

# THE EFFECT OF FAR RIGHT PARTIES AND DIASPORAS ON FOREIGN POLICY: THE CASE OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA AND DASHNAKTSUTYUN

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**Abstract**: Along with the independentKarabakh, regional partnerships, and negotiation on the borders with Turkey, another element of the Armenias foreign policy agenda is the universal recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations and this element is the ultimate common idea of the political parties regardless of their ideologies and political tendencies. However, this unanimity does not necessarily mean that the Dashnaktsutyun as one of the opposition parties does not have any criticism or opposition to the policies conducted by the government. When the process in which the Armenian identity was built around the historical events of the 1915 Incidents, the radicalization of the Armenian population and diaspora then leading to the international terror acts that dominated the 1970s conducted by Armenian militant organizations ASALA and JCAG-ARC which was organized by Dashnaktsutyun as rivalry to ASALA, it is possible to observe the similarities in todays public opinion in Armenia and Armenian diaspora regarding Nagarno-Karabakh conflict. Examining the tools and statements used by Dashnaktsutyun to rally the public opinion around the anti-Turkish and nationalistic realm after the Velvet Revolution that made Dashnaktsutyun as opposition is vital. Besides, the reapproachment of Turkish-Armenian relations also fiercly criticized by Dashnaktsutyun on the basis of the common ground: the recognition of the genocide allegations.

## INTRODUCTION

The far-right in politics is getting more attention in political science; however, the scope is mainly confined to the borders of Europe, focused on the rising far-right in European countries political parties and within the European Parliament. On the other hand, some political parties apart from Europe have not yet been adequately studied for their political tendencies. Whether far-right or far-left. Therefore, their effect on state policies has been relatively obscure in political science.

Dashnaktsutyun was established in 1890 and was one of the first political parties of the parliament of the First Republic of Armenia. That parliament is today known as the Armenian National Assembly. Before the establishment of an independent Armenian political entity and after that, the party operated within the borders of several states like the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire. Considering Dashnaktsutyun in Armenia within this context, it is essential to understand its ideology. Since it has been in the ruling coalitions for a long time, and after the Velvet Revolution in 2018, it has been in opposition. However, its effects have not decreased on the policies of the Armenian government, and it continues to push the government for its demands and vision for an independent Armenia. To this end, it uses various means like parliamentary sessions, movements within and outside Armenia, and protests.

In addition to Dashnaktsutyuns long history within Armenian politics, what can be said as unique to Armenian politics is that the diaspora also has quite an effect on the political environment of Armenian daily life and significant policies. Considering its history and large population of nationals outside the country, Armenia has strong ties with its non-resident nationals. Therefore, their tendencies regarding foreign policies of Armenia are essential to understanding how those policies echo in the international arena. Also, it is essential to note that Dashnaktsutyun is one of the most influential political party among the Armenian diaspora. For this reason, most of its movements resonate among the Armenian diaspora, which favors the same vision for an independent Armenia as the party envisions.

Focusing more on the far-right aspect of the political parties, Cas Mudde has described three common core ideologies among the European radical far-right parties populism, nativism, and authoritarianism.[1] However, acknowledging that this definition of the radical far-right parties is confined to the borders of Europe, it is more practical to use Ambalavaner Sivanandans conceptualization of xeno-racism.[2] It engulfs a new form of racism stripped from its color-coded restrictions. Instead, it focuses more on the fear of the strangers for the sake of their nation, own people, and own culture that has been distorted by the globalization of the civilizations. It is a combination of xenophobia and racism. Even though Sivanandans conceptualization does not perfectly fit the Armenian case, it sheds light on the understanding of the far-right tendency of Dashnaktsutyun.

In the case of Armenia, with its encounters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century forward, especially with the Azerbaijani and Turkish people, specific fears exist, as

will be discussed further in the Armenian identity. This includes the fear of losing the independence of their home country, as well as fear of not being accepted as the nation that suffered from specific series of events like their allegations of the 1915 genocide. This bears a certain amount of resemblance with Sivanandans definition of xeno-racism against Turkish and Azerbaijani people among the resident and non-resident nationals and regarding Armenian foreign policies with Turkey and Azerbaijan. It is important to understand the capacity of Dashnaktsutyun as a far-right party and its influence beyond the sphere of influence among Diaspora. In the case of Dashnaktsutyun, there is xeno-racism. Even though Sivanandans thoughts were generated upon the consequences of 9/11 attacks that took place in the United States, islamophobia, transnational terrorism and state policy, thus it is also possible to apply his theory to Dashnaktsutyun. The relation with it will be further explained later under the vision of the party.

Therefore, this paper will try to elaborate on the question that to what extend does far-right parties and non-resident nationals can have an effect on the foreign policies of states based on the case of Dashnaktsutyun and Armenian diaspora. It will be done by exploring the Armenian identity that connects the party and diaspora, the partys agenda, and the interconnected ties between the diaspora and the party. Later, based on the observations of the partys and diasporas actions and discourses, the possibilities of upcoming rebellions against the rapprochement with Turkey in the agenda of Civil Contract coalition government in Armenia will be discussed. Consequently, it will be argued that those rebellions will be in line with the recent reactions on the defeat after the Nagorno-Karabakh War with Azerbaijan.

## 1. ARMENIAN IDENTITY AND ARMENIAN DIASPORA

Even though individual identities differ within one community, in this paper, it is important to understand the general framework of the Armenian identity constructed through time with its key components. Understanding the Armenian identity will enable the examination of Armenian diaspora identity. This would be useful for establishing connections of it with the usage of discourses and arguments by Dashnaktsutyun and the diaspora. The national identity of Armenians roughly consists of three general components: the 1915 events, aspirations for Greater Armenia territories, and the Armenian Apostolic (Orthodox/Gregorian) Church. However, this paper will mostly focus on the 1915 events and the Greater Armenia ideal regarding the effect of diaspora and Dashnaktsutyun on Armenian foreign policies.

Christianity is one of the key components of the Armenian national identity. Since they went through difficulties under the reign of different empires or states due to their unique Christian traditions and their culture is highly invested on their religion. Aygün Attar points out to the political oppression conducted by Persian and Byzantine Empires between sixth to seventh centuries, and the termination of the connections with other Christian communities due to the policies that Armenian Church pursued under the caliphate period between eighth to ninth centuries. She argues that those gave rise to a national identity composed of the elements of Armenian Orthodox Church along with other national and literary elements.[3] Considering the victimhood of the Armenian population regarding

their religion also draws parallels with their allegations of 1915 genocide. Therefore, it is also an another vital element of their national identity.

Regarding 1915 events, Armenians argue that a genocide was conducted by the Ottoman authorities of Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). This argument is one of the sources for the foreign policy of Armenia today. However, the rate of attachment to the idea of being victimized by a certain nation or ethnicity also differs between the Armenian diaspora, Dashnaktsutyun and ruling coalition of Armenia. In Armenian diaspora and the Dashnaktsutyun as the far-right party, it is possible to observe the instrumentalization of the 1915 events as means to navigate the Armenian foreign policy decisions nowadays. They fiercely argue that the Turkish authorities must recognize the 1915 genocide allegations and necessary reparations shall be made to the victims of the incidents. This can be understood from the diaspora committees efforts. For instance, like American National Committee of Armenians priorities for the Turkish-Armenian relations to be restored as the prevention of Turkish efforts to obscuring justice for Armenian genocide through U.S. pressures.[4] As Öztürk argues that the emergence of organizations related to the diaspora is also a part of the process of the reconstruction of the national identity. It is important to observe the diaspora organizations activities regarding the Armenian genocide and to what extent they give priority.[5] Considering that one of the purposes of the American Armenians is the recognition of the Armenian genocide and punishment of Turkey indicates that the Armenian diaspora constructed their Armenian national identity around the agony and victimhood of the 1915 events. The fact that most current Armenians are now third or later generation after those events that they did not directly suffer, it is still a forceful element in their identity. It is apparent that the national memory has encapsulated those events and it passed through generations with the same level of hatred, agony and desire of reprisal. The studies on diaspora in general also shows that they are keen to have increased awareness about their own community whether they are unified or dispersed. Thus this enhances their desire to survive by passing their cultural and national heritage through generations.[6] Armenian diaspora as a community dispersed on the world but unified within the borders of their host countries are proved to internalized the 1915 events as one of the constructive fact that their future generations and current generations must take into attention. Also, they are acting in accordance with the requirements of the acknowledgement of those events.

Also, the official program of the Dashnaktsutyun states their desire of universal condemnation of the Armenian genocide and punishment of Turkey to prevent impunity as one of their core purposes. This proves that Dashnaktsutyuns perception of national identity is built also on the victimhood of the Armenian nation primarily due to 1915 Incidents during the final stages of the Ottoman reign.[7] It is also possible to understand the similarity of perceptions between Armenian diaspora and Dashnaktsutyun. They are observed to be closely related to each other in terms of the expressions they use during public protests like the ones opposing to the Armenian governmental acceptance of the defeat and openness to negotiate with Turkey and Azerbaijan after Armenian defeat in the Second (2020) Nagorno-Karabakh War.[8] Going back to the earlier stages of the establishment of Armenian independent state after the First World War, also the report of the first prime minister Hovannes Kajaznuni to the party conference in 1923 is significant.

He explains the tendency of the party in general towards Turkish people by organizing militia groups to conduct military activities within the Turkish territories in 1914.[9] Even though Armenians mostly ground their arguments against Turks by highlighting the consequences of the 1915 Incidents, in fact it is possible to claim that their identity construction around the dislike of the Turkish nation does not necessarily rely on the 1915 genocide allegations but rather resides in the desires for the accumulation of the territories of the Greater Armenia which partly belonged to Ottoman Empire. Therefore, today the core of Dashnaktsutyun members national identity is still the 1915 Incidents which is used as a mean to end, to get the recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide and acquire necessary reparations regarding the families of the victims.

As mentioned, along with the 1915 genocide allegations made by the Armenians, also another important element of their national identity also resides in the desire of establishing the independent Greater Armenia. This ideal is not necessarily indicated directly as it is in the case of 1915 Incidents. According to Wakizaka, the influence of French revolution in the eighteenth century about the secular national identity created an impact on Armenians in the end of the nineteenth century. That led to their creation of the utopia of the Greater Armenia. [10] He explains it through the necessity of having a homeland to base the modern national identity in which they live like the entire East and Southeast Anatolia. Moreover, Attar also highlights the fallacy within the Armenian history of basing the geographical location of Armenian history within the Greater Armenia . She states that Greater Armenia came into existence when Antiochus III occupied the territories of Armenians and merged them with the land around Lake Van in 220 B.C. But until 428, Armenia lost its power and eventually its existence under the reign of other empires.[11] However, some also claim that Urartu and Ararat are synonymous and they are originated from Armenian linguistic basis and in 860 B.C., the first king of the Urartu Kingdom was Aramu and also claimed to be an Armenian name.[12] Assuming that the claims of Urartu Kingdom being an Armenian nation is true, Armenians can claim the territory from Caucasus to Lake Van as mentioned in the utopia above. Therefore, as Şıhaliyev also mentions and seen above, there is no unanimity about the origins of the Armenian ethnicity along with a disagreement about the territorial sovereignty through the centuries.[13]

Even though aforementioned legend of Greater Armenia is not universally accepted by the historians, the Armenian national identity also base itself within the territories demarcated by this legend. For instance, the party program of Dashnaktsutyun also introduces another purpose of creating an independent and unified Armenia which would include the territories proposed in Sevres along with the territories of Karabakh (Karabakh according to Armenian nationalists), Javakheti (Javakhk) and Nakhichevan.[14] By examining the map of the region mentioned above, it is possible to see the those claimed territories are overlapping with the Greater Armenia territories. Also, the protest conducted by the American Armenians regarding the policies of Pashinyan government on the negotiation of Karabakh and multiple other protests by the Armenian right-wing opposition (Dashnaktsutyun) reveals that also the Armenian diaspora fiercely defending the claimed and historical Armenian lands (Greater Armenia). Moreover, they do not consider any negotiation over them.[15] Hence, the Armenian diaspora and Dashnaktsutyun seems to

embrace 1915 Incidents along with the territories of Greater Armenia as the gradual basis of their national identity. This argument is based on the observations that they instrumentalize and use those historical information as basis to acquire their ends.

## 2. THE AGENDA OF DASHNAKTSUTYUN AND ITS VISION AS A FAR RIGHT POLITICAL PARTY

Based on the Armenian identity adopted by both Armenian diaspora and Dashnaktsutyun, it can be argued that the elements of their national identity perception tends to agree with right-wing politics. In which it is based on the protection of the nation as a whole, construction of a safe and secure environment for the people, and protection of the values. However, in the case of Dashnaktsutyun, it cannot be considered as an ordinary right-wing political party, in fact it has a long history which also consists of the establishing of todays Armenia, and also its expressions and movements can easily exceed the limits reaching to the far-right politics.

As pointed out, recent scholars are mostly focused on the rising far-right phenomena within the European Union and Continental Europe and ignoring its possibility of being a global phenomenon. Therefore, there is no sufficient research on Dashnaktsutyuns classification as a far-right political party. Thereby, this paper requires a method to understand Dashnaktsutyun within far-right politics context as Cas Mudde used to define far-right in Europe in his terms. Far-right is understood as the extreme attachment to the nationality of a state and its priority within the borders of the state, protection of its absolute interests and rights in international arena by expressing extreme expressions against i.e. minorities, other nations as well as acting on the premises of their own interests and taking the risk of damaging others on the way through i.e. discrimination, biases, xenophobic expressions/actions, racist expressions/actions. The theory adopted would be Sivanandans xeno-racism which was discussed above.

It is important to understand the previous actions of Dashnaktsutyun to realize its place in the far-right politics of today. When the Armenian Question started to appear in the international arena, it was also the time when the Armenian organizations started to emerge like Dashnaktsutyun. This makes it a political party with a long history. In the beginning, Armenian bourgeoisie believed that the only powers that they could get assistance from were the Great Powers that the Ottoman Empire had disagreements with. [16] However, the first prime minister of Armenia, Hovannes Kajaznuni, states in his report to the party congress that the Armenians and especially Dashnaktsutyun made a mistake when believing that the British would see them as an ally. He also mentions that when the British approached Azerbaijani and Georgian authorities, the party blamed British for their disloyalty to their alliance with Dashnaktsutyun.[17] Therefore, their reliance on the Great Powers to echo their cause after 1915 Incidents proved to be a fallacy after their realization of the weakness of the alliance they built.

They also committed in terrorism against Turks during Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic periods to alter their disagreements. Armenian experience that created the modern Armenian identity was originated from both 1915 Incidents and the legend of

Greater Armenia which was discussed above. Accordingly, with this identity, the 1915 allegations against CUP became a general allegation against the Turkish people in time. Also Sivanandan explains that xeno-racism in times directed against other nationalities or religions by creating a war against the opponents of their culture and heritage.[18] This eventually generated a bigger hate towards a large population by the generations which resulted in the defiance against the Turkish and Azerbaijani territories to defend their national heritage. Obtaining those territories also meant to claim their national rights as the primary residents of those territories and to get the reparations that the victims families deserve. Therefore, their hatred crossed the borders of belonging to only a small group of people to the whole nation, regardless of individuals thought on the Armenian Cause.

Besides the support from the international arena that they still use as a tool to justify their allegations, they also used violent means to get genocide allegations universally recognized. This is also where it bears similarity with xeno-racism in which specified fears led to the use of violence by a certain group of people. For instance, Hergül also stresses the fact that Dashnaktsutyun formed volunteer units to serve as vanguard of the Russian Army during the First World War. They believed that the Russians would safeguard the Armenian interests too.[19] Therefore, it is possible to argue that their later actions mostly relied on terrorist acts which aimed at creating shock and fear to coerce the other party to come into terms with Dashnaktsutyuns desires.

Between 1973 to 1988, series of terrorist acts conducted internationally mostly towards Turkish diplomats by ASALA and the military extension of Dashnaktsutyun, Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) which later named as Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA). Even though those two organizations were not related and to some extent rivals to each other, they still pursued the same end, same extreme methods with relatively different political ends. Gunn mentions that Dashnaktsutyun used terrorism as a tool to reach their political desires as opposed to ASALA.[20] As mentioned in the perception of Dashnaktsutyuns national identity of Armenian people suggested that the party would certainly pursue policies that would coerce Turkish officials to recognize their allegations on genocide, give necessary reparations and further recognize those territories that belonged to Greater Armenia. Combining Gunns views with Sivanandans xeno-racism theory, it is possible to argue that ARA was the ultimate instrument that whipped up their foreigner hatred based on the nationality and led them to crave more for their national political ends.

Lastly, they established their priorities and plans after the 34th World Congress of Dashnaktsutyun in March 2022. They still prioritize the relation of tripartitism (between the party, Armenian diaspora, and Karabakh) to ensure the prospect of Armenian people. In addition, they aim to remove the anti-national authorities which in this case is the current Armenian government. They are of the opinion that the Armenian government gave consent to negotiations on Armenian terms after the defeat in Nagarno-Karabakh War that undermined the national goals of Dashnaktsutyun and allegedly the whole Armenian public opinion. Therefore, Dashnaktsutyun argues that the Armenian government showed disgrace through its policies that Dashnaktsutyun named as anti-

national and impotent.[21]

Even though Dashnaktsutyun does not necessarily refer themselves as a populist party, in fact they are rallying the population around the flag, showing other states as the casual perpetrators of attacks on Karabakh which they argue is a land belonging to Armenia. They are organizing protest movements against the government like the Homeland Salvation Movement by Iskhan Saghatelyan that demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister Pashinyan.[22] As they are within the main opposition coalition, namely Armenia Alliance that also stated their foreign policy agenda before 2021 elections as the recognition of genocide allegations, partnership with the US, EU, France and Russia, also raproachment with Turkey if and only if they are willing to take constructive steps toward recognizing the genocide allegations. Also similar to the ruling party, creating regionally stable environment along with overcoming the difficulties of being a landlocked country along with their attention to the relation with diaspora.[23] It is possible to assume that Dashnaktsutyun has interconnected relations with diaspora and with their perception on them as legitimate defenders of the Armenian Cause, it is possible for party to continue their far-right political agenda by stressing the national values and putting extreme importance on them during those days.

## 3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DASHNAKTSUTYUN AND ARMENIAN DIASPORA

When evaluating the impact of the far right party and the diaspora on the foreign policy of Armenia, it is also important to understand to what extent does the organizations that are diaspora related are interconnected with Dashnaktsutyun. By revealing the interconnectedness of the party and diaspora organizations, it is also possible to understand to what extent Dashnaktsutyun is legitimized by the diaspora organizations and diaspora in general. Considering that they both currently act against the policies of Armenian government, it is important to reveal that connection. To be able to understand, the Armenian Youth Federation, and ANCA will be examined.

First of all, understanding the tone of Dashnaktsutyun is important to understand what role they have according to themselves. This includes defending the rights of the people of Armenia and defending the truth that they talk about their genocide allegations. Analyzing this role would enable the understanding of legitimacy of the party according to diaspora. As revealed in the first chapter, the identity of both diaspora and the party is more focused on the 1915 Incidents and Karabakh. Finding legitimacy in diaspora is seen to be more related with the standing up for the rights that Dashnaktsutyun is already advocating for. From the newspapers like Armenian Weekly, Asbarez, Massis Post, and Mirror Spectator, it is apparent that to some extent, diaspora finds Dashnaktsutyun as a legitimate actor for their nation. This can be understood through the phrases used within the news and opinions of Armenian Weekly. For instance, regarding the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, the news article gives place to the concerns over the Armenian authorities behaviors. At the same time, they are applauding the same policies that Dashnaktsutyun also delivers.[24] Therefore, it is understood from the research that the diaspora legitimizes the actions of Dashnaktsutyun because they believe that the protector of their national interests is the party.

Considering the legitimacy of Dashnaktsutyun, it can be argued that it is provided through strong organizational ties between the party and diaspora. For instance, there is Armenian Youth Federation (AYF), which is directly a sub branch of the party back at Armenia. This organization has branches over different countries. The western United States will be examined as a sample organization for this study. In their website, the founding of the organization reveals that AYF was founded in 1933. Later, Dashnaktsutyun decided to unify other youth organizations across the US.[25] Since its historical background is bounded with the actions of Dashnaktsutyun, it is an organization that connects diaspora with Dashnaktsutyun in the international arena. Moreover, their websites reveal the hatred towards Turkey and Azerbaijan through events and campaigns like Divest Turkey. Their tone is the same with Dashnaktsutyun.[26] Also, the organization has programs like AYF Camp in which they provide summer camps to educate young Armenians in diaspora their national history and culture from a single biased point of view.[27] Therefore, it is apparent that this organization is a branch of Dashnaktsutyun and conducts operations to serve the interests of the party in diaspora.

Another organization that worth consideration is the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). It defines itself as a political organization which is actively engaged in the legislation issues in the US, supporting Karabakh region, increasing the US aids to Armenia, and recognition of the genocide allegations.[28] Their primary interest are the same with Dashnaktsutyun as they are the lobbying organization of ARF in the US, as discussed in the part of visions and agenda of the party. Differently from AYF, ANCA engages in political sphere within the US which includes lobbying activities to push Congress to pass beneficial legislations for Armenia. For instance, they proudly announced the amendments adopted by the US house was ANCA sponsored. Those amendments were about the investigation of alleged Azerbaijani war crimes.[29] By passing similar amendments, ANCA and overall diaspora encourages the fascist tone of Dashnaktsutyun at home while opposing the current Armenian government. Other activities of ANCA is

also similar to AYFs, informing about the genocide allegations, Karabakh issue, and Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. It is providing summer traineeship programs in Washington to boost up their local activism as stated in the website.[30] Similar to AYF, ANCA also aims to create new Armenian generations which will defend the same causes with the party and diaspora. Lastly, ANCA has also direct ties with Dashnaktsutyun on top of the same tone that they use. According to Armenian Weekly, ANCA communications director and Dashnaktsutyuns Central Committee chairman was in the same meeting in New York to discuss the future provisions.[31] Therefore, it is possible to say that ANCA also sees Dashnaktsutyun as a legitimate leader and partner in Armenia rather than the current government.

Both of the organizations actively engage in the protests against current governments policies towards Azerbaijan and Turkey. For instance, ANCA announced a demonstration in front of Turkish Ambassadors residence in Washington in 2018 conducted by AYF. The demonstration was about the recognition of their genocide allegations.[32] Along with other demonstration calls on Facebook and their official websites, it shows that both organizations are also interconnected along with their connections with Dashnaktsutyun. The vice-president of the National Assembly, Ishkhan Saghatelyan who is also member of Dashnaktsutyun, is one of the leading figures of Homeland Salvation Movement.[33] Even though diaspora did not necessarily named their protests under the movement, the context of their protests was also about the freedom of Karabakh after the Armenian defeat.[34] This movement shows that the party and diaspora is aligned on their views about current foreign policies regardless of their direct announcement of a unified movement. Therefore, Dashnaktsutyun proved to be an influential actor on diaspora since they are viewed as legitimate actors through similar national interest ends.

## 4. THE IMPACT OF DASHNAKTSUTYUN AND ARMENIAN DIASPORA ON FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN ARMENIA

Acknowledging the identity of Armenian opposition, Armenian far right party (Dashnaktsutyun) and the diaspora, the effect of them on the foreign policy of Armenia is not a complex situation. In order to understand, first the paper will focus on the current foreign policy agenda from the website of Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then, it will focus on the Homeland Salvation Movement and diaspora protests. Later, the effects of opposition to the foreign policy agenda will be assessed and further interpretations be made.

In the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenian foreign policy seems to be focused on the regional stability considering its landlocked geopolitics, further engagement with international organizations and processes, strengthening partnerships and resolving regional conflicts.[35] The regional conflicts mentioned in the page is mostly focusing on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. They aim to secure the region by international guarantees, to enable people of the region to exercise their self-determination right and lastly uninterrupted communication with the region.[36] However, after the Karabakh War in 2020, Armenia was defeated and Pashinyan government signed a ceasefire agreement with Azerbaijan under Russian moderation in November 2020. Armenia was forced to give

back further territories as a result of the ceasefire, but acquired the Lachin Corridor with the region under Russian auspices.[37] Even though according to the article 8 of the agreement, the prisoners of war (POW) shall be returned but according to Armenian side, Azerbaijan never returned those POWs after the agreement.[38] Therefore, it is possible for opposition, in our case Dashnaktsutyun, to criticize government on its failure to save POWs, and protect the territories they lost. On top of that the diaspora finding Dashnaktsutyun as the legitimate party for government, they would also follow the lines that party creates. In addition, the ruling party is now considering a rapprochement with Turkey including opening their shared border which would free Armenia from a landlocked situation.[39] Pashinyan also stated that there is a positive attitude towards them from Turkey which signals a possible rapprochement between two countries.[40] However, this is also an important point that Dashnaktsutyun uses as a point of criticism in the Pashinyan governments foreign policy agenda.

After the so-called failure of the Pashinyan government according to the opposition, a new movement called Homeland Salvation Movement was formed by nearly all of the opposition parties. However, this movement bears importance in this paper since its leading figures are also members of Dashnaktsutyun. The primary demand of the movement was the resignation of Pashinyan who signed the ceasefire in November. The movement stated that Armenia shall reclaim the lost territories, rebuild the defeated national army to ensure security, and lastly rebuild connections with countries that are at odds with Turkey. [41] Those objectives of the movement certainly serve to the interests of Dashnaktsutyun since they also argue and aim for the nationalization of the army, independent Karabakh and Turkish recognition of genocide allegations. While Pashinyan government having rapprochement with Turkey, Dashanktsutyun members would certainly oppose and this movement. Their opposition also paves their way up to the public support.

Having protests all around the country enabled Dashnaktsutyun to spread their arguments against the government and in parliamentary systems, the public opinion is important for a ruling coalition or party. According to Putnams theory of two level games, a state has processes of bargaining both domestically and internationally. Domestic negotiations involves governments reception of concerns of opposition and societal figures that it have to consider while bargaining internationally to protect their legitimacy and power in their seats.[42] In the case of Armenia, the path of international bargaining does not seem to overlap with the demands of societal figures like opposition parties, and public opinion. Homeland Salvation Movement demands the resignation of government which certainly damages the legitimacy of Pashinyan government.

In this context, acknowledging the previous discussion about the legitimacy of Dashnaktsutyun for diaspora, also the protests conducted by diaspora internationally seems to be in line with the Homeland Salvation Movement. For instance, organized by AYF, people surrounded the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles in order to state that they condemn the articles of ceasefire.[43] There are multiple examples of similar protests mostly organized by AYF and Dashnaktsutyun related organizations. Those protests also indicate that the tone of far-right political party in question is nearly the

same with diaspora. Diaspora is also an important community for Armenia since they are also the nationals that have potential to affect the thoughts of citizens in Armenia and creating external source of currency through remittances.

The far right party strongly criticizes the government as being a traitor along with the diaspora. Still, the government seem to follow its own policies in international arena. After the consensus on the normalization talks and beginning direct cargo flights in between Turkey and Armenia, two states are continuing to negotiate over different topics. In July, envoys for Ankara and Yerevan reached to consensus for the passage of third nationals on the land borders.[44] Despite the efforts of Dashnaktsutyun and diaspora, the government is bargaining at odds with them internationally. Considering that the land borders were strictly closed since 1993, they are baby steps towards a peaceful coexistence within the same region. However, this would only increase the tension within Armenia and among the Armenian diaspora and Armenia in general and would damage the legitimacy of the government. The uprising may be a result of the raproachment considering the reactions of Dashnaktsutyun and diaspora to Nagorno-Karabakh War back in 2020 was also justified with similar arguments in this case. Considering the foreign policy agenda of the ruling government, their foreign policy is also bold in a sense that it conflicts their aim of recognition of genocide allegations. Therefore, it is easier for Dashnaktsutyun to argue against the foreign policy agenda at the parliament and in public sphere.

Besides rapprochement, the protests also included desire for the release of POWs in Azerbaijan. As opposed to the situation above, Pashinyan and his government making efforts for the release of POWs as seen in their appeal to Putin for help after the ceasefire. [45] It can be argued that the Homeland Salvation Movement along with diaspora protests have been effective in decisive actions concerning the POWs, yet lacked necessary pressure for preventing the rapprochement. However, the pressure from Dashnaktsutyun and diaspora may have been effective in the slowness of the process, considering that those agreements between Turkey and Armenia have been made recently rather than immediately after 2020 Karabakh War. Therefore, to certain extent both far-right political parties and diaspora can be effective in pushing foreign policy agenda in a certain way or a pace.

## CONCLUSION

Consequently, one cannot argue that both Dashnaktsutyun as a far-right party and diaspora have excessive power upon the total foreign policy agenda of the state. Additionally, one cannot dispute that they have a significant impact. Upon the examinations of those protests, aims and means used, both Dashnaktsutyun and diaspora is influencing the government. Since the Armenian identity is built around the genocide allegations and Greater Armenia utopia, it is easier for Dashnaktsutyun to influence public opinion using its priorities. As mentioned, a legitimate government shall bargain both internationally and domestically to avoid losing power. In this case, Pashinyan government seems to elaborate more on POWs to sustain further reactions from

Dashnaktsutyun and diaspora. Whereas the government seems to continue with rapprochement with Turkey unconditionally. Therefore, still both party and diaspora have impact on the foreign policy, but their all priorities seem to be not possible to come into real life since Pashinyan government also have to bargain with international and regional actors to sustain stability. Therefore, a far-right political party and diaspora may impact foreign policy making process in a state impartially. It is important to consider other variables like regional actors, international organizations and stability.

A far-right political party definitely can use populist means to justify their desires for nationalization of the state. Dashnaktsutyun being a rooted party, definitely uses populist discourses to gather public support. Like in the case for Alternative für Deutschland in Germany and National Front in France, this is a global phenomenon that requires further investigation. Therefore, Sivanandans theory of xeno-racism is useful in investigating upsurge in far-right politics since other theories only constrained in the borders of Europe. Later, the upsurge in far-right politics would further enhance the studies on their effect on governance.

Lastly, this paper paves the way for further investigation of the future projection of the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. Elaborating on the effects and power of the actors like diaspora and far-right political parties, future projection may show that Pashinyan government possibly struggle for their legitimacy if they accelerate the process of rapprochement. Therefore, following questions may focus on in which ways Pashinyan can sustain their legitimacy domestically while sustaining peaceful coexistence within the region. Considering its landlocked geography, Armenia needs to build relationships with their possible regional partners. To open up to Europe, Turkey would be a good partner if they can work up on normalization plans. However, the downside would be domestic unrest caused by Dashnaktsutyun and other opposition parties. Also, diaspora carrying out lobbying activities in different countries against Turkish benefits may hinder that process.

**Photo: Wikipedia*

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