS ON NORMALISATION**

Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation

1.1. METHODOLOGY

This research aims to investigate the attitudes of the general public and representatives from relevant target groups (key informants and experts identified by the research team) regarding the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the perceptions of the general public in Armenia towards Turkey, considering various socio-demographic and geographic factors. Additionally, by seeking to identify the origins of these perceptions, the research aims to elucidate potential scenarios for relation normalisation between the two nations.

This section introduces the research methods and tools that were used to address the abovementioned issues.

Data Collection Methods

For the quantitative study, the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) method was utilised. The CATI method is more efficient and faster compared to face-to-face interviews as the selection of respondents is fully automated by data collection software. This method gives more flexibility and randomness. The respondents are selected from randomly generated numbers (see Sample Sizes, Geographic Coverage and Sampling Strategies/Procedures) where each unsuccessful call is directly replaced with another randomly generated number. The questionnaire here is administered using the SurveyCTO software and it restricts the possibility of summoning particular phone numbers. Combining this with the quality assurance procedures (see Quality Assurance Measures) we assure the maintenance of randomness within the survey. Additionally, taking into account the sensitivity of the topic, the CATI method helps the respondent to remain “incognito” while being interviewed making them more likely to be willing to participate in the survey.

For the qualitative study, in-depth interviews (IDI) and key-informant interviews (KII) were conducted as the scope of the research implies also a deeper account of reasons for dispositions and perceptions about Turkey. These methods are particularly effective for exploring personal experiences and practices. The IDI’s were conducted among 27 representatives of the general public. The KII’s were conducted with 3 representatives of different fields.

Data Sources and Fieldwork Timeframes

This research is based entirely on primary data. More specifically, the sources for data collection in this research were the general public (for both qualitative and quantitative studies) and representatives of specific fields, such as media/ CSOs, arts and business (for qualitative study only).

The quantitative fieldwork was conducted between November 22 and December 02, 2023 lasting 11 days. The qualitative data collection was conducted between April 26 and May 15, 2024.

Additionally, different media materials, books, and previous research related to the relations between Armenia and Turkey and the possible normalisation paths were used as sources of data to enrich the analysis and comprehensive interpretation of collected data.

Sample Sizes, Geographic Coverage and Sampling Strategies/Procedures

The sample size for the quantitative study is 1201 representatives of the general public (95% confidence interval with ± 3 percent margin of error). Respondents were selected using Automated Random Digit Dialling (RDD) technique with stratification by mobile operators according to their market shares. A generated full list of possible mobile numbers was used as a sampling frame. The method used excludes from the sample potential respondents who do not have mobile numbers. This means that the population to which our sample is representative, is, hence, the people who do have mobile numbers. However, this should not be a significant deviation from the overall population, but rather a nuance to be considered. All response statistics are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Response Statistics

(a) Of all attempts			(b) Of those who answered		
Statistic	Count	Rate	Statistic	Count	Rate
Numbers generated	38819	100%	Phone answered	5511	100%
Existing numbers	6970	18%	Gave consent	1473	26.7%
Phone answered	5511	14.2%	Eligible	1289	23.4%
Valid	1201	3.1%	Valid	1201	21.8%

The table below represents the geographic coverage of the sample (i.e., 1201).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: Region and Settlement Type

Characteristics	Frequency
Region	
Yerevan	33%
Ararat	9.7%
Shirak	9.4%
Kotayk	9%
Armavir	8.7%
Lori	7.2%
Tavush	5.3%
Gegharkunik	5.1%
Aragatsotn	5%
Syunik	4.7%
Vayots Dzor	2.8%
Settlement type	
Rural	36.2%
Yerevan	33.1%
Other urban	30.7%

The sampling strategy for qualitative study is criterion-based sampling. Sampling criteria justification for the qualitative fieldwork in Armenia is presented below:

1. The first criterion for selecting general public participants is the presence or absence of personal experience with the population of Turkey. It is necessary to obtain additional and more detailed information about existing and potential personal experience and its role in the normalisation process, as the majority of quantitative study participants (92.4%) had not visited Turkey, and 80% never interacted with a Turk.
2. As the data of the quantitative surveys show, the settlement type may be a predictor of opinions on normalisation processes, especially when expressing a negative attitude towards the population of Turkey and towards opening of borders.
3. CRRC-Armenia’s previous research¹ indicates that the perceptions of people from border areas may vary from those living elsewhere, especially as to the perceived impact of border opening.² Consequently, border residents have been invited into the qualitative study to enrich the understanding of these issues.
4. The quantitative survey indicates the potential sectors for normalisation according to the respondents. However, given that only around 27% of them have actually interacted with a Turk or visited Turkey, the selection process was not solely based on quantitative data; it also incorporated sectoral directions examined within the literature review.³

Hence, in total, 30 interviews were conducted across the following groups:

1. 27 IDIs with representatives of the general public
2. 3 KIIs with representatives of the following sectors:
 - media/CSO,
 - art,
 - business.

¹ CRRC-Armenia, “TOWARDS A SHARED VISION OF NORMALISATION OF ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS, Public Opinion Survey Results.” See: <https://www.crrc.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Armenia-Turkey-relations-2.pdf>

² See: <https://www.crrc.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Armenia-Turkey-relations-2.pdf>, p. 8

³ See International Crisis Group, “Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders”, Europe Report N°199 –14 April 2009, p. 22-23; Source: <https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/turkey-and-armenia-opening-minds-opening-borders.pdf>

Table 3. Representatives of the general public

Settlement type	With personal experience	Without personal experience
Yerevan	11	4
Region	Border settlement	2
	Non-border settlement	2
Total	19	8

Table 4. Representatives of the selected sectors

Sector	Total
media/CSO	1
art	1
business	1
Total	3

Grounds for Generalisability

The quantitative data collected by CRRC-Armenia on the perceptions about the normalisation in Armenia is nationally representative by sex, age, and settlement type.

Quality Assurance Measures

For the quantitative study, interviewers were recruited and specifically trained for the project. A training session was run specifically for the pilot and another one was run before the main fieldwork. Selected interviewers were trained on how to use tablets and the SurveyCTO software. They were also trained on the questionnaire so that they can memorise as much of it as possible and make the real-life interviews as smooth as a natural conversation. Further they were trained on a number of components such as the importance of following the sampling protocol and administering an interview (e.g., on consent, leading questions). In this process, interviewers had a chance to report any concerns to trainers or team managers as appropriate. After the training, the interviewer's knowledge was assessed through a rapid questionnaire (on sampling, interview process, questionnaire logic, etc.).

To ensure the quality of the data we implemented a number of quality control checks. The database was monitored daily. Automatic quality checks were used to flag submissions with unusual values or interview duration. 10% of audio recordings of the interviews were used to check for interviewer bias (leading questions, mis-read questions and/or answers, etc.). Back calls were also conducted for the same purpose. In addition, the following metrics were reviewed for each interviewer:

- Average duration and start/end time of interviews
- Number of "Don't know" and "Refuse to answer" options
- Number of skips of the "normalisation" block per interviewer
- Frequency and quality of answers filled in the "other" option and open questions
- Outliers
- Skip logic
- Number of interviews done per day

The quality assurance and data cleaning were implemented through the R programming. Submissions which were deemed unsatisfactory on the abovementioned grounds were excluded from the responses. Specifically, 9 submissions were rejected because of their low quality. Specific values from 12 submissions were modified as a result of quality control and subsequent back-calls. When the option "other" was selected, the responses were standardised, where possible. Thus, we are confident that the final data is of high-quality and meets commonly accepted quality standards.

Limitations

It is important to take into consideration that the survey was conducted mid-November in 2023, after the events in and around Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) and the forcible displacement of the NK population, and the topic was highly sensitive for the society. As CRRC-Armenia works by the "do no harm" principle, both in relation to researchers and surveyed individuals, several considerations were taken into account. To minimise the potential harm, anyone who was originally from Nagorno-Karabakh was excluded from the survey.

Additionally, the survey participants were given an opportunity to decide if they wanted to continue the survey, when they reached the section about the normalisation between the countries. This section encompassed rather direct and potentially more sensitive questions, hence all respondents were given the option to opt out in advance if they did not feel comfortable. Hence, 400 out of 1201 respondents preferred to skip the section, which left us with 801 responses about the normalisation block. To distinguish between these questions, note that all questions marked with "N", which stands for "Normalisation" have been asked to 801 respondents, all other question marks such as "P" (for Perceptions) and "D" (for Demographics) were asked to all (1201).

Ethical Considerations

Guided by the “do no harm” principle (which is also the basis of the ethical principles adopted by CRRC-Armenia), all necessary ethical circumstances were taken into account throughout the data collection and analysis.

During the quantitative survey, the respondents were properly informed about the purpose of the research, the confidentiality of the data, and the fact that the data would be analysed in a generalised manner. Respondents were also informed about the voluntary nature of their participation in the survey and their right to opt out from answering any questions.

Before starting the IDIs and KIIs, the respondents were informed orally and in writing about the research scopes and their rights within that context. They were also informed about the need to record the interviews, whereafter they were able to give written or verbal consent to be recorded.

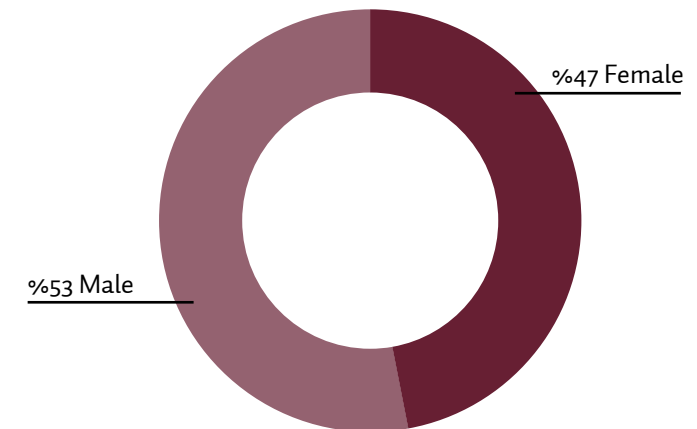
Within the framework of the same ethical considerations, geographic locations and all identifying data of the participants were excluded from the report.

1.2. Results

1.2.1. Demographic Profile of Study Participants

The survey reveals a near equal representation of sexes, with 47% female and 53% male respondents (see the graph 1). This distribution goes slightly beyond the national statistics indicating 54.4% of the Armenian population is female and 45.6% male.⁴ This said, we can see that the distribution in the random sample is counter-rotated with 8% of difference.

Graph 1.D1. Respondent's sex (n = 1201)



⁴ The percentages are presented for the 18 and older population// The Results of 2022 Population Census of RA, see: <https://armstat.am/en/?nid=944>

Most of the survey participants were within the middle age group of 36-55 (38.38%), followed by elders (34.8%) and young people (26.81%) (see table 6). The youngest respondent was 18, the oldest was 87. The average age of the respondents was 47 (see table 5).

Table 5. D2. How old are you (n=1201)

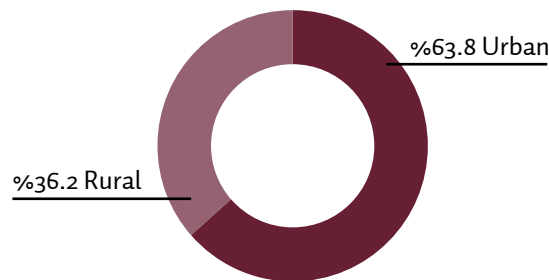
Mean	Min	Max	Std.Dev	N.Valid
47.1	18	87	16.2	1,201

Table 6. Age distribution by 3 age brackets

Age Bracket	n	Frequency (survey)	Frequency (National statistics) ⁵
18-35	322	26.8%	28.3%
36-55	461	38.4%	33.9%
56-87	418	34.8%	37.8%

The settlement types offer further insights into the demographic profile of respondents with 63.8% residing in urban areas and 36.2% in rural areas (see the graph 2), showcasing a predominantly urban-centric dwelling pattern, which is close to the national statistics (58.3% urban areas, 41.7% rural areas).⁶

Graph 2. D3. Respondent's Settlement type (n = 1201)

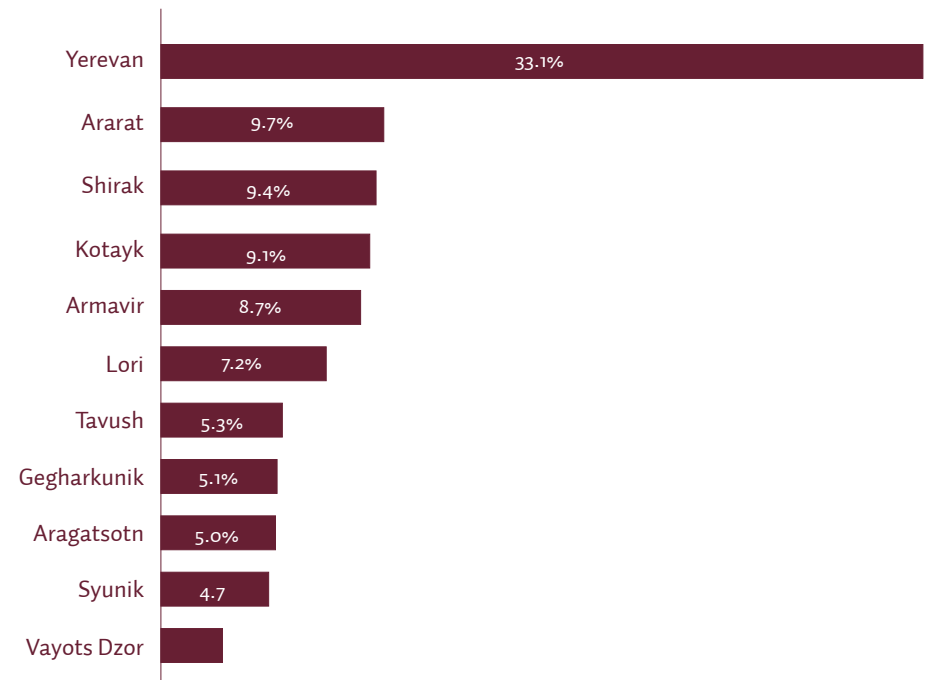


⁵ The Results of 2022 Population Census of RA, see: <https://armstat.am/en/?nid=944>

⁶ ibid

The same can be noted about the regional distribution, being predominantly Yerevan based (33.1% instead of 28.8% according to national statistics),⁷ followed by Ararat (9.7%) and Shirak (9.4%). Vayots Dzor had the lowest representation among the regions (2.7%) (see the graph 3).

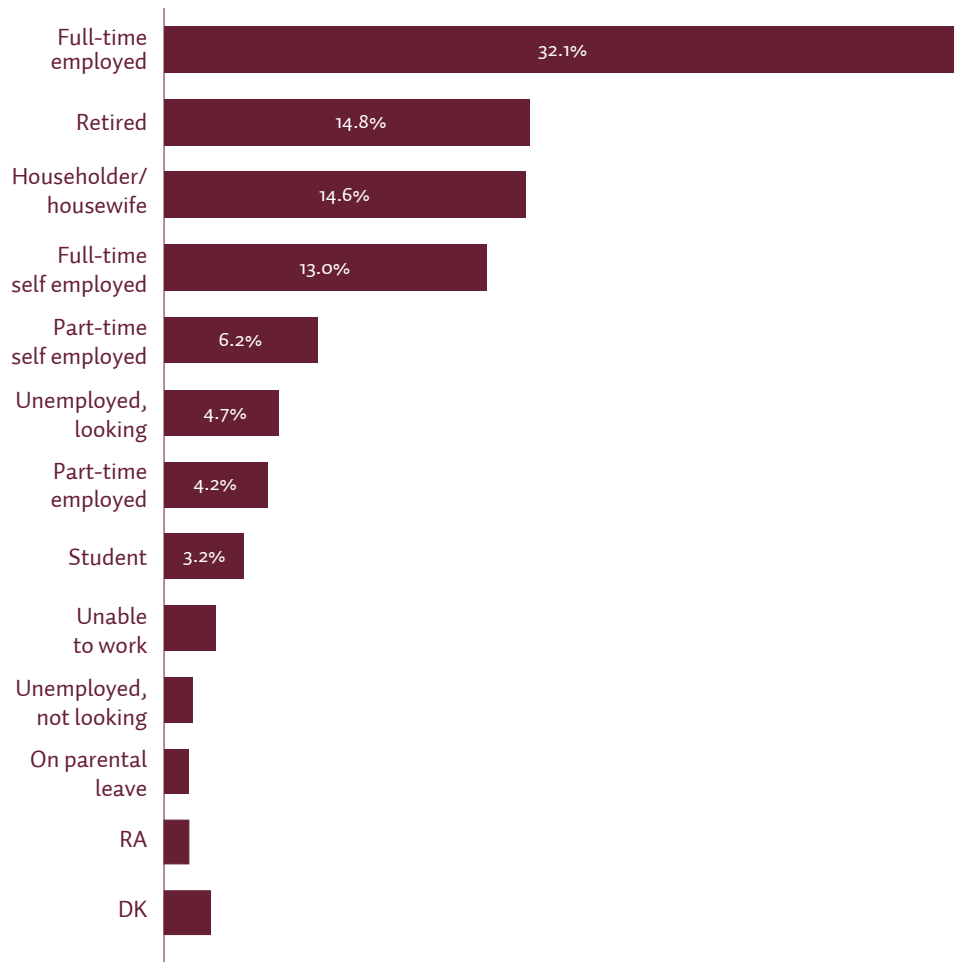
Graph 3. D4. Respondent's Marz (n = 1201)



⁷ ibid

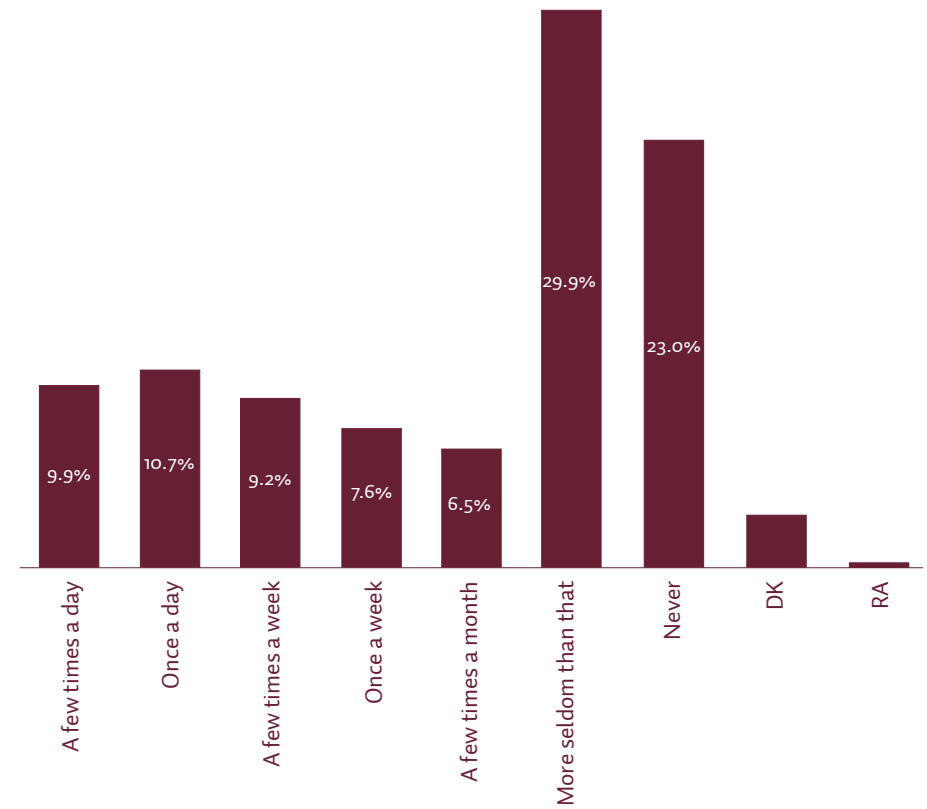
The most common occupation among respondents was full-time employment (32.1%). Retired people (14.8%), householders/housewives (14.6%), and the full-time self-employed (13%) followed the full-time-employed (see the graph 4).

Graph 4. D4. What is your current main occupation? (n = 1201)



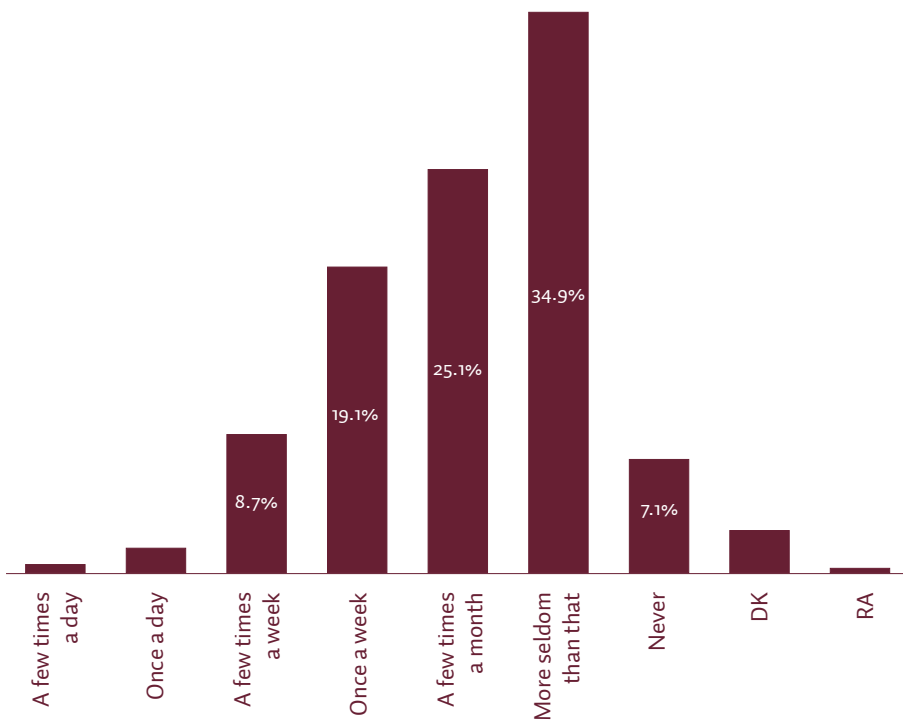
23% of survey participants expressed no engagement with sacred texts and 29.9% engaged seldomly (see the graph 5).

Graph 5. D5. How often do you read or listen to your religion's sacred texts, such as the Bible? (n = 1201)



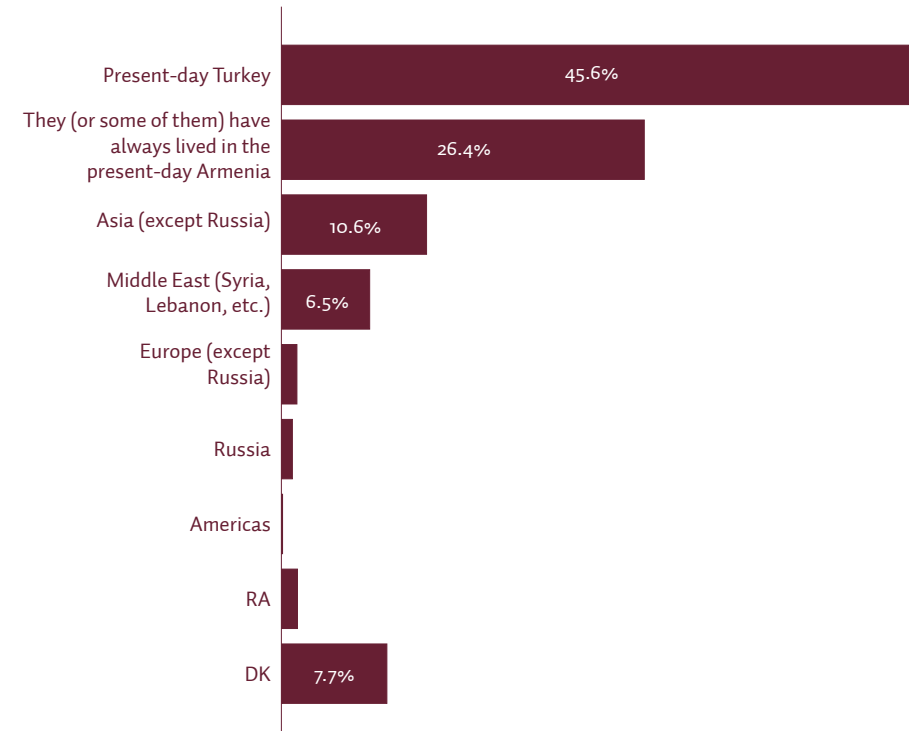
A similar picture is revealed when investigating the frequency of visits to religious sites such as churches or chapels except on special occasions like weddings, baptising and funerals. 7.1% of participants never attend the churches without special occasions and almost 35% attend seldomly (see the graph 6). This said, religious practices within society appear to not occur frequently.

Graph 6. D6. How often do you visit religious sites such as churches and chapels, except for special days? (n = 1201)



Notably, a fairly large number of respondents (45.6%) mention their ancestral ties to present-day Turkey. Present-day Armenia follows with 30.4% mentions (see the graph 7).

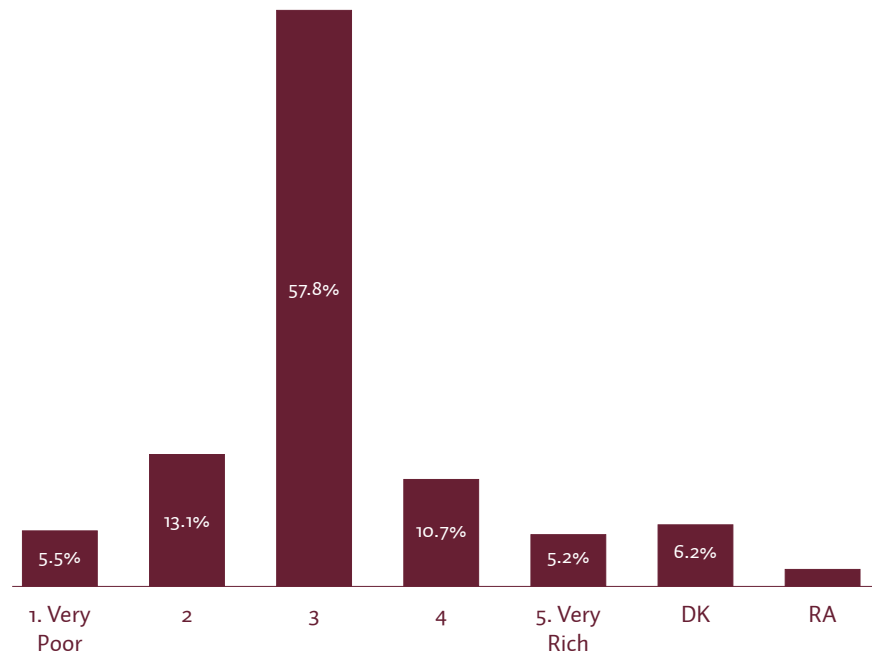
Graph 7. D7. As far as you are informed, where did your ancestors come from, when they moved to present-day Armenia? (n = 1383)⁸



⁸ All presented options besides the “Americas” are statistically significant

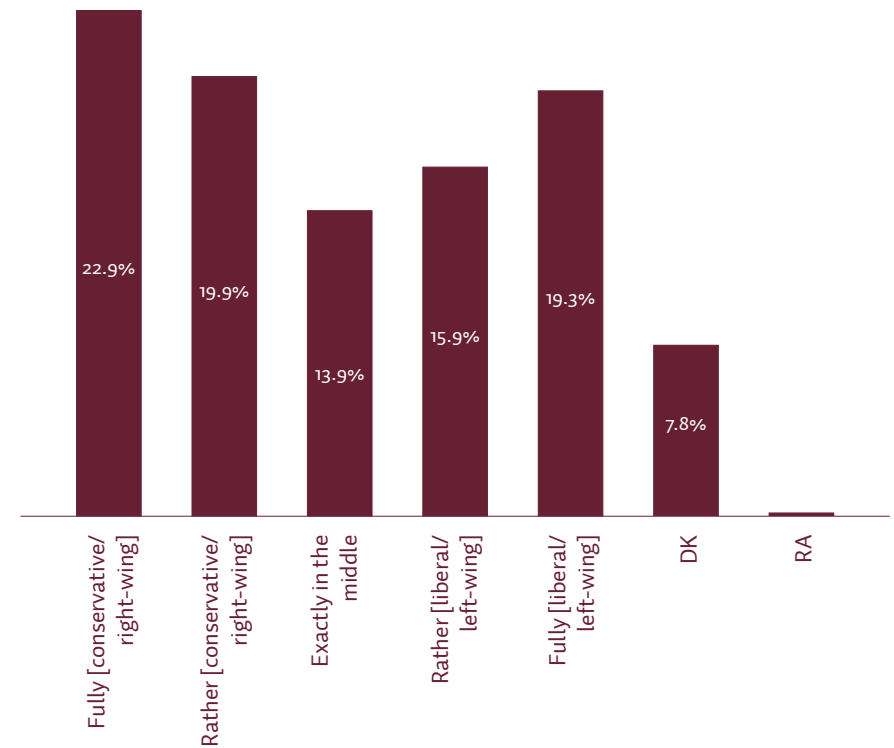
When considering their household income and wealth distribution, a significant portion of respondents perceive themselves within the middle stratum. With 57.8% (see the graph 8) placing themselves in the middle segments, the findings reflect the nuanced perceptions of wealth and financial status among the surveyed population.

Graph 8. D8. If we were to divide the people in our country into 5 income and wealth segments, with 1 representing the poorest and 5 the richest, which segment do you believe your household would belong to? (n = 1201)



Lastly, exploring political ideologies, a notable proportion of respondents (22.9%) identify as fully conservative/right-wing, while a similar percentage (19.3%) align with the liberal/left-wing ideology. Interestingly, a sizable contingent (13.9%) positions themselves at the centre, indicating a diverse range of political perspectives within the surveyed population (see the graph 9).

Graph 9. P1. People can have different positions about how the world should work. Considering this, how would you characterise yourself? I consider myself... (n = 1201)

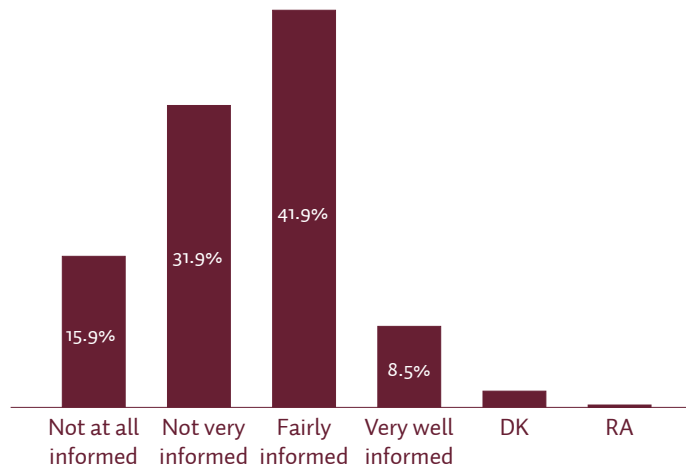


1.2.2. Knowledge, Perceptions, Attitudes

This chapter summarises the knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes of the research participants regarding Turkey and the population of Turkey.⁹ The relations between Armenia and Turkey date back many years, but the development of these relations has been slow and has not yet led to a constructive end point. Despite mutual borders, contact between the people of these two countries has been very limited. Even though flights between the countries have been operating since 1996,¹⁰ at the moment the land borders remain closed and communication de facto is usually happening through Georgia.

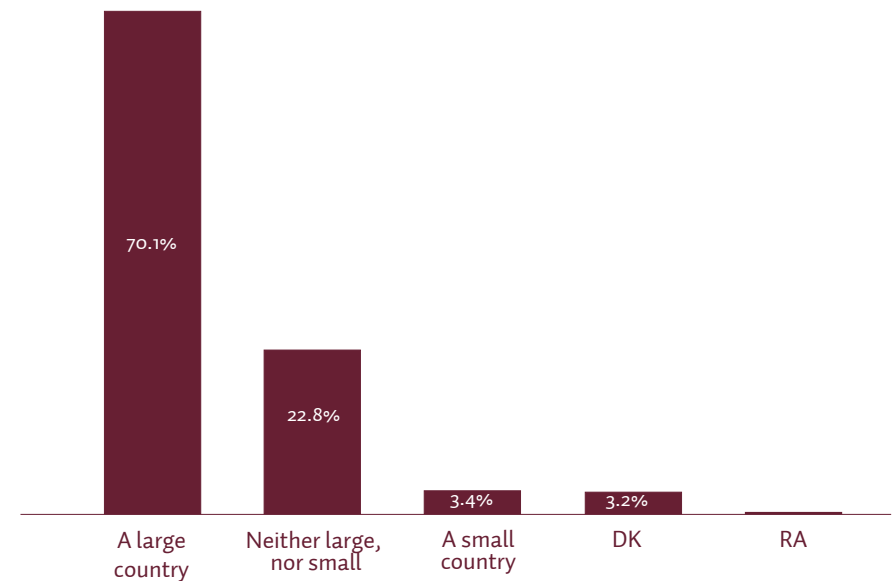
However, despite this situation, the conducted quantitative study shows that almost 42% of the public believes that they are fairly informed about Turkey and the population of Turkey (see the graph 10).

Graph 10. P13. Generally speaking, how much do you think you are informed about Turkey & Turks? (n = 1201)



Additionally, about 70% of the public believes Turkey is a large country (see the graph 11).

Graph 11. P6. How would you evaluate today's Turkey in terms of land size? (n = 1201)

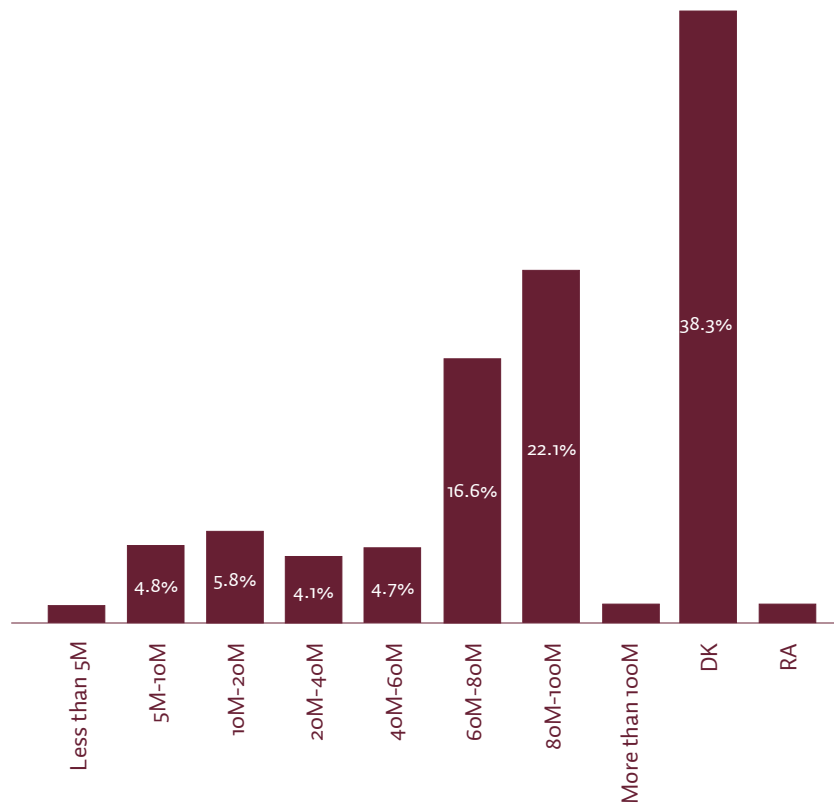


⁹ Please note that before the calculations of correlations were made between variables, all “don’t know” and “refused to answer” options were treated as “NA”, which was required for statistical tests’ accuracy. Hence, you will notice different numbers of observations based on the variables that were correlated.

¹⁰ Artak Ayunts, Talha Kose, “Armenia and Turkey an Overview of Relations and Prospects for Normalisation”, HDV publications, Istanbul, March 2019, p. 53

Notably, 38.3% of Armenian population mention they don't know the population of today's Turkey, and only 22.1% believe Turkey's population is between 80M-100M¹¹ (see the graph 12). This suggests that, in some cases, people's perception can deviate from the actual facts about Turkey.

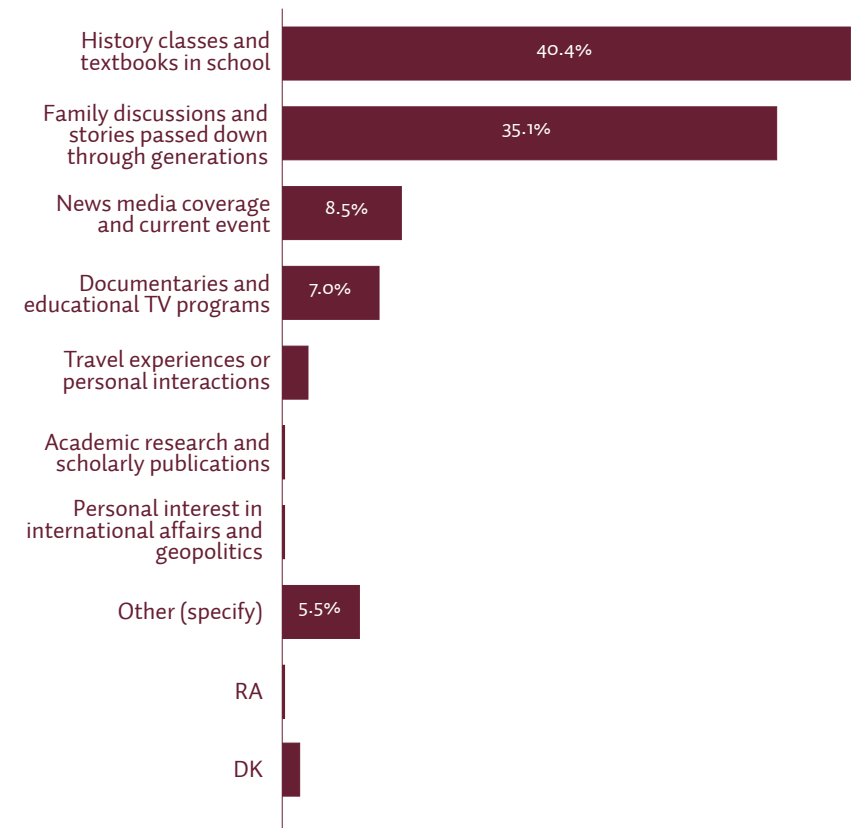
Graph 12. P5. Approximately how many millions do you think is the population of Turkey today? (options were not read out, n = 1201)



¹¹ As for 2024, Turkey has nearly 87M population, see: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/turkey-population/>

The survey shows society mostly becomes informed about Turkey and its population through history classes and family discussions. The news follows the list with a visible margin of selection (see the graph 13).

Graph 13. P14. Please, finish this sentence: "Growing up I have become informed about Turkey & Turks mainly through ..." (multiple choice, answers were not read out to the respondent, n = 1371)¹²



¹² All presented options besides the "Academic research and scholarly publications" and "Personal interest in international affairs and geopolitics" are statistically significant

Qualitative data provides valuable information emphasising the potential influence of gained collective memory on perceptions about the population of Turkey. In particular, it showcases that education and stories passed on by family members play a crucial role in the formation of initial perceptions.

Particularly those who heard stories about their relatives' displacement in 1915 describe the Turkish in more negative terms. Moreover, history classes and school textbooks may be generating perceptions about the Turks as "cruel", "coldhearted", "enemies", as the qualitative study points out. Additionally, it is apparent that especially older generation (50 y/o and over) put particular emphasis on textbooks, history, and events of remembrance related to the Genocide while talking about their sources of knowledge about the population of Turkey.

...When I was in the kindergarten, we went to my older sister's matinee [to Tsitsernakaberd, the Genocide Memorial], from that day I know about them [Turks], and then by reading history, at school, you read and when you interact with them in real life, you realise elders were right about them.

Man, 56 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Shirak, interacted with a Turk

...First, I associate them with the Ottoman Empire, the conquest of Armenia, the Genocide and the theft of Armenian culture and Armenian art. Their red flag reminds me of red blood.

Man, 29 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Vayots Dzor, interacted with a Turk

...They are very bloodhearted... They are always bad and aggressive, always living in war...

Woman, 36 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, no interaction with a Turk

On the contrary, those who heard about the population of Turkey from relatives who traded with them or interacted as tourists describe Turks in a more tolerable manner. Especially younger participants, who also single out wider sources of information such as media, news, and films (including movies and TV series produced in Turkey) alongside textbooks and history classes, in the long run have a broader understanding of the nation and are more inclined towards cooperation and communication with the population of Turkey, because they have seen the different aspects of being Turkish.

...Genocide [comes to my mind], and we have learnt about it by pictures, videos, films. We were presented [about it] at the Museum of Genocide. When we talk about Turkish culture, the first thing that comes to mind is everything that Turkish TV series, films, or cinemas have tried to convey to us; [about] the diversity in everything, starting from the cuisine, the attitude towards people, relations.

Woman, 19 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, no interaction with a Turk

...Ordinary people are more friendly; they try to create neighbourly contact. The problem is more political... I know about this from the historical films, I think that everything is the fault of their military and government. For example, in the case of "The Lark Farm" film, the Turkish and Armenian people lived together, there was no clear border. No one wants a fight...

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

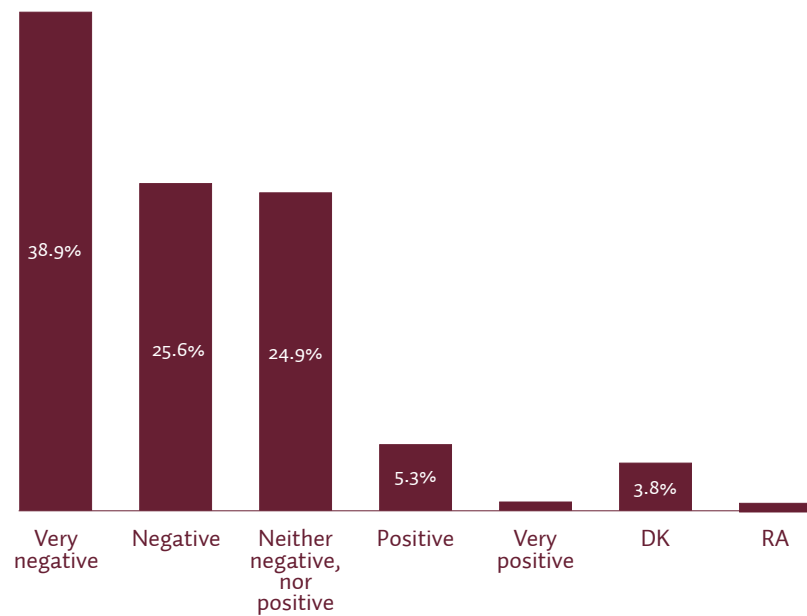
The qualitative data also offers the insight that attitudes and perceptions are formed subjectively. For instance, one informant had positive views about the population of Turkey but negative views about the government of Turkey, attributing this perspective to the teachings of her history teacher.

...Nothing has changed. My perceptions reaffirmed [before communication, she had a positive attitude about the people themselves] that the ordinary people of Turkey never want a war. My history teacher at school taught that their mothers send their sons to war just like us, no one wants [war].

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

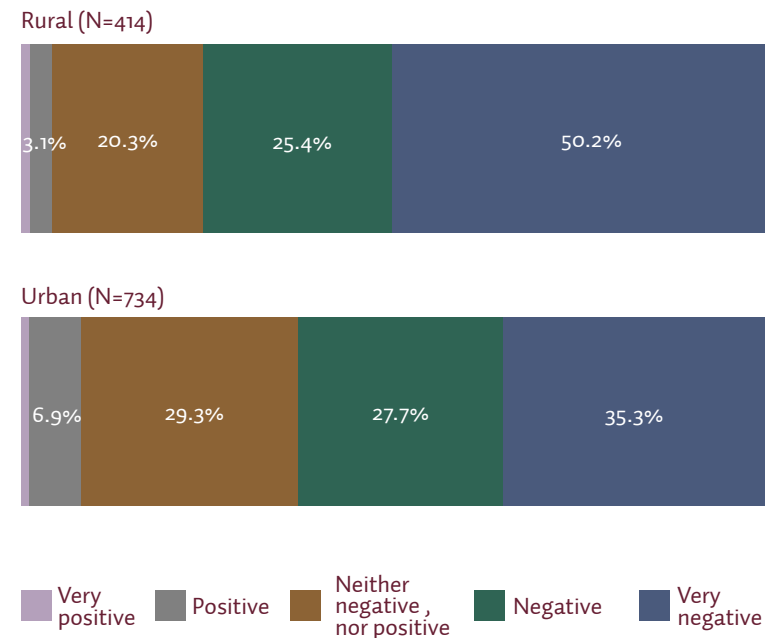
Continuing on the statistics, the survey shows that 38.9% of the public has a very negative attitude towards the Turkish (see the graph 14).

Graph 14. P10. Generally speaking, what kind of attitude would you say you have about Turks? (n = 1201)



The attitude towards the Turkish in this case differs by respondents' settlement type¹³ where 63% of those who live in urban areas have a negative or very negative attitude towards the Turkish, in contrast to 75.6% of those in rural areas (see the graph 15). Notably, rural settlements differ from urban settlements, including Yerevan, and there has been no statistically significant difference observed between Yerevan and other urban areas.

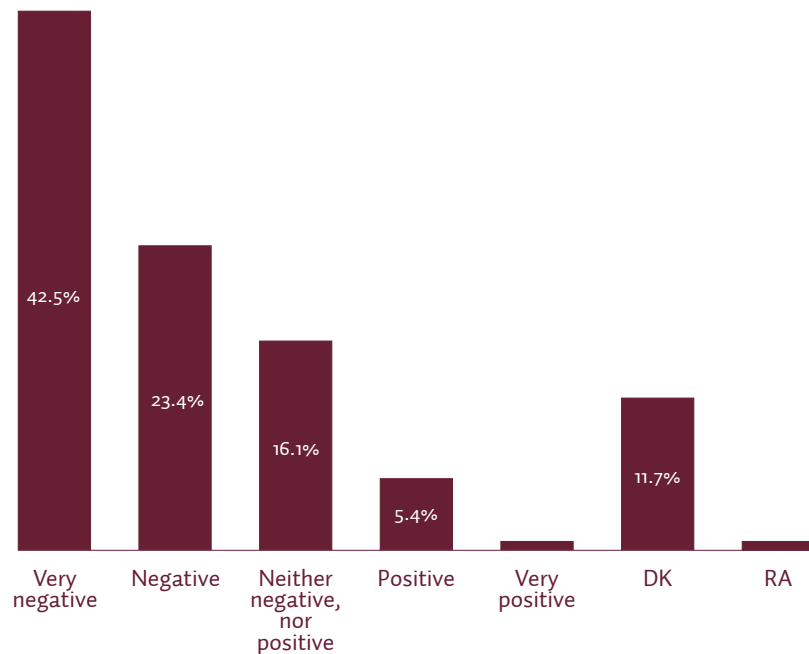
Graph 15. The attitude about Turks by the settlement type (n = 1148)



¹³ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 194884, p-value = 0.000002824, n=1148

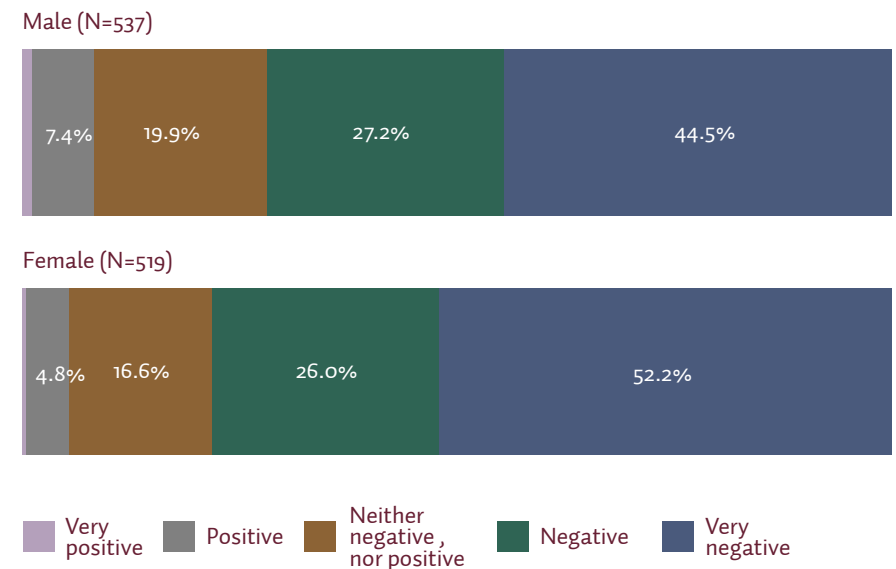
Importantly, according to the survey statistics, a significant group of people think that the Turks have a negative (23.4%) and very negative (42.5%) attitude towards Armenians (see Graph 16).

Graph 16. P11. What kind of attitude do you think the Turkish have about Armenians in general? (n = 1201)



The perceptions of the attitude of Turks towards Armenians appear to be highly correlated with Armenians' attitudes toward the Turks.¹⁴ This suggests that respondents who express a negative attitude towards the Turks are more likely to think that the Turks also hold a negative attitude towards Armenians. This is a major finding, since it comes to show that how people perceive the “other” and how they believe the “other” perceives them may be strongly mutually feeding. Additionally, the analysis shows that women (52.2%) tend to think that Turks have a very negative attitude towards Armenians more often than men (44.5%) (see the graph 17).¹⁵

Graph 17. Perceived attitude of the Turkish about Armenians by respondent's sex (n = 1056)

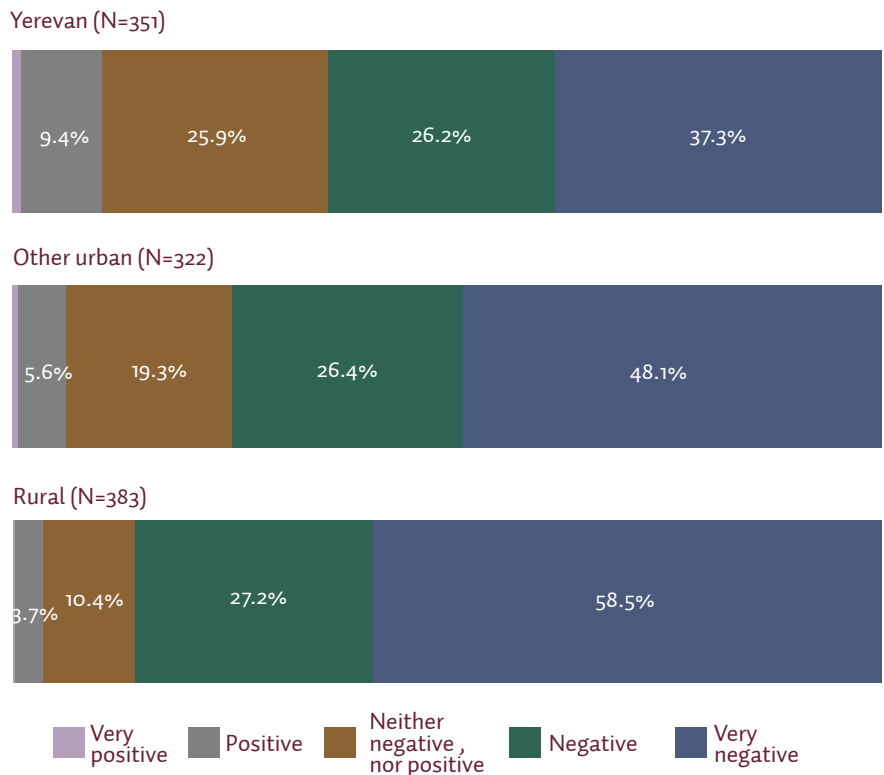


¹⁴ Kendall tau = 0.6088909, p-value = 0.000, n = 1056

¹⁵ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 126085, p-value = 0.003931

Moreover, respondents from rural areas think the Turks have a very negative attitude towards Armenians the most (58.5%), and respondents from Yerevan the least (37.3%)¹⁶ (see the graph 18).

Graph 18. Perceived attitude of the Turkish about Armenians by the settlement type (n = 1056)



¹⁶ Dunnett's test, other urban - rural settlements, P adj. = 0.0019149; other urban - Yerevan settlements, P adj. = 0.001277456; rural - Yerevan settlements, P adj. = 0.0000

Overall, the possible roots of this generally negative attitude of the public towards the population of Turkey can be understood when delving into the individual narratives. Here we notice that “the Turk” is used as an insulting adjective for Armenians to describe someone who is discerned with a negative connotation.

...I always get angry when people insult each other by saying “turk” No matter how angry I am, I will never call someone “turk”, because I don’t want to call an Armenian “turk”. It is better to say another bad word, why insult someone so badly?

Woman, 68 y/o, key-informant, business sector representative

...We don’t perceive them [Turks] as human beings, we look at them as “turks”, that’s ingrained in us... we treat everything related to Turkey badly, and the only difference between them and us is that we do not look at them as human beings.

Man, 22 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, interacted with a Turk

...When we were children, we were playing “Armenians and Turks”, and no one wanted to be a Turk... during the game we had to kill the Turks Why? We were children, it is because of the Genocide. My mother’s grandmother survived the Genocide, what she told, I can’t forget, I can’t close that page in my life and say “It’s okay, nothing happened”.

Woman, 45 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, no interaction with a Turk

Perceptions about the population of Turkey are often found to be intertwined with perceptions about Azerbaijanis. Informants perhaps view the actions carried out by the governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey as the same (the 2020 NK war and the Sumgait pogroms are at times being mentioned in this context). Importantly, this resemblance is pointed out by informants without any hint from the moderators (CRRRC-Armenia tried to explore the attitudes about the Kurdish living in Turkey as well, however no pattern of common attitude towards them was observed).

...There are no differences between Azerbaijanis and Turks, we can say that they are the same.

Woman, 36 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, no interaction with a Turk

This shows that there is general ambiguity observed between the two references of what defines “Turks”. Confusion in mental image association makes it harder to differentiate political challenges between the two states. This potentially shapes the level of mistrust towards the population of Turkey, as a result of which people appear to be unwilling to live in the neighbourhood of the Turkish, explaining this with an environment of fear and mistrust.

...These days [referring to post-war period after 2023 events] they [referring to Turks and Azerbaijani] are even more negative. In fact, I have no desire to have any contact with them...

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Shirak, interacted with a Turk

...When thinking about them [Turks], the first image that comes to mind is caution. It's clear, you just need to be careful...

Man, 49 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

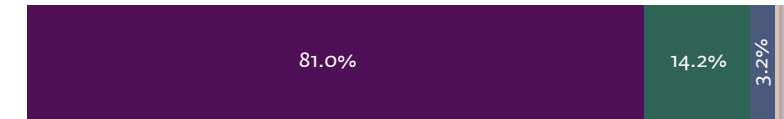
...I don't see any possibility for neighbourly relations between these two nations. Seeing the current events in Tavush, no. Regarding concerns about normalisation of relations, I always have that fear, living with them always means living in fear because they are capable of doing something bad.

Woman, 36 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, no interaction with a Turk

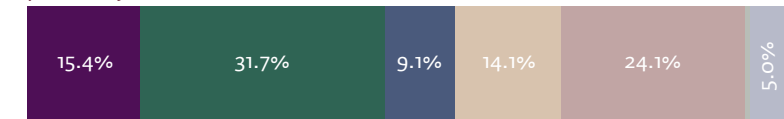
As the graph below shows, a big share of respondents (47.1%) agreed that Armenians must find a way of living peacefully with the population of Turkey, however, a lesser number of people are willing to have Turkish friends. Moreover, a lower tolerance has been observed towards possibilities of marriage between an Armenian and a Turk (see the graph 19).

Graph 19. P12. Now I will read out a few statements. For each, please, tell me to what extent it matches with your opinion. (n = 1201)

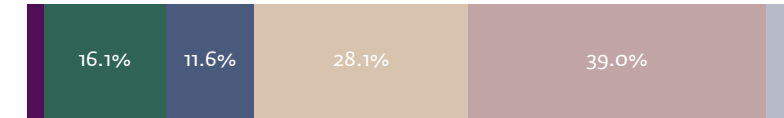
I am proud of being Armenian.



Turks are our neighbours, therefore we must find a way of living peacefully with them.



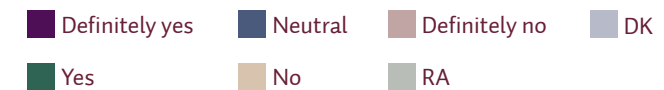
I could have a Turkish as a friend.



My son could marry a Turkish woman.



My daughter could marry a Turkish man.



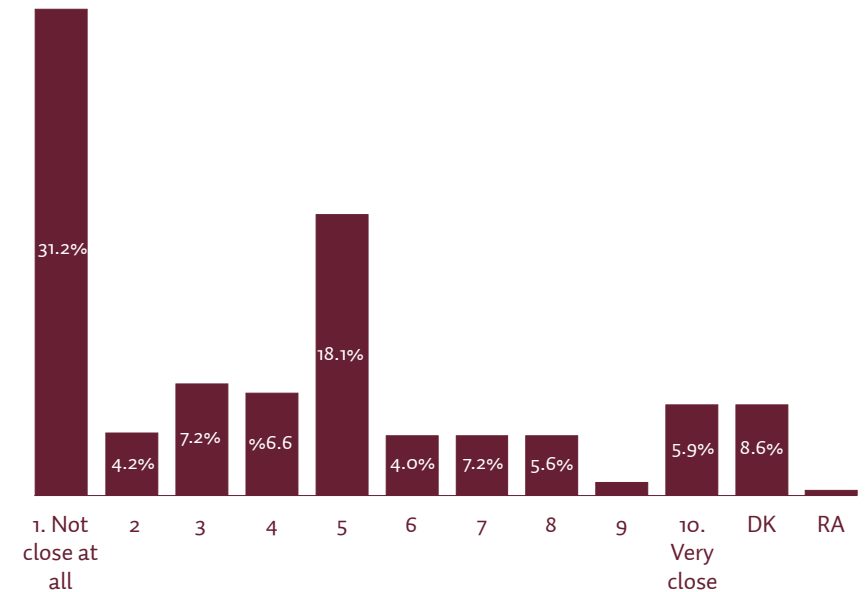
As different identity theories suggest,¹⁷ people usually tend to bond in such connections with people alike, these results might imply the tendency of othering, which also includes dismissing any similarities between the two societies.

...Even if there are similarities, I don't want to, I won't be able to remember those... Well, in any case, there is some similarity in music... no matter how much we don't want to [be similar to them].

Woman, 34 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Armavir, no interaction with a Turk

This is also observed in the quantitative data, where the public tends to think Armenian and Turkish cultures are not close at all (31.2%). As we move towards the other end of the scale of 1-10 (see the graph 20), we can observe a relative gradual drop in percentages from “not close at all” to the middle of the scale (value “5”, 18.1%) and then further on to “very close” (5.9%). Notably, the latter answer appears less frequently than the “don't know” answer (8.6%). Although the values ranging between 2-4 and 6-9 are less popular, upon conditionally splitting the scale into two, the cumulative percentage of answers 1-5 is 67.3%, while the answers 6-10 constitute 23.3% of the responses. This hints that there is a clear majority leaning towards the perception that the two cultures are not close. The mean and median values (4.01 and 4 respectively, n=729) seem to prove that as well.

Graph 20. N3. How close do you think Turkish and Armenian cultures are? (n = 801)



This tendency may also be interpreted as the result of “othering” for the sake of preserving one’s own culture and identity. The qualitative study shows that the public is likely triggered by, what they imply, the non-recognition of those cultural elements that people consider to be at least partially of Armenian origin. Occasions of attribution of such elements (e.g., food and cuisine) to Turkish culture may be what pushes the cultures away from one another in people’s minds.

...They don't have a culture... They make Tolma the national dish of Turkey... They wanted to make lavash as the national dish of Turkey... Even now they want to make duduk Turkish, but duduk is made from apricot wood, they don't know what an apricot wood is.

Man, 58 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

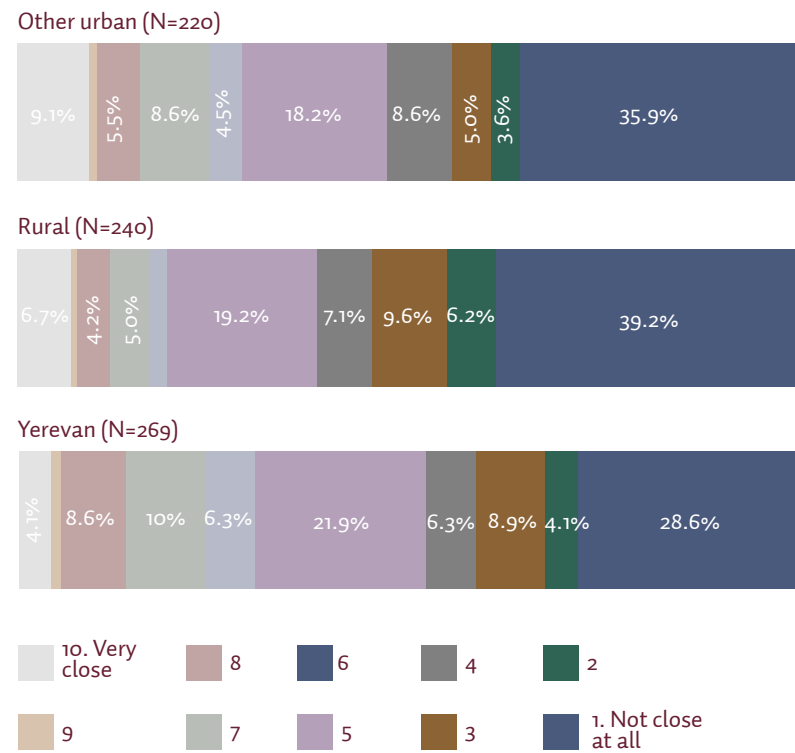
...They are trying to attribute various ethnic things typical to us to them, i.e. tolma, lavash, basturma...

Woman, 19 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, no interaction with a Turk

¹⁷ See for example; Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1985) The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour. In: Worchel, S. and Austin, W.G., Eds., Psychology of Intergroup Relations, 2nd Edition, Nelson Hall, Chicago // R. Jenkins (2014), “Social Identity”. 4th ed. London: Routledge.

Notably, the quantitative data reveals this tendency of “othering” to be more apparent in rural areas, where cultural boundaries are more sensitive and central in community life. The answers specifically differ between residents of Yerevan and rural areas¹⁸ (see the graph 21).

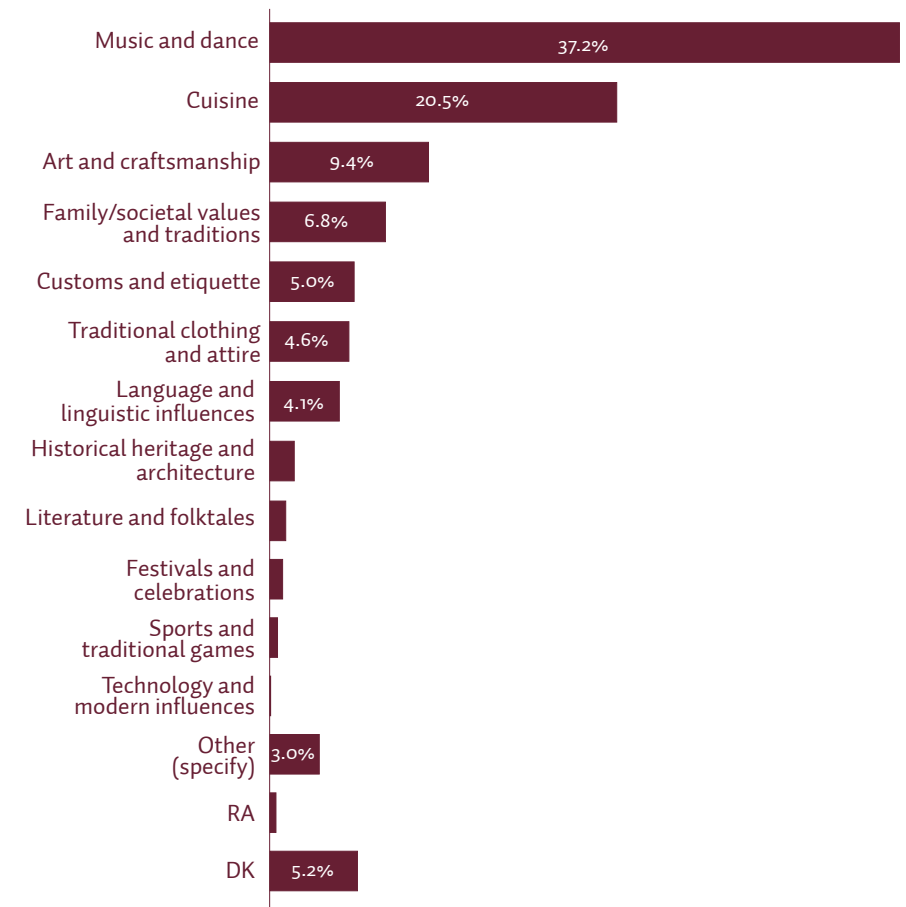
Graph 21. Perceived level of closeness of Turkish and Armenian cultures by the settlement type (n = 729)



¹⁸ Dunnett's test, rural area - Yerevan, P adj. = 0.007274901, n = 729

It is still worth having a closer look into the answers of those who think that the cultures are somewhat or very close (i.e., respondents who mentioned answers 3-10). Music and dance are the most mentioned spheres of similarities, followed by cuisine and arts (see the graph 22).

Graph 22. N4. In which cultural spheres do you think there are similarities between the countries? (multiple choice, answers were not read out to the respondent, n = 776)¹⁹



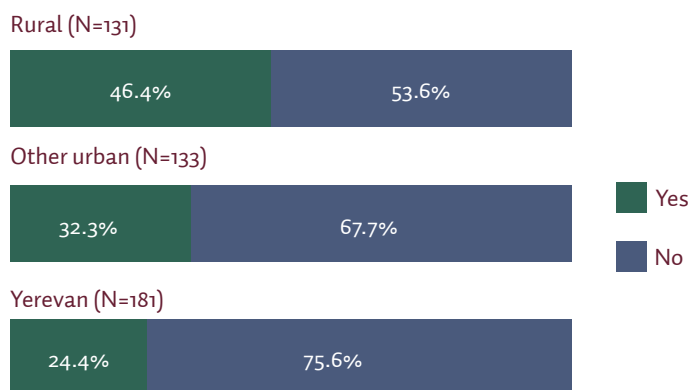
¹⁹ All presented options besides the “Sports and traditional games” and “Technology and modern influences” are statistically significant

Notably, data shows that the perceived cultural similarities may be associated with respondents' age. Older people tend to mention Armenian and Turkish cultures intercrossing in music and dance more frequently²⁰ (see table 7), while those younger tend to mention Armenian and Turkish cultures intercrossing in cuisine more.²¹ Additionally, cuisine comes across more among the residents of Yerevan, compared to other settlement types²² (see the graph 23).

Table 7. Cuisine as a culturally similar sphere between the countries by age (n=445)

	Mentioned cuisine	Did not mention cuisine
18-24 (n= 45)	51.1%	48.9%
25-34 (n= 75)	42.7%	57.3%
35-44 (n= 94)	35.1%	64.9%
45-54 (n= 81)	29.6%	70.4%
55-64 (n=71)	29.6%	70.4%
65+ (n= 79)	29.1%	70.9%

Graph 23. Cuisine as a similar sphere of culture by settlement type (n = 445)



²⁰ Simple logistic regression, coefficient associated with age = 0.018200, p-value = 0.00424, n = 445

²¹ Simple logistic regression, coefficient associated with age = -0.012519, p-value = 0.0455, n = 445

²² Chi square test, X²= 16.945, p-value = 0.0002091, n = 445

In this context, appearance, traditions, costumes, music, cuisine, customs, manner of speech, and inclination to the traditions come up more frequently in the qualitative study.

...We sometimes confuse the costumes, thinking that they are our traditional costumes, but they turn to be Turkish... or the table cloths that we use have Turkish patterns when we think the patterns are Armenian... Anyways, it is mixed...

Woman, 34 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Armavir, no interaction with a Turk

...Also, I remember from Erasmus, they [the Turkish] were talking about traditionalism, it felt very similar to us. We said that it is not accepted in our society for women to go out after 6-7 PM, they said that it is the same in Turkey. It is not accepted to get a tattoo in Turkey, or a piercing. Perhaps I can say that traditionalism can be a similarity between us.

Woman, 23 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Lori, interacted with a Turk

...There may be similarities in appearance, the sounds in music we use, they also use. The manner and tone of speech, for example loud speaking suits both their and our culture. Both of us are very conservative. Both of us are very rooted in religion, it has a very big influence on both of us.

Woman, 23 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...We are similar in appearance and behaviour, in culture. When I was there the first time and saw pomegranates everywhere I was surprised. I thought that the pomegranate is the symbol of Armenia, but the pomegranate is their symbol. And I also had the impression that I am at home. I have travelled to many other countries, but I didn't feel like home [in other countries].

Woman, 44 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

In addition to these insights, the qualitative study identifies three primary grounds of differences outlined by the informants.

First, the individual and perceivably national characteristics, according to which the population of Turkey is described as more violent and aggressive, in contrast to Armenians. This interestingly contradicts the revealed similarities, as some informants believe that these characteristics are similar, while others mention that those are our main differences. The qualitative study shows that this two-sided finding mainly arises from the perception of the population of Armenia being the "victim" and the population of Turkey being the "enemy". Those having no experience of interaction or mainly consuming information about the population

of Turkey from the history textbooks tend to differentiate between individual and national characteristics more than the others.

...They are very bloodhearted compared to us... we don't think the same way ... They are always bad and aggressive, always living in war, when we, Armenians, always tend to have a settled and peaceful life.

Woman, 36 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, no interaction with a Turk

...By only looking at the face of any Azerbaijani or Turk, I know that there is hatred in their face. If you look closely at their eyes, there is a lot of difference between our eyes and theirs.

Man, 56 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Shirak, interacted with a Turk

The second ground from differences appears to be religion. Although both societies are reported to be strongly connected to their religions, their faith belongs to different ones. In this context, the differences in habits constructed through their religious narratives is central. The qualitative data shows that religious differences often contain rather mild tones of superiority.

...They are Muslims, we are Christians. Our nation is creating, they are only ploughing and sowing.

Man, 39 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Ararat, interacted with a Turk

...They are Muslim. For them, a ten-year-old is considered mature, a thirteen-year-old is considered mature for marriage... But we are not like that, even our sixteen[-year-old], even eighteen-year-old girl is considered a child for their parents, they are not ready to marry. We don't have that custom.

Woman, 45 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, no interaction with a Turk

The third, yet comparably less mentioned ground of difference is the strength of the state and the government regime. Some informants mention that Turkey is a stronger state than Armenia and has its strategy of development, has more opportunities and power in global platforms than Armenia.

...A Turk's psychology is that s/he does what s/he wants, knowing that the state stands behind their back.

Man, 58 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

Some refer to the authoritarian regime as a form of stronger and easier control over ordinary citizens in Turkey.

...Ordinary people are governed by their policies, and their national politics is authoritarian. People do not need to be given so much freedom, the more uneducated they are, the easier they are to be led.

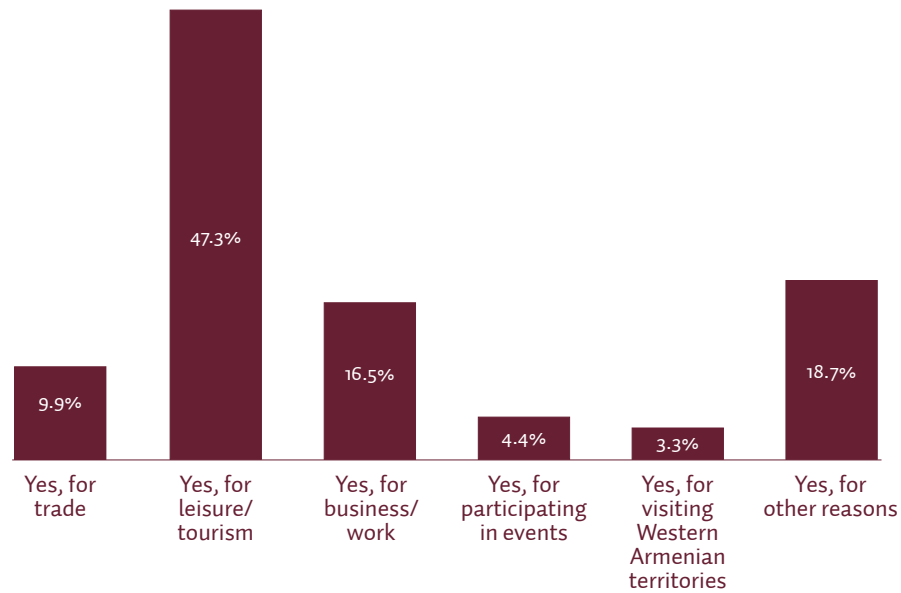
Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

Building on these findings of the initial perceptions about the population of Turkey, the next chapter delves into personal interactions and their possible influence on perceptions and attitudes, highlighting the nuanced and often transformative nature of such encounters.

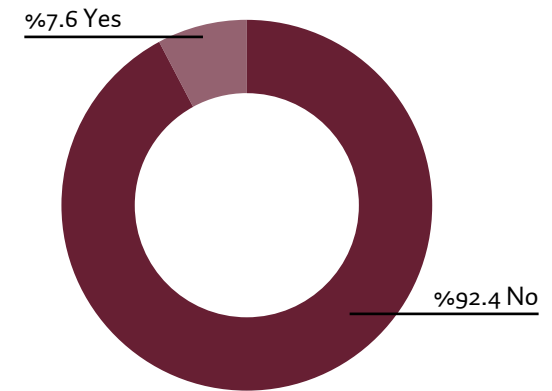
1.2.3. Existing Practices & Experiences

According to survey statistics, 19.5% of the people interacted with the population of Turkey (see the graph 26), and 7.6% of respondents had visited Turkey (see the graph 25) out of which (n = 91) most were there for leisure/tourism (see the graph 24).

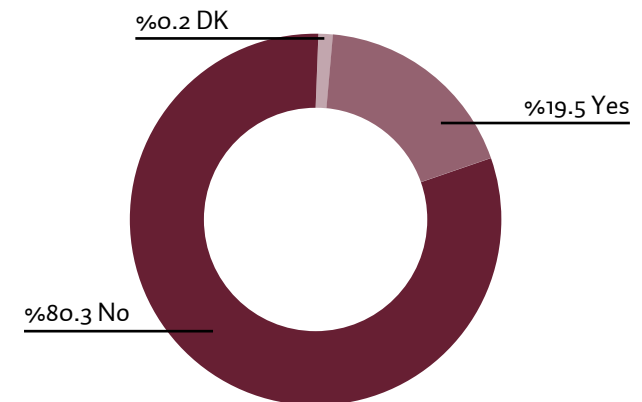
Graph 24. What was the purpose of the visit (n=91)



Graph 25. P7. Have you ever visited Turkey? (n = 1201)



Graph 26. P8. Have you ever interacted with a Turkish? (n = 1201)



The data shows that those who visited Turkey tend to approve of opening the borders (58.5% completely or rather approve) more than those who have not visited (34.3% completely or rather approve).²³ Table 8 showcases some further differences in positioning towards border opening, depending on the experience of visiting Turkey.

Table 8. Perceptions about influence of border opening by the experience of visiting Turkey

	Those who visited Turkey	Those who have not visited Turkey
Influence on our country's security ²⁴	18.7% very or somewhat positive (n=64)	10.4% very or somewhat positive (n=653)
Influence on our country's role in the region ²⁵	45.1% very or somewhat positive (n=62)	25.5 % very or somewhat positive (n=650)
Influence on normalisation of relations between countries ²⁶	50.8% very or somewhat positive (n=61)	36.8 % very or somewhat positive (n=637)

²³ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 19732, p-value = 0.001844, n = 756

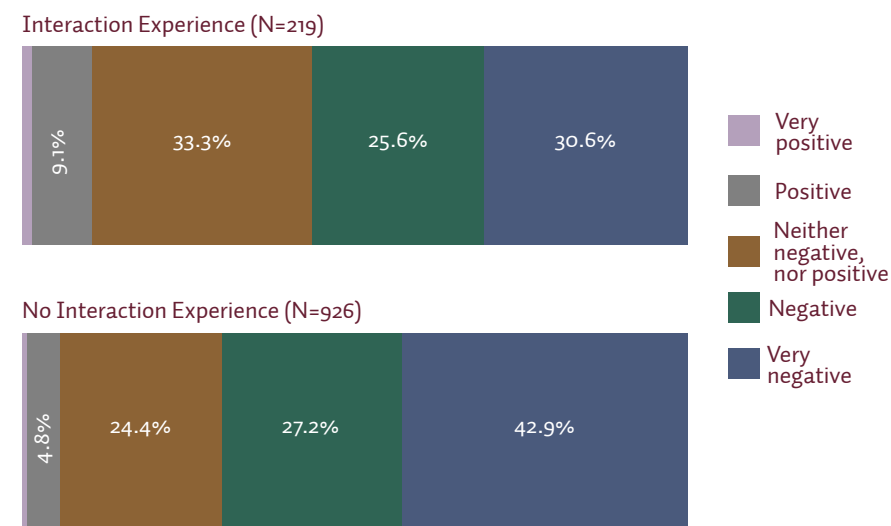
²⁴ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 17701, p-value = 0.02901, n = 717

²⁵ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 15921, p-value = 0.004397, n = 712

²⁶ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 15415, p-value = 0.005952, n=698

The experience of interaction with the Turks shows significant correlation with the attitudes the public has towards the Turks; those who ever interacted with the Turks are likely to express a positive attitude towards them (see the graph 27).²⁷

Graph 27. The attitude towards Turkish by the interaction experience (n = 1145)



²⁷ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 118921, p-value = 0.00002592, n = 1145

Zooming in on the nuances of the interaction experience, the qualitative data provides valuable insights into the initial stereotypes about the population of Turkey and the transformation thereof after the interaction. The initial feelings and expectations before the interaction are often reported to be characterised by the fear of being harmed, and the fear of potential conflict and confrontation. Interestingly, these kinds of expectations are mostly pointed out by the younger people, who mostly first get acquainted with the Turks through different educational programs.

...At the beginning we were afraid... both girls and boys from Armenia. We were afraid, so we were locking the doors to sleep.

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...They have a very diplomatic approach; they don't try to provoke a conflict when you are abroad and they know that you are Armenian... When I was supposed to go to Turkey at the age of 18, all my friends warned me to be careful as they may steal my passport and kidnap me. But when I arrived in Turkey, I felt how different our approach to Turks is. I communicated with educated people, I didn't have any conversation with someone on the street, and they had better communication skills.

Woman, 23 y/o, bordering settlement, Aragatsotn, interacted with a Turk

...In interactions they are very open and free, they will take you out for dinner or drinks instantly, will approach you as if you are not a stranger and address you as "my daughter".

Woman, 28 y/o, key-informant, art sector, interacted with a Turk

Middle- and older-aged informants also indicate the feeling of caution and distrust at their first meeting with the Turkish. Notably, their experience varies in the spheres of trade and tourism.

...I felt that they wanted to hug [my child], my boy has bright eyes, red hair, they hadn't seen this kind of child before. So, they couldn't resist and started playing with my child. I was with my family, it was an unfamiliar environment, I had that feeling of caution in me, but I showed respect, and he [the Turkish owner of the restaurant] responded with the same.

Man, 49 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

As the narratives showcase, some informants were not willing to be proactive in interaction with Turks. In most cases the first approach was made by the Turks.

Notably, even though quantitative data shows that the experience of interaction with Turks potentially accounts for positive attitudes towards them (significant difference of 4.3%, see graph 27), the qualitative data somewhat blurs the picture. Although participants report being surprised by differences between their expectations and the reality, they still mention not changing their initial thoughts about people from Turkey being dangerous and not trustworthy. However, such narratives are rather guided by affective factors, for example, mentioning the feeling of "bad energy" during interactions.

...I thought they would treat us worse, as an Armenian, but my expectations were not justified, because even the driver spoke very positively to us... However, no matter how much I experience it in Europe or anywhere else, a Turk will never like Armenians, therefore we must not like them either, that animosity between us should not disappear.

Man, 29 y/o, bordering settlement, Vayots Dzor, interacted with a Turk

...No matter how many times I've been there and done business, over the years, they've always treated me well... but for me, a Turk remains a Turk, that barrier is always there. I don't know, it's in genetics. In Turkey I don't feel free, although I can tell you that it is safe, I don't feel any danger. You can't forget history so easily.

Woman, 68 y/o, key-informant, business sector representative

Nevertheless, improvements in perceptions about the population of Turkey after direct interaction are also observed.

...When we started communicating with each other... the apprehensions passed away. Some of them even were in my Facebook friends...

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...They [Turks] greeted me normally, we communicated the whole time, then we played an Armenian song, they danced to that song. And for a moment I thought; why was I thinking [bad about them]? What is the fault of these people?

Woman, 34 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Armavir, no interaction with a Turk

...Their attitude towards us was very good, we did not experience anything bad from them. I went to Turkey with the thought that they might do us some harm, on the contrary, that wasn't the case. Even if it was in hotels, or any restaurants, they would serve us first. They showed us a warm attitude, they knew that we are Armenians, but the staff of that restaurant smiled at us and treated us well.

Man, 22 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, interacted with a Turk

It is worth noting that from across all in-depth interviews, none represented a case where the informant had had a very negative attitude before the interaction which significantly changed after the contact. Towards that end, if one were to categorise the responses from this perspective, four groups of informants would become apparent: (1) informants with no experience of interaction and who hold a negative attitude, (2) informants with an experience of interaction who commit to the positive sides of the population of Turkey but maintain a negative attitude even after the interaction, (3) informants with no experience of interaction who hold neutral or at least no strongly negative attitude and (4) informants who were already relatively tolerant to some extent before the interaction and mention positive changes in their perceptions about following the interaction.

It is within the framework of the latter group of people that cooperation and openness are more vividly expressed. Accounting for the limitations that a potential retrospective choice-supportive bias²⁸ could bring into play, this can hint that perhaps, the interaction experience alone might not be able to fully explain the change in attitudes. Factors, such as the sources of initial perceptions (books, media, school, relatives, and so on) may also play a role in shaping those.

... [My grandfather] used to say that they are people like us, that wars and politics destroyed everything, but I heard opinions that they were good. I [also] always remember what my grandmother said and I think that maybe everything would have been different if we didn't have such political and territorial issues, then we would have had very good relations.

Woman, 23 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Lori, interacted with a Turk

²⁸ The tendency to retroactively ascribe positive attributes to the previous positioning based on the current positioning (e.g., people who currently hold a positive attitude might characterise their previous attitude as more tolerant than it actually had been).

...In Armenia, I feel that in schools the topic of hatred [towards Turks] is touched upon a lot, people just sprinkle you with that information without leaving you to think of another option, that maybe one day I will have a contact with a Turk and that person will be completely different than what we imagined.

Woman, 23 y/o, bordering settlement, Aragatsotn, interacted with a Turk

Alongside this, opinions of the Armenian public regarding the importance of visiting Turkey and communicating with the population of Turkey are rather mixed. In-depth interviews often suggest that people's reluctance in coming to common grounds may largely be driven by fears and concerns.

The fears linked to possible communication with the population of Turkey relate mostly to culture, customs, mindset, or religion. As far as there is a perception of the population of Turkey as being threatening to Armenians, human to human relations seem to be viewed as rather insecure.

...Of course, it's not important [to communicate with them], a Turk can never accept us, and we can't have good neighbourly relations, of course not. Seeing this situation, I can't imagine us creating neighbourly or friendly ties. I can't imagine creating friendly relations with Turks, who are always associated with conflict, bloodshed, murder.

Woman, 36 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, no interaction with a Turk

Additionally, the existence of common stereotypes in society and the control it has over the attitudes of people, may also be an obstacle towards personal connections with the population of Turkey, holding young people back by fear of being labelled and accused as traitors.

...At the end they [Turks] said let's take a picture with the flags, at one point I thought; "Can you imagine my picture on the Internet with the Turkish flag, no matter how tolerant I am, the society will not be able to accept this". They said let's take a picture, we won't post it anywhere, it's not a problem for us... I mentioned that it's a problem for me, however we took a picture together, I with our flag, they with theirs.

Woman, 23 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Lori, interacted with a Turk

... [Turks I met during the program] were even in my Facebook friends... but I deleted a couple of them, there was no contact with them anyways. They were a little too Turkish. But they weren't that bad.

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

The occasions of people expressing that this interaction can create trust and mutual understanding are very rare. That said, some informants do point to the need for more communication between the societies.

...We need to communicate so we can come to an agreement, so we can stop demonising each other. Just like when we say “Turk” and people imagine enemies, I saw how similar we are, I saw how good and kind-hearted people can be, how we can live peacefully together. I think it’s impossible without personal communication; if you don’t go for that, you don’t see the people there, you can’t assume we can live peacefully together. Through communication, we’ll understand that we are all humans, that we want the same things, and those stereotypes we have will disappear.

Woman, 44 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...Of course, it is important [to interact with Turks]. It is important to interact with any person, there are stereotyped dogmatic thoughts among people that will change only when they have communicated with specific people and it does not only apply to Turks. If we have some idea of a nation, it comes from someone’s personal experience or internationalised stereotypes that are merely passed from person to person and many dogmas can be destroyed by human contact and your personal experience.

Woman, 23 y/o, bordering settlement, Aragatsotn, interacted with a Turk

Overall, initial fears and negative expectations persist for many, even after interaction. The data suggests that while direct contact may positively influence attitudes, deeply ingrained stereotypes and initial perceptions remain significant. This complexity underscores the need for more comprehensive efforts to foster mutual understanding and trust between the two societies which can be crucial for the normalisation process.

1.2.4. Areas of Potential Cooperation

The normalisation process has thus far been known to be slow and ineffective. One of the remarkable occasions in Armenia’s history has been the “football diplomacy” trial in 2008-2009 aimed for the cooperative settlement of the disagreements between Armenia and Turkey.²⁹ The President of Armenia then expressed willingness to launch a joint study by Armenian and Turkish historians to investigate the issue of ethnic cleansing of Armenians in 1915.³⁰ However, this received a backlash from the public and some politicians, one of the former presidents mentioned;- “It questioned our national conviction, and the established fact of the recognition of the Genocide by the parliaments of many countries.”³¹ The normalisation attempts were nevertheless frozen after these events until 2021 and only then resumed in 2022 and 2023.

The qualitative study showcases that many Armenians may be approving of the normalisation of relations, however, any discussions about border opening or any sphere-level cooperation are often being questioned unless the “Armenian issue” is addressed.

...I think the discussions are pointless, because now I don’t know why to talk about economic relations, etc. We have other problems with Turkey before we reach that stage. But it seems like we have decided to put the story aside... I think it will not happen this way, it is not possible to wake up one day realising that the roads are open, we already have excellent relations with the Turks, the Turks are already coming here, we are going there... It seems a little unreal at the moment. I think they will never recognise the Genocide, therefore, until they accept it... we cannot just simply say “let’s forget everything, it’s over, let’s start everything from scratch”.

Man, 37 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...From a historical perspective, we’ve always known the Turkish demand in Armenian-Turkish relations is to forget the Armenian Question, the Genocide, and all this. Should we leave all this behind and try to be good neighbours? I see nothing positive in this. Normalisation won’t happen, blood doesn’t turn to water, and they won’t tolerate us.

Man, 29 y/o, bordering settlement, Vayots Dzor, interacted with a Turk

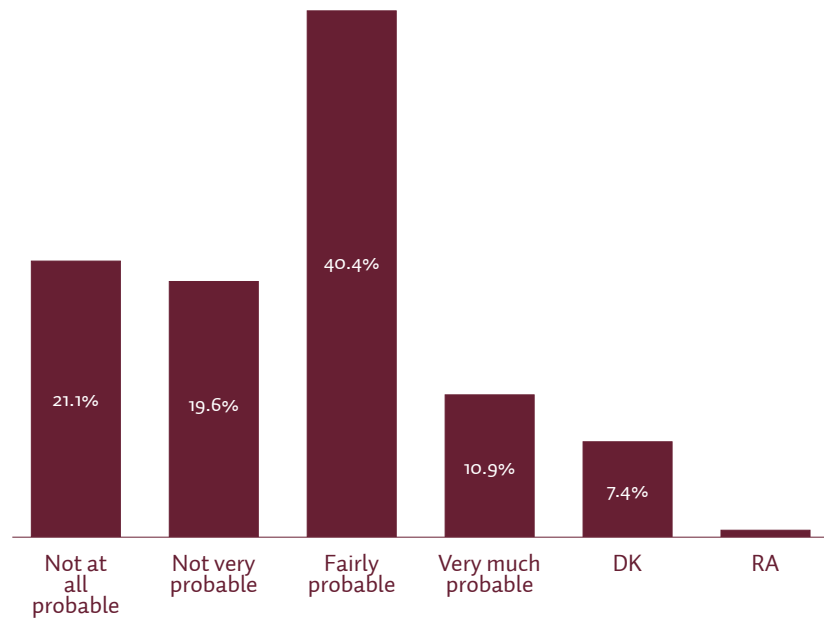
²⁹ See: <https://www.kisa.link/kDMJB>

³⁰ On 24 June 2008, Sarkisian was quoted as saying, “We are not against the creation of such a commission, but only if the border between our countries is opened”. Emil Danielyan, “Sarkisian signals support for Turkish genocide proposal”, Armenia Liberty, 26 June 2008.

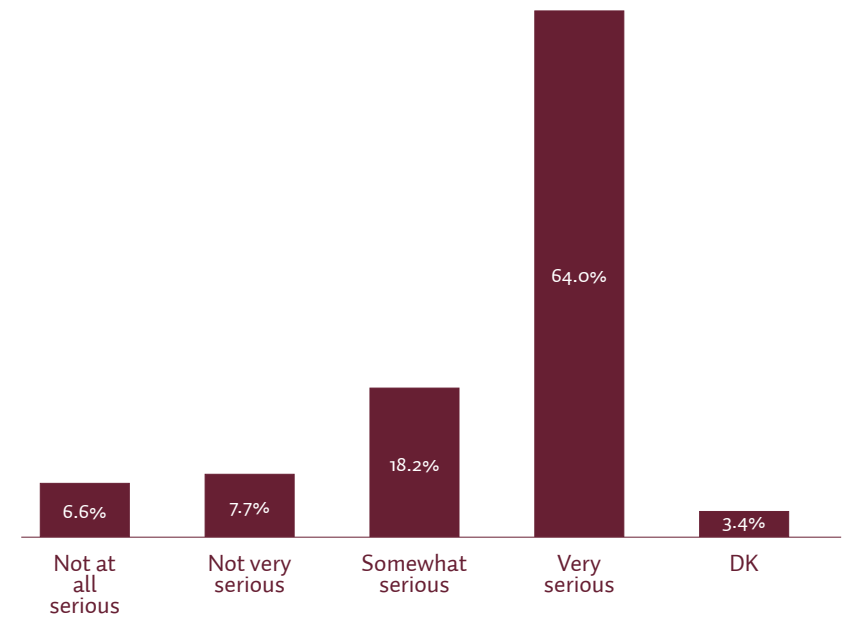
³¹ See: <https://hetq.am/hy/article/40326>

As the survey shows, 51.3% of the population considers it very or fairly probable that Armenia-Turkey relations will be normalised in the next 5 years through dialogue and communication (see the graph 28), however, quite a big share believes the problems between Armenia and Turkey are very serious (see the graph 29).

Graph 28. N1. Overall, how would you rate the probability of Armenia-Turkey relations being normalised through dialogue and communication in the upcoming 5 years? (n = 801)

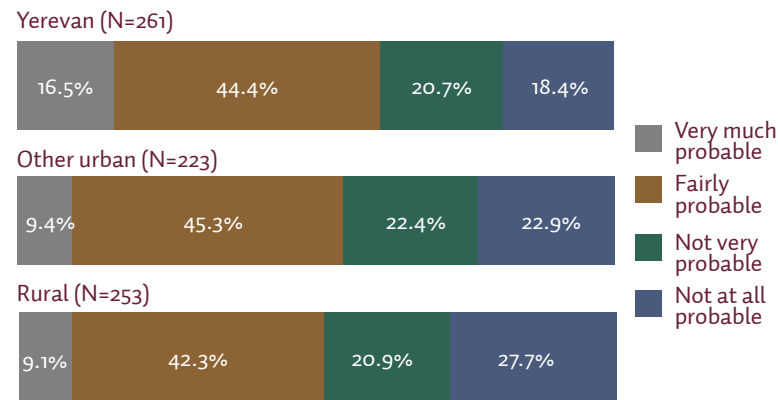


Graph 29. N2. How serious do you think the problems between Turkey and Armenia are? (n = 801)

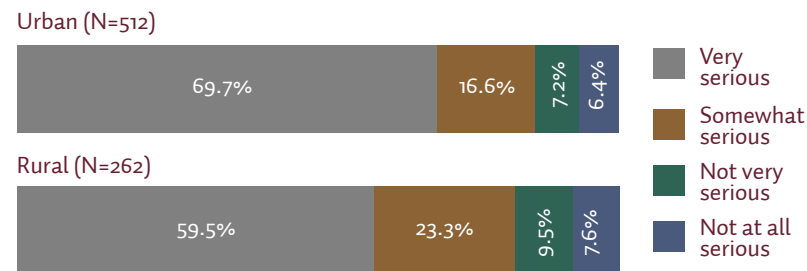


Notably, people from specifically Yerevan (60.9% very or fairly probable) tend to believe that Armenia-Turkey relations can be normalised through dialogue and communication in the upcoming 5 years more so than people from rural areas (51.4% very or fairly probable)³² (see the graph 30). And, interestingly, people from urban areas tend to believe the problems between Armenia and Turkey are very serious more (69.7%) than people from rural areas (59.5%)³³ (see the graph 31).

Graph 30. Perceived probability of Armenia-Turkey relations being normalised through dialogue and communication in the upcoming 5 years by the settlement type (n = 737)



Graph 31. Perceived seriousness level of the problems between Turkey and Armenia by the settlement type (n = 774)



³² Dunnett's test, P adj. = 0.008068748, n = 737

³³ Wilcoxon rank sum test, p-value = 0.007731, n = 774

These perceptions about the future of normalisation may also be interconnected with the respondent's sex and age. Accordingly, women tend to think that the problems between Armenia and Turkey are very serious (70.7%), more than men (62.6%)³⁴ (see the graph 32); the same tendency is observed in the perceptions of younger people compared to older people³⁵ (see table 9).

Graph 32. Perceived seriousness of the problems between Turkey and Armenia by respondent's sex (n = 774)

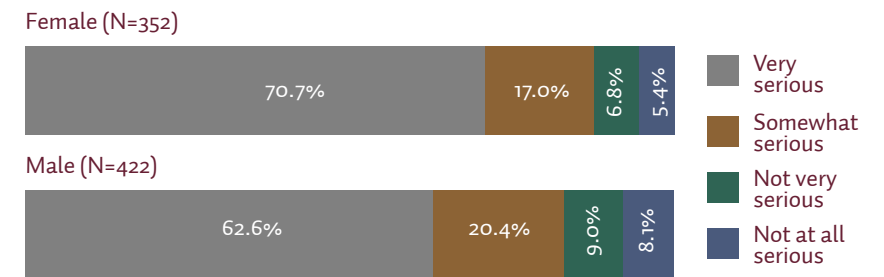


Table 9. Perceived seriousness of the problems between Turkey and Armenia by age (n=774)

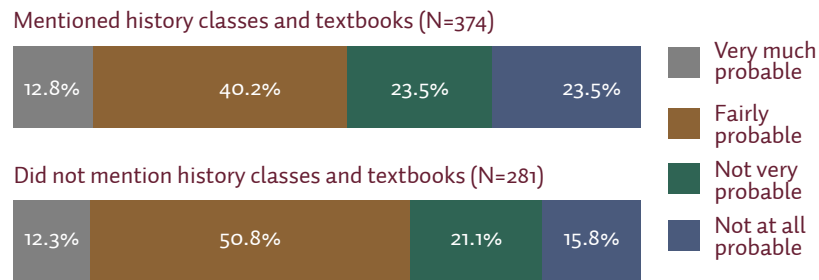
	Not at all serious	Nor very serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious
18-24 (n= 72)	1.4%	6.9%	16.7%	75%
25-34 (n= 141)	5.7%	2.8%	19.1%	72.3%
35-44 (n= 161)	4.3%	6.2%	22.4%	67%
45-54 (n= 125)	5.6%	8.8%	16%	69.6%
55-64 (n= 135)	8.9%	11.9%	19.2%	60%
65+ (n= 140)	12.8%	11.4%	17.9%	57.9%

³⁴ Wilcoxon rank sum test, p-value = 0.01314, n = 774

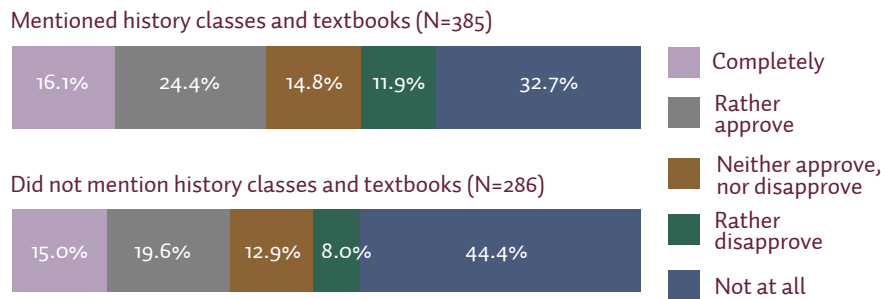
³⁵ Spearman's rank correlation rho = -0.1489946, p-value = 0.0000, n = 774

It can be also observed that the perceptions of the seriousness of problems between Armenia and Turkey, and the potential of peaceful normalisation might be intertwined with the means of information gained about Turkey and the population of Turkey. Those who mention history classes and textbooks in school as their main sources of information tend to deem normalisation between Armenia and Turkey very or fairly probable more frequently³⁶ (see the graph 33), moreover, they tend to also show more approval of opening the border³⁷ (see the graph 34).

Graph 33. Perceived probability of normalisation in 5 years by becoming informed about Turkey and Turks through history classes and textbooks (n=655)



Graph 34. The level of approval of the border opening between Armenia and Turkey by becoming informed about Turkey and Turks through history classes and textbooks (n=671)

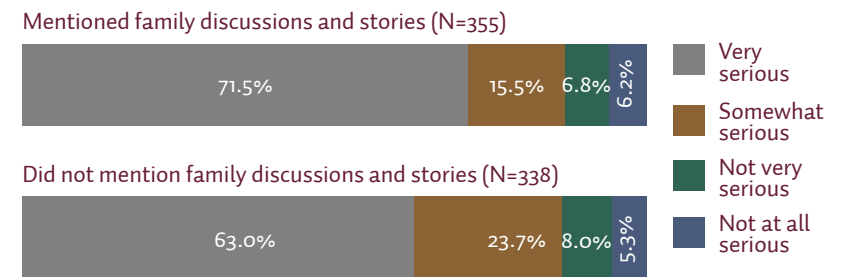


³⁶ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 47413, p-value = 0.02252, n=655

³⁷ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 55149, p-value = 0.01351, n=671

On the other hand, those who mentioned family discussions and stories as means of information more frequently perceived problems between Turkey and Armenia as very serious (see the graph 35).³⁸

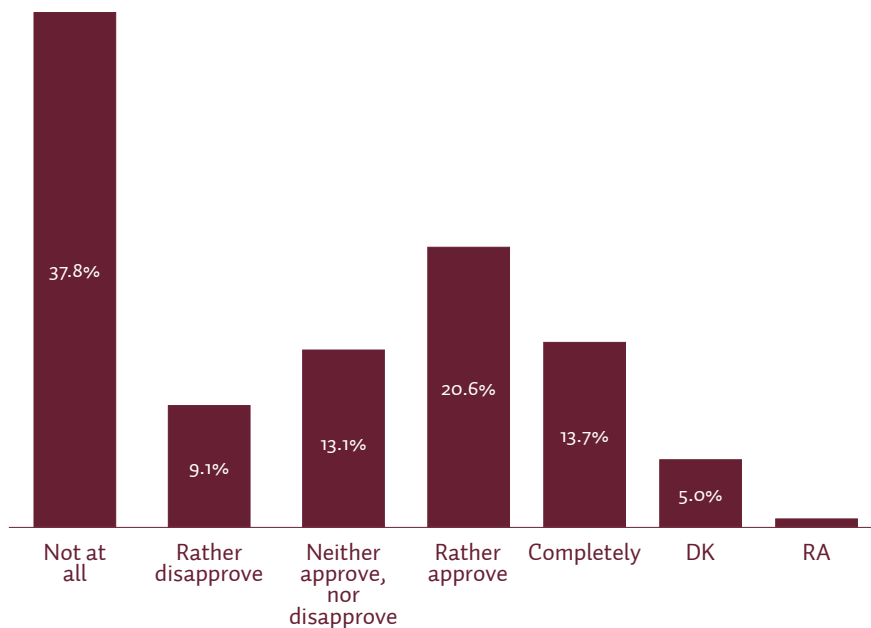
Graph 35. Perceived seriousness of problems between Armenia and Turkey by becoming informed about Turkey and Turks through family discussions and stories (n=693)



³⁸ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 55560, p-value = 0.04211, n = 693

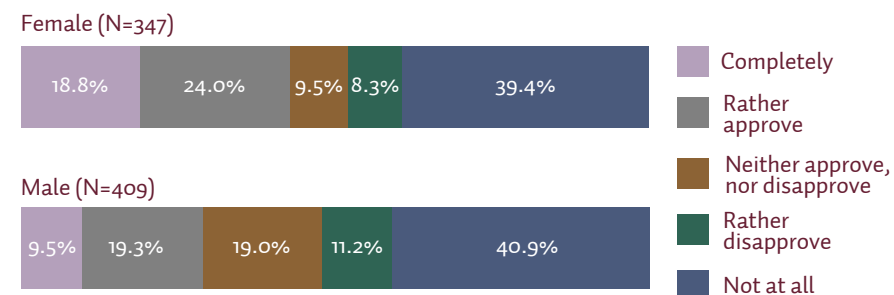
A noteworthy tendency of strong association and recognition of the normalisation process with the border opening has been observed. The quantitative analysis shows that the perceptions about border opening are a bit obscure as one third of the public (37.8%) does not approve of the border opening at all, while 34.3% of it somewhat or fully approve (see the graph 36).

Graph 36. N5. To what extent do you approve of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey? (n = 801)



Additionally, men, residents of Yerevan, elders, and those with experience of interaction with Turks seem to be approving of border opening more than respectively women³⁹ (see the graph 37), rural citizens⁴⁰, young people⁴¹ (see the graph 38), and those with no experience of interaction (see the graph 39).⁴²

Graph 37. The level of approval of the border opening between Armenia and Turkey by respondent's sex (n = 756)



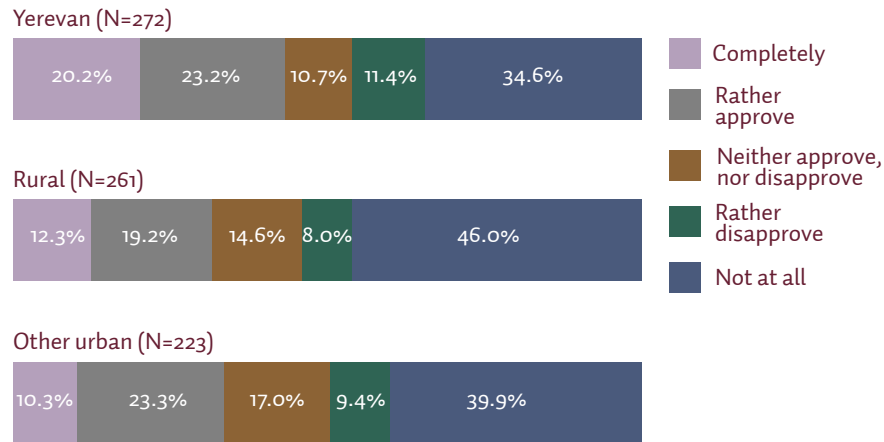
³⁹ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 78206, p-value = 0.01154, n = 756

⁴⁰ Dunnett's test for Yerevan-rural areas, z=-3.0737005, P.adj = 0.006342648, n=756

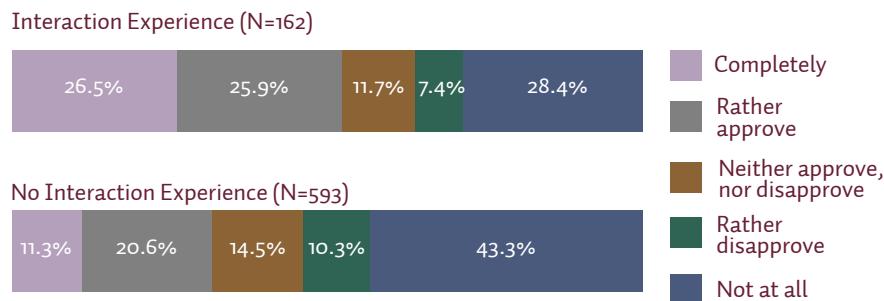
⁴¹ Spearman's rank correlation rho, S = 62968439, p-value = 0.0005372, n = 756

⁴² Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 64888, p-value = 0.0001146, n=755

Graph 38. The level of approval of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey by settlement type (n = 756)

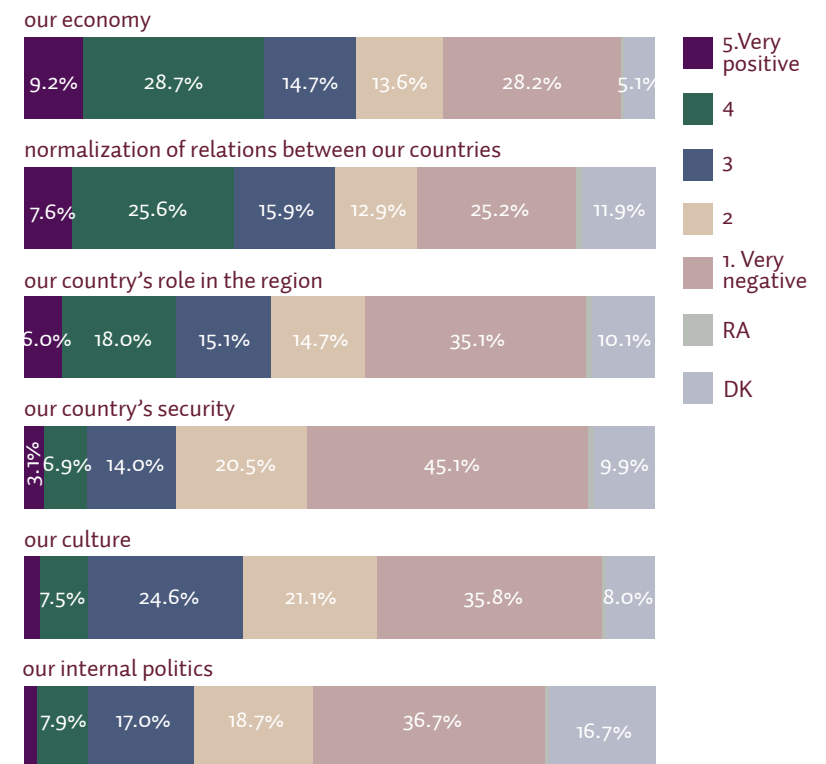


Graph 39. The level of approval of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey by experience of interaction (n = 755)



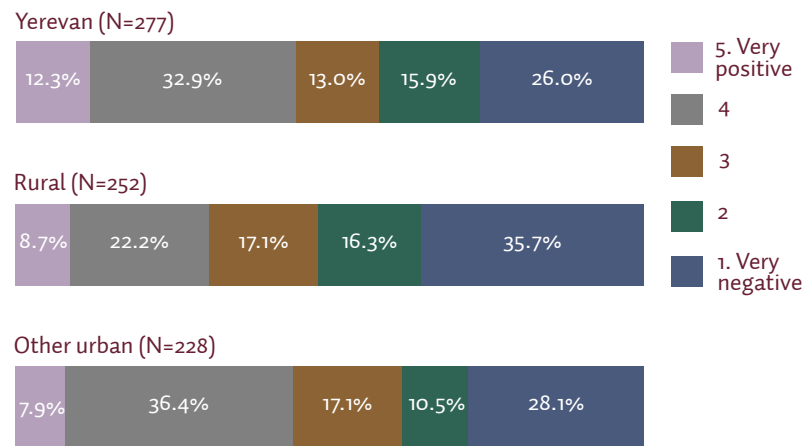
Furthermore, 38% of the public believes that the border opening will have a positive or very positive influence on Armenia's economy, and this tops the list of offered options if sorted in a descending order starting from more positive. In fact, the perceptions of the negative impact of border opening on Armenia's security are quite high (65.6%) (see the graph 40).

Graph 40. N6. What influence do you think opening the mutual border between Turkey and Armenia will have on ...? (n = 801)



The influence of border opening on economy⁴³ and internal politics⁴⁴ is perceived differently by settlement. Respondents from both Yerevan and other urban areas tend to be more optimistic in terms of the influence of opening the border on Armenian economy compared to rural areas⁴⁵ (see the graph 41).

Graph 41. Perceived influence of border opening between Turkey and Armenia on Armenia's economy by the settlement type (n = 757)



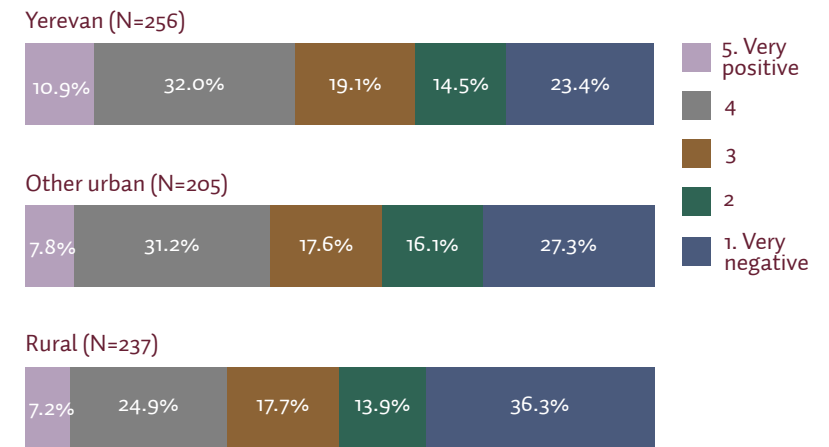
⁴³ Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 11.211, p-value = 0.003678, n=757

⁴⁴ Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 10.479, df = 2, p-value = 0.005303, n = 698

⁴⁵ Dunnett's test, other urban - rural areas, z = 2.5809539, P adj. = 0.019705545, n = 757, Dunnett's test, Yerevan - rural areas, z = -3.1359297, P adj. = 0.005139308, n = 757

A significant difference occurs only in the comparison between Yerevan and rural settlements,⁴⁶ showcasing that the population of rural areas tend to think of the influence of an open border on the normalisation of relations very or somewhat negatively (50.2%) compared to the residents of Yerevan (37.9%) (see the graph 42).

Graph 42. Perceived influence of border opening between Turkey and Armenia on normalisation of relations by the settlement type (n = 698)



⁴⁶ Dunnett's test, Yerevan - rural areas, z = -3.226018, P adj. = 0.003765764, n = 698

The fear of possible influences of border opening is clearly observable in the in-depth narratives as well. The collective memory about the population of Turkey being viewed as enemies still plays a key role here.

...In general, I cannot stand the idea, and will not agree [on border opening]. I don't expect our relations to improve so that we can live side by side... I don't accept them, because they have been our enemy for centuries, how can we accept them? They massacred our grandfathers, they massacred our grandmothers, they harmed the Armenian nation.

Man, 53 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, no interaction with a Turk

A stronger sense of rejection and fear is also expressed among residents of communities bordering Azerbaijan, who perhaps are speaking in the context of the NK conflict, ongoing border tensions, and the demarcation process in Tavush region, which arguably sensitise the matter of normalisation.

...I have a bad attitude towards people who visit Turkey and communicate with them, very bad. I do not accept such people. Seeing their homeland in this situation and still associating with them, creating friendships, doing business, I do not accept it at all. I think they are always fighting for these lands; they won't stop. They said everything would be resolved if we gave away Karabakh, Karabakh was given up, now they claim Voskepar, then it will be us, then Lori, and they won't stop against anything... I don't see any possibility for neighbourly relations between these two nations. Seeing the current events in Tavush, no.

Woman, 36 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, no interaction with a Turk

In-depth interviews also point out the main fears people have when they think about the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey and the normalisation of relations. In particular, these fears or insecurities may be generally categorised into four directions. All these categories of insecurity may arguably hint on the fact it is not uncommon that the traumas from the collective past (both related to Genocide, and the losses of the 2020 NK war) are still very much active and have not yet healed completely.

First, the impact on the neighbourhood and community. In-depth interviews indicate an insecurity about the potential of the Turkish populating their neighbourhood and community. The idea of sharing everyday life and a neighbourhood with people from Turkey comes up with a feeling of anxiety among the informants.

...If there will be Turks among my neighbours, I will feel fear in any case. After 2020, when I was walking on the street, a man with a Caucasian appearance, in my opinion, spoke in Azerbaijani, and I was so scared... I don't know they [Turks] can do whatever they want at any moment. The first thing I think of is fear.

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

Second, the concern about the overall security of Armenia. There is a clear concern observed among people that the overall security of Armenia will be disrupted. The idea of the Turks coming to Armenia is associated with uncertainty and loss of safety. This matter becomes further sensitive, when the possibility of Azerbaijanis entering Armenia through Turkey comes up.

...If the border is opened, they [Turks] will come, and slowly multiply in quantity very fast... Armenia, especially Yerevan, is considered one of the safest cities in the world, it won't be like that after [border opening], I think. Armenians and Turks will constantly be poking each other, they [Turks] will poke more, I don't think it will be safe.

Woman, 45 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, no interaction with a Turk

...There are many Azerbaijanis in Turkey with Turkish passports and they can do anything at any time. I am worried that Azerbaijanis can come to Armenia with Turkish passports. I remember how the Azerbaijanis decapitated innocent people, within the framework of some programs, with an axe... We can be the next victims if they are in this area. Those regulations will not bring security.

Woman, 23 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Lori, interacted with a Turk

...First of all, security will be disrupted, then all the things will arise from it, up to trafficking, buying and selling of people... If the borders open, Armenia is lost.

Man, 58 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

The third insecurity is the mistrust toward the government of Turkey's intentions. This perception entails concerns about the risk of "history repeating itself" which is seen as a hidden agenda behind normalisation from Turkey's perspective.

...I want to improve relations with them, but I cannot trust them... Do you hear the words of the country's leaders? They want land from Georgia, from Armenia, from Syria, from Iraq, from Russia... How can you trust them?

Woman, 68 y/o, key-informant, business sector representative

...Of course, there is a fear that if the relations are settled, the same thing will happen again. Even at the present moment, when you look, their words do not match with their actions.

Man, 53 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...Maybe they try not to harm the Armenian population in Armenia, but this will later lead to them buying houses and settling here, meaning they will become much more inside Armenia than the Armenian population, and this will eventually turn into a Pan-Turkism volcano that will erupt from within. We are creating a volcano that will explode within our country and destroy it.

Man, 29 y/o, bordering settlement, Vayots Dzor, interacted with a Turk

In spite of these fears, the study still arrives at some room for potential dialogue, in as much as in some cases there is an approval of the fact that the societies are neighbouring peoples, who, just like with next door neighbours, might be approached with a “knock on their door.” There seems to be a realisation of the fact that the possibility of open-border trade with Turkey does not inherently assume forgetting the past and can be a starting point for building relations.

...There are beautiful coastal areas in Turkey, much more beautiful than, for example, when we go to Georgia. They should visit our country, get acquainted, not come secretly to Armenia and take pictures like spies. How can we go to Turkey as tourists, and they can't come? I don't understand that. They say, until you communicate with a person, no matter what they tell you about them, until you see it with your own eyes, it remains a myth, even if the most reliable person tells you about this. People's perceptions are different, and communication is the most important issue we face today because people don't communicate face to face anymore.

Man, 22 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, interacted with a Turk

...I think the economic relations will be the easiest [to build], because the raw materials and products that Turkey has, no matter how much we don't like them, have a good quality. And it would have a very big role for Armenia, because it would be cheaper to import the raw materials and create Armenian products.

Woman, 23 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

... [Economic cooperation is possible] if everything is under a strict regime and they are not given much privilege. There are talks that they have territories here, gardens and houses in Ararat Marz anyways. If everything is controlled and the relations are purely economic, and no other arrangements are made with them, maybe it will be normal again. That trade still exists, it's true that we don't have a direct open border with Turkey, the only one is through air, but the trade still exists.

Man, 28 y/o, bordering settlement, Shirak, no interaction with a Turk

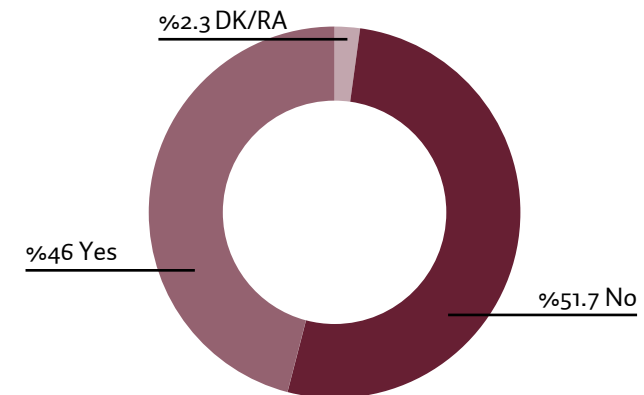
Interestingly, only one informant from qualitative study sees security and prevention of war as positive outcomes of normalisation rather than economic growth.

...I think that the security will be better, it will be safer whenever we are in good relations with Turkey. We will have diplomatic relations; we will be able to talk and negotiate with them directly... What I hear all the time is the concern that the Turks will come to Armenia, but it will be difficult for them to come from their country to live in Armenia, I have no such fear. My fear is war, but the opening of these borders should prevent it, I think.

Woman, 44 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

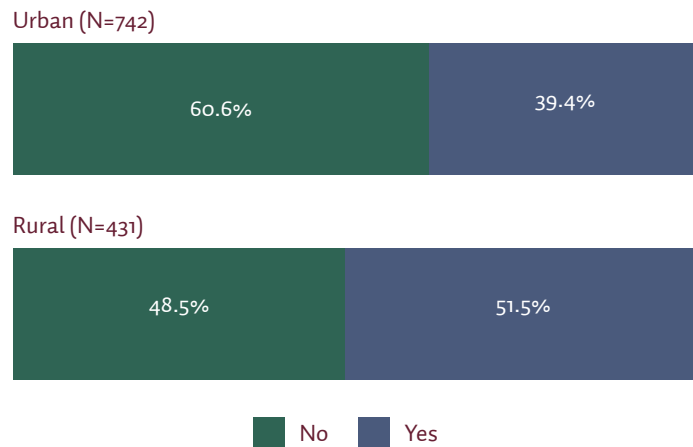
Going back to the representative nationwide survey, 51.7% of the public would not buy a product made in Turkey (see the graph 43).

Graph 43. P9. Would you buy a product that was produced in Turkey?
(n = 1201)



Willingness to buy Turkish products covaries with settlement⁴⁷ and with age, though more weakly,⁴⁸ as residents of urban areas (51.5%) and those aged older are more prone to buying Turkish products, in contrast to those from rural areas (39.1%) (see the graph 44) and younger people respectively.

Graph 44. Inclination of purchasing products made in Turkey by the settlement type (n=1173)



This is an interesting observation, especially under the light of the fact that a significant amount of goods imported to Armenia are produced in Turkey, and the import rates have not declined (except for the years 2020-2021, when Armenia imposed a limit on importing goods from Turkey). Following the lifting of restrictions in 2022, the import indicators returned to almost the same level as before the restrictions.⁴⁹ This outlines that public opinion may not necessarily directly reflect what exists in the economy, as most of the regular citizens usually are not participating in cross-country trade, and are rather the end-consumers of goods. This is what at times may leave them with no other option or with no awareness of where the goods were produced. Moreover, most people would perhaps first

consider other factors (i.e., price, quality, brand, etc.) when deciding to purchase goods, rather than the country those were produced in.

...If it were my choice, if I could find products of that quality elsewhere, I would not go to Turkey, I would not bring their products. I tried from Greece; didn't succeed, I tried from Russia, but the products there are either Chinese or Turkish anyways. You can't go to China, the costs are so high that you can't travel to choose the product and come back. You have to import a big quantity of goods, which is not my profile. But you can go to Turkey and bring as much as you want.

Woman, 68 y/o, key-informant, business sector representative

...Even now, there are many things at home that have Turkish origin. No matter how much we try not to buy those after the war, there are many things that have no substitute in the Armenian market. If the clothes are cheap, even if the person has patriotic aspirations, if he/she can afford only that, he/she has to buy it.

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

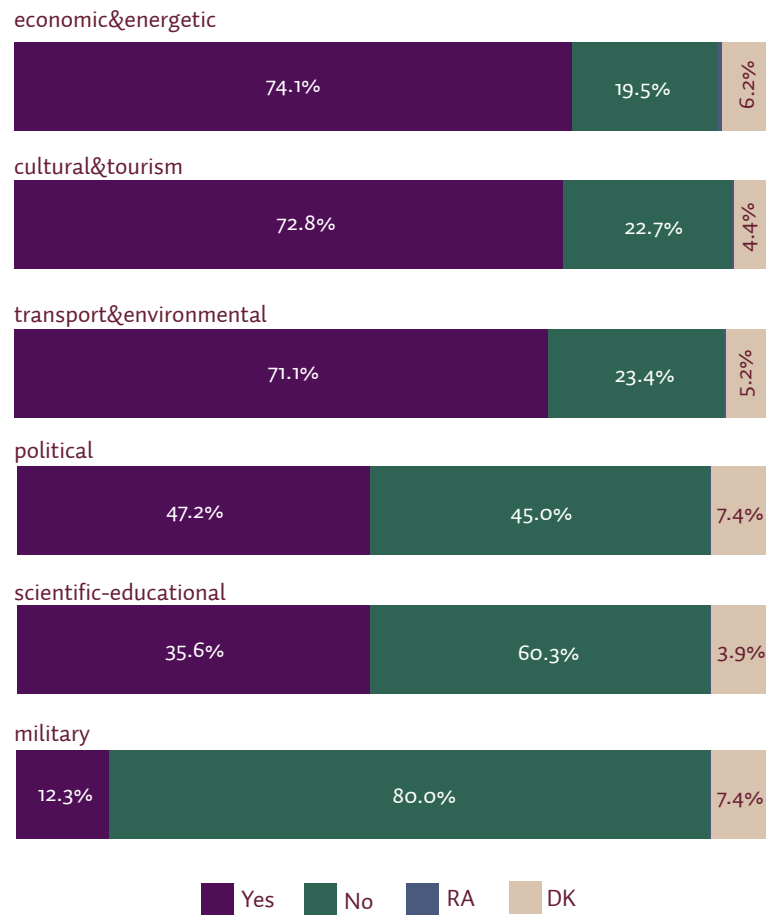
⁴⁷ Chi square test, $X^2=15.893$, p-value = 0.0003538, n=1173

⁴⁸ Spearman test, Spearman's rho =0.0651, p-value = 0.02574, n=1173

⁴⁹ "Possibilities and challenges of opening the blockade of Armenia by Turkey", Amberd (57),2023, p. 54 (Armenian)

In this light, it might not come across as surprising that, when asked about specific spheres of potential relations between the two countries, “economic and energetic” sphere tops the chart (74.1%). This is followed by “culture and tourism” (72.8%) and “transportation and environment” (71.1%). Importantly, the military sphere is at the bottom of the scale, presenting the highest percentage of disagreement for potential cooperation (80%) (see the graph 45).

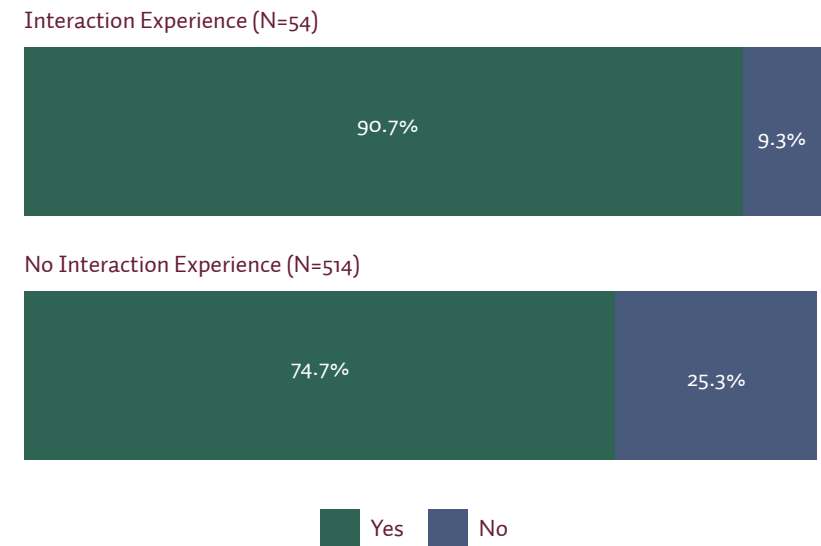
Graph 45. N8. Do you think our countries can get into relations in the following spheres? (n = 595)⁵⁰



⁵⁰ Those who mentioned that Armenia shouldn't get into relations with Turkey at all or found it hard to answer the question (see Graph 49) skipped this question.

Notably, those who have visited Turkey, are more inclined towards the countries getting into relations in culture and tourism (90.7% of attended compared to 74.7% of not attended)⁵¹ (see the graph 46).

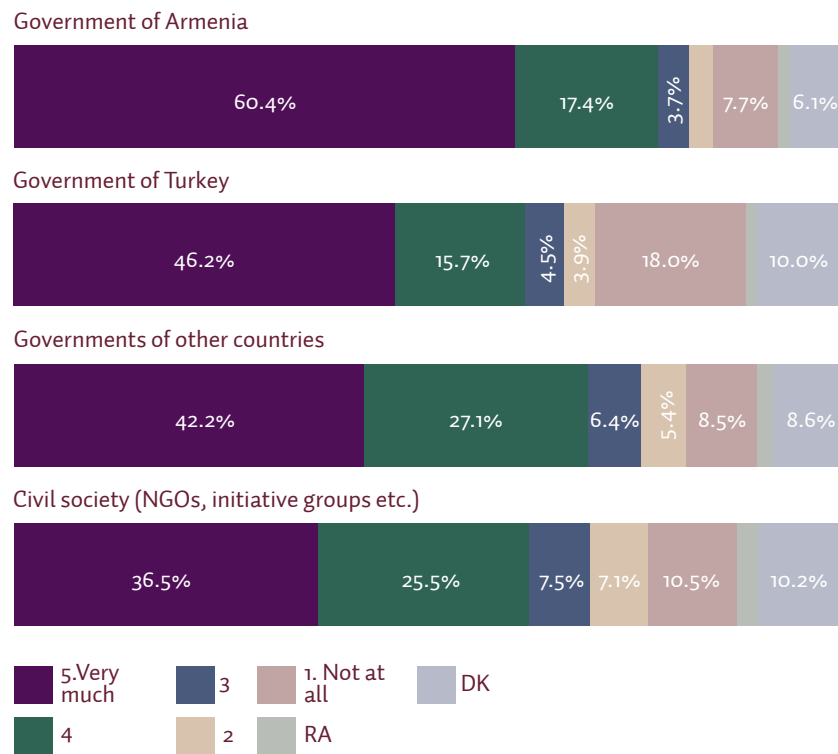
Graph 46. Possibility of relations in the spheres of culture and tourism by the fact of visiting Turkey (n = 568)



⁵¹ Fisher's Exact Test, p-value = 0.0068, n = 568

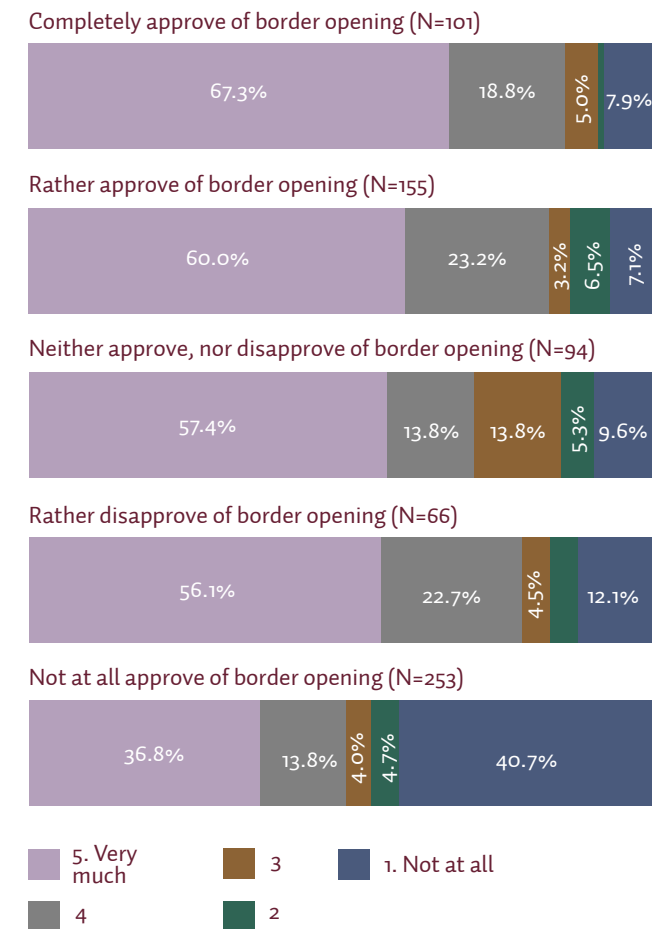
The public deems the government of Armenia's role towards normalisation very (60.4%) or rather (17.4%) important. Results suggest that other countries' governments are cumulatively (values 5 and 4 put together) given more importance (69.3%) than the role of the government of Turkey's (61.9% of very much or somewhat important roles) (see the graph 47).

Graph 47. N9. How important do you think is the role of each of the following towards normalisation? (n = 801)



As is visible from the graph, the importance of the government of Turkey's role in reaching normalisation has received the most "not at all" answers (18%). Interestingly, those who tend to disapprove of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey tend to also mention more frequently (45.4% not or not at all important) that the government of Turkey doesn't have an important role in the normalisation processes at all⁵² (see the graph 48).

Graph 48. Importance of the Turkish government's role by the attitude towards border opening (n=669)



⁵² Spearman's rank correlation rho = 0.3074628, p-value = 0.000, n=669

It is worth mentioning, that cumulatively (values “5” and “4”) the role of governments of other countries (69.3%) is perceived important more frequently than the government of Turkey’s role (61.9%). However, the in-depth interviews suggest that often normalisation is considered to have more prospects, if the Armenians and the Turks try to negotiate without any third party.

...If the Armenian people personally sat down to negotiate the issue with Turkey, they would reach a more profitable situation than bringing in a third party to solve their issues.

Woman, 34 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Armavir, no interaction with a Turk

Moreover, key-informant interviews indicate that the government of Turkey’s role is a key factor to the normalisation outcome. Possible policy change is not considered feasible until those who are involved in decision making processes from both sides, especially Turkey, do not agree on a specific plan of normalisation actions.

...All those initiatives of CSOs or exchange programs are important, however they are very segmented and cannot bring any results if there is no appropriate policy that accompanies everything... These issues should be dealt with by people who have a decisive role in decision-making. For example, if the leftists are interested in this question in Turkey, they are marginalised and their opinion will not have a decisive influence, they will not be able to change the policy. If it is possible to catch the attention of the right party and include them into the conversation, then it can be more effective.

Man, 40 y/o, key-informant, media and CSO representative

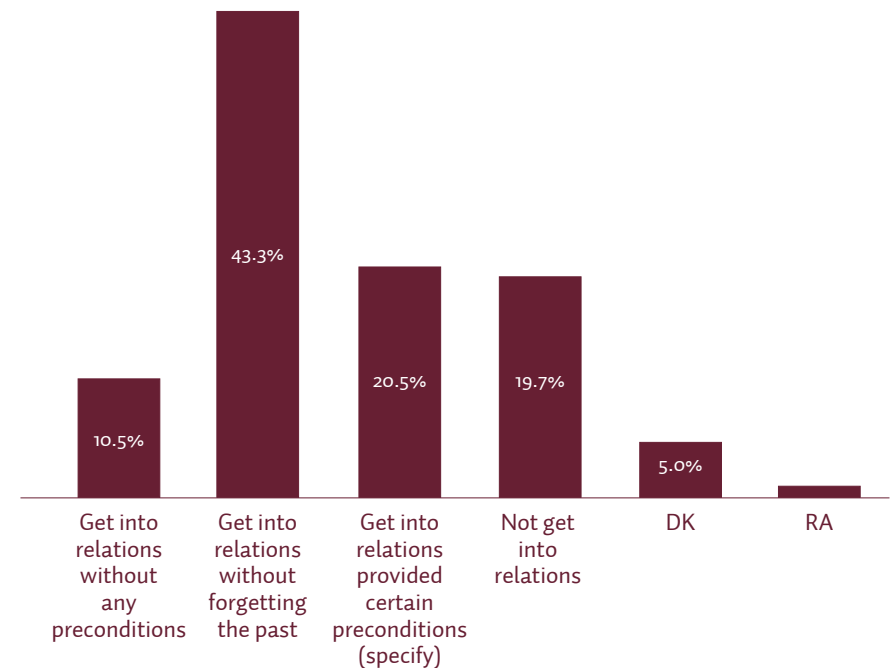
Consequently, in the case where a mutual decision is reached between the states, the process of creating cooperative and constructive narratives comes up in this context. Particularly, narratives of self- & cross-acquaintance as in “how we/they really are” is outlined as an initial step, which should be followed by the narratives of normalisations.

...The media can create narratives of normalisation, which could be used by politicians in the future, but if there is no agreement and desire from the other side, it is pointless. Now it is important for Armenian society to create narratives of recognition [does not elaborate, but the context suggests it is about the recognition of societal characteristics] not normalisation. On the other hand, Turkey needs to change its narratives about Armenians intending to harm them and take back their lands, because I am sure they think like this.

Man, 40 y/o, key-informant, media and CSO representative

On the other hand, the general public tend to believe Armenia should get into relations with Turkey without forgetting the past (43.3%) or only upon certain preconditions (20.5%). Although getting into relations without any preconditions has received the least mentions (10.5%), if we put together these three options, cumulatively they do indicate an approval and openness, though conditional and rather insecure, towards getting into relations with Turkey, as the cumulative percentage (74.3%) significantly overweighs the option of not getting into relations at all (19.7%) (see the graph 49).

Graph 49. N7. What position do you think Armenia should take towards relations with Turkey? (n = 801)



Furthermore, the analysis shows that the attitude towards normalisation may potentially be correlated with age.⁵³ Accordingly, we examine that even though most respondents tend to approve of entering into relations with certain preconditions, younger respondents tend to believe that Armenia should not get into relations with Turkey at all more frequently than older respondents⁵⁴ (see table 10).

Table 10. Perceived position towards relations with Turkey by age (n=753)

	Relations with no conditions at all	Conditional approval of relations	No relations at all
18-24 (n= 70)	1.4%	75.1%	22.9%
25-34 (n= 132)	7.6%	68.9%	23.5%
35-44 (n= 159)	8.8%	67.9%	23.3%
45-54 (n= 127)	14.2%	66.9%	18.9%
55-64 (n= 129)	14.7%	66.7%	18.6%
65+ (n= 136)	16.2%	64.7%	19.1%

It is worth zooming in on the exact preconditions that the 20.5% segment of the public implies. The answers of respondents were diverse including the preconditions of prospects for economic growth, return of prisoners of war (even though this is an issue related to Azerbaijan), and creation of favourable conditions for Armenia (without specification), however, two conditions stood out the most from across 164 responses. (1) the reassurance and provision of peace and security, sometimes intertwined with the requirement of respect for sovereignty (32.9%, i.e., 54 answers) and (2) the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, sometimes intertwined with the requirement of return of territories (28%, i.e., 46 answers). Additionally, in 6 answers (3.7%) both of these preconditions were named together.

⁵³ For this calculation, the options “get into relations without forgetting the past” and “get into relations provided certain preconditions” were merged into one option, as both of them in general carry the meaning of conditional approval of relations. Hence, after this data modification, we receive an ordinal scale of 1 to 3, where 1 means relations with no conditions at all, 2 means conditional approval of relations and 3 means no relations at all.

⁵⁴ Spearman’s rank correlation rho, S = 79262896, p-value = 0.001749, n = 753

Interestingly, drawing on the steps that should be taken towards normalisation between the two societies, in-depth interviews do not commonly bring up mentions of Genocide recognition. The answers mostly point towards the reassurance of security and safety and the prevention of potential conflict. Accordingly, we notice that only few informants speak about Genocide recognition as a condition during interviews, when, while describing their attitude towards the population of Turkey they constantly recall on the Genocide.

...If it is [the Genocide] recognised at the government level and, if they accept that they did such a bad thing, after that we can talk [about the normalisation], but until then we are in the role of a convincer, we are in the role of a poor person who tries to prove this.

Woman, 31 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

...Let the borders be closed, let us not communicate, let us not trade, until one day someone deals with the Armenian issue and solves it correctly... We must reunify Armenia, that is to take from Turkey what belongs to us.

Man, 29 y/o, bordering settlement, Vayots Dzor, interacted with a Turk

...Security must be guaranteed when regulating the relations, that is why, if the connection is established internationally through structures and some kind of ultimatum is put in front of both or a demand is made that both respect and protect each other’s security, I think there will be no problem.

Woman, 23 y/o, bordering settlement, Aragatsotn, interacted with a Turk

...Let’s make sure that the safety of the Armenians is guaranteed to the maximum. Yes, maybe Armenians also treat them very badly, but with mutual agreement, we will guarantee their safety in our country, and they will guarantee our safety in their country.

Man, 22 y/o, bordering settlement, Tavush, interacted with a Turk

...The recognition of the Genocide is not an issue; it is clear that they must face it. They are trying to make excuses, but it is no longer a correct strategy. For example, if Germany didn’t accept it until now, it would not develop. It happens in every nation; we also were not ideal throughout history. We also have done things that we need to accept.

Man, 49 y/o, non-bordering settlement, Yerevan, interacted with a Turk

These observations showcase Armenians' mixed feelings about normalising relations with Turkey. Many fear the impact especially on local communities and national security, with collective memories of the past still playing an important role in their views. In the long run, economic cooperation seems to be one of the most approved starting points for normalisation. Nevertheless, despite significant concerns, there is some openness to dialogue, especially with a preference for direct negotiations between Armenia and Turkey without third-party involvement.

**CHAPTER 2. TURKEY UNDER THE LENS:
EXPLORING PUBLIC SENTIMENTS ON NORMALISATION**

KONDA Research and Consultancy Company

2.1. METHODOLOGY

This research aims to investigate the attitudes of the general public and representatives from relevant target groups regarding the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the perceptions of the general public in Turkey towards Armenia, considering various socio-demographic and geographic factors. Additionally, by seeking to identify the origins of these perceptions, the research aims to elucidate potential scenarios for normalisation of relations between the two nations.

This section introduces the research design and implementation phases, methods and tools that were used to address the above mentioned issues.

Data Collection Methods

KONDA Mediated Panel was used to collect data for the quantitative study. Interviews were conducted by telephone through Mediated pollsters. In this system, we worked with mediated pollsters, who have agreed to cooperate with KONDA according to the rules of the quantitative study and panellists who are included in the sample calculated according to the requirements of the survey from a large universe. The contacts of the surveyors and the people directed by KONDA are included in the panellist pool.

There are three types of people in the Mediated Panel System through which the quantitative data was collected.

Panel Coordinator: The panel coordinator conducts the initial orientation of interviewers via video call or face-to-face and adds them to the system. They monitor the process of intermediaries adding panellists to the system according to the missing panellist profiles in the universe. They track the demand for panellists by region and demographics and feed the system accordingly. These people are full or part time KONDA employees.

Mediated pollsters create their lists according to basic demographic characteristics, first from their own circles and then according to the panellist data directed by KONDA. Panel coordinators check these lists and make control calls to ensure

that the right people are in the system. Intermediaries whose lists they approve are added to the system.

Mediated Pollsters: They manage panellists directed by their own networks or by KONDA. They inform panellists before including them in the system and obtain their verbal consent. These people are regular employees. They work for a fee.

They can participate in the system if the lists they create and the panellists directed to them are approved by the panel coordinator. They are responsible for keeping the panel population representative of their size by conducting regular face-to-face or online interviews with the Panel Coordination Team. As part of the survey, before and after the survey, the panellists and themselves are regularly called and checked by the Panel Coordination Team.

Panellists: They are added to the system by mediated interviewers. They are removed from the system if they do not wish to participate in the panel system surveys or if they give inconsistent answers during data and logic checks. These people give verbal consent when they are added to the system, they become subjects voluntarily and they are not paid.

Individuals over the age of 15 can participate as panellists in the Mediated Panel. Anyone who does not have a barrier to speaking on the phone can participate in the panel. Panellists are not remunerated in this survey model (no remuneration is provided to eliminate the tendency of the respondent to give biased answers in the expectation of a regular payout).

For the qualitative study, in-depth interviews were carried out, as the research scope requires a thorough understanding of the reasons behind attitudes and perceptions about Armenia. These methods are especially effective for delving into personal experiences and practices.

Data Sources and Fieldwork Timeframes

This research relies solely on primary data, with the general public serving as the source for both qualitative and quantitative studies.

The quantitative study was conducted between December 1-4, 2023, through telephone calls with individuals who agreed to be included in the KONDA Mediated Panel.

For the qualitative study, the interviews were conducted between May 5 and June 16 by experts using a semi-structured in-depth interview technique.

Apart from these, various media materials, books, and prior research on the relations between Turkey and Armenia, as well as potential paths to normalisation, were utilised to enhance the analysis and provide a comprehensive interpretation of the collected data.

Sample Sizes, Geographic Coverage and Sampling Strategies/Procedures

The sample is calculated from the universe of panellists in the KONDA Mediated Panel, taking into account the demographic distribution, political preferences and regional distribution according to the KONDA Barometer data collected with the calculation method described below. The data is collected by conducting interviews with the number of panellists included in the quantitative study according to the sample size.

During the sample preparation process, population size stratification utilises data sourced from a state-maintained system. In accordance with the Population Services Law No. 5490, the residence addresses of all individuals residing within the borders of Turkey have been detected; for citizens of Turkey, these addresses have been matched with the population registers in the Central Population Administration System (MERNIS) database using their Turkish ID numbers; information regarding foreign nationals has also been integrated into the system using their passport numbers, thus establishing the Address Based Population Registration System (ADNKS).¹ The sample is prepared by stratifying the population size according to this ADNKS data, the educational statistics of settlements and villages according to the ADNKS data, and the results of the 14 May 2023 general election in settlements and villages. Settlements are first stratified as rural/urban/metropolitan and the sample is determined based on 12 regions. After stratification, the neighbourhoods and villages to be visited from each cluster are randomly selected by computer. The purpose of this sampling is to ensure that the respondents are representative of the population of Turkey over the age of 15. The sample calculation is a formula developed by KONDA with its knowledge and experience and is a trade secret of KONDA and is subject to confidentiality. It is at the discretion of KONDA to provide information about the neighbourhood, respondent, field process, etc. regarding the sample.

¹ <https://nip.tuik.gov.tr/Home/Adnks>

This report and its underlying data were produced by KONDA Research and Consultancy Inc. for the Hrant Dink Foundation. This research report consists of content aimed at understanding the perceptions of the societies of Turkey and Armenia towards each other and their views on the normalisation process among the population over the age of 15 in Turkey. According to the year-end 2023 data from the Turkish Statistical Institute, the number of individuals in the 15-17 age group in Turkey is close to 4 million. According to the data, this age group constitutes 30.3% of the young population in Turkey. Therefore, in our survey on how Turkish and Armenian societies understand and perceive each other, we intentionally kept this group, which represents a large segment of the population in Turkey. The topics mentioned in the report have been analysed across different demographic clusters.

Within the scope of the survey, telephone interviews were conducted with 2,029 people living in 1,107 different neighbourhoods or villages in 74 provinces.

The research in Turkey was designed and implemented to determine and monitor the trends and changes in the preferences of individuals representing Turkey's adult population aged 15 and above. The margin of error for the research findings is +/- 2.18 at a 95% confidence interval and +/- 2.86 at a 99% confidence interval.

The sample was prepared by layering the population sizes and education levels of neighbourhoods and villages based on ADNKS data and the results of the neighbourhood and village from the general elections held on May 14, 2023. The settlements were first categorised as rural/urban/metropolitan, and the sample was determined based on 12 regions.

Table 1. The regional distribution and the provinces' places of residence

NUTS-1	Frequency	Percent	City
Istanbul Region (TR1)	375	18,5	İstanbul
West Marmara Region (TR2)	83	4,1	Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ
Aegean Region (TR3)	260	12,8	Afyonkarahisar, Aydın, Denizli, İzmir, Kütahya, Manisa, Muğla, Uşak
East Marmara Region (TR4)	196	9,7	Bilecik, Bolu, Bursa, Eskişehir, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Yalova, Düzce
West Anatolia Region (TR5)	219	10,8	Ankara, Konya
Mediterranean Region (TR6)	267	13,2	Adana, Antalya, Hatay, Isparta, Mersin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye
Central Anatolia Region (TR7)	118	5,8	Kayseri, Kırşehir, Nevşehir, Niğde, Sivas, Yozgat, Aksaray, Kırıkkale
West Black Sea Region (TR8)	110	5,4	Amasya, Çorum, Kastamonu, Samsun, Sinop, Tokat, Zonguldak, Karabük
East Black Sea Region (TR9)	71	3,5	Artvin, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Ordu, Rize, Trabzon
Northeast Anatolia Region (TRA)	50	2,5	Ağrı, Erzincan, Erzurum, Kars, Bayburt
Central East Anatolia Region (TRB)	88	4,4	Bitlis, Elazığ, Hakkari, Malatya, Muş, Tunceli, Van
Southeast Anatolia Region (TRC)	192	9,5	Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Batman, Şırnak, Kilis
Total	2029	100,0	

For the qualitative study, 200 people were called but only 35 agreed to participate. This process took longer than expected due to issues such as people being unavailable, having prejudices about the topic, or not having any opinion on the topic.

The qualitative study stage was designed to complement and enrich the findings obtained from the quantitative study after it was completed.

In particular, the qualitative study focused on the following topics:

- The normalisation between Turkey and Armenia is important. The interviewees' perspectives on which spheres of normalisation -political, economic, cultural, or energy- are more important are being examined.
- We try to understand the main concerns that are associated with normalisation between Turkey and Armenia.
- The image of Armenia and Armenians in the society of Turkey is being examined.
- The common interests of Armenia and Turkey, as well as the convergence points of their national interests, are being explored.
- The spheres in which participants think there are similarities between the two countries, as well as the commonalities in social and cultural fields, are being identified.
- The potential actions that the government and society can take to foster the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia are being considered.
- Public opinion in the society of Turkey regarding the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey is being assessed.

In this context, a total of 35 people were interviewed. 11 of these consisted of individuals living near the Turkey-Armenia border. The selection of participants prioritised a balanced distribution across criteria such as gender, age, education level, and occupation.

The table below represents the geographic coverage of the sample (i.e., 2029).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: Region and Settlement type

Characteristics	Frequency
Region	
Istanbul	18.5%
West Marmara	4.1 %
Aegean	12.8 %
East Marmara	9.7 %
West Anatolia	10.8 %
Mediterranean	13.2 %
Central Anatolia	5.8 %
West Black Sea	5.4 %
East Black Sea	3.5 %
Northeast Anatolia	2.5 %
Middle East Anatolia	4.4 %
Southeast Anatolia	9.5 %
Settlement type	
Rural	36.2%
Urban	38.4 %
Metropolis	53.7 %

Grounds for Generalisability

The quantitative data gathered by KONDA on perceptions of normalisation in Turkey is nationally representative across sex, age, and education level.

Quality Assurance Measures

KONDA Intermediary Panel System was used to collect the quantitative data. Before the main surveys, pilot interviews were conducted with 67 subjects. A series of checks were carried out to ensure that the study complies with the rules and the reliability of the data. The control steps are stated below:

- Data control by looking at the consistency of responses to previous surveys
- Average survey duration and start-end times
- Outliers
- Calling back and checking the subjects by phone
- Checking phone records of suspicious conversations

Within the scope of the research, 2172 interviews were conducted, and after the interviews were excluded from the quantitative data for various reasons, the data of 2029 interviews were analysed. SPSS and R programs were used for data control and analysis. The features of the resulting data set are consistent with both the previous KONDA data and the Turkish Statistical Institute data.

Limitations

The survey conducted with the KONDA Mediated Panel has some inherent limitations.

The past and present relations of panellists in the panel universe with the mediated interviewers may influence their responses to the questions asked. This can be referred to as an acquaintance bias. A similar bias may manifest itself in the form of non-acquaintance bias in a scenario where the respondent and interviewer are not acquainted. As it is not possible to measure acquaintance or non-acquaintance bias in social research, these limitations can be ignored in any research.

Qualitative elements such as emotional states, thoughts and motivations behind the answers to the questions measured by the survey may not be fully understood and reflected in the results. Any changes in global or local agendas, political events or discourses of politicians that touch on the subject of the research, geopolitical

conditions of the geography in which Turkey and Armenia are located in the context of this research may affect the answers given in relation to the questions asked within the scope of the research. (Although we reduced the data collection process to 2 days in order to purify the subjects' responses from conditions, there is always the possibility that the aforementioned conditions may occur).

The accessibility of the questionnaire design may not be ideal. The questionnaire may not have taken into account special circumstances such as language barriers, sign language. This may have been a barrier to access for a group of subjects. Another limitation, although outside the scope of the research, relates to the respondents' comfort with the environment in which they answered the questions and whether they responded honestly to the survey. It is possible that a group of subjects may have abstained due to the environment they were in or their general approach to the survey.

It is possible that the concepts asked about in the questionnaire do not have the same meaning for everyone. This may lead to a lack of consensus on the meaning of these concepts.

Ethical Considerations

In the quantitative study, participants were informed about the research objectives and gave verbal consent before completing the survey. It was emphasised that the study aimed to capture public opinion broadly rather than individual perspectives.

In the qualitative study, participants were verbally briefed about the research aims and provided verbal consent. They were also informed that the interviews would be recorded, and their consent for audio recording was obtained.

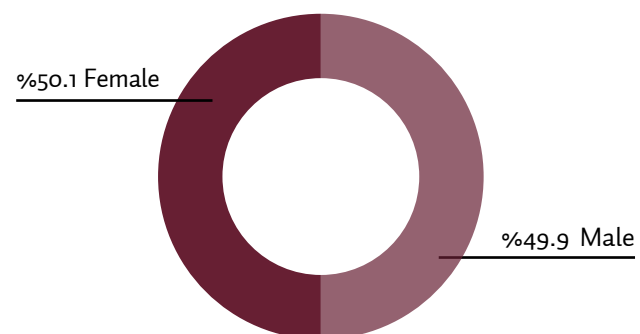
All data from both quantitative and qualitative study were anonymised to ensure that participants' identities were not disclosed and were stored and used accordingly.

2.2. RESULTS

2.2.1. Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

This section of the report starts with the basic demographic findings of the survey respondents. Gender distribution in the survey is almost equal. As shown in the graph below, 50.1% of the respondents are female, and 49.9% are male.

Graph 1. D1. Respondent's sex (n = 2029)



The highest percentage (33%) belongs to the age group of 51+ years old. It is followed by the age group of 34-50 with 32.9% and 18-33 with 29.2%. The youngest respondent was 15, the oldest was 93. The mean age of the respondents was 41.8 (see the table 5 below).

Table 3. D2. How old are you (n = 2028)

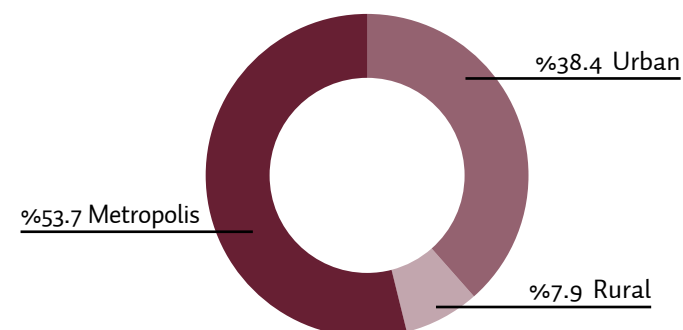
Mean	Min	Max	Std.Dev	N.Valid
41.8	15	93	16.2	2,028

Table 4. Age distribution by 4 age brackets

Age Bracket	n	Frequency (survey)
15-17	100	4.9%
18-33	592	29.2%
34-50	667	32.9%
51+	670	33%

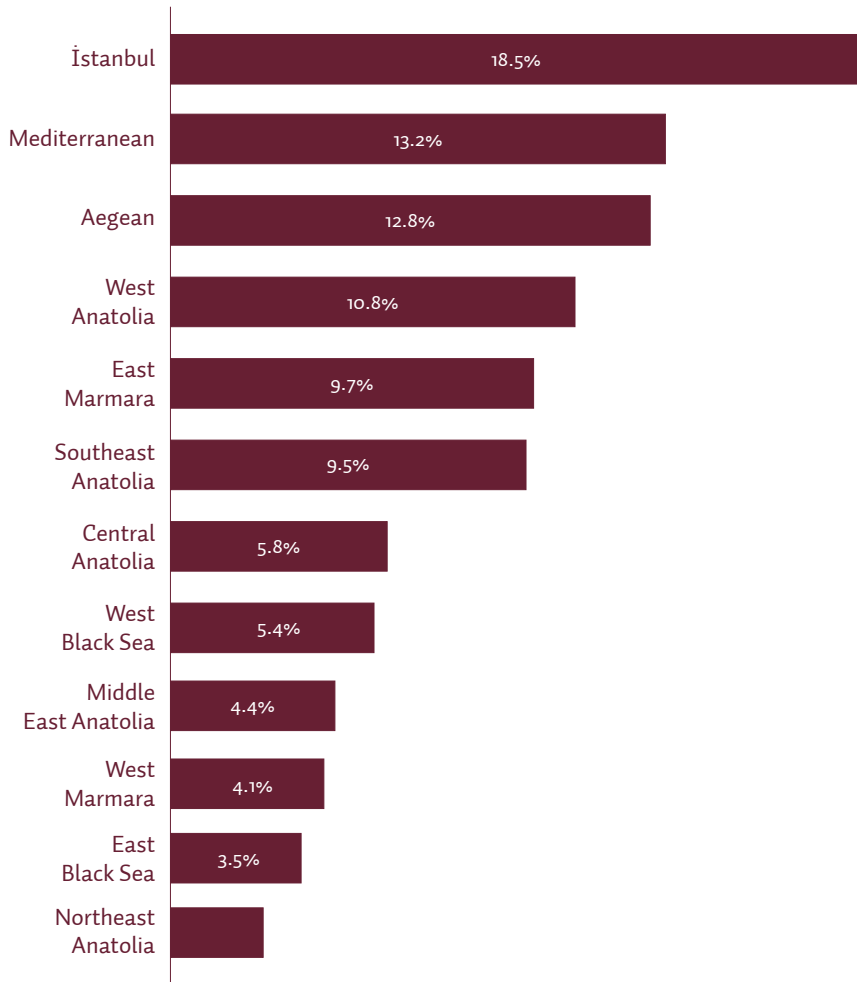
Settlement types provide further insights into the demographic profile of interviewees with 53.7% residing in metropolises, 38.4% in urban areas and 7.9% in rural areas.

Graph 2. D45. Respondent's settlement type (n = 2029)



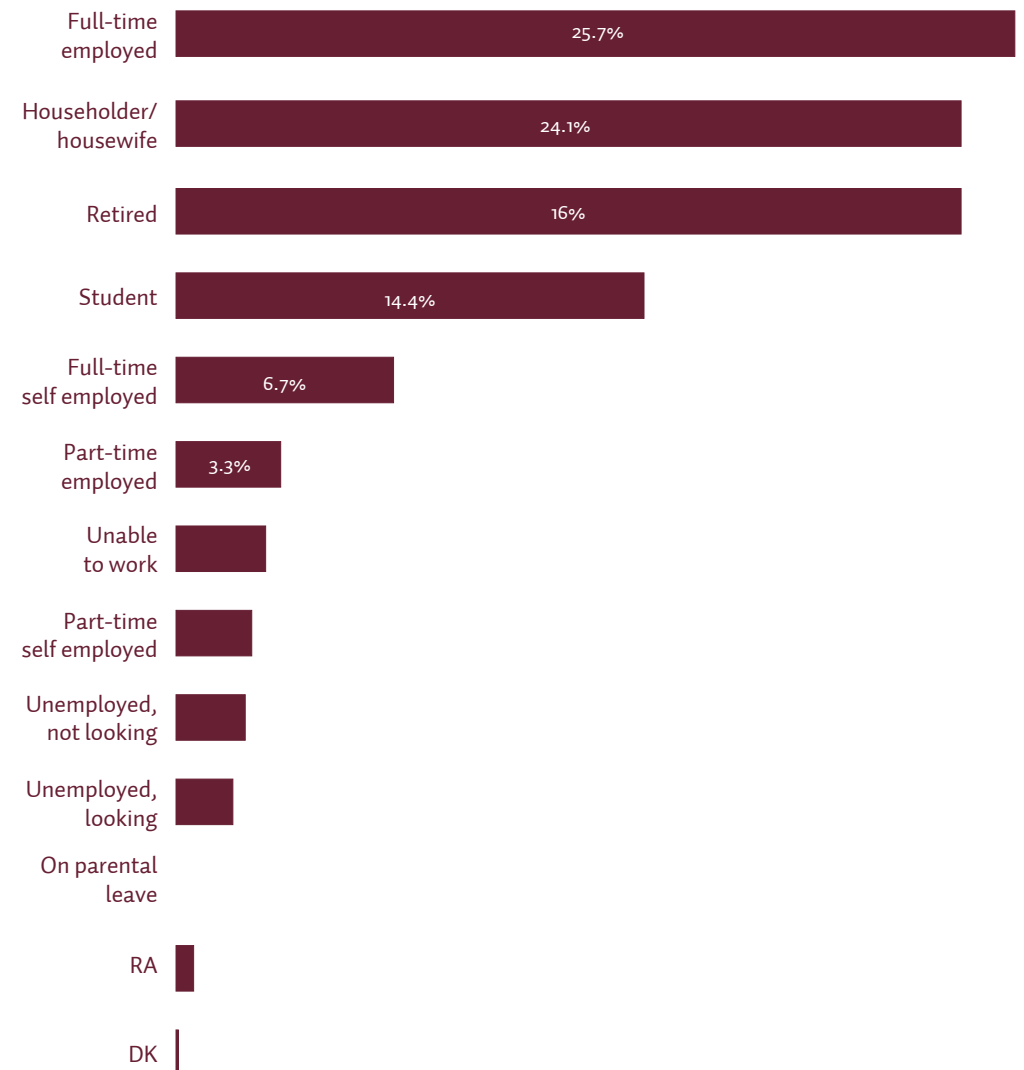
Istanbul has the highest proportion (18.5%) among the regions. It is followed by the Mediterranean (13.2%) and Aegean (12.8%) regions. The lowest proportion belongs to Northeast Anatolia (2.5%).

Graph 3. D46. Respondent's region (n = 2029)



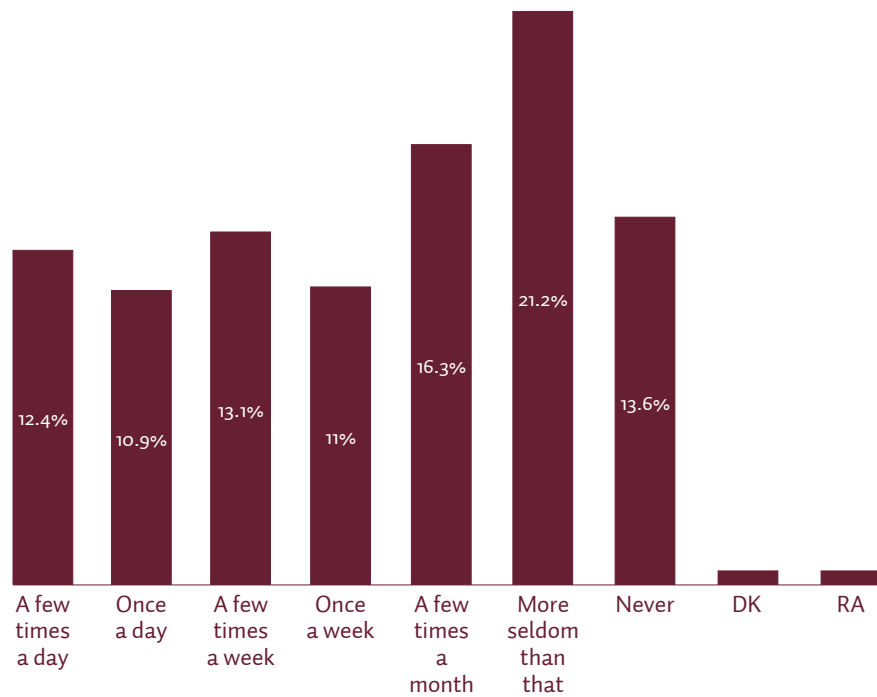
The majority of respondents were full-time employed (25.7%). The next most common occupations were householders/housewives (24.1%), retired people (16%) and students (14.4%).

Graph 4. D5. What is your current main occupation? (n = 2016)



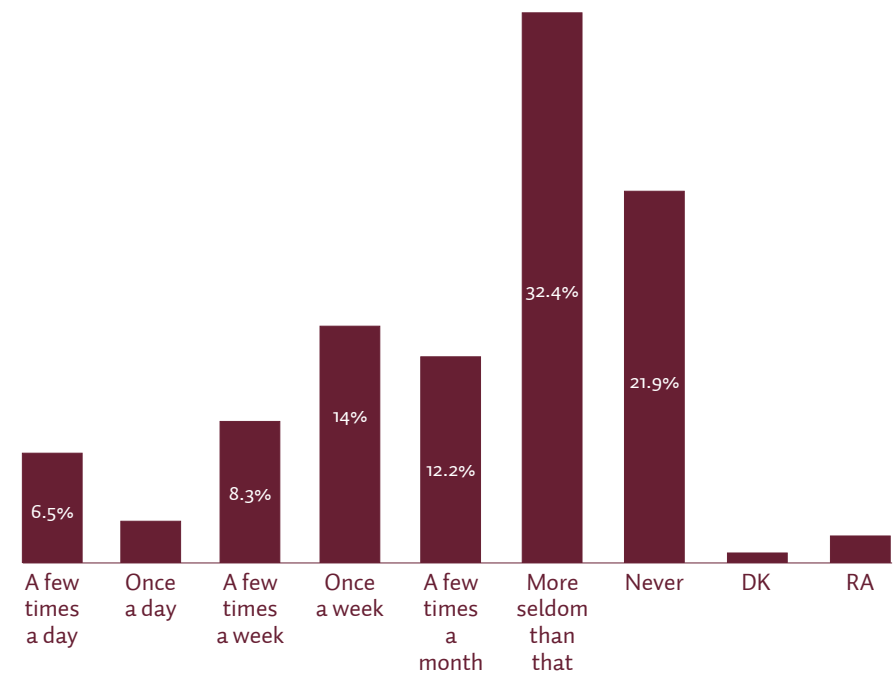
The graph below shows varying degrees of religious involvement. According to the survey, 12.4% of participants reported that they read or listen to their religion's sacred texts a few times a day, while 21.2% interacted with sacred texts very rarely and 13.6% reported no interaction with them.

Graph 5. D34. How often do you read or listen to your religion's sacred texts, such as the Quran? (n = 2007)



As it can be seen in the graph below, 32.4% of respondents very rarely visited mosques and cemevis,² except on special days, while 21.9% reported that they never visited such places. On the other hand, the percentage of those who visited religious sites regularly is 6.5%.

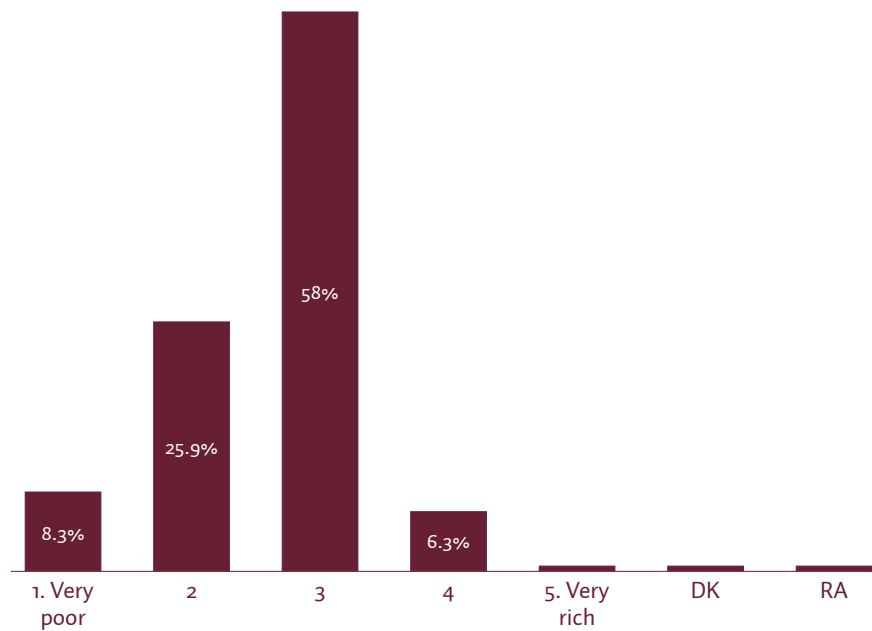
Graph 6. D35. How often do you visit religious sites such as mosques and cemevis, except for special days?(n = 1997)



² Cemevis are the places of worship of the Alevi, the largest religious minority in Turkey.

When the respondents were asked about the income and wealth of the people in their country, 58% of them report that the people are within the middle segment. The second highest percentage (25.9%) belongs to respondents who consider people in their country poorer than the middle segment. On the other hand, we observe that the proportion of people who rate the wealth of the people in Turkey as “very rich” is extremely low.

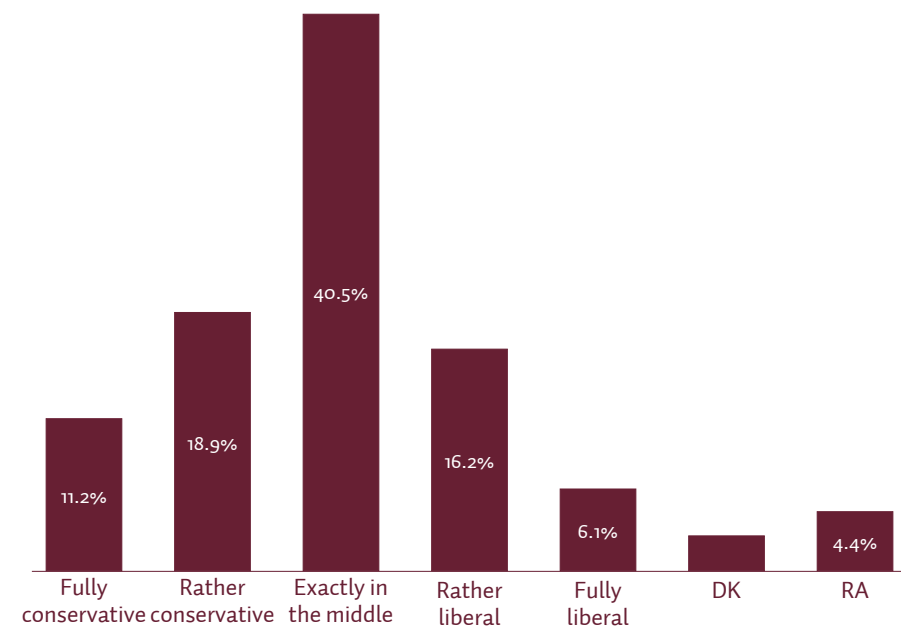
Graph 7. D39. If we were to divide the people in our country into 5 income and wealth segments, with 1 representing the poorest and 5 the richest, which segment do you believe your household would belong to? (n = 2021)



In light of potential variations in perceptions towards liberalism, conservatism, left-wing, and right-wing ideologies between the two countries, separate survey questions were designed for Turkey. Nonetheless, upon reviewing the two graphs below, it is evident that the responses exhibit strikingly similar distributions.

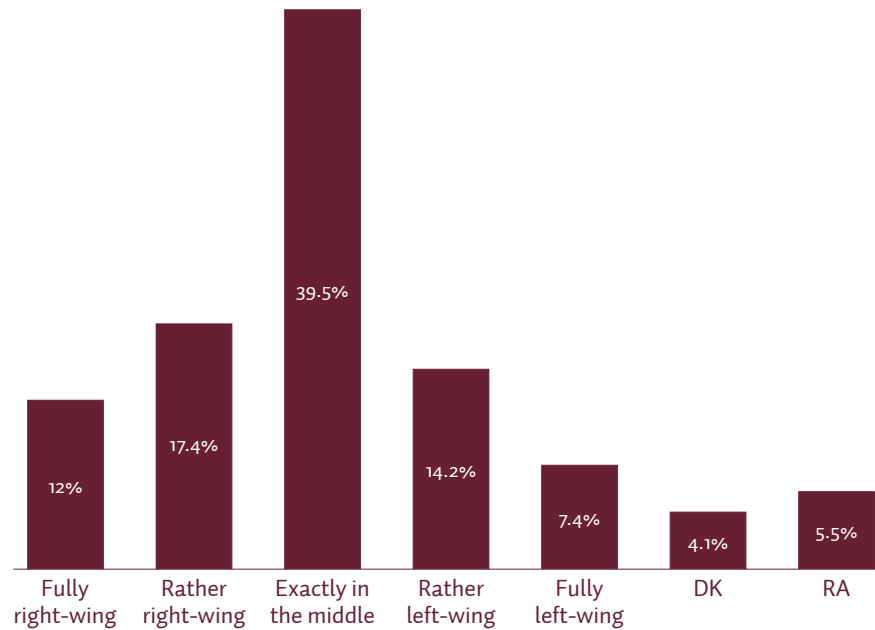
When respondents were asked to place themselves on a conservative-liberal scale, a significant proportion (40.5%) identified themselves as exactly in the middle. Additionally, the proportion of those identifying at the extremes of the scale decreases, regardless of whether they are on the conservative or liberal side.

Graph 8. P9. People can have different positions about how the world should work. Considering this, how would you characterise yourself? I consider myself... (n = 1940)



When respondents' positions on the political scale are examined, a similar trend to the conservative-liberal scale is observed. 39.5% identify themselves as exactly in the middle. Additionally, the proportion of those identifying at the extremes of the political scale decreases, regardless of whether they are on the left or right.

Graph 9. P8. People can have different positions about how the world should work. Considering this, how would you characterise yourself? I consider myself... (n = 1918)

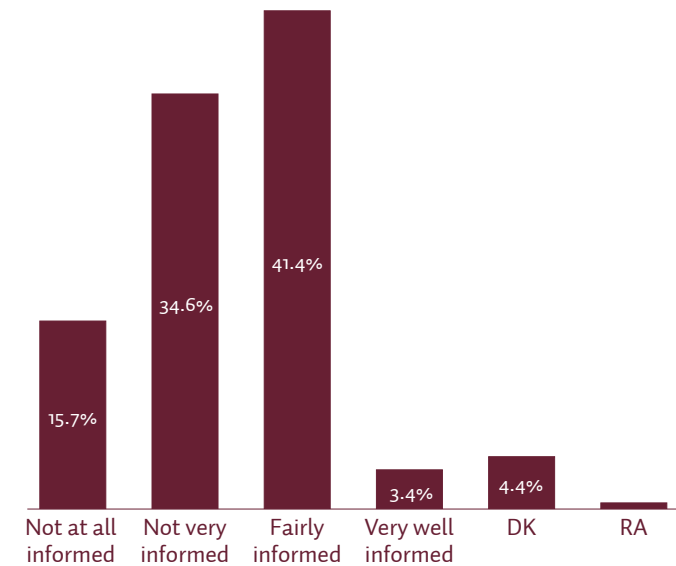


2.2.2. Knowledge, Perceptions, Attitudes

In this chapter, the knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes of the survey participants regarding the Armenians and Armenia³ will be scrutinised. Although the relation between the two countries has a very long history, it has developed slowly and this development has not been consistently constructive so far. Moreover, despite sharing borders, the connections between the countries have remained minimal.

When the respondents were asked “Generally speaking, how much do you think you are informed about Armenia & Armenians?”, 41.4% of them report that they are fairly informed about Armenia and Armenians, and 34.6% state that they are not very informed. Merely 3.4% of survey participants believe that they are very well informed about Armenia and Armenians.

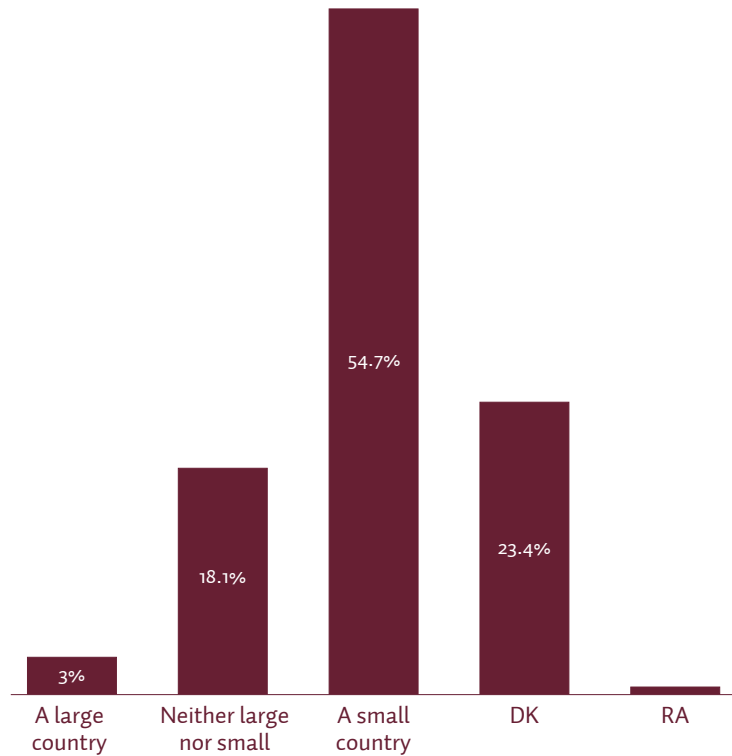
Graph 10. P21. Generally speaking, how much do you think you are informed about Armenia & Armenians? (n = 2019)



³ It is important to note that before the statistical testings were made between variables, all “don't know” and “refused to answer” options were treated as “NA”, which was required for statistical tests' accuracy. This is the reason why you may notice different numbers of observations based on the variables that were statistically associated.

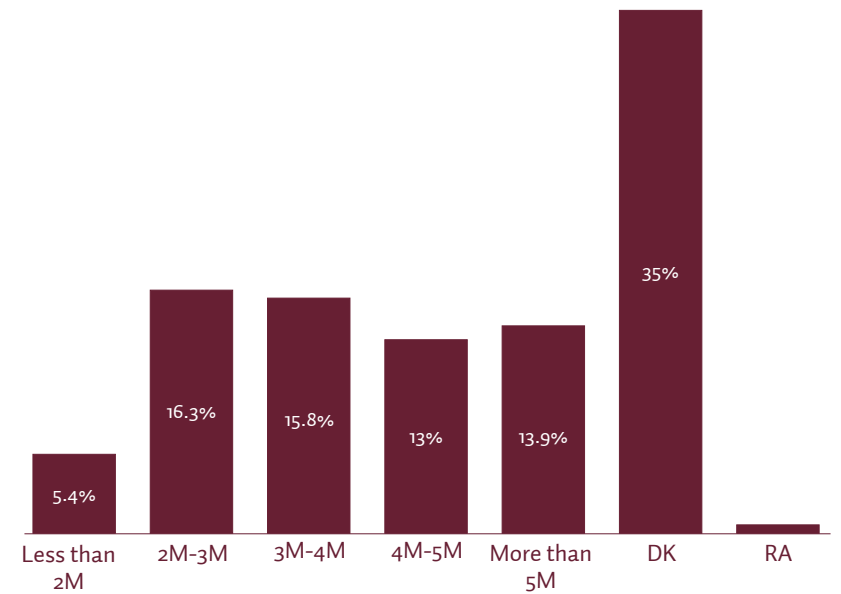
In addition to the findings above, we see that more than half of the respondents (54.7%) define Armenia as a small country, while 23.4% of participants say that they have no information about the land size of Armenia.

Graph 11. P13. How would you evaluate today's Armenia in terms of land size? (n = 2013)



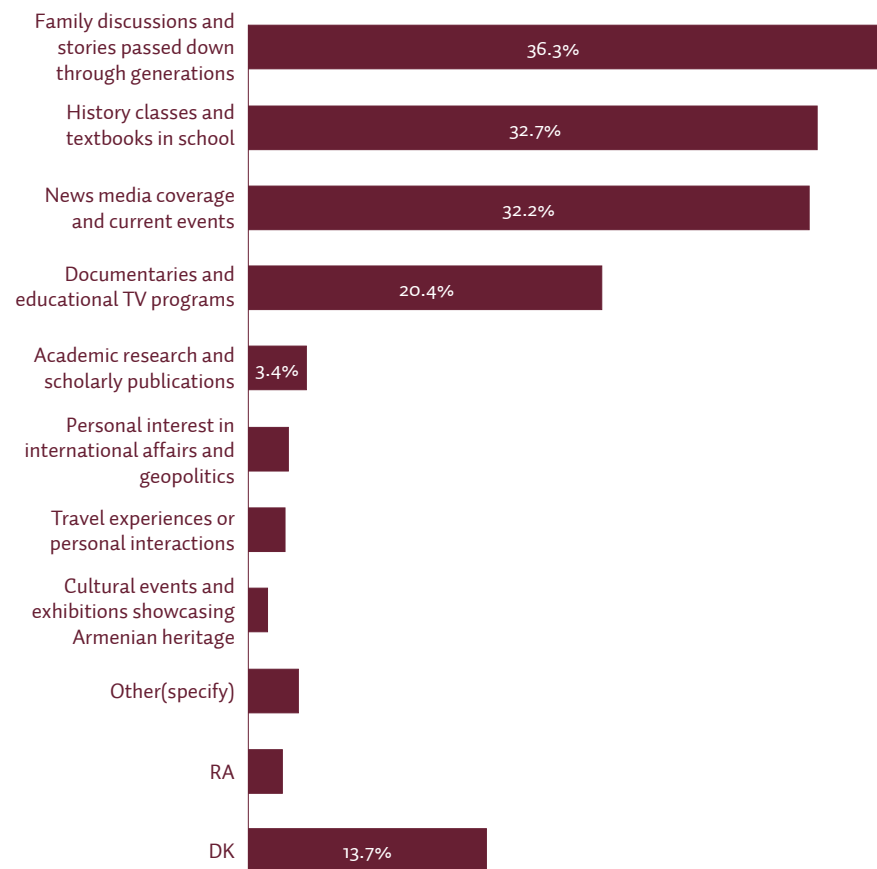
The respondents were also asked a more detailed question about Armenia, "Approximately how many millions do you think is the population of Armenia today?" The most common response (35%) is "I have no idea" for the question. On the other hand, 16.3% of respondents say that the population of Armenia is between 2 and 3 million, while 15.8% of respondents think that the population size is between 3 and 4 million.

Graph 12. P11. Approximately how many millions do you think is the population of Armenia today? (options were not read out, n = 2016)



As the graph below indicates, the most common way of being informed about Armenia & Armenians in Turkey is through family discussions and stories passed down through generations (36.3%). This is followed by history classes and textbooks in school (32.7%) and news media coverage and current events (32.2%)

Graph 13. P22. Please, finish this sentence: "Growing up I have become informed about Armenia & Armenians mainly through ..."(multiple choice, answers were not read out to the respondent, n = 2986)



As we continue with the qualitative study, we observe that the participants learnt about Armenians from various sources. These sources include information from family elders, school education, historical artefacts and local narratives. In addition, some participants learnt about Armenians through the media, social media, and personal research.

Accordingly, the respondent, I14 mentions various sources of information: elders, social media, hashtags on Twitter, and events. This indicates a diverse set of influences shaping their understanding of Armenians. Learning from the elders suggests that traditional, oral narratives and personal anecdotes play a significant role in shaping perceptions. This often reflects the historical and cultural context passed down through generations. The mention of social media and hashtags on Twitter highlights the impact of contemporary digital platforms on shaping opinions and spreading information. Social media can both inform and misinform, depending on the content consumed:

Q: How did you learn about Armenians growing up?

A: From the elders, from social media, from the hashtags on Twitter, from the events that happened.

(I14: Man, 28 years old, high school graduate)

The reference to “events that happened” suggests an awareness of historical and possibly recent events involving Armenians. This could include both historical events such as the Armenian Genocide and more recent political or social incidents. The combination of traditional and modern sources means that I14 is likely exposed to a mix of narratives, which can include both accurate historical accounts and biased or incomplete information. This mix can lead to a complex and sometimes contradictory understanding of Armenians.

A significant part of respondents indicate that their knowledge about Armenians primarily comes from history lessons. This suggests that formal education played a significant role in shaping their understanding and perception of Armenians:

Q: How did you learn about Armenians growing up?”

A: As far as I know from history lessons.

(I13: Woman, 59 years old, high school graduate)

Similarly, the respondent, identified as I29, provides an account of learning about Armenians through formal education, particularly history books and lectures. He highlights that Armenians were once a trusted community during the Ottoman period, but this trust was lost after World War I. This response reflects the impact of historical narratives on current perceptions, emphasising the role of education in shaping understanding. I29's acknowledgment of a transition from trust to mistrust underscores the profound effect of historical events, particularly the Armenian Genocide, on the relation between Turks and Armenians. This perspective points to the need for nuanced and comprehensive historical education that addresses both the periods of coexistence and the conflicts to foster a more balanced understanding:

I learnt about Armenians from history books and lectures. Armenians were a trusted community during the Ottoman period, but after World War I, this trust disappeared.

(I29: Man, 23 years old, high school graduate)

The answer implies that the respondent might have limited personal or familial knowledge about Armenians, relying instead on institutionalised education. Participants' sources of information were shaped by historical events and personal experiences. This shows how the perceptions of individuals living in Turkey about Armenians and Armenia are formed and how they are influenced by different sources.

We first got to know Armenians through the massacres that were rumoured to have been committed in Erciş⁴ district of Van and also through the massacres committed against the people living in Dereköy

(I9: Man, 51 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

By reading, that is, objectively... We get information whether from my family elders or from the environment, but you know, I consciously gained knowledge by actively reading myself, but of course there are also hearsay things, after all

(I6: Man, 46 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

I15 states that she does not have general knowledge about Armenia and Armenians and that she was affected by the exclusionary discourses she heard from her environment during her childhood. Hence, a large part of respondents learned about Armenians through a combination of traditional sources (elders), contemporary digital platforms (social media and Twitter), and awareness of

significant events. This diverse set of influences suggests that their understanding of Armenians is shaped by both historical narratives and modern discourse. Recognizing the potential for mixed narratives, it is essential to promote accurate and balanced information to foster a more informed and nuanced understanding of Armenians.

Generally, most of the respondents state that they do not know much about Armenians and Armenia. (For example: I1, I2, I7, I8, I9, I12, I13, I14, I15, I16 etc.) Limited knowledge about Armenia and Turkey-Armenia relations may make it difficult to understand the issue in depth. For example, I12 states that she does not know much about Armenians and Armenia. What she has heard about Armenians has generally been negative and exclusionary discourses, but she does not have such prejudices. She gives an example of exclusionary and hateful discourses on Armenians:

I mean, I've heard of Armenians being 'bad people', excuse me, 'dogs' and so on.

(I12: Woman, 33 years old, high school graduate)

Despite this negative view in her context, she does not see any problem in having an Armenian friend or neighbour and says that she would allow her son or daughter to marry an Armenian. Generally, similar to I12, other respondents (except nationalist ones) display a positive and tolerant attitude at least on the individual level despite general lack of knowledge.

I14's attitude towards Armenians is characterised by a strong commitment to equality and non-discrimination. I14 emphasises treating everyone the same, indicating a belief in fairness and inclusivity. This neutral stance, particularly in the context of historical tensions, suggests an effort to move beyond historical grievances and focus on individual character. The respondent's views highlight the importance of personal values and social norms in shaping attitudes towards others, promoting a more inclusive and equitable approach to interpersonal relations:

Q: What would you say is your attitude towards Armenians in general?

A: I am the same to everyone, the same to everyone. I don't discriminate between human beings, I don't discriminate between people.

(I14: Man, 28 years old, high school graduate)

⁴ Erciş in Armenian is Archesh.

I15, too, does not display a negative attitude towards Armenians on an individual level and is open about Armenian friendships and neighbourhoods, states that she can buy products produced in Armenia and allow her son or daughter to marry an Armenian. I18 also sees no harm in having an Armenian friend or marrying an Armenian daughter/son. He does not hesitate to buy products produced in Armenia.

Q: Could you have an Armenian friend?

A: It can happen, of course, it is normal.

(I18: Man, 34 years old, university graduate)

I20 sees no harm in having an Armenian friend or marrying an Armenian daughter/son. He does not hesitate to buy products produced in Armenia.

Q: Would you buy a product made in Armenia, for Example?

A: So it depends on the product. Except for food, I think I would buy it if the product is good quality and affordable.

(I20: Man, 35 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I25, expresses a view that emphasises the deep historical and cultural connections between Armenians and Turks. I25 highlights the long-standing presence of Armenians in Turkish culture and the significant cultural similarities between the two groups. This perspective suggests a potential for positive relations based on shared heritage and mutual respect, implying that historical and cultural ties can serve as a basis for improving contemporary relations between Turkey and Armenia:

When I think of Armenia, I think of Armenia, in short, Yerevan Armenians. They have been in our culture since ancient times, in fact we live in very similar cultures.

(I25: Man, 25 years old, university graduate)

The respondent, identified as I28, associates Armenia and Armenians primarily with being non-Muslims. This response highlights the focus on religious identity as the defining characteristic of Armenians, potentially reflecting a simplification of their complex identity. The emphasis on religious differences may influence the speaker's perceptions and attitudes towards Armenians, underscoring the importance of addressing and broadening such viewpoints to foster a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of Armenian identity:

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of Armenia and Armenians?

A: I think of non-Muslims.

(I28: Man, 31 years old, less than high school graduate)

I29 has a negative and cautious attitude towards the relations between Turkey and Armenia. Although he states that he can buy Armenian products and have an Armenian friend provided that he is a good person, he is against his children marrying an Armenian. Although he advocates the establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia, he thinks that these relations should be managed together with Azerbaijan. Security concerns and historical reservations are seen as the biggest obstacles to the normalisation of relations:

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of Armenia and Armenians?

A: Treason.

Q: Could you define this a little bit, what kind of treason is this?

A: During the Ottoman period, Armenians were a community we called millet-i sadika. Later on, during World War I and the War of Independence, they committed treason.

(I29: Man, 23 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I34, associates Armenia primarily with its conflict with Azerbaijan and denies the Armenian Genocide, referring to it as a "rumour" that has been "proven to be invalid." This perspective emphasises conflict and controversy, reflecting a nationalistic viewpoint that focuses on historical and political disputes. This view is dominant by the nationalist respondents. The response highlights the significant impact of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and disputed historical narratives on perceptions of Armenia. Addressing these contentious issues and promoting a more balanced understanding could be essential steps toward improving relations and mutual understanding between Turkey and Armenia:

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of Armenia and Armenians?

A: Azerbaijan comes first, they had problems with Azerbaijan. There was also a rumour about the Armenian genocide, which has already been proven to be invalid.

(I34: Man, 35 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, I35, describes a personal shift in understanding from seeing Armenianism as a sect to recognizing Armenians as a distinct race. This correction reflects a broader awareness of the historical coexistence between Armenians and their community in the region. I35's evolving understanding highlights the impact of education and exposure on correcting misconceptions and fostering a more respectful and nuanced perspective on ethnic and cultural identities. This awareness is crucial for improving relations and building mutual respect between different communities.

Until a year ago, I knew Armenianism as a sect. For a year now, I know that they are a race. Yes, I know that we have been living together in the geography where I live since ancient times.

(I35: Man, 30 years old, university graduate)

I35 displays a positive attitude towards Armenians and takes into account their historical victimisation. This shows how historical events shape individuals' empathy and understanding. The respondent, I35, expresses a very optimistic and positive attitude towards Armenians. He feels empathy and sympathy for Armenians, viewing them as victims of historical injustices. Personal connections with Armenian acquaintances in Istanbul and Diyarbakır further reinforce this positive outlook. His attitude includes an element of positive discrimination, where they consciously think good things about Armenians and support them, while being mindful not to appear patronising. This perspective highlights the importance of empathy, personal connections, and a genuine positive attitude in fostering understanding and improving relations between different communities:

Q: What would you say is your attitude towards Armenians in general?

A: I am very optimistic, I don't want to sound patronising, but I am on the side that feels a bit sorry for them because they are victims. I have Armenian acquaintances in Istanbul and Diyarbakır. I am very positive, even a little positive in the sense of positive discrimination towards Armenians, I think good things.

Q: Can you explain what victimisation means, what kind of victimisation?

A: There are what we have heard about the 1915 events, there are the theses of the other side, there are their own theses. Of course, we can reach the truth with historians, historians can sit down and talk, but this makes me feel that they are bad and victimised.

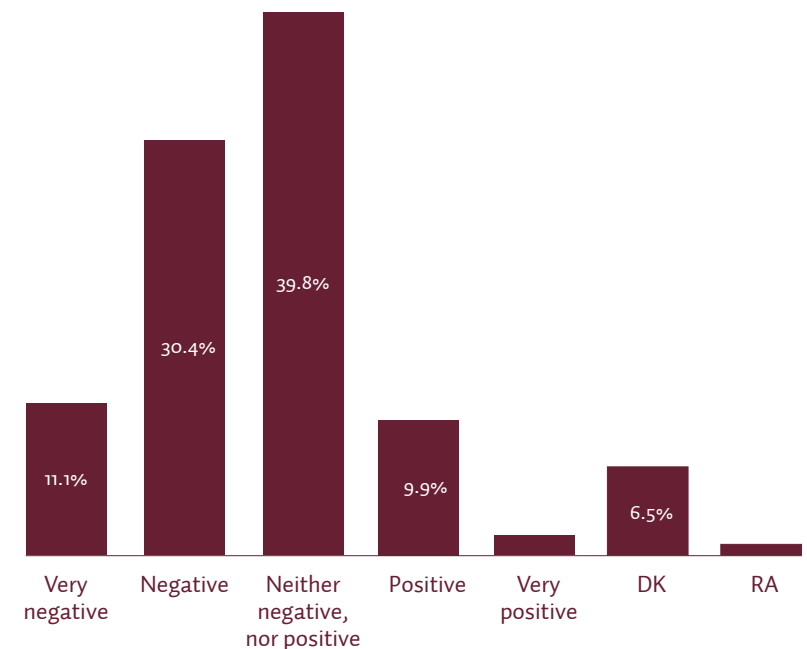
Q: What do you think is the attitude of Turks towards Armenians in general?

A: I can say that the attitude of Turks towards Armenians is terrible. They are taught since childhood that they are a real enemy, even in social media, which we have all seen, or when insulting someone, the word 'Armenian' is used, and expressions such as 'Armenian spawn' are used.

(I35: Man, 30 years old, university graduate)

Continuing on statistics, the most common response (39.8%) to the question "Generally speaking, what kind of attitude would you say you have about Armenians?" is "Neither negative, nor positive". On the other hand, 11.1% of participants express a very negative attitude towards Armenians, while 30.4% hold a negative attitude. However, similar percentages cannot be observed for those who express positive attitudes towards the Armenians. Merely 9.9% of respondents report that they have positive attitudes towards them.

Graph 14. P17. Generally speaking, what kind of attitude would you say you have about Armenians? (n = 2010)



As we move from rural to metropolitan areas, the percentage of people with positive attitudes towards Armenians increases slightly.

Table 5. The attitude about Armenians by the settlement type (n = 1878)

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative, nor positive	Positive	Very positive
Rural (n= 147)	17.8%	25.1%	48.2%	8.8%	0.0%
Urban (n= 720)	11.7%	35.7%	40.4%	11.3%	1.0%
Metropolis (n= 1011)	11.5%	31.9%	44.1%	10.5%	2.0%

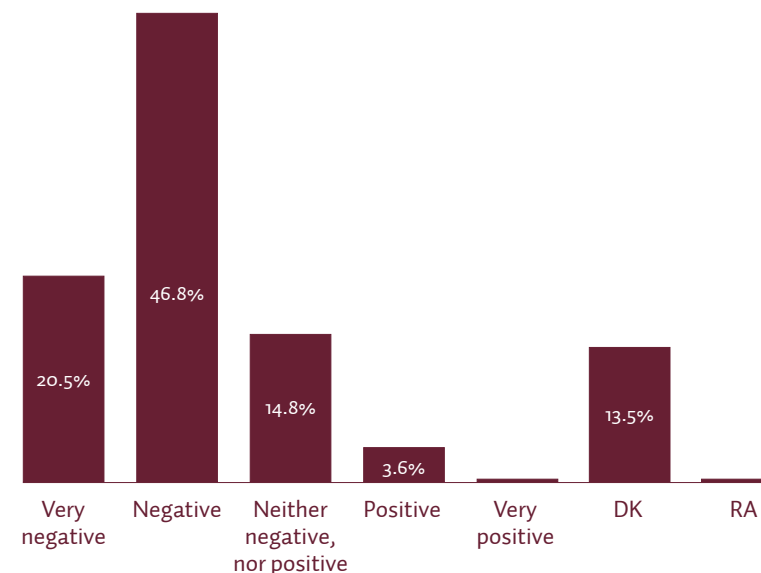
As the table below indicates, the highest rate of those who say they have a very negative attitude towards Armenians belongs to those aged 51 and over (16%). On the other hand, the highest percentage of those who say they have a very positive attitude towards Armenians belongs to those aged between 15 and 17 (3.1%).

Table 6. The attitude about Armenians by respondents' age? (n = 1877)

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative, nor positive	Positive	Very positive
15 – 17 (n = 89)	5.1%	32.9%	50.5%	8.5%	3.1%
18 – 33 (n = 558)	9.7%	26.2%	52.1%	10.3%	1.7%
34 – 50 (n = 611)	11.2%	35.1%	43.2%	9.6%	0.9%
51+ (n = 619)	16.0%	36.6%	33.5%	12.4%	1.6%

A substantial number of respondents believe that Armenians have a negative (46.8%) and very negative (20.5%) attitude towards Turks. The percentage of those who think that Armenians have a positive attitude towards Turks is only 3.6%.

Graph 15. P18. What kind of attitude do you think the Armenians have about Turks in general? (n = 2017)



Another question the respondents were asked was “What kind of attitude do you think the Turkish have about the Armenians in general?”. We observe that the perceptions of the attitude of Armenians towards Turks appear to be remarkably correlated with Turks’ attitudes toward Armenians.⁵ It can be seen that interviewees who think Turks have a negative attitude towards Armenians are very likely to believe that Armenians also have a negative attitude towards Turks. In other words, there is a correlation between the two parties’ negative perceptions of each other.

Additionally, while the percentage of those who believe that Armenians have a very negative attitude towards Turks is higher among male respondents than among female respondents, the opposite trend is observed for those who believe that Armenians have a negative attitude towards Turkish.

⁵ Kendall tau = 0.440, p-value < 0.001, n = 1766.

Table 7. Perceived attitude of the Armenians about Turks by respondent's sex? (n = 1742)

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative, nor positive	Positive	Very positive
Male (n= 910)	26.0%	51.8%	17.2%	5.0%	0.0%
Female (n= 833)	21.6%	57.5%	17.4%	3.2%	0.3%

According to the table below, the highest rate of those who think that Armenians have a very negative/negative attitude towards Turks belongs to people who live in urban areas.

Table 8. Perceived attitude of the Armenians about Turks by the settlement type? (n = 1742)

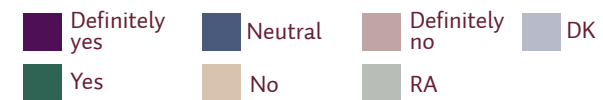
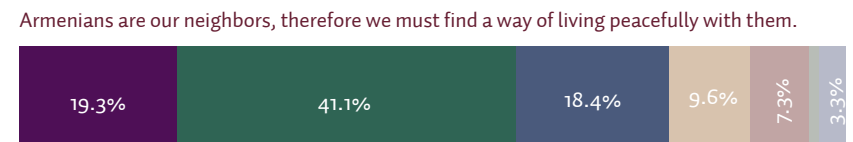
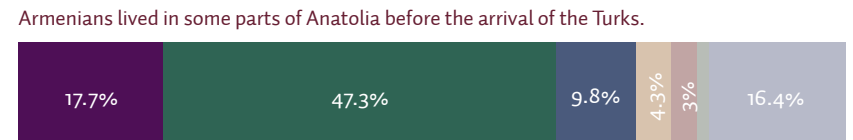
	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative, nor positive	Positive	Very positive
Rural (n= 133)	27.7%	42.8%	21.9%	7.6%	0.0%
Urban (n= 648)	26.0%	54.7%	15.3%	3.7%	0.2%
Metropolis (n=962)	21.9%	56.1%	18.0%	4.0%	0.1%

When the responses given to the statements below are analysed, it is seen that by far the highest rate of the response “Definitely yes” belongs to those who state “I am proud of being Turkish” (70.6%).

Also, 54.6% of respondents approve of the statement “I would be disturbed if my daughter married an Armenian man”, while the percentage is 49.7% for the statement “I would be disturbed if my son married an Armenian woman”.

The highest rate of response “I have no idea” (16.4%) belongs to the statement “Armenians lived in some parts of Anatolia before the arrival of the Turks”. The reason for this finding may be that this statement requires historical knowledge.

Graph 16. P20. Now I will read out a few statements. Please indicate to what extent you approve of them, using the following scale: 1 - Definitely no, 5 - Definitely yes.. (n = 1999)



The respondent, identified as I26, acknowledges and normalises the historical presence of Armenians in parts of Anatolia before the arrival of the Turks. She places this within the context of the Ottoman Empire, noting that Greeks, Kyrgyz, and Armenians may have been among the first landowners. Generally, the perspective of the respondents reflect an acceptance of the region's historical multiculturalism and a lack of bias against the historical presence of Armenians. Similarly, I26's view highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing the diverse ethnic heritage of Anatolia as a foundation for understanding and improving contemporary relations:

Q: What do you think about the Armenians living in some parts of Anatolia before the arrival of the Turks?

A: It is possible, of course, because from the Ottoman times, Greeks, Kyrgyz, Armenians may have been the first landowners, so I consider such a thing normal.

(I26: Woman, 24 years old, high school graduate)

According to the data obtained from the interviews, the majority of the participants have a cautious or negative attitude towards the marriage of their sons or daughters with an Armenian. However, some participants displayed a more open and positive approach. Others have a negative attitude towards marriage with Armenians due to historical events and cultural differences. For example, historical prejudices against Armenians and past conflicts support a distant stance towards such marriages. Participants think that cultural and religious differences may cause problems. Some participants openly stated that they would not accept their children marrying an Armenian.

I would never allow my son or daughter to marry an Armenian.

(I17: Man, 34 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

I cannot approve such a marriage due to religious and cultural differences.

(I4: Woman, 43 years old, less than high school graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

I27's views reflect the nationalistic tendencies. He states that he will not buy Armenian products, will not make friends with an Armenian person, and will not allow his children to marry an Armenian. He states that he does not trust Armenians for historical and political reasons. He is against the opening of borders and the normalisation of diplomatic relations and thinks that these processes do not serve Turkey's interests:

Q: Would you buy a product made in Armenia?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: Because they massacre innocent people at the first opportunity they find, like in Khojaly in 1994.

Q: Could you have an Armenian friend?

A: No.

Q: Would you allow your son/daughter to marry an Armenian?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: I prefer it to be from my own nationality.

Q: How do you think the opening of the common border between Turkey and Armenia will affect our economy, culture or security?

A: I mean, I think it may cause problems in terms of security. In the economy, it may mobilise tourism a little bit, but it is not necessary.

(I27: Man, 22 years old, high school graduate)

A part of interviewees stated that marriage depends on the compatibility and character of individuals and that their son or daughter can marry an Armenian regardless of ethnicity or religion. These participants argued that compatibility in personal relations is important and that prejudices should be overcome.

Other interviewees stated that it is important to live in peace and tolerance with Armenians and that they would allow their children to marry an Armenian.

I can allow my son or daughter to marry an Armenian, the important thing is the harmony of individuals.

(I6: Man, 46 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

What matters in marriage is character, not ethnicity or religion.

(I8: Woman, 22 years old, high school graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Most participants exhibit a cautious or negative stance regarding the marriage of their sons or daughters to an Armenian. Nevertheless, some respondents embrace a more open and tolerant viewpoint. These different attitudes are based on historical events, cultural and religious differences, and individual understandings of harmony and tolerance.

The majority of the interviewees have a positive or neutral attitude towards having an Armenian friend or neighbour. Positive attitudes towards having Armenian friends or neighbours emphasise the importance of harmony and tolerance in individual relations. However, some respondents are more cautious due to historical and cultural reservations.

Of course it can be. I mean, people’s nationality or religious beliefs are not an obstacle for me. I can be friends with anyone I can get on well with, trust and value.

(I3: Woman, 26 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Q: Let’s say you meet a person who is very sweet, but he is Armenian, could you be friends with him?

A: I could be friends.

(I12: Woman, 33 years old, high school graduate)

It can happen. People’s attitude, character and behaviour towards each other are important. Having an Armenian friend is not a problem for me.

(I11: Man, 34 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

I23’s answers reflect a pragmatic and non-discriminatory approach to both consumer choices and personal relations. His willingness to buy useful products from Armenia and their openness to having Armenian friends indicate a focus on practicality and individual merit over historical or ethnic biases. This attitude is crucial for fostering positive interactions and building mutual understanding between people from different backgrounds. The respondent’s stance suggests a potential for constructive and harmonious relations, contributing to reconciliation and cooperation:

Q: Would you buy a product produced in Armenia?

A: If it is useful, I would buy it

Q: Could you have an Armenian friend?

A: Of course I can.

(I23: Man, 61 years old, university graduate)

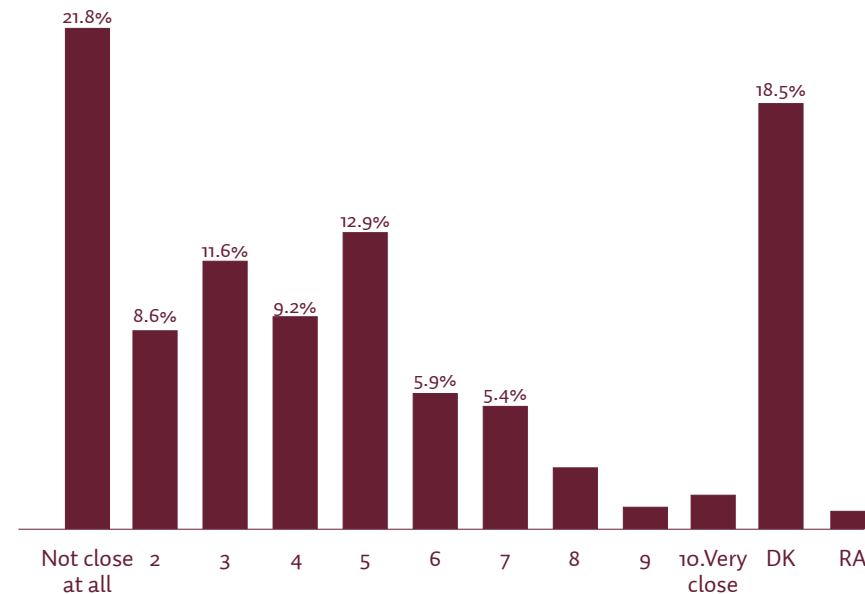
The respondent, identified as I25, provides a personal account of their relations with Armenian friends. He emphasises the positive qualities of these friends and the cultural closeness they share. This perspective highlights the potential for integration and acceptance between different cultural groups, suggesting that shared cultural elements and positive personal relations can bridge historical divides. I25’s experience underscores the importance of looking beyond rigid ethnic identities to find common ground and foster mutual respect and understanding:

I have Armenian friends, but today they do not see themselves as Armenians but as Kurds. They are good people, they are very close to our culture, I am Kurdish myself and I see them as people very close to my Kurdish culture.

(I25: Man, 25 years old, university graduate)

Continuing on statistics, 21.8% of respondents believe that Turkish and Armenian cultures are not close at all. Those who say “I have no idea/knowledge” to the question are also quite high (18.5%). Additionally, we see a gradual decrease in percentages when we move from the middle value “5” (12.9%) to value “9” (less than 3%).

Graph 17. N25. How close do you think Turkish and Armenian cultures are? (n = 2012)



Continuing on qualitative study, we observed that participants' views on the closeness of Turkish and Armenian cultures differ. While some recognise cultural similarities, others state that there are significant differences between these two cultures.

The fact that we come from a common culture, even though our religions are different, our food culture is almost the same, halays,⁶ the way we speak, the way we live, our cultural codes, the fact that we breathe the air of the same lands. This does not make any difference between the west of Turkey and the east of Central Anatolia, I am saying this for almost every land because, for example, you know what lahmacun is and they know what lahmacun is.

(I8: Woman, 22 years old, high school graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Let's say the closeness is at a medium level, that is to say, there are their influences here, especially on Kurds, whether it is weddings or different traditions. Superstitions, superstitious beliefs, for example, in terms of, let's say, folkloric aspects, for example, weddings, so they also have their influence, that is, the beliefs left over from them are still here... Yes, there are."

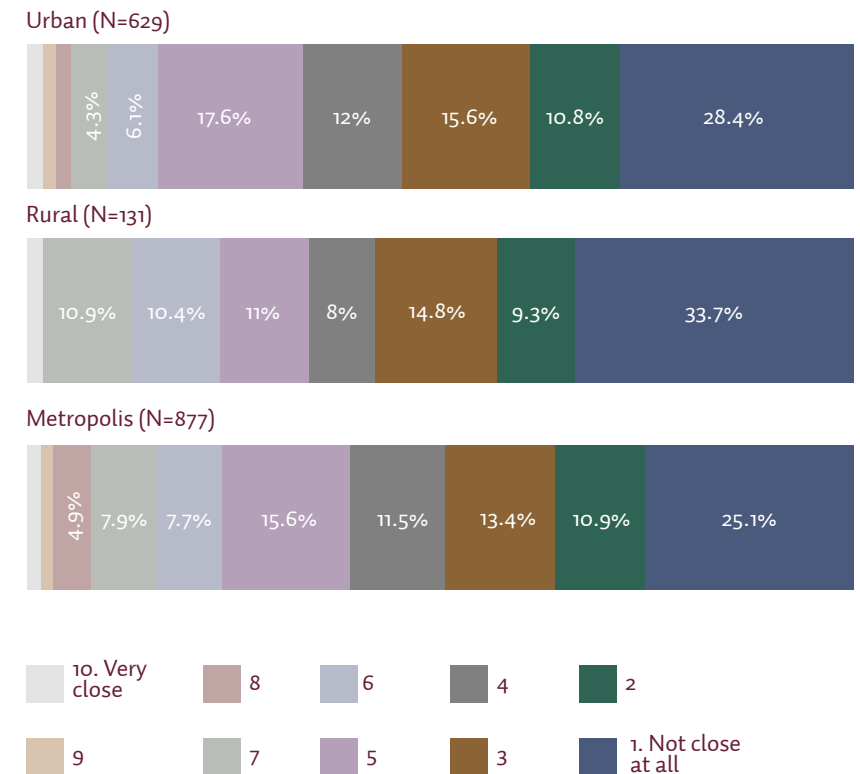
(I2: Man, 33 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Culturally, I do not see any closeness.

(I4: Woman, 43 years old, less than high school graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

In the survey, when we examine the perceived level of closeness of Turkish and Armenian cultures by settlement type, we observe that the responses specifically differ between residents of metropolises and urban areas.⁷ We also see that the highest percentage for those who believe that the cultures of the countries are not close at all belongs to people in rural areas (33.7%).

Graph 18. Perceived level of closeness of Turkish and Armenian cultures by the settlement type (n = 1637)

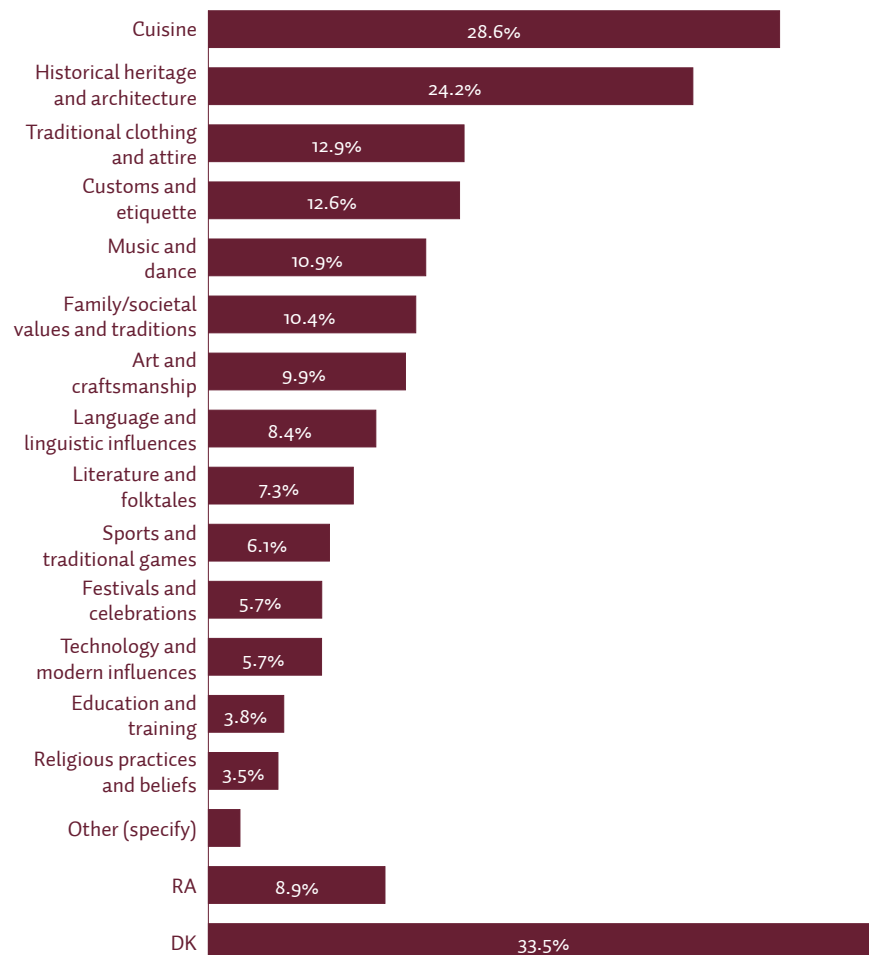


⁶ Halay is a traditional folk dance popular in Turkey, as well as in regions of the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. It is a group dance performed in a line or a circle, where dancers hold hands or link arms.

⁷ Dunnett's test, Urban - Metropolis, P adj. = 0.009, n = 1637.

Additionally, we aimed to identify cultural similarities by asking participants which cultural spheres they believed exhibited similarities. Based on the quantitative findings, we observed that the most common answer is cuisine (28.6%). This response is followed by historical heritage and architecture (24.2%), and traditional clothing and attire (12.9%). Additionally, it is important to note that the highest response rate belongs to those who say “I have no idea/knowledge”.

Graph 19. N26. In which cultural spheres do you think there are similarities between the countries? (multiple choice, answers were not read out to the respondent, n = 3755)



As the education level of respondents increases, the percentage of those who find cuisine a similar sphere of culture also increases (from 21.1% to 43.7%).⁸ 2 out of every 5 university graduates believe that cuisine is a similar cultural sphere between the peoples.

Graph 20. Cuisine as a similar sphere of culture by respondents' education level (n = 577)



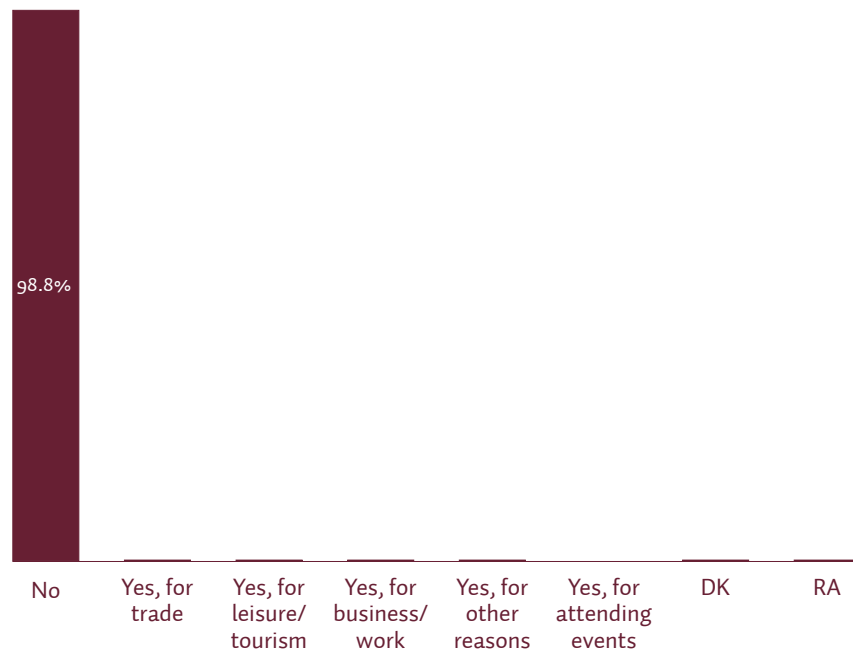
⁸ Chi square test, $X^2 = 76.254$, $p < 0.001$, $n = 577$.

2.2.3. Existing Practices & Experiences

In this section of the report, we examine the existing practices and experiences of respondents towards Armenians.

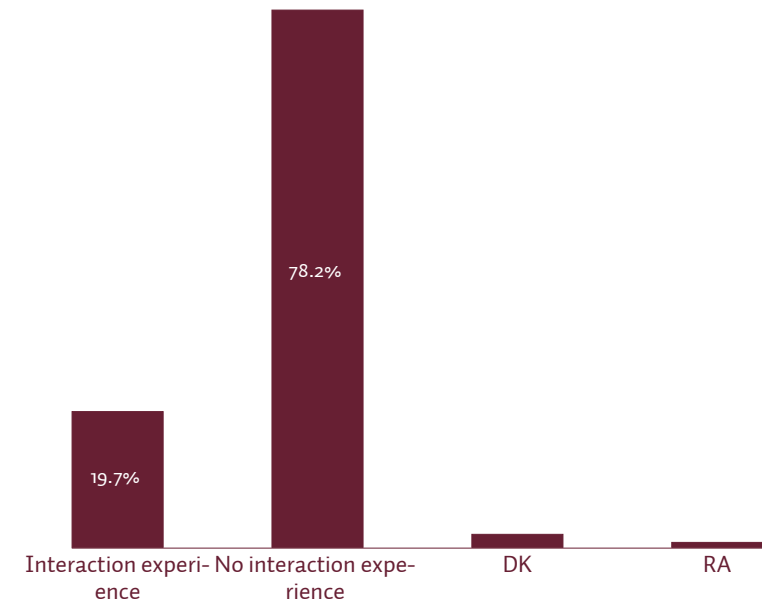
When the respondents were asked “Have you ever visited Armenia?”, we observe that almost all the respondents in the survey stated that they have never visited Armenia (98.8%).

Graph 21. P17. Have you ever visited Armenia? (n=2022)



Moreover, interaction experience can be a significant factor in relations among people. Since the perceptions and perspectives of the people of Turkey towards Armenians are within the scope of the report, the respondents were also asked “Have you ever interacted with an Armenian?”. While 78.2% of respondents stated that they have never interacted with an Armenian, 19.7% say that they have interacted.

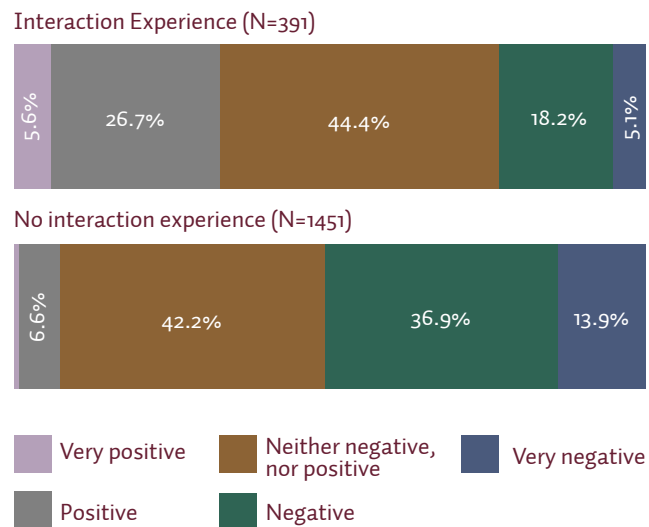
Graph 22. P15. Have you ever interacted with an Armenian? (n = 2024)



Those who have had interactions with an Armenian are more likely to express positive attitudes towards them.⁹ Among those who have interacted with an Armenian in their lifetime, 32.3% (the cumulative total of very positive and positive responses) reported having a positive attitude towards Armenians. In contrast, among those who have never interacted with an Armenian, none gave a “very positive” response, while 6.6% gave a “positive” response. Furthermore, 50.8% of these individuals (the cumulative total of very negative and negative responses) reported having a negative attitude towards Armenians.

In summary, these findings suggest that personal interactions with Armenians significantly enhance positive attitudes towards them, while the absence of such interactions may contribute to negative perceptions. This highlights the importance of fostering interpersonal relations and dialogues to bridge gaps and improve mutual understanding between different communities.

Graph 23. The attitude towards Armenians by the interaction experience (n = 1842)

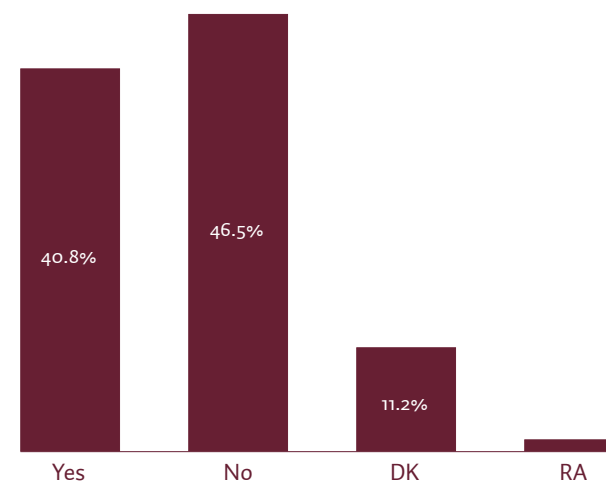


⁹ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 1300204.500, p-value < 0.001, n = 1842.

Another question the respondents were asked in order to examine their perception and attitudes towards Armenians and Armenia was “Would you buy a product that was produced in Armenia?”

While 46.5% of the participants stated that they would not buy a product produced in Armenia, 40.8% expressed the opposite.

Graph 24. P16. Would you buy a product that was produced in Armenia? (n = 2001)



To continue on qualitative study, we observe that in general, the intensity and quality of the participants’ interactions with Armenians are limited. These interactions rarely take place on a personal level and are often overshadowed by historical events.

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of Armenia and Armenians?

A: Well, what comes to my mind? I don’t have any information about that right now.

Q: Do you know any Armenians?

A: Armenian, no, I didn’t see them, I have never met them, I don’t know.

Q: Have you visited Armenia?

A: Of course not.

Q: So you have no prejudice against an Armenian product?

A: I don't, but I wouldn't think of using it, to be honest.

Many participants stated that they had little or no interaction with Armenians on a personal level. Some participants stated that they have no Armenian acquaintances or friends, while others stated that they do not encounter Armenians at work or in daily life:

Q: Have you known any Armenians, have you visited Armenia?

A: I have not visited, but I recognised them on TV.

Q: On television, in your own life?

A: No, maybe I recognised them in my own life, but there is no one who says "I am Armenian".

The regions where the participants live and historical events affect their interactions with Armenians:

Yes, I know them. I am from Kars, there are many Armenians still living in Kars.

(I8: Woman, 22 years old, high school graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

For example, participants living in Van and its surroundings stated that they were historically influenced by the conflicts with Armenians. The stories they heard about Armenians and the regional history caused the participants to keep their distance from Armenians. There were also participants who stated that they may have Armenian neighbours or friends, but these participants generally stated that their interactions were limited.

According to the data from the interviews, respondents' attitudes towards purchasing a product produced in Armenia vary. However, in general, certain tendencies can be observed: some respondents stated that they would buy a product produced in Armenia if it is useful and needed. These respondents prioritise their practical needs regardless of the country of origin of the product. For example, if a product produced in Armenia is not available in Turkey or if it is of better quality and affordable, they would buy it.

If a product produced in Armenia is also produced in Turkey, of course I will not buy it, but if it is not produced elsewhere and we have to buy it, we will buy it anyway.

(I9: Man, 51 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey Armenia border)

Some respondents are reluctant to purchase a product produced in Armenia due to historical events and political reservations. These respondents are distant from products produced in Armenia due to past conflicts and genocide narratives.

I would hesitate to buy a product produced in Armenia because I am distant from Armenia due to the events in the past and the genocide allegations.

(I11: Man, 34 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

There are also respondents who tend to buy the same product from another country due to the origin of the product in Armenia. Participants with a neutral attitude stated that they would buy a product produced in Armenia if its quality and price are favourable. These participants emphasised that the country where the product is produced is not important, the main thing is the product itself. Some participants stated that they do not have any prejudice against the products produced in Armenia and that they would buy these products if they need them.

I would buy a product produced in Armenia, the important thing is the quality and price of the product. The country of origin is not important.

(I7: Man, 34 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Some interviewees take rather a positive approach in buying a product made in Armenia:

Q: Would you buy any product made in Armenia?

A: I would.

(I12: Woman, 33 years old, high school graduate)

Respondents' attitudes towards purchasing a product produced in Armenia vary according to historical, political, and practical factors. In general, there is a tendency to buy a product if it is useful and of good quality. However, due to historical events and political reservations, some of the respondents keep their distance from these products.

Some respondents' perception (such as I19, I20 and I21) of Armenia is overwhelmingly negative, shaped by historical events such as the Armenian Genocide and ongoing political conflicts. This perspective underscores the deep impact of unresolved historical grievances and current political tensions on individual attitudes. The strong emotional response and negative associations highlight significant challenges to fostering reconciliation and mutual understanding between Armenia and Turkey. Overcoming these barriers will require addressing historical grievances, promoting dialogue, and building trust through cooperative efforts aimed at finding common ground and achieving lasting resolutions.

When I think of Armenia, the first thing that comes to my mind is genocide, the lack of an agreement, the inability to reach an agreement, a fight between countries, conflict, such bad words.

(I19: Woman, 35 years old, high school graduate)

I21's perception of Armenia and Armenians is predominantly shaped by the historical event of the Armenian Genocide:

When we think of Armenia and Armenians, we usually think of genocide.

(I21: Woman, 31 years old, university graduate)

Addressing these issues requires efforts to broaden perspectives through education, cultural exchange, and open dialogue that acknowledge historical grievances while also promoting a more comprehensive understanding of each other's identities and histories:

Q: What would have increased the level of mutual trust between Armenians and Turks?

A : People need to understand each other.

(I21: Woman, 31 years old, university graduate)

I22's perception of Armenia is dominated by the notion of closed borders and the absence of communication between the two countries. This view underscores the physical and symbolic barriers that hinder interaction and understanding. The closed borders represent unresolved historical and political issues, contributing to a sense of isolation and detachment. Addressing these barriers through diplomatic efforts and fostering communication and exchange can pave the way for improved relations and a shift in perceptions. The respondent's statement highlights the critical need for initiatives aimed at opening borders, promoting dialogue, and building bridges between the two communities:

When I think of Armenia, I think of closed borders, no communication, no one can come from there to here and no one can go from here to there.

(I22: Woman, 23 years old, high school graduate)

I22's view on whether Turkey and Armenia should find a way to live in peace is influenced by a pragmatic assessment of the benefits to Turkey. He perceives Armenia as offering limited global contributions to Turkey but recognizes that providing access via trade routes could be beneficial for Armenia. This perspective underscores a transactional approach to peace, where economic cooperation, particularly through trade, is seen as the most tangible and beneficial outcome of improved relations. The respondent's stance reflects a focus on practical benefits

over broader diplomatic or cultural reconciliation efforts, suggesting that economic incentives might be a key driver for any potential improvements in relations between the two countries:

Q: Do you think that Turkey and Armenia are neighbours and that the countries should find a way to live in peace?

A: In other words, since Armenia does not seem to be a point that will contribute to Turkey in a global or global sense, I think it would be more beneficial for Armenia for Turkey to provide access to Armenia in terms of a trade route, as if there is not much need."

(I22: Woman, 23 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I29, expresses a pessimistic view on the potential for peace and conflict resolution between Turkey and Armenia. I29 cites the ongoing Azerbaijan-Armenia tension and Turkey's friendship with Azerbaijan as key reasons for their stance against finding a way to live in peace with Armenia. Additionally, the speaker refers to a long-standing enmity between Turkey and Armenia, indicating a perception of deep-rooted historical antagonism that they believe is difficult to overcome. This perspective underlines the significant influence of regional alliances and historical conflicts on current attitudes and suggests that overcoming these barriers would require substantial efforts to address both historical grievances and contemporary political dynamics:

Q: Since Armenians are our neighbours, do you think we should find a way to live in peace with them?

A: No, because there is still an ongoing Azerbaijan-Armenia tension and Azerbaijan is our friend.

Q: Do you think that the problems between Armenia and Turkey can be solved?

A: I don't think so because we have a very long-standing enmity.

(I29: Man, 23 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I30, believes that the end of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan is a critical precondition for the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia. This perspective emphasises the significant influence of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict on Turkey-Armenia relations and reflects the interconnectedness of regional issues. The response highlights the need for peace and stability in the region as a foundational step towards improving bilateral relations. This viewpoint suggests that efforts to resolve the Armenia-Azerbaijan

conflict could pave the way for more constructive engagement and reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia.

Q: Which preconditions do you think should be fulfilled for the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations?

A: It could be the end of the war with Azerbaijan.

(I30: Woman, 49 years old, high school graduate)

I23's attitude towards Armenians is characterised by a universal and non-discriminatory approach. He emphasises treating Armenians the same way they treat everyone else, reflecting an egalitarian and inclusive perspective. This attitude suggests a willingness to engage positively with Armenians, moving beyond historical grievances and focusing on individual character. Such a stance provides a strong foundation for reconciliation and building constructive relations between individuals from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

Q: What would you say is your attitude towards Armenians in general?

A: The same way I look at everyone universally.

(I23: Man, 61 years old, university graduate)

2.2.4. Areas of Potential Cooperation

This section provides information about potential cooperation between the societies and countries. Since the survey also strives to comprehend the possible opportunities for cooperation between the societies and countries, it is crucial to focus on which fields could be a driving force for this cooperation. With the quantitative and qualitative findings in the section, we try to shed light on the possible ways the normalisation process can progress.

Based on the qualitative findings, we observed that respondents' views on the economic impacts of the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey are diverse and comprehensive:

In terms of security, I don't think there will be anything negative, how many problems can we have? I think it will have positive effects in economic and cultural terms.

(I8: Woman, 22 years old, high school graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

In economic terms, I think it is neutral in a positive cultural sense because, as I said, some things are already close to each other. Maybe one or two small settlements in a very close region may be affected by us and them, but in terms of security, I have some hesitations.

(I9: Man, 51 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey Armenia border)

Most respondents agreed that the opening of the border would have positive economic impacts. These positive effects include increased trade, revitalised tourism and, improved economic cooperation. In particular, economic interactions between the peoples living in the border regions could increase. However, some respondents expressed security concerns and believe that the opening of the border could create potential security problems. However, there are also views that these security concerns can be minimised if the border is opened in a controlled manner.

I12 rejects negative discourses about Armenians and expresses openness to relations on an individual level. However, her opposition to the settlement of people from Armenia in Turkey reflects her cultural and demographic concerns.

Q: Would you approve the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey?

A: Opening the border? I don't see a problem in terms of culture and tourism, but I wouldn't want settlements etc.

(I12: Woman, 33 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I24, offers a nuanced perspective on the potential for normalising relations between Turkey and Armenia. While acknowledging historical tensions, they express a belief that normalisation is possible in the present day. However, they underscore that this process is deeply political and requires broader international cooperation, suggesting that Turkey alone, especially under its current government, may not be able to achieve this. This perspective highlights the complexities and challenges involved in diplomatic efforts and the importance of international consensus in resolving long-standing conflicts:

I mean, it can be normalised, of course there have been incidents in the past, it can be normalised nowadays... This is something that is a bit related to politics. A common consensus needs to be reached with other countries. It is not something that Turkey can do alone with the current government.

(I24: Woman, 48 years old, high school graduate)

Her opposition to the settlement of people from Armenia in Turkey reflects concerns about cultural diversity and demographic change. Nevertheless, she stands against prejudices against Armenians. It is clear that with more information and education, prejudices can be completely broken down and a more inclusive perspective can be developed. Participation in cultural events organised by civil society organisations can help individuals like I12 to gain more knowledge and reduce their prejudices.

Generally, the views of the respondents show a tolerant and constructive attitude. Although they lack knowledge, it is seen that this attitude can develop more positively with education and awareness raising. Turkey's active role in diplomatic relations and the organisation of events by non-governmental organisations can contribute to Turkey's people to develop more conscious and non-prejudiced approaches.

The respondent, identified as I25, strongly supports the establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia and other neighbouring countries. He emphasises the shared geography and cultural similarities as compelling reasons for such relations and critique the current lack of diplomatic engagement as unreasonable. This perspective highlights the importance of regional cooperation and the need for a shift in policy to prioritise diplomatic relations for the benefit of all parties involved. The speaker's viewpoint underscores the potential for mutual understanding and collaboration based on commonalities, advocating for a more open and cooperative regional approach:

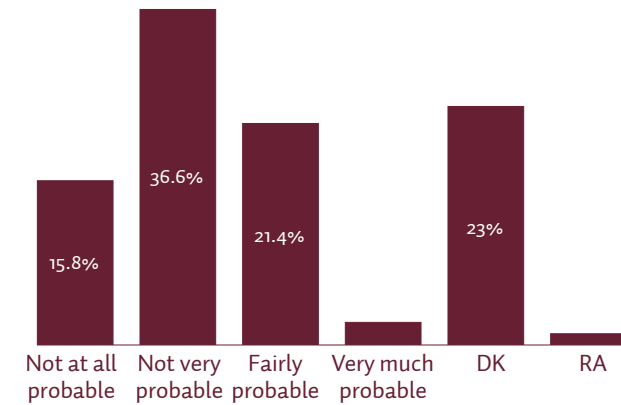
Q: Should diplomatic relations be established with Armenia?

A: Of course they should be established, not only with Armenia but with all neighbours. After all, we share the same geography, we have similar cultures, so it is ridiculous that this has not happened until today.

(I25: Man, 25 years old, university graduate)

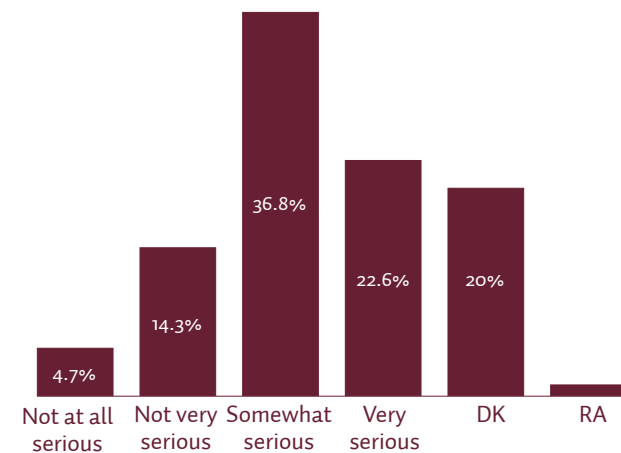
Based on the quantitative findings of the survey, 36.6% of respondents do not see the normalisation of Armenia-Turkey relations very probable through dialogue and communication in the upcoming 5 years, while 21.4% of respondents have a more moderate view of the question, stating that they find normalisation fairly probable.

Graph 25. N23. Overall, how would you rate the probability of Armenia-Turkey relations being normalised through dialogue and communication in the upcoming 5 years? (n = 2007)



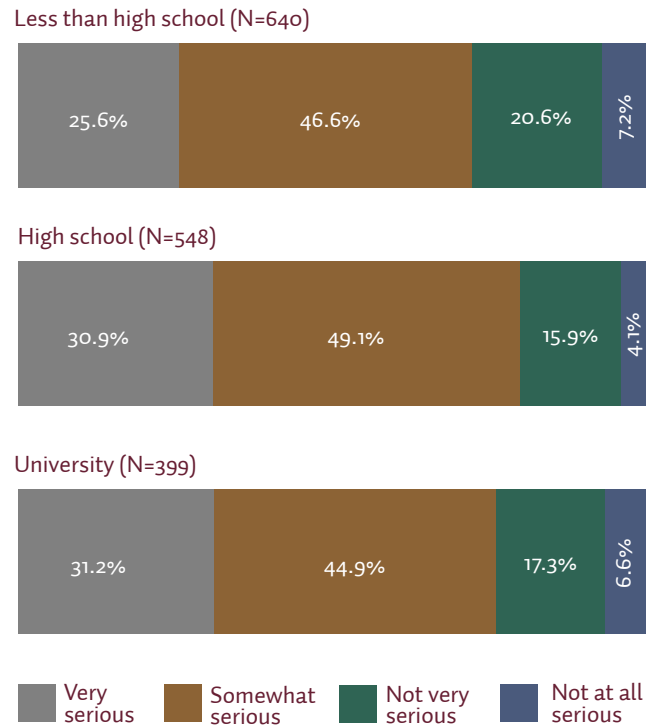
36.8% of respondents say that the problems between Turkey and Armenia are somewhat serious, while 22.6% consider the problems very serious. On the other hand, 14.3% of people believe that the problems are not very serious.

Graph 26. N24. How serious do you think the problems between Turkey and Armenia are? (n = 1997)



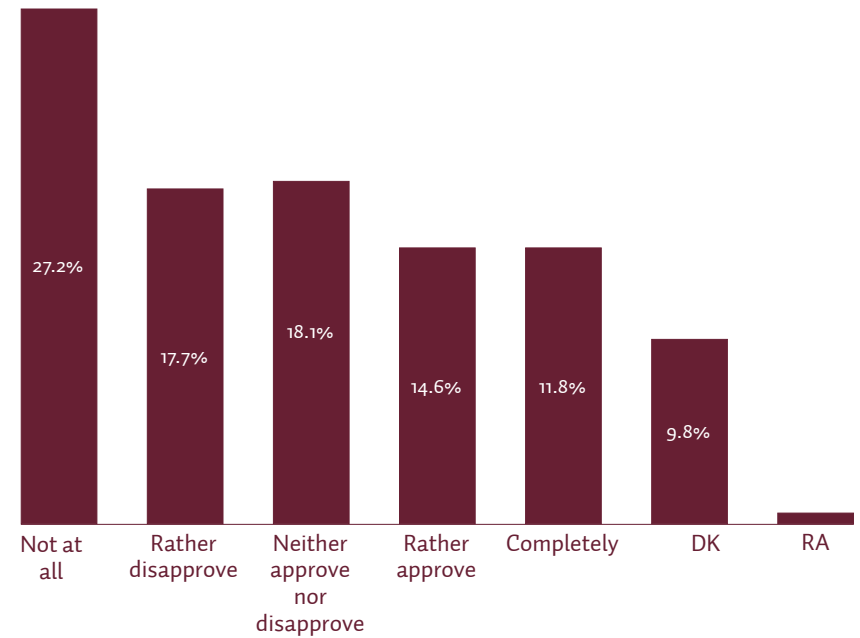
As the education level of respondents increases, the percentage of those who consider the problems between the countries very serious also increases.¹⁰ The percentage is 25.6% among people who have less than high school education. This reaches 30.9% among high school graduates and 31.2% among university graduates.

Graph 27. Seriousness of the problems between Turkey and Armenia by respondents' education level? (n = 1586)



As the graph below shows, 27.2% of respondents do not approve of opening the border between the countries at all. The lowest percentage belongs to those who completely approve of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey (11.8%).

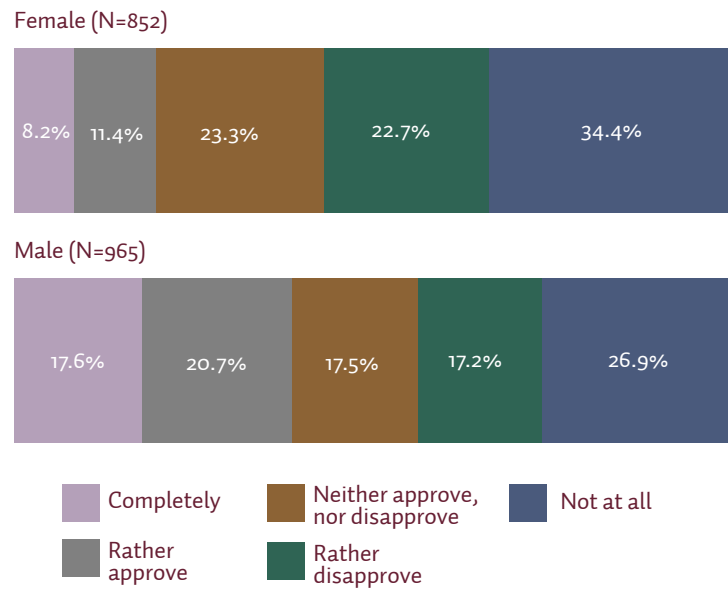
Graph 28. N28. To what extent do you approve of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey? (n = 2016)



¹⁰ Kruskal-Wallis test, H = 9.781, p-value = 0.008, n = 1586.

When the responses are analysed by gender, we observe that the percentage of those who approve of opening the border between the countries is higher among males compared to females.¹¹ On the other hand, 34.4% of female respondents do not approve of it at all, while this percentage is 26.9% among male respondents.

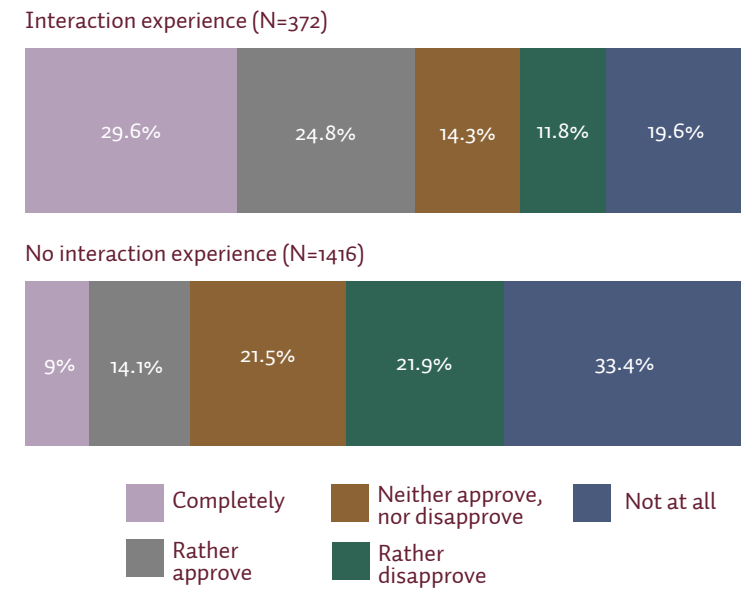
Graph 29. The level of approval of the border opening between Armenia and Turkey by respondent's sex (n = 1817)



¹¹ Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 740966.500, p-value < 0.001, n = 1817.

Moreover, the percentage of those who approve of opening the border between the countries is much higher among the respondents who have interacted with an Armenian.¹² While 29.6% of them completely approve of opening the border, this percentage is 9% among those who have never interacted with an Armenian.

Graph 30. The level of approval of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey by the experience of interaction (n = 1788)

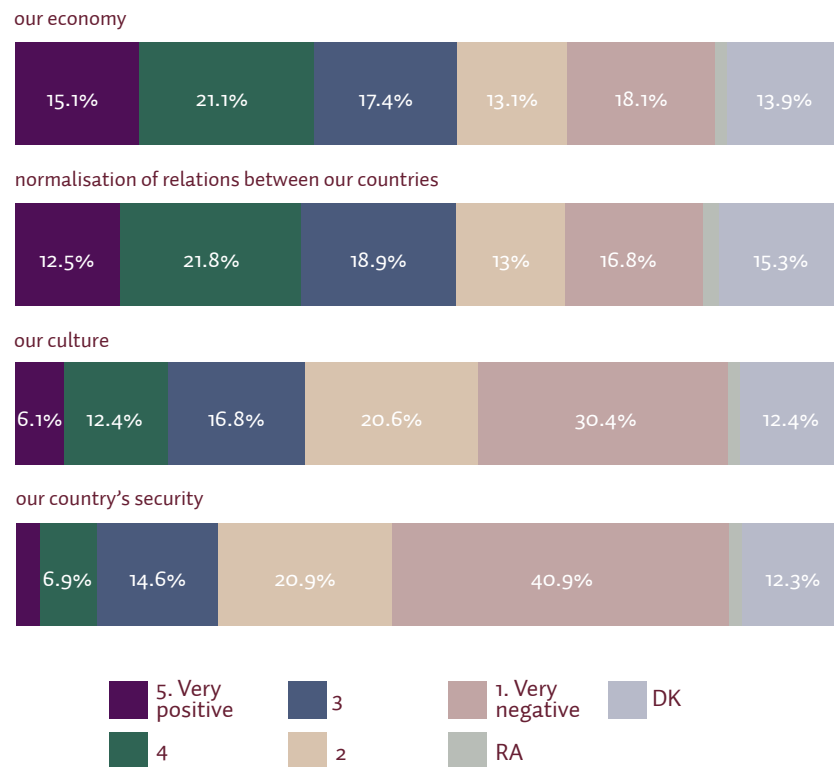


¹² Wilcoxon rank sum test, W = 1246226.500, p-value < 0.001, n = 1787.

We strove to elaborate this issue by asking respondents about what the mutual opening of borders between the countries would affect. According to the survey, 40.9% of people think that this development will be very negative for the security of Turkey. This is the highest rate compared with the other options. We observe that the second field that is thought to be affected very negatively is culture in Turkey (30.4%).

On the other hand, 15.1% of people believe that opening the mutual border between Turkey and Armenia will have a very positive impact on Turkey's economy. The second field that is thought to be affected very positively is normalisation of relations between the countries (12.5%).

Graph 31. N29. What influence do you think opening the mutual border between Turkey and Armenia will have on ... ? (n = 1999)



There are different views among the participants regarding the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations. Some participants think that normalisation is possible and that empathy, cultural activities, and civil society projects are important for this. On the other hand, some participants state that normalisation is difficult or not possible due to geopolitical situations and the influence of external powers. These differences reflect the complexity of the historical, cultural and political dynamics between the peoples of Turkey and Armenia.

They can achieve many things by empathising. Even if we try to normalise, someone from outside will do everything in their power to influence or prevent this normalisation.

(I9: Man, 51 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey Armenia border)

I don't think it can be solved in the current geopolitical situation.

(I7: Man, 34 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

I18's interview shows that he has a positive attitude towards the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey. On an individual level, he does not have a negative attitude towards Armenians and supports the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations:

This diplomatic relation is a communication, whether it is positive or negative, it can be established, why not?

(I18: Man, 34 years old, university graduate)

I19 expresses conditional support for establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia, emphasising the need for genuine and mutually beneficial interactions. They caution against opportunism and stress the importance of approaching the relation with a positive mindset. The response reflects a nuanced perspective that balances optimism with caution, advocating for a proactive and intentional approach to shaping diplomatic outcomes. This viewpoint highlights the potential for improvement in bilateral relations, provided that both parties commit to fairness and good faith in their interactions.

Q: Do you think diplomatic relations with Armenia should be established and how?"

A: It can be good if it is established, but it should not be based on self-interest. Don't think it's bad, make it good and make it bad.

(I19: Woman, 35 years old, high school graduate)

I22 respondent's perspective on establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia is characterised by uncertainty and conditional support. He expressed ambivalence, acknowledging potential benefits but questioning the necessity and feasibility of such relations. The close relation with Azerbaijan and the influence of nationalist sentiments are significant factors that shape this viewpoint. The respondent implies that if Turkey perceived substantial political or economic benefits from Armenia, its stance might differ. However, in the absence of such benefits, the current lack of relations is seen as an accepted reality. This analysis highlights the complex interplay of pragmatic considerations, historical alliances, and nationalist sentiments in shaping attitudes towards diplomatic relations with Armenia:

Q: Do you think diplomatic relations with Armenia should be established?

A: I mean, I don't know in which interest diplomatic relations can be developed. I think it would be better if they were established, but should they be established? I think that Turkey would not have taken that front even if it had to be established, I mean, for most nationalists, Azerbaijan's stance or being on Azerbaijan's side is important, but when you think about it, I think that Turkey would not have taken that side if it had gained a political or economic benefit from Armenia, so I think it is not very important, so this is how it goes.

(I22: Woman, 23 years old, high school graduate)

I13 believes that Turkey-Armenia relations should be normalised and thinks that the establishment of diplomatic relations would be beneficial. However, she is ambivalent about the cooperation of civil society organisations and states that historical disputes are difficult to resolve. She thinks that economic and energy cooperation can be accelerated within the framework of a relation of interest:

Q: Do you think diplomatic relations with Armenia should be established, what do you think?

A: In the future, I think it can be beneficial for us, after all, it is a neighbouring country, so why should we be at war or have bad relations? It can be beneficial for our country too.

(I13: Woman, 59 years old, high school graduate)

Although I16 has no clear opinion on whether diplomatic relations should be established or not, she thinks that everyone should live in peace as he is not a malicious person:

I don't know about that, I mean, we are all human, I don't know, I can't think badly because I've never been a bad person with ulterior motives.

(I16: Woman, 40 years old, less than high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I26, primarily views the opening of the common border between Turkey and Armenia through the lens of security concerns. They believe that such an action may lead to security problems originating from Armenia. This perspective underscores the significant mistrust and fear that persists due to historical conflicts and political tensions. The speaker's focus on security issues highlights the need for confidence-building measures and reassurances to address these concerns and create a more favourable environment for discussions about border openings and improved bilateral relations:

Q: How do you think the opening of the common border between Turkey and Armenia will affect our economy, culture or security?

A: I mean, I think it may cause problems in terms of security.

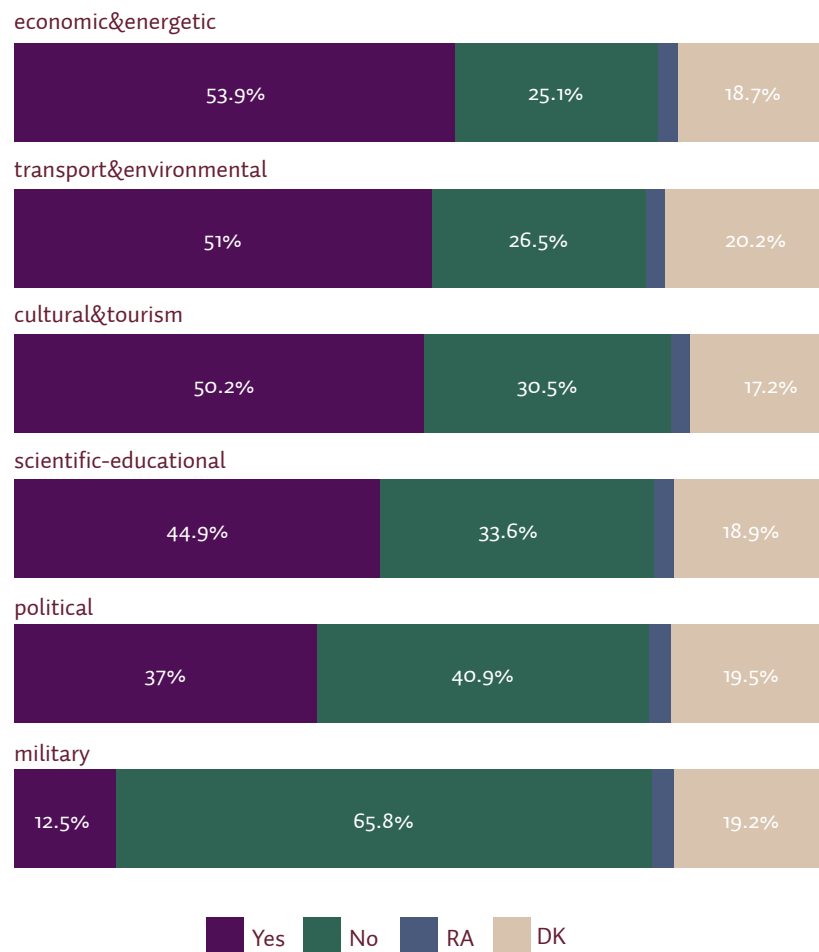
Q: From whom would this be a problem?

A: I think from Armenia.

(I26: Woman, 24 years old, high school graduate)

In the survey, the participants were also asked in which areas Turkey and Armenia could establish relations. As the graph below shows, the sphere with the highest rate of response “No” is military (65.8%). This option is followed by politics (40.9%). On the other hand, the spheres with the highest rate of response “Yes” are economic & energetic (53.9%), transport & environmental (51%) and cultural & tourism (50.2%), respectively.

Graph 32. N32. Do you think our countries can get into relations in the following spheres? (n = 1980)



The rate of those who think that the countries can get into relations in the field of military is slightly higher among male participants compared to females.

Table 9. Perspectives on military relations between the two countries by respondents' gender (n = 1588).

	Yes	No
Female (n= 729)	13.8%	86.2%
Male (n= 859)	17.8%	82.2%

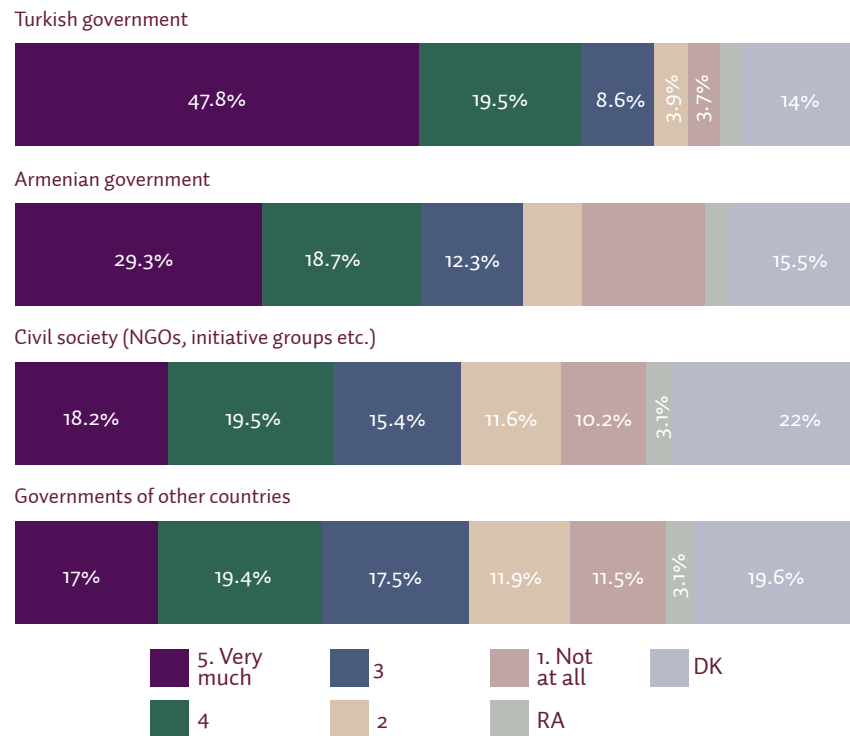
As the level of education increases, the percentage of people who think that the two countries can cooperate in the military field also increases, albeit slightly.

Table 10. Perspectives on military relations between the two countries by respondents' education level (n = 1584).

	Yes	No
Less than high school (n= 645)	14.5%	85.5%
High school (n= 559)	15.4%	84.6%
University (n= 380)	19.0%	81.0%

The respondents consider the Turkish government's role towards normalisation very (47.8%) or rather (17.4%) important. The second highest rate of response "5. Very much" belongs to those who consider the Armenian government's role towards normalisation (29.3%). We observe that the most prominent actors who are thought to play an important role in normalisation are the governments of Turkey and Armenia. It is also important to note that the highest rate of response "I have no idea" belongs to the option "Civil society". The reason behind this could be the public's lack of knowledge about such institutions.

Graph 33. N33. How important do you think is the role of each of the following towards normalisation? (n = 1971)



The rate of those who find the role of the government of Turkey important is higher among female respondents compared to males.

Table 11. Evaluation of the government of Turkey's role in normalisation by respondents' gender (n = 1693).

	1. Not at all	2	3	4	5. Very much
Female (n= 792)	4.1%	3.7%	9.9%	25.1%	57.2%
Male (n= 901)	4.7%	5.4%	10.7%	21.8%	57.4%

Lastly, we evaluate our findings in accordance with the education level of respondents. Regarding the importance of the government of Turkey in normalisation, we observe that the cumulative values of "4" and "5" reveals that respondents who have less than high school education have the highest proportion.

Table 12. Evaluation of the government of Turkey's role in normalisation by respondents' education level (n = 1690).

	1. Not at all	2	3	4	5. Very much
Less than high school (n= 718)	4.4%	4.9%	8.2%	25.3%	57.1%
High school (n= 559)	4.6%	5.0%	12.2%	21.1%	57.1%
University (n= 413)	4.1%	3.8%	11.1%	23.1%	57.9%

When we examine the qualitative findings, we observed that participants' views on the steps Turkey should take to improve its relations with Armenia are diverse and comprehensive:

I2 emphasises that in order to improve its relations with Armenia, Turkey should organise cultural activities, open the borders, and provide visa-free entry and exit.

I9 argued that cooperation in the economic and energy fields should be developed and stated that the interests between the countries should be mutually observed.

I1 emphasised that prejudices can be reduced through the education of children and the importance of education and awareness-raising programmes. I6 stated that the great powers could intervene and find peaceful solutions. The interviewee used the term "great power," but to clarify, they are referring to hegemonic countries in the world political system. This term generally denotes countries with significant economic, military, and political influence on a global scale.

The respondent, identified as I24, believes that society in Turkey is already predisposed to positive relations with Armenians and that societal actions alone are insufficient to drive change. He emphasises that the real barriers to improved relations lie in political rhetoric and actions, which create and sustain divisions. This perspective highlights the importance of political leadership and diplomatic efforts in overcoming historical tensions and improving bilateral relations. He calls for a shift in political language and actions to reflect the more harmonious and integrated sentiments within society, particularly among the younger generations:

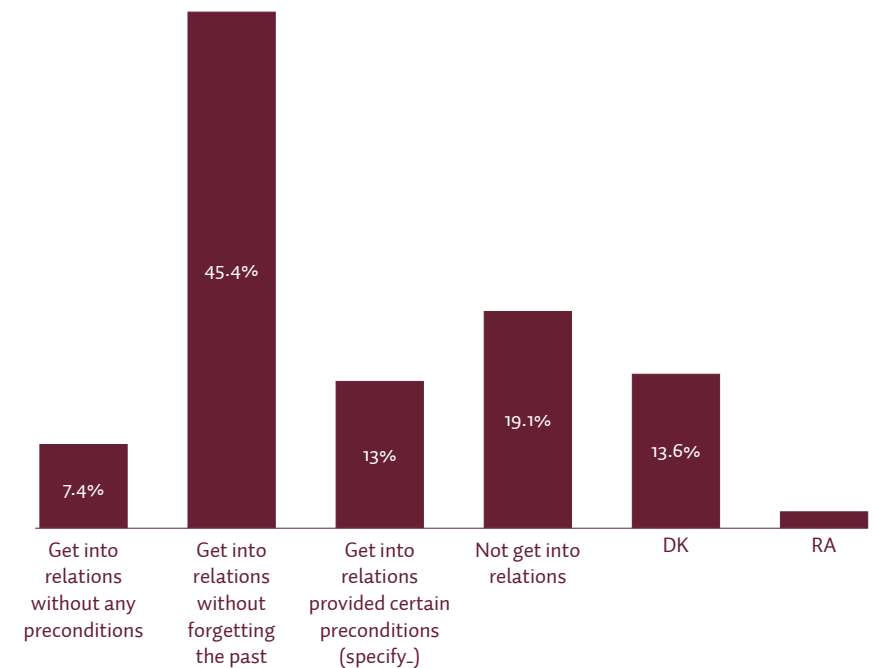
Q: What should the politicians and society in Turkey do to improve relations between Armenia and Turkey?

A: What should society do? Society doesn't really have much to say! Society is already, you know, for example, at first you asked, 'Would you marry off your friends', society is already young, so what can society do? Society is already doing it, there is actually no separation in society, the states are separating it, the political thing, this is the language of politics.

(I24: Woman, 48 years old, high school graduate)

Continuing on survey findings, 45.4% of respondents believe that Turkey should get into relations without forgetting the past. This is the highest percentage among the other options given for the question. The second highest rate belongs to those who think that Turkey should not get into relations with Armenia.

Graph 34. N30. What position do you think Turkey should take towards relations with Armenia? (n = 1999)



Some of the participants believe that the government of Armenia can play an important role in the normalisation process and that relations can be improved through empathy, mutual understanding, and cultural activities. These views emphasise the need for active participation and cooperation of both countries.

If the current government survives, it seems like it will take positive steps. I don't know how long it will survive and how long it will be able to sustain it.
(I7: Man, 34 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

It should open borders and organise cultural and tourism events. Sporting and cultural events bring countries closer together.
(I2: Man, 33 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Other respondents were more sceptical or negative about the role of the government of Armenia. These respondents believe that external factors and the influence of big powers in the region may complicate the normalisation of relations. Moreover, some participants stated that they did not have sufficient information on this issue.

Participants agreed that the government of Turkey should take an active role in normalising relations with Armenia. The need to establish diplomatic relations, reduce hate speech and adopt a constructive approach was emphasised. However, some participants also noted that Armenia lacks cooperation.

They can organise a commission with the leaders of both communities and sit down and talk.
(I3: Woman, 26 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Participants generally adopt a positive and constructive approach to the role of civil society. It is stated that civil society organisations should meet with the public, organise cultural and integration trips, and cooperate in the fields of health and education. However, some participants believe that NGOs in Armenia are under the influence of external forces.

If there is a need for blood, the Red Crescent can go and open an institution there and support the people there in their own country.
(I2: Man, 33 years old, university graduate, living near the Turkey-Armenia border)

Q"What do you think should be done to increase the level of mutual trust between Armenians and Turks?"

A: "There should be student exchange programs, people from abroad should come and learn about our way of life here."
(I14: Man, 28 years old, high school graduate)

I think that all the NGOs in Armenia... I think that the French intelligentsia controls the Armenian NGOs.
(I13: Woman, 59 years old, high school graduate)

Well, Russia is the same as Russia, and there are a lot of countries supporting Armenia, I don't know.
(I17: Woman, 35 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent I19 opposes cooperation between the civil societies of the two countries due to a belief that it would be exploited for purposes other than genuine collaboration. This view reflects a significant lack of trust and concerns about manipulation and ulterior motives. Historical grievances and political tensions likely contribute to this scepticism. The respondent's stance highlights the barriers to reconciliation and the importance of addressing underlying mistrust to foster genuine and effective civil society cooperation. Overcoming these challenges requires building trust, transparency, and a shared commitment to the true goals of mutual understanding and peace:

Q: Would you support cooperation between the civil societies of the two countries?

A: No, I would not support that. I think it will be used for different purposes.
(I19: Woman, 35 years old, high school graduate)

I18's support for cooperation between the civil societies of Turkey and Armenia is conditional and thoughtful. I18 emphasises the importance of finding common ground and meaningful subjects for cooperation, particularly in the realm of cultural exchange. By highlighting shared historical and geographical roots, the respondent suggests that interactions between the two societies are natural and should be normalised. This perspective reflects a cautious optimism that, through purposeful and respectful engagement, positive outcomes can be achieved, fostering mutual understanding and respect:

Q: Would you support cooperation between the civil societies of the two countries?

A: I mean, it depends on what common denominator they meet, in other words, on what subject will there be a civil organisation? It can be the introduction of cultures to each other, Armenian language culture... That means interaction, there can be interactions, why not because we were born in Mesopotamia on the same land and this interaction is very normal."
(I18: Man, 34 years old, university graduate)

I20 expresses strong support for cooperation between the civil societies of the two countries, emphasising the futility and harm of conflict. They argue that peace is the more logical and beneficial choice, questioning who truly benefits from war and fighting. This perspective highlights the importance of working together for mutual benefit and reflects a moral and ethical stance that prioritises peace and cooperation over division and conflict. The respondent's support underscores the value of collaborative efforts in achieving positive outcomes for both societies:

Q: Would you support cooperation between the civil societies of the two countries?

A: I would definitely support it, why should there be peace instead of war, who benefits from war, who has benefited from fighting so far?
(I20: Man, 35 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent I13's opposition to civil society cooperation between the two countries despite her positive view on Armenians is rooted in the belief that historical controversies are too significant to overlook. This perspective underscores the deep impact of historical grievances on current attitudes and highlights the challenges of fostering reconciliation and cooperation. Addressing and acknowledging past conflicts transparently and constructively might be necessary steps to change such perceptions and pave the way for future collaborations:

Q: Would you support cooperation between the civil societies of the two countries?

A: No, I wouldn't support it.

Q: Why?

A: I think it would not be right because there is a controversy from the past.
(I13: Woman, 59 years old, high school graduate)

To some interviewees, if relations with Azerbaijan negatively affect Turkey's attitude towards Armenia, this could complicate the normalisation process:

Q: To what extent do you think Azerbaijan may be influencing Armenian-Turkish relations?

A: I think it affects them a lot because our country sacralises Azerbaijan too much... they sacralise these people too much.
(I12: Woman, 33 years old, high school graduate)

I14's perception of Armenia is heavily influenced by narratives of atrocities against Azerbaijan, as conveyed by their grandparents and social media. This

perspective highlights the powerful impact of intergenerational transmission of conflict memories and the role of social media in shaping contemporary views. The emotional weight of these narratives can create significant barriers to empathy, understanding, and reconciliation. Addressing these deeply rooted perceptions requires acknowledging and understanding the historical context, promoting open dialogue, and encouraging direct, personal interactions to foster a more balanced and nuanced understanding of the conflict and the people involved:

When I think of Armenia, I think of the atrocities committed against Azerbaijan. As far as I heard from my grandparents and social media, very bad things happened.

(I14: Man, 28 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I34, views the end of the war with Azerbaijan as a crucial precondition for the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations. This view underlines the significant impact of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict on Turkey's diplomatic stance and highlights the importance of regional stability for improving bilateral relations. The speaker's response suggests that achieving peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan is essential for creating a conducive environment for Turkey and Armenia to address their issues and move towards normalisation:

Q: Which preconditions do you think should be fulfilled for the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations?

A: It could be the end of the war with Azerbaijan.

(I34: Man, 35 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I25, highlights significant obstacles to peace between Turkey and Armenia, specifically the Karabakh conflict and the historical deportation law. I25 emphasises the detrimental impact of derogatory language and societal attitudes in Turkey that perpetuate negative stereotypes about Armenians. The analysis suggests that addressing these deep-rooted issues and changing the language of discourse are crucial steps towards enabling peace and reconciliation between the two nations. This view emphasises the importance of confronting historical grievances and fostering a more respectful and understanding societal attitude to build a foundation for improved relations:

The first one is Karabakh, the second one is the deportation law that was enacted 100 years ago and people's admonishments, at least as far as I have seen here in Turkey, even when people abuse each other, they say "You Armenian, Armenian seed" and so on and so forth, so this language has never enabled these two nations to make peace.

(I25: Man, 25 years old, university graduate)

I17, as an individual of Azerbaijani origin who has been living in Turkey for 18 years, has generally negative views about Armenia and Armenians. She harbours deep distrust and anger towards Armenians due to the events that took place during the Azerbaijan-Armenia war. She states that she had Armenian friends before the war, but after the war, relations came to a breaking point. She is sceptical about the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations and thinks that it is difficult to achieve peace. She supports civil society cooperation, but emphasises that it is difficult to overcome the lack of trust:

We have always had wars with them, Azerbaijan-Armenia, I don't know, we don't have that kind of intimacy, but they have lived in our village a lot, they have always been our friends, but we don't like them because of this war, that's how it is as a country.

(I17: Woman, 35 years old, high school graduate)

Q: Turkey and Armenia are neighbours, but do you think they should find a way to live in peace?

A: Well, they should, but they won't, they won't.

(I17: Woman, 35 years old, high school graduate)

The respondent, identified as I25, provides a multifaceted approach to increasing mutual trust between Armenians and Turks. They emphasise the importance of high-level visits, particularly by president Erdoğan of Turkey, to Armenia as a symbolic gesture of goodwill. Additionally, they advocate for signing trade agreements to foster economic cooperation and interdependence. Addressing the Karabakh conflict and changing its portrayal in the media are also highlighted as crucial steps to improve perceptions and reduce hostility. The speaker's recommendations underscore the need for both symbolic and practical actions by political leaders and media to create a foundation for building mutual trust and improving relations between the two nations.

Q: What should be done to increase mutual trust between Armenians and Turks?

A: Well, the presidents of the two countries, especially Erdogan, should visit Armenia, trade agreements should be signed, or there is the Karabakh conflict, which is reflected in the media a lot. The perception of this reflection in the media should be changed.

(I25: Man, 25 years old, university graduate)

The respondent, I35, strongly believes in the importance of finding a way to live in peace with Armenians, citing both the shared geographical proximity and

the deep historical relations between the two peoples. I35's response reflects a proactive and positive attitude towards improving relations, emphasising the significance of historical connections and the practical benefits of peaceful coexistence. This perspective underscores the importance of recognizing shared history and fostering a willingness to engage in dialogue and cooperation to build a better future for both communities:

Q: Since Armenians are our neighbours, do you think that we should find a way to live in peace with them?

A: I definitely think so. Apart from being neighbours, we have very deep relations from the past, we lived on the same land. I definitely want to improve relations.

(I35: Man, 30 years old, university graduate)

To summarise, these 35 in-depth interviews reveal a complex landscape of opinions on Turkey-Armenia relations, shaped by historical narratives, personal experiences, and contemporary political dynamics. While there is a notable desire for improved relations and peaceful coexistence, significant barriers remain, including deep-seated mistrust, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, and the influence of nationalist narratives. Promoting accurate historical education, fostering personal interactions, and encouraging diplomatic initiatives are crucial steps towards building a more positive and constructive relation between Turkey and Armenia. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes political leadership, media reform, and grassroots efforts to foster empathy and understanding.

The interviews show that while respondents are hopeful about the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia, they have some historical and cultural reservations. While they adopt a tolerant approach to relations at the individual level, they adopt a more cautious attitude at the national level. Historical tensions and current political dynamics between Turkey and Armenia have negative impacts on the perspective of respondents on the macro-level scale.

The ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is a major barrier to improving Turkey-Armenia relations for many participants. The conflict influences perceptions and hinders diplomatic efforts. Addressing this conflict through diplomatic efforts and confidence-building measures is crucial for improving relations between Turkey and Armenia. Support for peace initiatives in the region can create a more conducive environment for reconciliation.

Generally, the respondents display a tolerant attitude towards Armenian friendships and neighbourhoods. But limited knowledge about Armenia and Armenians makes it difficult to understand the issue in depth.

Respondents' views can generally be shaped by complex emotions and prejudices. Although they lack knowledge, it is seen that this attitude can develop more positively with education and awareness raising. Turkey's active role in diplomatic relations and the organisation of events by non-governmental organisations can contribute to the respondents to develop more conscious and non-prejudiced approaches.

Many participants' understanding of Armenians is shaped by their education and the narratives passed down from elders. There is a mix of awareness and misconceptions about Armenian identity and history. Some participants express positive attitudes towards Armenians, emphasising shared history and culture. Others hold negative perceptions, often influenced by historical conflicts and nationalist narratives.

There is a general desire for peaceful coexistence. A significant number of participants believe in the importance of finding a way to live in peace with Armenians, citing shared geography and historical ties. This sentiment underscores the potential for reconciliation based on historical and cultural connections. Building on this foundation can facilitate dialogue and cooperation.

Several interviewees believe that political leaders need to take proactive steps towards normalisation, including high-level visits and trade agreements. Political leadership and diplomacy play a critical role in shaping bilateral relations. Encouraging political initiatives that promote dialogue and cooperation can help break down barriers and build trust. There is support for increased economic and cultural interactions as a means to build trust and improve relations. Trade and cultural exchanges are seen as practical steps towards normalisation.

Media representation and propaganda are seen as significant factors in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards Armenians. Some participants express empathy for Armenians, acknowledging their historical suffering and the need for reconciliation. Personal interactions with Armenians, whether through travel or friendships, positively influence participants' views and promote a better understanding.

Many interviewees exhibit varying degrees of historical awareness regarding Armenians and the events of 1915. Some have corrected past misconceptions through education and personal learning.¹³ This shift in understanding reflects the importance of education and accurate historical narratives in shaping perceptions. Efforts to improve historical education can help correct misconceptions and foster a more nuanced understanding.

Appendix

Table 13. Containing information about the participants of in-depth interviews.

Identification	Gender	Age	Education level	If living near the Turkey-Armenia border
I1	Man	30	University	Yes
I2	Man	33	University	Yes
I3	Woman	26	University	Yes
I4	Woman	43	Less than high school	Yes
I5	Woman	56	Less than high school	Yes
I6	Man	46	University	Yes
I7	Man	34	University	Yes
I8	Woman	22	High school	Yes
I9	Man	51	University	Yes
I10	Man	62	Less than high school	Yes
I11	Man	34	University	Yes
I12	Woman	33	High school	No
I13	Woman	59	High school	No
I14	Man	28	High school	No
I15	Woman	35	High school	No

¹³ Example: Until a year ago, I knew Armenianism as a sect. For a year now, I know that they are a race. (I25)

I16	Woman	40	Less than high school	No
I17	Woman	35	High school	No
I18	Man	34	University	No
I19	Woman	35	High school	No
I20	Man	35	High school	No
I21	Woman	31	University	No
I22	Woman	23	High school	No
I23	Man	61	University	No
I24	Woman	48	High school	No
I25	Man	25	University	No
I26	Woman	24	High school	No
I27	Man	22	High school	No
I28	Man	31	Less than high school	No
I29	Man	23	High school	No
I30	Woman	49	High school	No
I31	Man	21	High school	No
I32	Man	23	High school	No
I33	Woman	66	University	No
I34	Man	35	High school	No
I35	Man	30	University	No

**CHAPTER 3. EXPERT INSIGHTS:
SYNTHESISING COMMONALITIES AND
DIFFERENCES IN TURKEY-ARMENIA NORMALISATION**

Dr. Sona Balasanyan; Dr. Erman Bakırcı

Introduction

The Turkey-Armenia normalisation process, while often accounting for political complexities and historical grievances, presents a unique opportunity for transformative diplomacy. This chapter explores expert insights into the multifaceted dynamics shaping bilateral relationships between societies.

Despite periodic setbacks and scepticism about Turkey's and Armenia's intentions towards normalisation of relations between the two countries, recent developments in the Caucasus region have created a momentum for dialogue and for unlocking potential reconciliation. By putting the opinions of contemporary Turkey and Armenia citizens side by side, this chapter synthesises commonalities such as mutual economic benefits and strategic interests alongside divergent religious and political stances and historical narratives.

This analysis seeks to provide a social data-interpretation-based understanding of the pathways towards possible normalisation and the societal factors that could either facilitate or hinder this process. Central to the chapter is the thesis that the more there is interaction between societies, the more is the likelihood of reciprocal positive attitudes.

The interpretative chapter is based on the survey reported herein and is organised in sub-topics that were revealed through an analytical synthesis (thematic analysis), when putting the opinions of people from Turkey and Armenia side by side. The sub-headings are as follows: "Forward to the Past"; "The Looking-Glass Other", "From Historical Trauma to Modern Perceptions" and "What if and how can Normalisation Happen?"

Forward to the Past

Despite all the efforts to look forward to the future, the representatives of the societies of Turkey and Armenia are inclined to refer to the past in search of opinions about each other. The Armenian perception of Turks is deeply rooted in historical narratives and familial knowledge transfer. The Armenia survey showed that a significant 85% of Armenians learn about the Armenian Genocide before the age of 11, predominantly from family members (70%) and school (62%). This early exposure shapes their understanding and attitudes towards Turks. History

classes and textbooks often depict Turks as "cruel", "coldhearted", and "enemies", reinforcing negative stereotypes.¹

In this respect, we can say that the society of Turkey is not much different from that of Armenia. The tone or frequency may vary, but current research indicates that while the negative tone of the Armenia narrative in Turkish textbooks has decreased, this negative discourse continues to persist. A study by Gürpınar (2013) reviews² the progression of Turkish history textbooks over time, highlighting that earlier textbooks (pre-2000) portrayed Armenians in a more explicitly negative manner. Although more recent editions have shown a slight move towards a more balanced narrative, the underlying nationalistic perspective has largely remained the same. Similarly, Hovhannisian (2014) conducted a content analysis³ of Turkish history textbooks, revealing that Armenians are frequently depicted as "traitors" or "enemies" during the late Ottoman period. These textbooks often stress the narrative of Armenian insurgency and collaboration with Russian forces, which serves to justify the Ottoman government's actions during World War I.

Despite these portrayals, there is a dichotomy in how the communities of Turkey and Armenia perceive each other. While the historical and educational narratives are negative, many Armenians regard ordinary people from Turkey as more friendly and open to ordinary contact. The more they establish contact, the higher the rate of openness, increasing the opportunity to move forward. The same pattern is observed among people from Turkey as well. This suggests that the negative perception is often viewed through a historical and intergenerational lens rather than a personal one. Although these historically negative narratives influence how the two communities perceive each other; today, neither community harbours uniformly negative feelings towards the other in a monolithic manner.

Public sentiment remains mixed. Approximately 65.4% of the population of Armenia hold a negative attitude towards Turks, with rural populations and the younger generation exhibiting stronger negative sentiments. This rural-urban, young-old divide underscores the varying degrees of influence that historical nar-

¹ See Gürpınar, Ö. (2018). Teaching the Armenian Genocide: a Comparative Analysis of National History Curriculums and History Textbooks in Turkey, Armenia and France. *Remembrance and Solidarity: Studies in 20th-Century European History*. 6, 145-168. <https://enrs.eu/uploads/media/5c24d1752fb50-studies-6.pdf>; and Mkrtchyan, S. (2015). The Memory of the Armenian Genocide as Taught in Armenian Schools: Textbooks, School Rituals and Iconography. <https://ge.boell.org/en/2015/04/23/memory-armenian-genocide-taught-armenian-schools-textbooks-school-rituals-and-iconography>

² See Gürpınar, D. (2013). *Ottoman/Turkish visions of the nation, 1860-1950*. Palgrave Macmillan.

³ See Hovhannisian, M. (2014). Armenians in Turkish textbooks: A study of textbook representation. *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies*, 1(1), 23-34.

ratives and direct personal interactions have on shaping perceptions in Armenia. The ongoing challenge lies in reconciling these entrenched historical perceptions with the potential for more positive, personal interactions between the Armenians and Turks.

Among the population of Turkey, the rate of those who have a negative attitude towards Armenians is about 41%. Therefore, the negative attitude of Turks towards Armenians is lower than that of Armenians towards Turks. It is also important to highlight that 40% of Turks stated that they have neither a negative nor a positive attitude, whereas this rate is 25% among Armenians. In other words, while there is a differentiation in negative attitudes between the communities of Turkey and Armenia, this differentiation is not due to Turks having a much more positive attitude but rather having or expressing a more neutral attitude.

Futurology and utopian thinking are largely overlooked in the matters of understanding history and teaching or transferring history in both societies. Meanwhile, integrating futurology into history perception and teaching is crucial as it equips people with the ability to apply historical lessons to future scenarios, fostering a proactive and forward-thinking mindset. By using futuristic methods, representatives of both societies could develop critical thinking skills that enable them to anticipate and navigate potential social and political challenges. This approach not only enhances the relevance of historical knowledge but also prepares to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Futurology encourages the examination of historical patterns to predict and shape future outcomes, thus making history a dynamic and practical subject that extends beyond mere retrospection - a pattern co-existent in both societies.⁴ A mere retrospective approach towards history shall not promote the interaction between societies and their individual representatives.

Meanwhile, utopian thinking in perception of history is essential as it encourages to envision ideal futures and critically assess the present. By exploring utopian concepts, individuals are inspired to think beyond existing societal limitations and imagine transformative possibilities. This approach promotes creative problem-solving and fosters a sense of agency, enabling people or the societies to challenge the status quo and work towards a better future. Utopian thinking

4 Cairns, R., & Garrard, K. A. (2024). 'Learning from history is something that is important for the future': Why Australian students think history matters. *Policy Futures in Education*, 22(3), 369-382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14782103231177615>

integrates historical lessons with future-oriented perspectives, making history a dynamic and relevant subject. It empowers to draw connections between past experiences and future aspirations, cultivating a mindset that balances critical analysis with hopeful imagination.⁵

The Looking-Glass Other

The "looking-glass self" is a concept developed by the sociologist Charles Cooley (1902), who posits⁶ that an individual's self-concept is shaped by their perception of how others view them. This theory involves three primary steps: first, we imagine how we appear to others; second, we imagine the judgement of that appearance; and third, we develop our self-concept based on our perception of those judgments. Essentially, the looking-glass self suggests that our self-identity is a reflection of the way we believe others perceive us. This social interaction process means that our self-worth, values, and behaviour are heavily influenced by our interpretations of others' reactions.

The notion of the "looking-glass other" can hence be developed based on Charles Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self." Just as the looking-glass self explains how an individual's self-concept is shaped by their perception of how others view them, the looking-glass otherness extends this idea to explore how individuals perceive and internalise the identities and roles of those around them. The looking-glass presumably involves three steps: first, imagining how others perceive themselves; second, imagining how others think they are perceived by others; and third, understanding/observing how these perceptions influence their behaviour and interactions (how others interact with others). By recognizing the reflections of others' self-concepts, individuals may then develop deeper empathy and insight into social dynamics, enhancing their ability to navigate complex social interactions and foster more meaningful relationships.

The Armenia-Turkey normalisation research hence, viewed through the lens of the looking-glass otherness ("knocking on the other's door" as described by an Armenian respondent), highlighted the complex interplay of perceptions and mutual reflections between the two nations. The surveys underlined the mutual awareness of each nation's governmental positions and how these might influence

5 Kertz-Welzel, A. (2022). The power of utopian thinking. In *Rethinking music education and social change* (online ed.). Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197566275.003.0003>

6 Cooley, C. H. (1902). The looking-glass self (189). In C. Lemert (Ed.), *Social theory: The multicultural readings*. Philadelphia: Westview Press.

their interactions. The very fact that the people of one nation perceive the other nation as they think they perceive them, - “we think, they think about us, what we think of them”, - is a precondition to look at the normalisation process from the perspective of the other-representation. Despite the caution and fear that the people of the two societies experience from possible scenarios of political intercourse, the tendency of presenting the “other” to one another is as important as presenting “oneself”. This said, initiatives where the Turks may present Armenian cuisine and arts to Armenians and vice versa in forms of counter-exhibitions/representations promoting the subjective perceptions of the others might be one way of activating the interaction between the societies. For instance, representation of other’s everyday cultures to each other might be a creative way of understanding each other in a more realistic way.

From Historical Trauma to Modern Perceptions

The research points to a prevailing perception in Armenia of Armenians as historical victims and Turks as the perceived aggressors or enemies. In turn, respondents in Turkey asserted that their ancestors suffered due to Armenian uprisings. Armenians view their victimhood as rooted in historical events, while Turks feel more recent victimisation, believing their nation is unjustly accused of committing genocide.⁷ This perception is deeply rooted in the historical and ongoing tensions, as well as the religious differences between the two societies.

Furthermore, the research showed the power dynamics at play, with Turkey being portrayed among the Armenians as a stronger state compared to Armenia. This power asymmetry contributes to a complex dynamic between the two societies and influences their interactions, perceptions of each other and the importance they place on the normalisation process. The people of Turkey have less knowledge about Armenia when compared to the knowledge the people of Armenia have about Turkey. The number of people who respond with “I don’t know” is quite high in Turkey. This indicates that the topic of Armenia is not a widely discussed topic for Turkish society. A significant portion (35%) of the respondents in Turkey have no idea about Armenia’s population. These can be the results of a perceived power asymmetry between the two states.

Individuals from Armenia who have visited Turkey are more likely to support the idea of opening borders, reflecting a potential shift in attitudes towards cross-border relations.

7 Demirel, C., & Eriksson, J. (2019). Competitive victimhood and reconciliation: The case of Turkish–Armenian relations. *Identities*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1611073>

Interestingly, personal interactions with Turks lead to more positive attitudes among Armenians, especially among those individuals who were already relatively tolerant. The Armenians reported positive changes in their perceptions after interacting with Turks, expressing hope for future relationships characterised by mutual understanding and respect. Despite these positive individual interactions, there remains an underlying sense of insecurity in human-to-human relations between Armenians and Turks due to the historical context and deep-seated perceptions.

The “victim-perpetrator” complex relations are often rooted in social psychology and group dynamics. One relevant theory that helps explain this dichotomy is the Social Identity Theory⁸. According to this theory, individuals categorise themselves into social groups to enhance their self-esteem and identity. This categorization leads to “in-group” favouritism and “out-group” discrimination. In the context of victim-perpetrator relations, individuals within a group/nation tend to view their own group (in-group) in a more positive light while perceiving another group (out-group) as a threat or adversary. This perception bias is intensified by realities, historical events, socio-political contexts, and intergroup conflicts, contributing to the historical trauma.

What, if and how can Normalisation Happen...

Approximately 50% of Armenians believe that normalisation is likely within the next five years through dialogue and communication. The society in Turkey is more pessimistic regarding the prospect of normalisation. Only a quarter of the population of Turkey believes that normalisation is likely within the next five years through dialogue and communication. Of course, one of the main reasons for this difference is closely related to which foreign policy issues the states prioritise on their agendas. Similarly, it is not a topic that is on the agenda of society in Turkey and discussed in their daily lives. As part of this research, we observed that during the in-depth interviews conducted in Turkey, participants displayed a noticeable lack of enthusiasm towards engaging in the interviews. However, this reluctance was not rooted in a hesitation or unwillingness to address the subject matter itself. Instead, this reluctance stemmed from their lack of prior consideration of the topic and their indication that there wasn’t much to contribute or elaborate on.

8 Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political Psychology*, 22(1), 127–156. Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, S. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *Organizational identity: A reader*, 56–65.

A significant portion of the population of Armenia views the existing issues between Armenia and Turkey as deeply serious and complex. There is a notable gender disparity in perceptions, with 70.7% of women considering the problems between Armenia and Turkey very serious, compared to 62.6% of men. Younger individuals also tend to see the issues as more critical than older generations. Hence, targeted approaches towards women and youth in Armenia may be useful to the attempts for promoting dialogue and normalisation.

In this regard, we can also speak of a difference between the societies of Turkey and Armenia. Only 23% of the population of Turkey thinks that the existing issues between the societies are very serious and complex. For one-third of the society of Turkey, the issues between Turkey and Armenia are considered “somewhat serious”. Again, the differences in the foreign policy priorities of the states may have an impact on this. However, this finding shows that it is not only the states, but also the communities that approach this issue asymmetrically.

Those who rely on history classes and textbooks for information in Armenia are less likely to view normalisation as probable and support the idea of opening borders. Meanwhile, those who get their information from family discussions often perceive the issues as more severe. What if societies are given alternative sources of information?

Public opinion on opening the border with Turkey is divided in Armenia. About 37.8% of the population opposes it entirely, while 34.3% somewhat or fully support it. Economic benefits are a significant factor, with 38% believing that border opening would positively impact Armenia’s economy. However, concerns about national security remain high, with 65.6% fearing negative consequences. Among the people in Turkey, 27% are strongly opposed to opening the border, while 26% somewhat or fully support it. On this issue, 10% of the people in Turkey responded “don’t know,” and approximately one-fifth stated “neither approve, nor disapprove”. Therefore, there is no strong approval or disapproval reflex regarding the opening of the border within the society of Turkey. Approval of opening the border in Turkey is higher among men and those -who have previously interacted with an Armenian. Society of Turkey shares similar views with the Armenian community regarding the effects of opening the border. While Turks mention economic benefits, they also consider security issues as a potential concern.

Unresolved historical traumas contribute to feelings of anxiety and fear about the future. Many of the respondents in Armenia worry that opening the border could lead to a repetition of past conflicts and a loss of national identity. The opening of

the border is not perceived as a trauma-inducing factor by the respondents in Turkey. While there are security concerns, they see the border opening as an economically positive move, even if it doesn’t have a significant impact on Turkey’s economy.

Economic cooperation is seen as a feasible starting point for normalisation in both societies. Turkish raw materials and products are recognized for their quality and affordability in Armenia, which could benefit Armenia’s economy. The society of Turkey is divided over buying products made in Armenia. Some respondents hesitate to purchase these products due to historical events and political concerns. However, most research participants in Turkey mentioned that they would buy products made in Armenia if the quality and price are reasonable. Despite fears of war, some believe that open borders might help prevent conflicts.

The willingness to engage with Turkey varies by demographics in Armenia. Urban residents (51.5%) and older individuals are more inclined to buy Turkish products than rural residents (39.1%) and younger people. The public considers the government of Armenia’s role in normalisation very important, with 60.4% deeming it crucial. We see a similar pattern among Turks: 47.8% of the population consider the government of Turkey’s role towards normalisation very important. In other words, regarding the roles in normalisation, respondents from both Armenian and Turkish societies first mention their own country, followed by the other. This finding reveals two main points: (i) Individuals in both countries believe that their own government should take a leading role in normalisation efforts. This suggests that any progress toward improved relations is likely to be most effective and legitimate when driven by the respective governments. (ii) Both Armenians and Turks understand that a one-sided approach is insufficient and that lasting peace and cooperation can only be achieved through bilateral engagement.

Conclusion

Despite significant concerns, there is a cautious openness towards normalisation in Armenia currently, with the population of Armenia favouring some form of engagement with Turkey. Younger respondents are more sceptical about establishing relations in Armenia. For the society of Turkey, there is more neutrality towards Armenia. This neutrality indicates a potential openness to change and improvement in relations, as it suggests that many individuals may not have strong pre-existing biases or negative perceptions. This neutral stance could serve as a foundation for efforts aimed at fostering positive engagement and dialogue between the two nations. Overall, economic relations, cultural similarities, diplomatic engagements,

and tourism emerged as potential areas for cooperation. However, significant obstacles such as nationalist sentiments, historical and familial narratives, media portrayals, and the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict present substantial challenges.

While historical narratives and educational experiences significantly shape Armenian and Turkish perceptions of each other, enduring negative stereotypes and attitudes, there is an opportunity to shift these perceptions through increased personal interactions and a forward-thinking approach. Emphasising futurology and utopian thinking in education can equip individuals with the critical thinking skills necessary to envision and work towards a more positive future. By integrating these approaches, both societies may move beyond entrenched historical biases and promote mutual understanding, ultimately contributing to reconciliation and coexistence.

The looking-glass otherness offers profound insights into the dynamics of self-perception and intergroup relations between Armenia and Turkey. By applying these concepts to the Turkey-Armenia normalisation process, we can understand the significant role of mutual perceptions in shaping interactions between the two nations. Encouraging initiatives that present everyday cultural aspects of each society to the other, such as exhibitions of cuisine and arts, everyday life, can foster a more realistic and empathetic understanding. These efforts can help bridge historical divides and promote a more constructive dialogue between Armenia and Turkey, ultimately aiding the normalisation process.

The research highlighted the deep-rooted and complex perceptions that shape Armenian and Turkish identities and their interactions. The historical victimhood felt by Armenians and the recent victimisation perceived by Turks underscore the enduring impact of past events on present-day relations. Power asymmetry between the states and limited knowledge further complicate these dynamics, influencing attitudes towards normalisation. However, positive shifts in perceptions through personal interactions and visits indicate potential pathways towards mutual understanding and respect. Addressing these deeply rooted perceptions through continued dialogue and cultural exchange could pave the way for more constructive relations between the two nations.

A notable discovery was the substantial lack of information about Armenia and Armenians among respondents from Turkey. Despite a general desire for improved relations and peaceful coexistence, deep-seated mistrust and nationalist influences remain formidable barriers.

The prospect of normalisation between Armenia and Turkey remains complex and divided. Deep-seated historical issues, gender and age disparities in perceptions in Armenia, neutral approach towards Armenia in Turkey, and the perceived power asymmetry between the two states highlight the challenges ahead. Despite this, there is potential for progress through targeted engagement with women and youth in Armenia and through addressing educational biases in both countries. Economic cooperation presents a viable point, but unresolved historical traumas and national security concerns continue to impede trust. Ultimately, the research highlights the necessity for balanced, well-prepared, and careful steps by proactive politicians to overcome societal prejudices and navigate potential obstacles effectively. Both societies recognize the critical role of their governments in leading normalisation efforts, underscoring the need for bilateral engagement to achieve lasting peace and cooperation.

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