ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AMONG U.S. ARMENIAN-ANCESTRY BEHAVIORAL SCIENTISTS

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Since 1987, the Armenian Behavioral Science Association (ABSA) has linked over 500 behavioral scientists of Armenian ancestry in the USA with others world-wide. Though few in number, many of these scientists are noted leaders within their own field. After the 1988 earthquake in the Caucasus, how much do these scientists identify themselves as Hyes? In the early 1990s, ABSA collected surveys from 295 Armenian-ancestry behavioral scientists--44 involved in Armenian Studies, and 251 not involved--asking several questions: their fluency in Armenian, availability for earthquake relief (as a paid/unpaid consultant), availability for media or public speaking. The analysis of these survey findings uses correlational and factor analyses to reveal patterns of ethnic identification among these 295 scientists. Policy implications are discussed.

The dramatic growth of Armenian Studies in the USA in the past half-century is clear in the formation of several key institutions: the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR, 1955), the Armenian Research Center at Michigan-Dearborn (ARC, 1959), the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA, 1971), the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS, 1974), Zoryan Institute (ZI, 1982), and chairs and/or centers at a score of U.S. universities (Takooshian, 1995). With the rise of these new training centers, Armenian Studies in the USA transformed from a small handful of scholars to a large new wave of historians and other social scientists focused on Armenian issues. In 2013, interested young Armenian-Americans can now choose to grow closer to their heritage by planning a career in Armenian Studies.

How about the many Americans of Armenian ancestry who enter other careers in the behavioral sciences? How much do they identify with their Armenian heritage (Der-Karabetian, 1980; Phinney, 1990)?

On August 31, 1987, over 50 Armenian-ancestry professionals and students from across North America convened at Fordham University in New York City to form the Armenian Behavioral Science Association (ABSA). The co-

founders represented six allied fields: **Anny P. Bakalian** (sociology), **Haikaz M. Grigorian** (psychiatry), **Hagop S. Pambookian** (psychology), **Mardo Soghomian** (political science), **Richard H. Tashjian** (statistics), **Harold Takooshian** (social science). Since 1987, ABSA has been active in the USA, with a diverse program of national and local gatherings, publications, directories, and awards. How much do these ABSA behavioral scientists identify with their Armenian ancestry?

Method. After the devastating earthquake in the Caucus mountains on December 7, 1988, ABSA quickly acted to involve U.S. behavioral scientists, by conducting a census to publish its first *Directory of Armenian-American Behavioral Scientists* (Takooshian, 1989). This was eventually expanded from 304 up to 506 professional in six years (Takooshian, 1995).

As part of this U.S. effort, professionals were sent multiple surveys in 1989-1995 asking for basic information: (a) Fluency in speaking Armenian (none/ limited/ fluent)? (b) Current involvement in the U.S. Armenian community (none/ slight/ moderate/ heavy)? Availability as a: (c) Volunteer? (d) Paid consultant? (e) Media expert? (f) Mentor to students? (g) Public speaker?

ABSA also published its first non-USA directories, in cooperation with leaders in the Republic of

Armenia: (a) *Directory of psychologists in the Republic of Armenia* (Vardanisn, 1990). (b) *Directory of sociologists in the Republic of Armenia* (Pogosian, Kalayjian, & Takooshian, 1991).

Results. Of 506 U.S. professionals, a total of 295 (or 58%) replied to the surveys. Of these 295, a minority of 44 (or 15%) were involved in Armenian Studies. The analysis below focuses on the 251 (85%) who are mainstream behavioral scientists not involved in Armenology.

1. **Profile.** Only a minority of the 251 U.S. behavioral scientists (44%) reported being fluent in the Armenian language. Only a minority of 37% were involved in the U.S. Armenian community—moderately (24%) or heavily (13%). Yes a majority of these respondents reported being available as volunteers (66%), paid consultants (68%), media experts (61%), public speakers (67%), or mentors to students (84%).

2. **Patterns**. A principal-components factor analysis of the 251 replies indentified three significant factors: (a) The largest factor (37%) was "Service"--the desire to serve one's community. (b) Second (16%) was "Ethnicity"--identification with one's ethnic ancestry. (c) Third (15%) was "Achievement"--

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status as an outstanding member or Fellow in one's field.

3. **Correlates.** Based on inter-correlations of the responses, we find a similar though not identical patter of correlations, comparing the 251 behavioral scientists, and the 44 involved in Armenology.

Discussion. Overall, the replies of 251 U.S. behavioral scientists following the 1988 earthquake in Armenia reveal this picture: Most are not fluent in Armenian or involved in the Armenian community, but are open to becoming more involved if asked to do so. Policy implications are discussed.

Table 1. A self-report profile of 295 respondents, comparing behavioral scientists in general (N=251) with those specializing in Armenian issues (N=44).

	Total	Mainstream	Armenologist
		Armenian Language?	
None:	25%	30%	0% ***
Limited:	27	27	24
Fluent:	49	44	76
Involvement?			
None:		19	22	0 ***
Slight:		37	42	11
Moderate:		25	24	32
Heavy:		19	13	57
Media referral?		61	59	73
Counseling students?		84	84	84
Paid consulting?		68	67	74
Volunteer relief?		66	68	53
Public speaking?		67	66	74
Achievement		32	29	48 *

Notes: Asterisks indicate the difference between Armenologists and mainstream is significant (two-tail) at the level of p = .05 (*), .01 (**), or .001 (***).

Table 2. Factor analysis of responses of 251 mainstream behavioral scientists.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Armenian language:	.35	.71 *	.31
Involvement:	.45	.68 *	.07
Achievement:	-.19	-.14	.80 *
Counseling students:	.56 *	-.04	-.52
Media referral:	.71 *	-.33	.38
Paid consulting:	.82 *	-.24	-.06
Volunteer relief:	.68 *	.13	-.10
Public speaking:	.82 *	-.27	.18
% variance explained:	37%	16%	15%

Principal components analysis, un-rotated factors:
Factor 1: Service – desire to serve the community
Factor 2: Ethnicity – identification with Armenians
Factor 3: Achievement – Status within one's field

Table 3. Intercorrelation of self-report statements for
251 mainstream behavioral scientists **in bold** (and 44 Armenologists).

	.Involv	.Achiev	.Language	.Counsel	.Media	.Paid	.Volunteer
Achievement:	**-.10** (.31)						
Armenian language:	**.47** (.27)	**.01** (.22)					
Counseling students:	**.24** (.02)	**-.31** (-.51)	**.03** (.40)				
Media referral:	**.16** (.30)	**.04** (.03)	**.16** (.19)	**.23** (.40)			
Paid consulting:	**.21** (-.03)	**-.18** (-.22)	**.13** (.19)	**.45** (.40)	**.56** (.73)		
Volunteer relief:	**.31** (.05)	**-.15** (-.05)	**.26** (.39)	**.35** (.46)	**.29** (.63)	**.51** (.63)	
Public speaking:	**.25** (.14)	**-.09** (.03)	**.13** (.19)	**.35** (.40)	**.69** (.73)	**.65** (.73)	**.45** (.63)

NOTE: involvement in Armenian-American community 0-none to 3-high; Achievement 0-average, 1-fellow; Armenian language fluency 0-none to 3-high; Counseling 0-no, 1-yes; Media 0-no, 1-yes; Paid 0-no, 1-yes; Volunteer 0-no, 1-yes; Speaking 0-no, 1-yes

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