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"100 Years Later, It Is Still So Powerful": Navigating the Effects of the Armenian Genocide and its Trauma on Armenian American Youth

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the effects of the Armenian Genocide on five Armenian American university students ages 18 to 29 in the San Francisco Bay Area. The impact of this event from 100 years ago is passed down generationally and still affects the current descendants of its survivors. Since this genocide is still denied by Turkey, its perpetrators, and by the United States, the impact on Armenians has increased as each generation fights for official recognition.

By conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews, the participants revealed its impact on their identity. This thesis was grounded in intergenerational trauma transmission theory and collective memory theory. The participant narratives revealed that this traumatic event from 100 years ago still affects Armenian American identity and is heightened by the denial. The genocide serves as a collective memory marker for Armenians. The participant narratives also serve as counter-stories to the denial discourse. Their narratives reveal what factors have mobilized the younger generation of Armenian Americans into collective action for global recognition of this genocide. These results can be used as a tool for human rights educators, those active in the genocide recognition, and can be included in genocide curriculum.