

The Armenian Lobby in the US:
The Successes (and Limitations) of the Grassroots
Approach



By

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Abstract

The following thesis will provide an in-depth analysis on the success of one of the most powerful ethnic lobbies in the US, namely the Armenian lobby. This analysis will show what factors contribute to the success of the Armenian lobby. Thereby, this thesis also will show what difficulties the Armenian lobby faces. Besides that, the thesis will show whether factors that are believed to have an influence on ethnic lobbying in general, are also the factors that contribute to the success of the Armenian lobby. The results will follow from a clarifying disquisition of the Armenian community's history and most important lobby group ANCA, a comparison between the most important Armenian and Cuban lobby groups, a comparison between the Armenian and Cuban communities in the US, and an overview of the claimed successes of the Armenian lobby. These distinct elements in combination with existing literature, both scholarly as public material provided by the lobbies themselves, will eventually provide results from which it is possible to conclude which factors are the most important for the success of the ethnic minority's lobby.

Keywords: Armenian-American Community: Cuban-American Community: Ethnic Lobby: Grassroots: Immigrant Community: US Foreign Policy

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I. Introduction

“*Wer redet heute noch von der Vernichtung der Armenier?*”

(Adolf Hitler 1939)

Just before invading Poland, Nazi-leader Adolf Hitler posed the question above, which means “Who today speaks about the eradication of the Armenians?” The question was meant cynically, rhetorically, and as a justification for his invasion. Nowadays, fortunately, this interpretation is no longer received as such. The Armenian population and their cause have been ignored for a longstanding period, but Armenians around the world have made efforts in confronting the world with the atrocities against the Armenian people in the former Ottoman Empire. A specific example of the success of these efforts was the recognition by 26 nations of the *Vernichtung* (eradication) after the collapse of the Soviet-Union (USSR)¹. 26 of the 29 nations recognizing it have acknowledged it only after 1989. This indicated the apparent shift of attention. The United States (US), however, is not one of the 29 nations to recognize the genocide despite the efforts of the Armenian community.

Nonetheless, their efforts did result in the recognition of their lobbying strength from former US national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski (2006). He called the Armenian-American lobby one of the three most influential ethnic lobby groups within the US political system (Jaffe). This statement from the former advisor does not stand on its own. Scholars like Baser & Swain (50), King & Pomper (11), and Zarifian (503) also mention the Armenian-American community as one of the most powerful communities in the US. Baser & Swain state about them that “the Armenian-American diaspora deserves serious attention since it is one of the most powerful transnational communities and is highly influential in influencing policymaking (53).” A clear example of the Armenian-American community’s influence on US politics is shown by the fact that Armenia is within the top ten of all nations regarding assistance per capita, and is the most beneficiary nation of US aid per capita around the Caspian Sea (King & Pomper 9).

While the Armenian lobby is considered to be one of the strongest ethnic lobby groups in the US, these previously mentioned statements are to some extent contradicting. The Armenian community is clearly not the largest immigrant community in the US. When

1. This thesis will use the term ‘Armenian Genocide’ rather than the ‘Armenian issue’ based on research from Simm (2016), Housepian (1966), and Winter (2003). These scholars all claim that the term ‘genocide’ does justice to the atrocities that have happened in the Ottoman empire.

comparing the number of Armenian-Americans with other immigrant communities, its place in Brzezinski's top three of the most influential lobbies seems somewhat unexpected at first sight. Approximately 800.000 Armenians live in the US (Baser & Swain 57), while there are for example millions of Mexicans (35 million), Vietnamese (2 million), Japanese (3 million), and Cubans (2 million) ("2015 American Community Survey"). Therefore, it is interesting to look at how the Armenian lobby has grown to become one of the most influential lobby groups within the US political system despite the relatively small size of the community.

Lobbying is a crucial element of the US political system according to several scholars (Lowery 30; Zarifian 503; Rubenezzer & Redd 755). Lobbying is often seen as trying to persuade and influence politicians through various means. Possible means that a lobby group can use are building close relationships between a lobby group's representative and public officials, funding political campaigns, using voter turnouts as a means of pressure, altering the public opinion to put pressure on public officials, or providing exclusive information ("Interest Group"). A specific group that utilizes lobbying for this purpose are ethnic lobby groups. They represent a certain immigrant minority or diaspora within the host land's political system. These lobby groups do not only try to represent the minority within the US, but in most cases also the interests of the country of origin (Baser & Swain 46).

A difficulty with lobbying is the lack of research on the phenomenon since lobbying is hardly done overtly. Nevertheless, scholars have managed to show that the Armenian lobby has successfully influenced US politics. Examples include the amount of foreign aid that a country of origin receives (Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller 61), the number of mentions of the minority in Congress (King & Pomper 10), and bills that have been proposed in favor of the country of origin. A clear example of this is the *Section 907* that Congress added to Freedom Support Act. This is shown in research from Baser & Swain who state that:

In the fall of 1992 the U.S. Congress passed the Freedom Support Act (FSA) to facilitate economic and humanitarian aid to the former republics of the Soviet Union, aimed at helping democratization processes and fostering economic growth. However, a month after its adoption, on October 24th, 1992, the Congress pushed by the Armenian lobby introduced a highly controversial amendment to the FSA, most commonly referred as Section 907, which banned direct American government assistance to the government of Azerbaijan. (59)

Adoption of this amendment was a great lobbying victory for the Armenians since they were, and currently still are, at war with the Azeri's over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Examples like these in several studies have shown that the Armenian lobby is among the most powerful and influential ethnic lobby groups that act in the US political system.

1.1 Among the lobbying elite

The Armenian lobby is not the only ethnic lobby to be considered as highly influential. Other ethnic lobby groups that are often mentioned in studies of ethnic lobby groups are the Israel and the Cuban lobby groups. Considering the size of these groups and the importance of their role in US foreign policy allows for the conclusion that it is somewhat strange that Armenia is among these nations in the lists of scholars. The size of the Cuban community is, for example not of the same size of the Mexican community (the largest immigrant minority in the US). Nevertheless, the Cuban community is a relatively large and concentrated community in the US. This can, to some extent, explain their success in influencing the process of policy making. A superior explanation would be that Cuba is a neighboring country, which makes it more obvious for the US to seriously consider the country in creating its foreign policy. Especially since Cuba's geographical location and political stance made them a direct enemy during the Cold War, which made them a threat to the US national security. In addition to this, the exiles from Cuba were enemies of the Castro government that reigned over the country. Therefore, most of their views on the Castro government were in accordance with the US' views.

The success of the Israel lobby is, at first sight, hard to match with the number of Israelis in the US. There are approximately a hundred thousand Israelis in the US, but Mearsheimer & Waltz (24) argue that the Israel lobby is often regarded as the "Jewish lobby". That raises the number of people that these lobby groups represent to approximately 8 million people. This amount is relatively high compared to other ethnic minorities in the US. However, one must note that the Israel lobby might present itself as the representers of the entire Jewish community, but not all Jewish people feel akin to the Israel lobby.

Mearsheimer & Waltz also mention that the US has significant interests in Israel due to its geographical position in the Middle East (17). The US was one of the first nations to recognize the existence of the Israeli state in 1948, which already shows the close relations between them. During the Cold War, these ties strengthened due to the fact that nations surrounding Israel became allies of the Soviet Union. Israel hereby became a capitalist stronghold in the region and the US wanted to maintain this situation (Policy Almanac). It is

thereby not strange that certain laws were adapted to the interests of Israel and that they receive large amounts of foreign aid. These advantages for Israel are especially beneficial for the US by gaining an important, trustworthy, and dependent ally in that given region (18).

Thus, this indicates that the Armenians are successful despite their shortcomings. Regarding the size of the Armenian population in the US they seem to have a disproportional influence on US foreign policy. Therefore, this thesis will try to find an answer to the question why and how the Armenian-American lobby is considered to be so successful. A factor that for example could have had a major influence on the success of the Armenian lobby is that their most important lobby group focusses on local politics in order to get influence. How this has contributed to their success will be elaborated in both the first and the second chapter of this thesis.

I.II Literature overview

(Ethnic) lobbying is a practice that is done mostly behind closed doors. Therefore, it is interesting to look at it in depth to see what kind of influence it has on US foreign policy. A large portion of studies regarding the practice of lobbying focuses on whether ethnic lobbying has an influence on American politics at all. In this section, different researches on ethnic lobbying and the Armenian lobby will be discussed. This will give a brief overview of already existing literature on the topic.

Stephen Garret, for example, showed in his research on Eastern-European lobby groups, that the influence of these ethnic lobby groups was minimal during the Cold War era. According to Garret, they lacked influence simply because the relation with the USSR was too much under pressure to let foreign policy be influenced by ethnic lobby groups (318). However, a study done by Louis Gerson showed that the first wave of immigrants in the US could have exploited their influence despite the tensions during the Cold War. Gerson concludes that they have just failed to do so. For this reason, he states that ethnic lobby groups nowadays lack influence because their ancestors were not assertive enough (Gerson).

Despite their different interpretations, Gerson and Garret both are skeptical towards the influence of ethnic lobbies in the US. This is, however, not the shared consensus amongst scholars. A controversial study done by Mearsheimer & Walt has shown that the Israel lobby, for example, has a significant influence on US foreign policy. Similarly, Samuel Huntington in his research *The Erosion of American National Interests* proved that ethnic lobby groups are the most important factor in foreign policy along with the business lobby.

In line with Garret's research, Yossi Shain stated, that during the Cold War there was hardly any room for ethnic groups to have an influence on US foreign policy. Although according to Shain, this changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union because "of the greater complexity in distinguishing between America's friends and foes after the collapse of communism" ("Ethnic Diasporas" 812). In later research by Shain, he recognized a shift within the American society that gave room to ethnic lobby groups to flourish. Shain said about this shift that "After the Cold War, with the growing acceptance of multiculturalism in all aspects of American life, transnational ties and diasporic activism became more pronounced" ("Role of Diasporas" 140). Shain means with 'diasporic activism' in this sense the activities of migrant communities that fight for their interests in several possible ways like protests, petitions, but most importantly through lobbying.

While there is no general consensus to what extent these ethnic lobby groups have influence on US foreign policy, there is a noticeable shift after the Cold War when ethnic lobby groups seem to have obtained more influence. This gives the opportunity to look at specific ethnic lobby groups including the Armenian lobby. Heather S. Gregg conducted research on the establishment of two important Armenian lobby groups. Her research indirectly refutes Gerson's notion that the first wave of immigrants laid a bad foundation for contemporary ethnic lobby groups, at least, in the case of Armenia. Because the first Armenian attempts to influence US politics happened already in 1891. The Armenians mobilized themselves in their communities and tried to get in touch with local politicians to ask them to support the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire (6).

Gregg further found by looking at the case of the Armenian Lobby, that it is possible to say that ethnic lobby groups can have influence on foreign policy. She further states: "Lastly, overall, the Armenian case does suggest that ethnic lobby groups can sway US foreign policy goals. US interests in the Caucasus do not demand to favor Armenia over its neighbors, yet have pro-Armenian voices in Congress succeeded in pushing through considerable aid to the country and legislation punishing to its enemies (27)." Hereby Gregg clearly states that an ethnic lobby influences foreign policy by stating that the Armenian lobby is successful, at least in comparison to the other nations in the Caucasus.

King & Pomper in turn specified their research even more by looking at how the Armenian lobby is organized. They show that the creation of an Armenian Congressional Caucus has had a major role in the community's success in influencing policy regarding their interests (5). Besides this finding, King & Pomper noticed something else when looking at the Armenian success. They found that pity, and perhaps some sort of guilt, plays a role in their

success. They came to this conclusion when they looked at what role the US played in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan and how the US handled it. They state that the Armenians were the military victors. “Nonetheless, taking advantage of Congress’s continuing perception of Armenia as victimized because of Turkey’s backing of Azerbaijan, Armenia’s supporters on Capitol Hill sought to convince other lawmakers that Armenia was still the weaker party in the dispute” (King & Pomper 11). In their research, they also touch upon the fact that the Armenian communities are living far away from each other and operate as small local communities.

While King & Pomper do mention the grassroots approach from which the largest Armenian lobby group works implicitly, they do not go into depth on this topic. The Armenian lobby namely has adapted their style of lobbying to the lack of size of the community that they represent. While King & Pomper only slightly touch upon this topic, this grassroots approach seems to be one of the most important factors of success and, therefore, will be elaborated on in depth later in this thesis. While the several types of research done on this topic show different reasons why the Armenian lobby is so successful, it lacks to go into depth on the main reason for their success. This reason is the grassroots approach that the Armenian lobby uses to get their interests represented. King & Pomper are not the only scholars to neglect this aspect of the Armenian lobby and its success. Other scholars, such as Baser & Swain and Zarifian pay little attention to the grassroots aspect. And yet this thesis will show, the grassroots element, in fact, turns out to be crucial. It is through the grassroots approach that the Armenian lobby achieves recognition in almost all states in the US.

Another flaw in research that has been done on the Armenian success is that the reasons mentioned by several scholars are hardly combined and that the success is constantly explained from one or two specific factors while not taking in account other factors. As mentioned above, for example, research has been done on the influence of the size of the community, on the importance of having multiple lobby groups, and on the shared values between the immigrant community and the US citizens, but hardly are these factors combined to see whether all or some of these can have significant influence on the success of the Armenian lobby.

This thesis will, therefore, attempt to combine several possible reasons to show that all can contribute, but will keep in mind that some contribute more than others. Furthermore, this thesis will show that a reason which hardly gets attention, the grassroots approach, is more important to the success of the Armenian lobby than is assumed in previous research. The main objectives will be further elaborated on in the next section.

I.III Objectives

Within this thesis, it will be demonstrated that the success of the Armenian lobby is mostly derived from the right timing of establishing the lobby, the ability to adapt objectives so they do not conflict with US interests and their grassroots approach. Especially when the specific community is rather small, it is important to look at how the diaspora is divided over different states within the US, and how they manifest themselves within these separate regions (5). How this works out for the Armenian lobby will be explained in the first chapter. Baser and Swain argue in their research (50), that the size of the community is an important factor for the success of an ethnic lobby and claim that a larger community is likely to be more successful. However, the notion that a community like the Armenian is considered to be successful indirectly means that the size of the community is not an important factor in all cases.

Does having more money than the opposing side guarantee you lobbying success? This is a question that has been asked by scholars like Paul & Paul, Ainsworth, and Derewicz in their research on lobbying. Therefore, the next important conclusion that this thesis will provide is how important the role of money is in lobbying. This thesis will show whether this is the case regarding the Armenian lobby. This is not necessarily expected when we look at research done by some scholars on ethnic lobby groups in general, who claim that ethnic lobby groups have relatively small access to funds. Therefore, this thesis will give an insight in the accessible funds of the most important Armenian lobby group. Besides that, the third chapter will provide some cases in which the lobbying victory was claimed by the Armenians, which will help to determine whether money was the most important factor in the success of the Armenian lobby.

This thesis will achieve the earlier mentioned objectives through a historical descriptive overview, a comparison between the Cuban and Armenian lobby and their communities, and an overview of some of the most important successes gained by the Armenian lobby. The overview will be looking at the Armenian community in the US and their history, and the creation of the two most important lobby groups. Especially the latter will be looked at in depth and this thesis will provide a clear overview of their establishment, their working method, and their goals.

On top of that, this thesis will compare the Armenian lobby with the Cuban-American lobby. This ethnic lobby group is often regarded as successful as the Armenian lobby (King & Pomper 10; Baser & Swain 50; Jaffe). A comparison between the two will provide an in-depth analysis of their differences, but perhaps more important, it will show their

commonalities and what contributes to the success of both lobby groups. Next, the present thesis will provide a clear overview of successes that could possibly be the outcome of, and are claimed by the Armenian lobby. Within this chapter, the reasons for their success will be given and it will show why the Armenian lobby is so (disproportionally) successful.

I.IV Theoretical Framework

This thesis will look at the success of the Armenian lobby from several perspectives. Therefore, two theories will be taken into account when the success of the Armenian lobby is looked at and explained. First of all, this thesis will use Olson's theory on collective action. In his book *Logic of Collective Action*, Olson describes that organized interests are not formed naturally, but that there needs to be a selective incentive (Lowery 32). An example of this can be growing status within the community or individual financial benefits. ANCA, for example, claims payments from the Turkish government for the atrocities in 1915 (Gregg 17). The interest itself is not persuasive enough to mobilize a community according to Olson (15). In addition, he states that the matter in which success is expected is also a reason for an individual to engage in collective action.

Applying this theory to the discussion of the Armenian genocide, Olson's theory provides that the members of a group or collective and therewith the Armenian lobby has more at stake than just the recognition itself. Furthermore, the theory suggests that small groups with larger stakes in policy are probably more successful in fulfilling their demands than when a large group shares an interest (16). According to Olson, the individual benefit is much larger when a smaller group is lobbying for something, than when large groups with common interests do so.

Next to Olson's theory of collective action, this thesis will consider Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller's definition of lobbying. They did research to why "only a small proportion of total foreign aid goes to the least developed countries" (62). By looking at this topic they used the following definition of lobbying by ethnic lobby groups:

Lobbying in our paper takes place in a donor country which allocates aid among two recipient countries. We assume that there are two ethnic groups in the donor country corresponding to the two recipient countries, and there are natives. The natives are impartial about the two recipient countries and do not lobby the government. However, each ethnic group cares only about one

recipient country and lobbies the government for giving more aid to its country of preference. (Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller 63)

This definition of lobbying will be used throughout this thesis and will be applied to the Armenian lobby. The definition provided by Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller has an advantage in comparison to other given definitions of lobbying since it puts focus on the participants of lobbying. Adding to that, this definition puts lobbying in a perspective in which the lobbying party is relative to an opposing side. While the paper in which this definition has been used, focused on aid allocation, this thesis will show that this definition is perfectly applicable to other policies on which the Armenian groups lobby. For example, it is possible to apply this definition to the fight for recognition of the Armenian genocide. In this case, the US is the donor country of whom the natives are relatively impartial towards the issue. The US in this case is country that needs to “give” its recognition or not. Besides that, there are two lobbies, the Turkish and the Armenian lobby, who try to influence the US to recognize the genocide or not. The Turkish lobby opposes recognition, while the Armenian lobby strives for it. Thereby, the success of both lobbies is dependent on the US and, therefore, try to influence politicians in such way that the US favors their side. This makes success in lobbying relative to the other side trying to influence the donor country. Besides this, there are two recipient countries, Turkey and Armenia to whom recognition has a severe impact because the recognition inherits claims for pieces of land and payments, for example.

Turkey will be used multiple times as an example due to the important role they play in the success of the Armenian lobby in general. Like in the case mentioned above, Turkey plays a role as opposing side in multiple issues that are important to the Armenian lobby. Due to the difficult relationship between Armenia and Turkey they often have conflicting interests and, thus, are facing each other in their lobbying efforts. The issues on which they quarrel are for example: the closed border between Armenia and Turkey, the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, and the violation of Human Rights. Therefore, Turkey and its lobby is mentioned and used throughout this thesis as an example. There will, however, not be an elaboration on the influence of Turkey or its lobby groups.

1. Armenians and the Armenian lobby in the US: an overview

In this section, the history of the Armenian community and their way to the US will be discussed. Furthermore, will it provide a factual overview of the community. Therewith, this section will contribute to the general understanding of the Armenian community and their motivations to engage with US foreign policy. Long before the Republic of Armenia (1991) was founded, Armenians already lived in the area where nowadays the independent state exists (Vartabedian). However, throughout history, the Armenian kingdom has often shifted in size and in place. This is one important reason why the Armenian people were dispersed from the heart of the former Ottoman Empire all the way to the Caspian Sea (Balakian 23). Balakian says that because of the strategical place of the Armenian empire they often have been fought and, therefore, the Armenian people had to move from the area and many Armenians did flee the area (27).

This makes it better understandable that only about half of the Armenians live in the Republic of Armenia. While seven to eight million Armenians are estimated to live in the world, only three and a half to four million live in the Republic itself (Baser & Swain 52). An estimated one million Armenians live in Russia, which is the nation that hosts the largest number of Armenians outside of Armenia. In the US there are approximately 800.000 Armenians (52). This group has been spread from the east to west. The most Armenians in the US nowadays live in California, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Rhode Island, and Texas (“Ancestry: 2000”).

The numbers of how much and where Armenian-Americans live are important because they represent a certain value during elections. One of the usable resources of lobby groups is the people that they represent. Lobby groups can support local candidates by recommending the candidate to their members and by promoting the candidate through their various media outlets. In exchange for these recommendations, the lobby group can ask or pressure the candidate to support their views when he or she is in office. An example of how this works is shown by the ANCA report cards. ANCA gives all members of Congress a grade based on whether they support the Armenian case. They accurately keep track on what bills and letters the members sign or cosponsor. A candidate that is openly supported, for example, is Democratic Congress member Brad Sherman from California. Sherman has received consecutive A+’s for his efforts in Congress the last six years and has, therefore, received the ‘ANCA endorsed’ button on his website. This explicitly shows the influence that Armenian-American voters can have on US politics.

The Armenian community was established through various waves of migration. The first serious wave of Armenians coming to the US that established communities came around the end of the 19th century. They fled an increasingly oppressing Ottoman regime under which Armenians were seen as second-class citizens. This oppression eventually resulted in the Hamidian Massacres (1894-96) in which 200.000-300.000 casualties were caused (Balakian 27). While it was the most serious wave of Armenians coming to the US, they were not the first. The first claimed Armenian in the US is 'Malcolm the Armenian', who came to what we now call the US along with the Puritans in the early 17th century.

In the following two and a half centuries, the numbers of Armenians in the colonies hardly rose. It is thought that only around 60 Armenians lived in the colonies in 1870 (Bakalian 8). According to Bakalian, the dozens of Armenians were mostly businessmen and merchants who were schooled by missionaries from New England and who were expected to leave for Anatolia in the near future. The earlier mentioned growing oppression within the Ottoman Empire upon the Armenian citizens, however, had a drastic impact on Armenian migration to the US. During this oppression in the 1890's approximately 12.000 Armenians fled the Ottoman Empire and went to the US.

In hindsight, it is possible to say that this was only a part of a much larger wave of Armenian immigrants coming to the US. From 1899 till 1917 approximately 54.000 Armenians came to the US fleeing from the Ottoman atrocities (Bakalian 9). The Hamidian massacres were not the end of growing tensions between the Ottomans and the Armenians in former Anatolia. The highly politicized genocide that followed caused many Armenians to flee from the Empire due to safety issues. Approximately one and a half million Armenians lost their lives during the genocide, which lasted from 1915 to 1922 (Winter 16).

According to Malcolm (67), the approximately 78.000 Armenians settled down all over the US. Therefore, there is not just one large Armenian community, but smaller communities have been established for example in New York, Los Angeles, Boston, and several other cities across the US (73). These small communities, however, were easy to mobilize due to their size (Malkasian 350).

This makes it more logical that during this wave of Armenians coming to the US, the communities started to be politically active. The Armenian community already sought opportunities to promote the Armenian story. Balakian states that the Armenians tried to alert the US citizens of the atrocities that happened in the Ottoman Empire and they tried to shape the public opinion in order to demand actions from the American government (44). This

mobilization of Armenians in order to help the Armenians back in Anatolia took shape with the establishment of the first Armenian lobby group by Vahan Cardashian.

1.1 Armenian National Committee of America

The following section will show how the first mobilization turned into one of the most influential groups regarding US foreign policy. Vahan Cardashian, an Armenian Yale-educated lawyer who had come to the US in 1902, was the founder of the first Armenian “lobby group” in 1919. The *American Committee for the Independence of Armenia* (ACIA) its main target was to gain support among American politicians for the independence of an Armenian state (Malkasian 351-2). Covertly they acted as a lobby group for an in Anatolia based Armenian political party the *Armenian Revolutionary Federation* (ARF). The committee reached out to politicians and other figures from the American elite by sending letters and simply contacting them. The first success of ACIA came when Henry Cabot Lodge, as the head of the *Foreign Relations Committee* was reached out to and submitted a resolution that endorsed an independent Armenia (352). This had to happen retroactively, since the First Republic of Armenia had already been called out in 1918. Their method of creating a coalition of the elite that sympathized with the Armenian people already had put the Armenian independence on the American political agenda only a year after creating the ACIA (Malkasian 354).

ACIA grew rapidly and gained members more dispersed over the US. Thus, after 22 years, ACIA changed its name in 1941 to the Armenian National Committee of America to emphasize its nationwide stature (Anca.org). While the name changed, the lobby group is still considered to be the lobbying arm of the ARF (17). Another important change for the lobby group over the last century was the continuously changing status and situation of the Armenian nation. Nevertheless, ANCA’s objectives are still in line with the objectives of its predecessor. On their website ANCA states the following objectives:

- To foster public awareness in support of a free, united and independent Armenia;
- To influence and guide U.S. policy on matters of interest to the Armenian American community;
- To represent the collective Armenian American viewpoint on matters of public policy, while serving as liaison between the community and their elected officials (Anca.org).

The objective to create awareness for an independent Armenia has always been an objective for the ACIA as well. The others might already have been worked on by ACIA, but were not explicitly mentioned goals for ACIA. While the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the US remains to be the most important topic on which all Armenian lobby groups try to get influence on, there are many other contemporary topics which can be seen as important to the lobby groups. These topics, however, seem to get less attention in media outlets (Malkisian 350). The topics the groups put their efforts in have developed mostly after the Republic of Armenia became an independent nation and are mostly concerned with the political situation in Armenia (351). The issues the ANCA explicitly addresses are:

Supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination and independence within secure borders increasing U.S. aid levels to Armenia to promote economic and democratic development; securing direct U.S. aid to Nagorno-Karabakh; ensuring the appropriate commemoration of the Armenian Genocide; and encouraging Turkey and Azerbaijan to lift their blockades and adhere to international standards for human rights and humanitarian practices. (Anca.org)

The issues shows the willingness of ANCA to address other issues, rather than focusing solely on the recognition and proper commemoration of the Armenian genocide. Furthermore, this shows that ANCA is not only dwelling on issues from the past but also try to tackle contemporary issues like the blockades from Turkey and Azerbaijan. The methods ANCA uses to address these issues will be elaborated on in the next section.

1.2 A Grass-Roots Organization

While the objectives and the group supporting the country of origin mostly remained the same over the decades, the style of lobbying and thereby influencing US politics changed (Gregg 18). ACIA mainly was a club of elitist and highly educated Armenians, while ANCA, however, tries to accomplish their goals with a grassroots approach. The grassroots approach means that ANCA's lobbying efforts are motivated by its members who are not necessarily elitists Armenians. This means that next to their lobbying efforts in Washington D.C. they focus on state and city level politics in order to achieve their goals in Washington D.C. (19). The recognition on the municipality and state level on their turn should help to put pressure on the federal government.

In order to accomplish this, ANCA is located not only in Washington D.C., but also in both Massachusetts and California representing the Eastern and Western region. These offices both operate as the heads of smaller offices throughout the nation. The smaller offices are called local ANC's or chapters depending on whether you are in the east or the west and are located in multiple cities in the US and focus on influencing local politics. ANCA utilizes these local offices to pursue their goals by, for example, supporting Congressmen in their home states in order to have their support when they push for a bill regarding recognition in Congress. Not only does it show that it works bottom-up on a geographical level, but also that the lobby group tries to work based on the motivations and support of their members and their collective interests (Anca.org). The ANC's are of utmost importance for ANCA because they "represent the cornerstone of an ANCA grassroots movement that educates, motivates, and activates community advocates in pursuit of security, justice, peace and prosperity for the Armenian nation" (Anca.org).

The local offices are the connection between their members and the national committee. Therefore, these ANC's are responsible for mobilizing people for rallies and manifestations throughout the country. Another way of how the local ANC's try to mobilize people is to get them active on the World Wide Web. The community is called upon through social media, e-mails, and pamphlets to show its compassion with the Armenian cause by sharing certain hashtags, photos, and messages on social media. These are means of pressure that the lobby group has been able to use only recently. Nevertheless is it a way to show the importance of the Armenian cause to a broader public and to the specific people you want to reach like politicians.

Next to social media campaigns the local offices try to persuade people to sign all sorts of petitions that deal with the Armenian cause. A recent example of this was a pre-fabricated letter to President Donald Trump to show disappointment in his message on the 24th of April while addressing the Armenian issue (Anca.org). An example of how the grassroots approach works has been shown by the recognition of the Armenian genocide in Texas. After Texas had recognized the Armenian Genocide, ANCA by means of the following statement explained what contributed to this local success. "Following the testimony, ANCA-WR called its online activists in Texas to action, as a result of which hundreds of letters were emailed to state legislators. Many more phone calls were made through joint efforts of the Armenian community in a strong demonstration of unity and grassroots activism" ("Texas Recognizes"). It shows an example of what methods ANCA utilizes in order to put pressure on local politicians in order to accomplish their objectives.

Furthermore, it shows that the local offices are important because they motivate their grassroots to take action and can, thereby, be used as a means of pressure.

Another important task for the local offices is getting the Armenian people to vote for all kinds of elections. From their respective regional office, people are motivated to register in order to vote. Not only are the Armenian-American people motivated to vote in the presidential or other national elections, but more importantly they are motivated to cast their vote in regional and local elections. Because local elections are often smaller-scale, the Armenians can have a relatively larger influence on the outcome. A higher voter turnout is important to the office in Washington D.C., because such a turnout can also be used as a means of pressure on politicians in Congress. This pressure is only relative considering the size of other communities within the US.

Looking at the definition of lobbying this thesis uses, the public opinion of the relative impartial citizens of the donor country (US) matters. The definition shows that success of lobby groups is only relevant to the other lobby group with which the Armenian lobby quarrels over a certain topic. In the case of the Armenian lobby, the opposing sides are predominantly Turkey and Azerbaijan. Therefore, it is essential to have the public opinion on your side in order to be successful. This makes it important that the American society gets familiar and supportive with the Armenian side of the story. Then, the public opinion can be utilized as a means of pressure on local and national politicians. ANCA tries to spread the Armenian story and heritage in several ways among Armenians and people interested in the cause. One of the ways in which ANCA is trying to create awareness among US citizens regarding the Armenian history and its contemporary situation is through education. The lobby group has set up multiple educational summer school programs, and they offer internships at the organization's bureaus. Another way to promote the Armenian story is through scholarships. The scholarships are a good example of the grass-root approach of the organization. Young Armenian Americans are offered scholarships to follow programs like 'Armenian studies' or programs at universities where many Armenian scholars are active (Anca.org).

ANCA clearly shows its strategy with the tactics they use to let the US government act in favor of the Armenians. The grassroots approach aims at the public opinion of not only Armenian-Americans. They try to influence the public opinion of other Americans as well. The public opinion should influence US policymakers, so it makes the lobbying efforts in and around the Capitol in Washington simpler. The local offices try to let the American people get familiar with the Armenian story so they sympathize with the community and perhaps even

vote in favor of bills and amendments that benefit the community which would be contributing to the success of the lobby.

However strong the lobbying efforts of ANCA seem to be, they are not the only strong and influential lobby group lobbying on behalf of the Armenian community in the US. The Armenian Assembly of American (AAA) is another powerful Armenian lobby group. While they more or less share the same group and interests as ANCA, there are some significant differences between the two. At first, was the AAA launched much later, namely in 1972 in Washington D.C. and their main objective was to promote Armenia among the American public. In the early beginning of the AAA they also wanted to represent the Armenian interests on a political level where possible, but this did not happen. Therefore, they decided that *“promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues”* became their primary goal. Gregg, however, showed in her research to both lobby groups that the Assembly is by far not as active on all topics regarding the Armenian interests as ANCA is (12). In addition to that, the Assembly is more occupied with conveying the Armenian story to the American public than truly lobbying politicians and submitting policy changes. Therefore, the primary focus of this thesis will be on ANCA rather than discussing all groups that put in any effort in promoting the Armenian interests. Therefore, the comparison in the next chapter will focus on ANCA and use it as a leading example of the lobbying efforts of the Armenian lobby.

2. A comparison: The Armenian and Cuban lobby

Within this chapter, the focus will be on the differences and the similarities between the Armenian and the Cuban lobby. Comparing these lobbies will give an insight into what is important to be a successful ethnic lobby, while it will also help to exclude some reasons mentioned by other scholars that are not an important factor in the success of an ethnic lobby group. The reason to look at the Cuban lobby to extract these factors for success is clear and simple. The Cuban lobby is often seen as a strong ethnic lobby group and often is mentioned together with the Armenian regarding (disproportional) success in their lobbying efforts. Therewith, both are considered to be successful despite their differences and are interesting communities to compare. Before the two lobbies are compared, however, will the chapter provide a comprehensive historical overview of the Cuban community in the US.

2.1 *The Cuban lobby in the US*

To some extent both the Armenian and the Cuban lobbies have a goal that they share for their own respective country of origin. Both pursue and support a free and independent country of origin. However, the Cuban Republic has already been established in 1902 long before the Cuban lobby existed while the Republic of Armenia was created decades after their lobby had been established. The Cuban Republic was established when they fought themselves free from the Spanish (1898) oppression with the help of America (Pérez 54). After the Spanish-American war, Cuba had been under American rule, until the famous *Platt amendment* gave the Cuban Republic independence (54).

Cuba had faced several revolutions and (military) coups in the first decades of sovereignty, but it was the communist revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959 that divided the nation entirely. Political opponents of the regime and people who did not sympathize with Castro's ideas feared prosecution and, therefore, sought a way out of Cuba. 'The Cuban exile', as the flood of Cubans who came to the US during that period was called, lasted from the late 1950's until the 1970's and brought almost a million of Cubans to the US (Boswell 144). Most of these refugees stayed in Miami Dade-County, mostly because they thought that the Castro regime would not last long and that they could return to Cuba (Boswell 145).

Today, approximately 2.1 million people with Cuban ancestry live in the US. An estimated 1.2 million of these people live in Florida, while the rest of the community is dispersed over the nation with small communities living in New York City, Kentucky, Texas, California, and New Jersey ("Ancestry United States"). One of the political refugees coming to the US and living in Miami was Jorge Mas Canosa, better known as Jorge Mas. The young

law student fled the Castro regime because he was known to be the leader of a liberal student movement who also opposed the Batista regime in favor of a free and democratic Cuba (Canf.org). Mas became one of the three founders of one of the strongest ethnic lobby groups present in the US, the Cuban American National Foundation, which he founded in 1981. The other founders were Cuban natives Masdival and Salmon (Haney & Vanderbush 347). However, Mas has always been considered to be the leading figure of the three. "No individual had more influence over United States policies toward Cuba over the past two decades than Jorge Mas Canosa," Leogrande stated in his article *The Cuba Lobby* in *The Foreign Policy*. His ability to influence US policies in Congress made CANF grow out to the most influential Cuban lobby group in the US. Therefore, CANF is used in the next chapter in order to make a comparison with ANCA and the Armenian lobby.

2.2 The Cuban American National Foundation

The establishment of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) is often a topic of discussion because there are different stories about who came with the idea to form a Cuban group that would represent the Cuban refugees' interests (347). Haney & Vanderbush claim in their article that the discussion about the foundation of CANF often deals with the question whether it was an idea of President Reagan or people of his staff (348). In his article *Miami's Community Of Republican Cubans Awaits Reagan With Excitement* in the *New York Times* journalist Reginald Stuart noted a coincidence on Raegan's visit to the highly Cuban populated Miami saying: "Mr. Reagan is scheduled to appear at a midday rally sponsored by the Cuban American National Foundation, a bipartisan organization formed the month Mr. Reagan took office by three Miami businessmen" hinting on connections between CANF and Reagan. Earlier in his article, Stuart already mentioned that Reagan was popular among the Cuban community for his strong anti-communist feelings.

The Reagan administration advised Mas and his companions to form a lobby group to the example of the Jewish lobby since they were considered to be extremely successful. To do so, Mas was helped by the Reagan administration, because of the Cold War objectives of the administration, Reagan wanted the lobby group to be successful in changing the public opinion on the Cuban exiles in favor of those objectives (Haney & Vanderbush 349). A start like this obviously makes lobbying a lot easier than when a lobby group is created on its own and has to start from scratch. The Cuban lobby profited from powerful connections from the moment they started (349). It also contributed to the Cuban lobbying efforts that both the Cuban exiles and the American public saw Castro's regime as an enemy of the US (351).

Rubenezer & Redd (772) showed that lobbying efforts are much more likely to be successful when the objectives of the lobbying group are in line with the interests of the host nation's community.

When this is compared with the Armenian lobby this is where the success of the Armenians possibly comes from. It is not the case that Turkey, for example, is an enemy of the US, but the US does recognize the violation of Human Rights in this case (U.S. Dept. Bur.). This is also in line with the statement on Human Rights by the US department of state in which they say the following about Human Rights all over the world

The protection of fundamental human rights was a foundation stone in the establishment of the United States over 200 years ago. Since then, a central goal of U.S. foreign policy has been the promotion of respect for human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States understands that the existence of human rights helps secure the peace, deter aggression, promote the rule of law, combat crime and corruption, strengthen democracies, and prevent humanitarian crises. (U.S. Dept. Bur.)

The protection of Human Rights all over the world is seen as an objective for the US government and the statement even describes the promotion of human rights as a goal in their foreign policies. An example of this, is the amendment in the Freedom Support Act that blocks aid to Azerbaijan because of their violation of the Human Rights in Nagorno-Karabakh. The amendment and the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh will be analyzed in depth in the last chapter of this thesis. Furthermore, it is a goal for the US foreign policy to promote Human Rights.

Nevertheless, there is more at stake for the US in the case of the Armenians than solely human rights. When the case of recognition of the Armenian genocide is taken into account it comes down to a fight between two communities (Derewicz 36). The Turkish community and the Armenian community both have stakes and arguments in this battle. The Armenian community bases its argument largely on Human Rights and on justice for the crimes against humanity (Dadrian 226), while the Turkish are supported by American parties in the conflict like oil contractors, defense contractors, and the US military who all have interests in Turkey (Lindsay 39). However, these forces are not represented in local politics and therefore their interests do not conflict with those of the Armenian lobby. Thus,

municipalities and states can more easily recognize the genocide without military consequences than the federal government.

This is different than the situation regarding the Cuban lobby. The Cuban exiles hardly have an enemy in terms of lobbying since the Cuban government is not represented at all in US politics. The fact that there is no real opposing side regarding the Cuban case makes lobbying a lot simpler as Lindsay, a senior fellow in the Brookings Foreign policy studies program, stated (39). That is in line with the definition of lobbying used throughout the present thesis in which lobbying success is always relative to the opposing side lobbying on the same topic (Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller 63).

Another important difference between the Armenian and the Cuban lobby is that at the time in which the Cuban lobby started to exist, Cuba was one of the most important topics in US politics (Haney & Vanderbush 348). The Armenian case and their issues, however, have never been the most important topics in the US, especially not in an era in which mass-media was around. Therefore it did not take too long for CANF to make a name for themselves. To describe their reputation Leogrande in *The Foreign Policy* uses an anecdote about an event only seven years after their establishment. “CANF built its reputation by spreading campaign contributions to bolster friends and punish enemies. In 1988, CANF money helped Joe Lieberman defeat incumbent Sen. Lowell Weicker, whom Lieberman accused of being soft on Castro because he visited Cuba and advocated improvement of their relations. Weicker’s defeat sent a chilling message to other members of Congress: challenge the Cuba Lobby at your peril” (Leogrande).

It shows that the Cuban lobby uses its funds in order to promote a politician that favors their cause and at the same time they use their funds to make an election difficult for those who do not support their case. In addition, it shows that CANF’s reputation grew rapidly under the wings of enormous attention for their cause, which has helped them to build a reputation that contributed to their success. When CANF and ANCA are compared it is visible that both gained success immediately after their establishment. ANCA’s first success already came one year after its creation, while it was still called ACIA. The way in which both gained success was different. ACIA wrote letters to politicians, asking them to support their cause, while CANF used a method of promotion and punishment in which they punish politicians whose actions do not conform to their interests by calling up the community not to vote for that specific politician. Due to the size of the Armenian community in the beginning of the 20th century, this method was not effective to use.

CANF kept using this built reputation and their community to fulfill its main objectives. These objectives when Canosa established the group were according to the CANF's own literature,

their initial objective was to establish an organization that “would challenge the myths propagated by the Cuban government, through the objective analysis and reporting of conditions in Cuba, of Castro's repressive dictatorship and destructive international policies, while promoting the ideals of respect for human rights and self-determination for the Cuban people. (Canf.org)

CANF was clearly established to fight the Cuban government and its leader Fidel Castro. On the 18th of February in 2008 however, Castro announced in his *Mensaje del Comandante en Jefe* that he would not go for another term, meaning that his 49-year reign came to an end. The resignation meant that a major objective of CANF fell away, and perhaps more important, Castro's resignation gave Cuba and the US the opportunity to re-establish relationships. 2008 was also the year Former President Barack Obama was elected and formed a watershed point in American-Cuban relations. The timeline of the Council on Foreign Relations states that “During the 2008 U.S. election, then-presidential candidate Barack Obama said that it was time for the United States to “pursue direct diplomacy” with Cuba, and pledged that he would as president meet with Raul Castro, who had recently replaced his brother Fidel as leader” (Felter et al.).

Obama kept his promise and led 18 months during negotiations between both nations until the 17th of December 2014 when both nations spoke out their intentions of rapprochement between the two. These mutual intentions eventually led to a historical visit from former President Obama to Cuba in March 2016. It was the first time an American president visited Cuban soil in eighty-eight years (DeYoung).

This movement of reconciliation and cooperation between the two nations has its influence on the Cuban lobby. The lobby has to reinvent themselves in that way that their most important objective, pressuring Fidel Castro and his regime, has vanished. Raul Castro's regime is much more open towards the US. Nevertheless are there still problems as claimed by a report of *The Human Rights Watch*, which was ironically named *Different Castro, Same Cuba*, hinting on continuing violations of human rights. Therefore CANF has altered its key issues of which human rights are the most important at this point as their own website states that “CANF works to bring human rights issues to the forefront of Cuba-related discourse –

providing politicians, academics, non-governmental organizations, and international human rights leaders the opportunity to understand the current human rights situation in Cuba, and engage directly with defenders on the Island” (Canf.org).

This shows the change in objectives between the establishment of the foundation and the contemporary lobby group. Akin to the Cuban lobby, the Armenian lobby also changed its objectives throughout the years. The major difference, however, is that the Armenian lobby has not lost its main objective, the recognition of the genocide.

Not only did the objectives of the Cuban lobby change, but also the way in which CANF lobbies has changed over the decades. Where Haney & Vanderbush stated that the foundation worked through close relation with American politicians and by influencing the US public opinion about the Castro regime with the help of various media outlets (351), so does CANF nowadays also works with a local “island-based network”.

CANF works to identify, support, and empower individuals who work to defend and advocate for human rights in Cuba. Through our extensive on-Island network, we identify key leaders within the human rights community and provide moral and material support for their continued activities. (Canf.org)

The quote above shows that CANF is less dependent of the US policymakers in order to create the change they want to establish since they themselves now can have direct access to individuals that try to create the same change from within Cuba. This is an important difference when it is compared to the Armenian lobby that definitely has no possibility to bypass US politics since their objectives need to be carried out by the US government because the country of origin is just as dependent on the US as its lobby is (King & Pomper 9).

Like ANCA, CANF could not rely on a (government from the) country of origin to support their efforts. This shows that support from the nation of origin is relatively unimportant. The reasons for the lack of support, however, are far from similar to one another. Within the Armenian case, a country of origin simply did not exist and when it did was more dependent on the Lobby in the US than the other way around (Baser & Swain 50). The Cuban Republic did, but CANF was established to fight the government in power in the Republic. Therefore, it could not turn to the Cuban government for any support (Haney & Vanderbush 347). Nowadays, CANF has access to the Cuban citizen through their network, which makes it possible to reach their goals from within the country without needing the US government.

The comparison between the Cuban and Armenian lobby has given several insights in possible factors that contribute to the lobbying success of the Armenian lobby. At first has the comparison shown that while the timing of creation is important, there is not just one moment which fits for a successful lobby group. The Cuban lobby started almost 90 years later than the Armenian, but still both can be considered to be successful. Late in the 18th century, it was simpler for a lobby group to reach the men in charge in order to persuade them to take a certain cause into account (Gerson 1981), while the Cuban lobby was created when the Cuban cause was the most important topic in US politics (Haney & Vanderbush 344). Therefore, for both lobbies their timing of creation could have contributed to their success.

Another insight provided by the comparison is that the opposing side lobbying for the same cause is important. Cuba hardly had an opposing factor and even had the favor of the US government. The public opinion on the Castro regime was in line with the Cuban lobby since Castro was not only an enemy of the Cuban exiles, but he also formed a threat to the US and its citizens. This makes the Cuban lobby efforts more like they kicked in “already open doors” (Lindsay 38), in which Lindsay says that the lobby probably has accelerated the process, rather than truly influenced. While the US stands for the protection of Human Rights throughout the world which is in line with the interests of the Armenian lobby, the US military interests often conflict with the Armenian interests. Locally, however, where military interests do not conflict with the Armenian interests, the Armenian lobby seems to be successful. Therefore we can partially subscribe the success of both the Cuban and the Armenian lobby to shared values and to the support of the host nation its public opinion.

Despite the many shown differences, both lobbies are considered to be among the strongest of their kind. This shows that there is not just one blueprint that needs to be followed in order to be a successful ethnic lobby. Therefore, it is almost impossible to make statements about factors that contribute to the success of ethnic lobby groups in general since the differences are as apparent as shown in this chapter. In the following chapter, the communities of both ethnic minorities will be compared in order to give an insight from which the differences between their lobbies stem from. The community is extremely important for the lobby since that is what they represent and from which they gain legitimacy and support in order to be successful

3. The Armenian and the Cuban communities in the US

To get a clear insight on the differences of the Armenian and the Cuban lobby it is helpful to look at the roots of the lobby groups. It is important to look at how the communities are composed geographically and demographically because this can have its influence on the creation, striking power, and success of their representing lobby. Therefore, this section will be devoted to giving information about the two communities and to compare them with each other. Within this comparison, the focus will be on the size of the community, the way they are dispersed over the US, and other possible influential factors like income, the level of education, and unemployment.

Different records show different dates of who was the first Cuban on American soil, but from the 1950's and onwards the first significant numbers of Cubans started to flee to the US. As mentioned before, Miami became the largest and most important community of Cubans (Boswell 145). The 1950's, however, is much later than the first large wave of Armenians who came to the US in the early 1900s (Bakalian 9). Thereby, the Cubans were much more concentrated in one area than the Armenians, who were dispersed over the country.

Both communities, however, were established a long time before the Soviet Union fell apart and the end of the Cold War. As Shain mentioned this was a turning point in US foreign policy, since ethnic minorities got more influence on US politics since the collapse ("Role of Diasporas" 140). Therefore, it is possible to say that the moment of when the communities were created is not that important, as long as it has been established before the end of the Cold War. This would be because already existing communities and their lobbies could already establish relationships with politicians. Therefore, they were first in line to get their voices heard in the aftermath of the Cold War. Nevertheless, timing of creation of the lobby can help to be successful. The Cuban lobby, for example, was created in an era in which both Americans and Cuban-Americans had the same enemy namely, the Soviet Union and its companion Fidel Castro. Thus, the timing of creation supported the efforts of the Cuban lobby since its interests were in line with the interests of the host nation in that era.

What both communities also have in common is that they both fled a threatening situation in their country of origin. Both fled from oppression by the government in the country of origin, which makes them political refugees. Lindsay states in his article *Getting Uncle Sam's Ear* that "Immigrants who came to the United States as political exiles (think Cubans) are much more likely to try to influence policy towards their ancestral homeland than those who came to find a better life (38)." Furthermore, Lindsay believes that a lingering

threat to the ancestral homeland from a neighboring country like this is the case with Armenia also motivates a community to (support a) lobby. In the same paragraph Lindsay explains the Cuban success compared to other Latino minorities. Lindsay states that “The lack of either an exile mentality or a threat, explains why, Cuban Americans aside, Latino organizations usually sit on the sidelines of foreign policy (38).” Both the Armenians and the Cubans, therefore, share this “exile mentality” which makes them already more likely to lobby than others, according to Lindsay.

Rubenezer & Red (757) argue “that individual members of ethnic minority groups are more likely to vote in US elections based on their concerns with the affairs of ethnic kin abroad.” They base their argument on the research of DeConde (1993) on voting patterns of ethnic minorities. Herewith it is possible to claim that voters can be used as a means of pressure on politicians. For example, the Cuban community makes up almost 7% of the entire population in Florida. Therefore they have the possibility to influence elections on all levels that are being held, including the presidential election. Because Florida is considered to be a swing state, 7% can be the difference between a win and a loss. As mentioned earlier, the Cuban community can influence local elections even more, like in Miami-Dade County, where the Cubans even make up 34.4% of the population (“Ancestry Florida”)

The Armenian community is about 60% smaller than the Cuban and important to notice is that they are much more dispersed than the Cuban, according to the US Census Bureau. This makes it much harder for the lobby groups to use the voter turnout as a means of pressure. Looking at Los Angeles County, it becomes clear what kind of influence the Armenian vote has. Los Angeles County is the county in which the most Armenians live (US Census Bureau 2000). 152.910 people in the county are believed to be of Armenian ancestry according to the US Census Bureau, while the entire population of the Los Angeles County consists of around 9.5 million people. Although it is the 5th largest Armenian community in the county, they still only make up 1.6 % of the county’s population (“Ancestry: 2000”).

Therefore the Armenian vote can hardly be used to put pressure on political figures or parties, at least nationally. Nevertheless, the grassroots approach of their most important lobby group ANCA is adapted to the lack of community size. ANCA supports and motivates their members to vote in local elections. Furthermore, they even help members with the registration process on their website in order to be able to vote (Anca.org). Through these efforts, they try to get the percentage of Armenian voters as high as possible to give them some leverage while using it as a means of pressure. Despite all this effort, however, the Armenian voter turnout is relatively low and therefore their impact on the outcome of the

elections is relatively small as well. Looking at these numbers it is hard to believe that the votes from the Armenian community in the US are a reason for members of Congress to support the Armenian case and its lobby group.

When the size of both communities is expounded next to each other in connection with the lobbying tactics of both lobbies two things stand out. Firstly, it is that the size of a community can be seen as a factor for success. Although, this is not a means of pressure for every community. Haney & Vanderbush have shown that the Cuban lobby has used the influence they have on elections to put pressure on politicians (342). Secondly, it has shown that, although the voter turnout can be helpful to create a successful lobby, it is not the key element. Like this is shown by the Armenian lobby. Especially, when it is compared to other ethnic minorities like the Cuban, it stands out that the Armenian community can never truly influence elections on a national or state level. That makes it almost impossible for Armenian lobby groups to use this voter turnout as a means of pressure and, therefore, is not likely to be an important factor in achieving their goals and objectives.

The amount of funds that communities and lobby groups have is another factor that is being discussed by scholars (Paul & Paul 27; Ainsworth 42; Derewicz 37) and by several journals and websites like *Follow The Money* and *Opensecrets* that track the funds of several lobby groups. While Paul & Paul and Ainsworth reject the notion that money is of true influence, Derewicz claims that it does have an impact. Based on several scholars and some politicians he argues that:

Most people agree there's a problem; the First Amendment right to petition the government shouldn't depend on cash flow. Even campaigning politicians often blame corruption on corporate slush funds. But Frank Baumgartner and four other political scientists found that almost every public policy debate can be boiled down to two sides, and the side with more lobbyists, more political action committee donations, and bigger budgets wins only half the time. (36)

This statement shows that there is a contradiction between the intention that the government shouldn't depend on cash flow and the way this works out in practice. The scholars in the cited paragraph mention that the side with more resources wins 50% of the times while funds should not influence the government. Therefore, it's interesting to see whether this is the case with the Armenian lobby and whether the resources are the most important factor to their success because it makes a difference half the time.

The last section and the literature overview show that there is no consensus regarding the importance of funds in lobbying. Therefore, the comparison given in the following section will show the differences between the communities, which in their turn can somewhat explain the success of each lobby. Supported by data from the US Census Bureau a comparison between the Cuban and the Armenian community on their average income, the level of education and the revenues of the most important lobby groups of both respective ancestries, will show that funds are not the most important factor of success for the Armenian lobby. This, however, does not mean that this is automatically the case for ethnic lobbying in general since the last chapter already established that there is not a blueprint for lobbying success (“2015 American Community Survey”; Posey).

The first clear difference between the two communities is the dissimilarity in the level of education between the two. 91% of the Armenians above 25 have a High school diploma or more. This percentage for the same group of Cubans is much lower, namely 79%. These numbers also have an influence on the percentage of highly educated people in the communities. While 25% of the Armenians have a bachelor degree and 19% even has a graduate or professional degree, only 17% of the Cubans have a bachelor degree and only 9% have obtained a graduate or professional degree. This shows a significant gap between the two communities in the number of highly educated people.

While one might expect that these numbers will also show an effect on the employment rate and the average income of the two groups, they do not. When the percentages of unemployment are considered, they hardly show dissimilarities between the two. Despite a lower average level of education of the Cuban community is a higher percentage than of the Armenian community employed. 57.8% of the Cubans are employed while 56.5% of the Armenians are as well. The difference, is only 1.3% and therefore does not show anything significant. What perhaps could show any significance is the occupation of those who are employed. The data shows that almost 46% of the employed Armenians is occupied with ‘Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations’, while only 29% of the Cubans are in such line of work. The Cubans on their turn are relatively high occupied with ‘Natural resources, construction, and maintenance’ and ‘Products, transportation, an material moving’. A relatively high percentage of the Armenian community is involved in management and organizations. This is something of which a lobby could benefit since the organizational structure of a lobby group is important to its success.

The numbers regarding the line of occupation of both communities can also explain the difference in average annual income for a household. These numbers show another clear

dissimilarity between the groups since an average Armenian household gains 60,561 US Dollars a year, and a Cuban household earns 44,588 US Dollars (Posey). The average US income, however, is 55,775 US dollars (US Census Bureau 2015), which indicates that while Armenian-American on average earns +- \$5.000 more, Cuban-Americans earn about \$11.000 less than the nation's average. This directly shows that a community does not need to be on the upper-side of the average income in order to have a successful lobby.

There is, however, no one-to-one relation of a lobby's revenue and the average income of the community since not only do revenues come from more than just people with the ancestry that they represent, but there are more factors that have an influence on how much the community contributes to the lobby. An example of this is given by Olsson, who argues that when people have more to gain from the lobby, they will engage more (15). Larger revenues can therefore partially indicate that there is more to gain for one of the communities. One might, however, expect that when a community is wealthier and has more to gain from the lobby, that more funds will be available for those who represent their interests. To see whether this is true for the lobby groups this thesis has focused on so far, it is necessary to look at the groups' revenues. Since ANCA and CANF are tax-exempt non-profit organizations they need to return *Form 990* annually ("Cuban American National Foundation"; "Armenian National Committee in America"). This form is used by the government to prevent fraudulent practices by non-profit organizations but is accessible to the public as well. The lobby group needs to give insight in the group's income and expenses in order to be a tax-exempt organization. The existence of *Form 990* provides the possibility to see what the groups' incomes are made of and how much of their income is from contributions and gifts. It gives some insight in whether a lobby group that lobbies on behalf of a richer community receives more gifts than a group that lobbies for the interests of a relatively poorer community.

To see whether this is the case for the Armenian and the Cuban lobby this thesis will compare *Form 990* of ANCA, AAA, and CANF from 2014. The forms of all three groups from that year are available and it excludes the possibility that the height of the income is influenced by a special event. 2015 was a special year for the Armenian community throughout the world because in 2015 the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated. Whether this has an influence on the amount of contribution a group receives is not known, but the (possible) effect is excluded in this way.

The groups' revenues are to some extent in line with their communities' incomes. Where CANF earned \$331.168 out of contributions and grants in 2014, ANCA earned

\$477.335 (“Cuban American National Foundation”; “Armenian National Committee in America”). So, CANF earned 69.4% of the amount of what ANCA earned in 2014, while the Cuban community earns 73.6% on average per household of what an Armenian household earns on average. This means that relatively, the differences in both group’s revenues are small. Important to note is that the Cuban community, however, is much larger than the Armenian. Looking at the two most important and well-known lobby groups of both respective communities one can say that the income of the community can influence the available funds for the lobby, but many other factors such as a lobby group’s working method, relations with politicians, and interests of the host nation can have an influence on this.

Looking back on the comparison made in this chapter, there is a difference between the communities when their financial power is compared. The average annual income of the Armenian households lies about \$15.000 higher than the Cuban’s income. This difference is also visible in the revenues of both communities’ largest lobby groups, but it has never been shown that a wealthier ethnic minority donates more to their representing lobby. Thereby is there no consensus among scholars about the influence of money on lobbying.

Perhaps the biggest and most important difference between both communities is the size and in which way the communities are dispersed over the US. This showed that communities of distinct sizes can use distinct means of pressure on the political system. Whereas the Cuban lobby uses their power to influence elections both on a local and a national level, the Armenian lobby can only use this in a small portion of elections. Here lies perhaps the most important difference between both lobbies. The Cuban lobby is primarily focused on influencing national politics with their strong network among national politicians. The Armenian lobby focusses more on local politics to put pressure on national politics. The grassroots approach of the Armenian lobby can, therefore, be considered to be one of the most important factors that contribute to their success. Since they can hardly put pressure on national politics due to the size of the community, and the available financial means, they focus on achieving their goals locally.

4. The successes of the Armenian lobby

This thesis has already presented ANCA's foundation, their methods, and their goals. The present thesis has given an in-depth comparison between the Cuban and the Armenian lobby by looking at the most important lobby groups of both and their communities. This has given an insight into the possible factors contributing to the success of the Armenian lobby. The following chapter will discuss the most important issues of the Armenian lobby. Additionally, it will be assessed whether they have been successful in their efforts. Expounding on their issues and their successes will show that the Armenian lobby truly can be considered successful. It will also show what factors have had an influence on their successes. This also gives the opportunity to exclude factors about which scholars disagree like the role of funds within the ethnic lobby for instance.

In order to accomplish this, the present chapter will show and expound on three major issues in which ANCA and the Armenian lobby have put efforts. The three issues that will be looked at in depth will be the earlier mentioned *Section 907* in the Freedom Support Act, blocking several deals and aid packages with Turkey, and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. These are all key issues mentioned on the website of ANCA and can, therefore, be seen as an indication of success (Anca.org).

4.1 Section 907

Section 907 is an amendment included in the FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) in which FREEDOM stands for Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets. The act was signed by former President George Bush in November 1992 and granted funds for all former nations of the USSR in order to build a stable democratic nation. The act also disarmed the region of any nuclear weapons as it did (implicitly) prevent the new established state Russia to have a monopoly on the energy resources that were available in the area like oil (Cornell 112). All nations were included in this act but one. Due to the addition of the section 907 amendment, Azerbaijan, an enemy of the Republic of Armenia, was the only nation excluded from FSA. The amendment reads as followed:

Sec. 907. RESTRICTION ON ASSISTANCE TO AZERBAIJAN.

(A) RESTRICTIONS - United States assistance under this or any other Act (other than assistance under title V of this Act) may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the president determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the

Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Following this section, Svante Cornell claims, that “the powerful Armenian lobby in the US Congress had succeeded in imposing language (sponsored by Senator John F. Kerry in the Senate) in section 907a of the 1992 Freedom Support Act that prohibited US government-to-government aid to Azerbaijan” (112). The explicit language in the section that calls upon Azerbaijan to “cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh” supports Cornell’s notion. The Armenian lobby had to put in efforts to maintain the section throughout the years since there have been multiple attempts, for example in 1998 to outlaw the amendment. In 1998 however, members of the Armenian Caucus helped to get a majority in Congress to uphold the section. This shows that a network of members of Congress with strong ties to the Armenian lobby have been an important factor in the success of the Armenian lobby (113).

This is especially the case when this information is combined with another important political event that played a role in the early 1990’s. Cornell (111) argues that the US’ attention to the region grew when they found out that there was oil available to recover from the region and especially from the Caspian Sea. This was in the interests of US oil companies who saw opportunities to invest and contribute to the oil industry in Azerbaijan. Section 907, however, formed a blockade for the US oil companies to invest in the Azeri oil industry (Gregg 23). This made lobby groups representing the oil industry an opposing side to the lobbying efforts of the Armenians.

Gregg effectively argues that this shows that funds are clearly not the most important factor for the success of the Armenian lobby by stating that “Financial contributions, such as Political Action Committee (PAC) donations to Congressional candidates, appear to have had little influence on voting behavior on Section 907. Oil PACs contributed, on average, \$6,870,672 biennially to members of Congress, whereas Armenian PACs contributed only \$26,681 biennially” (23). Another difference between the two, are their relationships with members of Congress. In Congress, there are members who are part of the Armenian Caucus, which motivates its members to vote in favor of pro-Armenian resolutions. An ‘Oil caucus’ or something similar, however, does not exist. Thereby, the oil PACs lack a base in Congress that they can rely on to support their cause. With that, this case shows that the relationships that are built through the Armenian Caucus are more important than the funds that have been

donated by lobby groups in order to persuade members of Congress. It excludes the available funds of the Armenian lobby group as the most important factor in their success.

Recent history, however, showed, that previous section also revealed another important factor in the success of the Armenian lobby. Namely that, as mentioned earlier, the Armenian lobby can be successful as long as their interests are not in conflict with the interests of the US government. While Section 907 was upheld by Congress for nine years, the status of the section changed on the 24th of October in 2001 (Anca.org). Less than two months after 9/11, a clause was added to the section which reads “The restriction on assistance in subsection (a) shall not apply if the President determines, and so certifies to Congress, that the application of the restriction would not be in the national interests of the United States.” This gives the president the opportunity to waive the section when it would conflict with US interests (“Foreign Aid Conferees”).

Reasons to do so are, for example, as provided by an extension of the waiver in 2003, “efforts to counter international terrorism” and “to support the operational readiness of United States Forces or coalition partners to counter international terrorism” (U.S. Dept. Arc.). Every year, the waiver has been used to bypass the amendment and therefore aid from the FSA also went to Azerbaijan. It shows that after 9/11 US interests have changed drastically in the region. In general, it shows that however strong a lobby may be, it has only so much influence as US interests allow.

4.2 Blocking deals with Turkey

As shown above, representing Armenian interests is not only a case of lobbying for legislation that favors Armenia. Additionally, the Armenian lobby tries to persuade US policymakers to impose sanctions on nations that oppose the existence of the Republic of Armenia. The previous section has shown that the Armenian lobby has been fairly successful in their efforts to damage the relationship between the US and Azerbaijan during the aftermath of the Cold War. Next to Azerbaijan, Turkey is an important nation that the Armenian lobby and ANCA in particular tries to damage through their lobbying efforts (Gregg 18). An example of how ANCA tries to damage Turkey was shown after Erdogan’s security forces attacked a group of protesters in Washington during a visit to the Turkish ambassador in the US. ANCA widely reported the event and demanded actions against the Turkish ambassador (Anca.org). An example of the ways in which ANCA tries to damage Turkey through US legislation is by calling for blockades on arms and aid deals with Turkey. This is an objective for ANCA because “ANCA names Turkey’s denial of the Armenian Genocide,

their treatment of Kurds, the blockade on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, their occupation of Northern Cyprus, and their treatment of Christians within their borders as grounds for prohibiting arms sales” (Gregg 25).

While the Armenian lobby’s efforts to damage the Azeri government has shown some success over the years, there hardly are any signs of success caused by the Armenian lobby in imposing trade or weapon embargoes or something in that fashion on Turkey. The last embargo that the US had imposed on Turkey was because of its way of handling on Northern Cyprus and lasted only three years from 1975 till 1978 (Durmaz 19). Durmaz argues that this embargo, however, has not been imposed due to lobbying efforts from the Armenians but by pressure from the Greek lobby (23). Christos Kassimeris, however, states that this influence was only small and therewith supports Gerson’s notion that ethnic lobbies only gained influence after the end of the Cold War.

Nevertheless, this shows that the Greek lobby has experience with lobbying for an embargo and with lobbying against Turkey. This is exactly the wish of the Armenian lobby and therefore they cooperate with the Greek lobby in order to achieve this. After Azerbaijan and Turkey closed its borders with Armenia in 1993 there have been cooperative lobbying efforts in order to impose an embargo on Turkey but this attempt had no success (Gregg 27). According to Görgülü, “The Armenian diaspora has taken great measures to convince the international community that this Turkish action was a form of an economic embargo. However, experts have claimed that the closure of the border by Turkey was not an economic embargo and it was impossible to prevent this move within the scope of international law” (22). This shows that the Armenian lobby has been unsuccessful in their effort of imposing an embargo on Turkey. Despite a coalition with the Greek lobby in the US, they did not have enough striking power to achieve their goal.

Notwithstanding, the failure to force the US to impose an embargo on Turkey in 1993 the Armenian lobby had some success regarding an embargo on Turkey. The California State Assembly, the legislative branch of the Californian government, adopted measure AB1597 on June 1st 2017, which calls “for the divestment of California public funds from Turkish government controlled financial instruments, ensuring taxpayer funds are no longer used in this manner to aid and abet Turkey’s century-long obstruction of justice for the Armenian Genocide” (qtd. in “CA State Assembly”). ANCA-WR president Hosevpian, again highlights the grassroots approach in the following statement on the topic “We are also grateful to the thousands of California Armenians who heeded our Action Alert to call upon their elected representatives to support AB1597 and to the AYF (Armenian Youth Federation) for

initiating this Divest Turkey movement by successfully securing resolutions from all nine campuses of the University of California and for working with us side by side to educate our elected representatives and to mobilize our grassroots” (“CA State Assembly”). Hosevpien, again, states that the mobilization of their grassroots has had an important role in their success. It shows the awareness of the organization itself that their grassroots working method plays an important role in the lobbying success in general.

The achievement also is another example of the fulfillment of an objective of the Armenian lobby on a regional level, which they cannot get done at the federal level, as they tried in the 90’s. Again, this does not only serve as a success on itself but the statement provided by ANCA already gave away that it is part of a larger (international) campaign to create more legislation like this. The statement says that “The campaign calls international divestment of funds from the Republic of Turkey in any and all institutions in order to hold Turkey accountable for its continuing human rights violations ... and for the yet unpunished crime of genocide against the Armenian people, as well as the Assyrian and Greek peoples” (“CA State Assembly”).

The call for “international divestment of funds” implies that this success on a more regional level in politics will contribute to success on a higher level in politics. California, for example, has no conflicting interests with the Armenian’s interests like the federal government has. Therefore, this can be seen as another success of an ethnic lobby that does not conflict with the interests of the local community and its politics and is, therefore, more likely to allow the influence of the Armenian lobby. The next section will provide more examples of this case while looking at the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

4.3 The Recognition of the Armenian Genocide

The Armenian lobby’s most important issue according to scholars like Gregg (9), Baser & Swain (46), and Zafirian (505), is recognition by the US of the Armenian Genocide in 1915. This subject has already been touched upon slightly throughout the thesis but will be expounded on in depth in the following section. The following section will show what ways the Armenian lobby uses in order to persuade the US government to recognize the events in 1915 as genocide. Thereby this section will show what successes already have been achieved throughout the years and what has contributed to those successes. Lastly, there will be an analysis of how the already gained successes can help to achieve the lobby’s ultimate goal, recognition of the genocide by the federal government of the US and perhaps even the Turkish government.

As mentioned earlier, 29 nations in the world recognize the attempted extermination of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire. Among these 29 are nations from all over the world including, for example, Uruguay, Russia, France, Lebanon, Canada, and Syria of which Uruguay was the first nation to recognize the genocide (“Countries that Recognize”). Some nations, like Germany, Switzerland, and Italy even criminalized the denial of the genocide (Martirosyan). Besides these nations there are organizations like the Catholic Church, European Parliament, and the Council of Europe who have spoken out their recognition. Notable absentee in the list of nations and organizations recognizing the genocide is the United States’ federal government.

Turkish Journalist Semih Idiz however, states that the US came close to recognition in the last ten years. Idiz wrote that:

The Democrats won the majority in the House of Representatives in the elections held in November 2006, and Nancy Pelosi, who is renowned for her views supporting the Armenian allegations, was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives. This has brought a new dimension to the recognition of the Armenian genocide in the USA. Finally, the presidential candidate for the Democrat Party, Barack Obama, has announced that he will recognize the Armenian allegations. (21)

According to Idiz, therefore all conditions were favorable for the Armenian lobby to push for federal recognition of the Armenian genocide after the election of President Obama. In 2010 their push eventually resulted in a favorable vote for the recognition by the Foreign Relations Committee but it was blocked by President Obama so it could not get to the floor. Idiz wrote about the resolution that “The Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives passed a resolution, on March 4, 2010, albeit by one vote, asking President Obama to honor the memory of the Armenians who had perished in the genocide in 1915” (16). However, despite the fact that the majority of the committee voted in favor of the resolution, and Obama’s opinion on the topic before the election was in favor of the resolution, Obama warned the committee that bringing the resolution to the floor could damage “ongoing reconciliation talks between Turkey and Armenia” and that “Turkey is a key member of NATO, strategically placed in the Middle East” as shown by documents published by Wikileaks (“US/Turkey/Armenia”).

Former President Barack Obama was clear about his views on the topic before he became president. He stated in a letter to Secretary Condoleezza Rice that “The Occurrence of

the Armenian genocide in 1915 is not an “allegation,” a “personal opinion,” or a “point of view.” Supported by an overwhelming amount of historical evidence, it is a widely documented fact” (qtd in “Barack Obama’s Track”). Which is an explicit mention of the genocide by Obama as a Senator and is in line with his policies since Obama (co-)signed multiple bills to recognize the genocide (Baker; Anca.org; Associated Press). However, as president, Obama explicitly states that the strategical location of Turkey in the Middle East is an important reason to block resolutions that recognize the genocide. Therewith, Obama himself is example of the occurrence that the Armenian cry for recognition will only be successful when it does not intervene with the US’ global interests. It shows that individual politicians might be willing to recognize but that national interests difficult their willingness. Obama was willing to recognize the bill, partially because it did not conflict with the interests of the State of Illinois.

This, in combination with the fact that the genocide has been recognized by 46 of the 50 states (“Texas Recognizes the Genocide”) makes the grassroots method used by the Armenian lobby in order to achieve recognition not only a factor of success but also a necessity. Their grassroots approach in which they try to focus on local institutions, with the help of their members and the shorter lines between these members and local politicians, has shown itself to be effective regarding the recognition of the genocide. The earlier mentioned recognition of the genocide in Texas already showed how the grassroots approach worked to get this done. The chair of the ANCA Western Region, Nora Hovsepien, also attributed the success to the smaller representative offices of this grassroots approach in her reaction after learning that the bill had been passed. She stated that

This incredible victory, which achieves universal recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the Western Region’s 19 states was possible because of the outstanding unity and activism demonstrated by the diverse Armenian community of Texas, the unflinching leadership of State Representative Scott Sanford and his fellow lawmakers, as well as the dedication and persistent work of our grassroots—ANCA-Houston and ANCA-Dallas—and staff. While many Texan-Armenians and community groups were instrumental in the passage of and building ground for HR191. (“Texas becomes 46th”)

This clearly shows that the community itself, as the grassroots approach aims for, actually was the input of success in lobbying for recognition, in for example Texas. Hosevpian’s

remark that it “achieves universal recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the Western Region’s 19 states” gives an indication of the regional character of the lobby. The 19 states she mentions are not an institution as a whole, but are primarily a goal set by ANCA to claim another success and that the recognition by the state Texas does not stand on its own but that it contributes to a larger effort. This is important since it shows how the grassroots approach utilizes successes on a smaller scale to achieve their objectives on a higher level.

The present chapter has given an insight into three important successes of the Armenian lobby. This chapter clarified that while the Armenian lobby is often considered to be successful, this is hardly the case when their interests conflict with those of the host nation and its community. Section 907, the embargoes, and the recognition of the genocide all have shown that the political system allows influence from the Armenian lobby until it starts to conflict with national interests. The Armenian lobby by means of ANCA has shown to understand that their efforts are only as successful as the US’ interests allow. The opposing side of their lobbying efforts is most of the times Azerbaijan and Turkey who, due to several factors, can help the host nation to achieve interests of its own like having a stable partners in the area. Thence, the interests of the Armenian lobby conflict with the US’ interests on a federal level. Therefore, the Armenian lobby has focused on regional branches of politics since they have no (military) geopolitical interests in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Examples given in the present chapter have shown that this grassroots approach has been an important factor in the success of the lobby.

II. Conclusion

The past four chapters provide an in-depth analysis of the Armenian lobby in the US. Through an overview of the historical background of the Armenian community in the US the thesis shares knowledge of how the community came to exist and has developed ever since. It shows that the community is not large enough to have an influence on national politics. Additionally, the way in which the Armenian community is dispersed over the US makes it harder to influence elections as a community. The overview shows that the community is too dispersed in order to have influence from a certain stronghold, like the Cubans can from Miami. Besides that, the first chapter provides the fundamentals for the rest of the thesis since it elaborates on the Armenian lobby and, in particular, the Armenian National Committee of America. This has given a comprehensive insight into the group's history, its objectives, key issues and most importantly their working method.

An elaboration on the working methods of ANCA shows two important traits of the grassroots approach. Firstly, it shows that the grassroots approach means that the members of the lobby group are of utmost importance since the lobbying efforts are based on their input and interests. In addition to that, the members are a means of pressure themselves because by getting them to vote, sign petitions, write letters, and attend demonstrations they are used to put pressure on politics. Secondly, it shows that the grassroots approach incorporates the level on which the lobby group acts. ANCA focusses on influencing local politics, rather than their lobbying efforts in Washington D.C., because ANCA believes that success on a more local level will form a means of pressure on the federal government itself. The bottom-up style of working, thereby, is used in both the internal organization and on the level the group lobbies.

A comparison between the Armenian and Cuban lobbies shows that there is not one blueprint for lobbying success. Furthermore, the comparison provides several conclusions about the factors that contribute to lobbying success. It showed that success can depend on several different factors and that these factors are of different importance to distinct ethnic lobbies. The first factor that has an impact on success is the time of creation of the lobby. The comparison in combination with existing literature shows that the time in which a lobby is created is only important in that sense, that it has been created before the end of the Cold War. Both lobbies were established approximately 90 years apart, but still, both are considered successful lobbies. The second factor the comparison provides is, that the level in which the goals and objectives are in agreement with the interests of the host nation matter. Ethnic lobbying is simpler when its objectives are shared by the host nation's public or politics. At last, the comparison shows that support from the country of origin is irrelevant to the success

of an ethnic lobby group. Both the Armenian and the Cuban lobby could not rely on the country of origin they represent and, nowadays, even seem to be a form of support for the countries. This is mainly caused by the fact that ethnic lobby groups often lobby for foreign aid from the US. Armenia is, mostly through its representing lobby, one of the highest recipients of foreign aid per capita.

These findings, in combination with the comparison between both their respective communities, show even more factors that contribute to the lobbying success. The findings also excluded some factors from being necessary present in order to be successful. Factors that can be excluded as essential to success are the availability of funds and having a large community to support the lobbying efforts. A highly concentrated community in a specific area can be helpful in order to accomplish goals like the relatively high percentage of Cubans in Miami shows. Nevertheless, the size and the way in which the Armenian community is dispersed compared to that of the Cuban excludes that a large community is of utmost importance for success. The grassroots approach is an important factor in this since this helps the Armenian lobby to bypass the necessity of a large community.

The successes of the Armenian lobby provide a further confirmation of the points made before. The history and the successes gained by the Armenian lobby regarding Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act have shown that the interests of the ethnic lobby cannot be conflicting with those of the host nation. Section 907 in combination with changing global politics have proven that even when legislation has already been implemented this will be subordinate to the interests of the host nation. The opposing side of the Armenian lobby, in this case, the oil industry, is and much wealthier and outnumbered the Armenians in their contributions to Congress. Still, they could not change legislation in their favor, which even further indicates that funds are not of extreme importance to the Armenian lobby. The Armenians maintained the legislation with the help of the Armenian Caucus in Congress for a long time. This indicates that connections are more important than funds.

At last, the successes gained in both blocking deals between the US and Turkey as in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide strengthen two points already made. Both strengthen the notion that the Armenian lobby is primarily successful in influencing US foreign policy only when it does not conflict with US interests. More important, these examples of success have shown that the Armenian lobbying efforts hardly pay off on a federal level and, therefore, have to focus on local and state level governments to be successful. Thereby, the grassroots approach seems to be the most important factor in the success of the Armenian lobby. While other factors mentioned by several scholars have

proven to have a certain influence, they have not proven to be as important as the working method of the lobby. Thus, the Armenian lobby can be considered successful but their status is mostly derived from success on a lower political level, which indicates that the Armenian lobby is only as successful as the host nation's interests allow.

II.I Suggestions for further research

The findings the thesis provides can be used as a foundation for further research. This thesis provides a focus on the Armenian lobby while more research about other ethnic lobbies can provide a deductive conclusion for ethnic lobbying in general. There are, however, some limitations during this research. There are no clear results available that prove the influence of a lobby group on individual members of Congress. A lack of such information makes lobbying efforts and their direct effects at rather vague and primarily based on assumptions and logical conclusions. In sum, future research could further substantiate claims about direct effects of ethnic lobbying, which would lead to a better understanding of the consequences of ethnic lobbying for all parties involved. Therefore, a suggestion for further research is an empirical study in which members of Congress or lower levels of politics anonymously provide an insight into to what extent their decisions are influenced by ethnic lobby groups.

Further, would it be interesting to conduct research on why only 4 of the 50 states (Alabama, Iowa, Mississippi, and Ohio) do not recognize the Armenian genocide and which factors have led to the fact that this is the case. This could create a greater understanding of what reasons local politicians have to be receptive towards lobbying efforts (or not).

At last, this thesis could not provide an analysis of recent events in Turkey, the most important opposing side of Armenian lobbying efforts, and how these events influence the success of the Armenian lobby. Examples of these recent events are the military coup and its aftermath in Turkey, Erdogan's recent results in elections, and his hostile stance against the west. An analysis on whether these events have an (positive) effect on the Armenian lobby's success could provide a further claim of the notion that lobbying success is partially dependent on the opposing party.

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