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**The Impact of Newspapers on Diaspora Communities – A Case Study of Haratch's
Impact on the Armenian Community in Paris**

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Introduction

*Media play a crucial role in maintaining the cultural identity and political engagement of diaspora communities. Through the dissemination of news, cultural content, and political discourse, media help bridge the geographical divide, providing a platform for diasporic groups to stay connected with their homeland and each other.*¹

The Armenian diaspora in France is one of the most influential diaspora communities in Europe. The French Armenian community has existed for a long time in France, maintaining Armenian culture and political engagement through various means. Among these factors one is the Armenian newspaper *Haratch* (1925-2009), which stands as an important platform which preserving Armenian heritage and identity. It preserves Armenian culture, connects with political discussions, and serves as an educational platform. The thesis examines how newspapers impact Diasporas, focusing on a case study of the Armenian diaspora in France through the newspaper *Haratch*. It is important to acknowledge that there are numerous scholarly books examining the influence of newspapers on societies, research on their effect in diaspora contexts remains limited. The research focuses on understanding these dynamics, particularly through a case study of the Armenian diaspora. Therefore my research question how the diaspora newspaper *Haratch* preserved Armenian community in France that has not assimilated as other Armenian communities in Europe and what was its role. To this end, the thesis analyzes how the newspaper has supported the preservation of the Armenian language, traditions, and heritage in France. I argue that many factors have played a role in Armenians maintaining their identity, and one of the factors is the newspaper *Haratch*, which has an 84-year history in France and experienced exceptional longevity.² There is a lot of evidence that *Haratch* was popular among Armenians, one of which is the number and the frequency of publication. *Haratch* was a daily newspaper, publishing more than 22,000 pages. Given these numbers and frequencies, it is quite obvious that the newspaper was very popular among Armenians. One factor contributing to this was that *Haratch* was the first Armenian newspaper published in Europe after the genocide. This makes sense, as at that time, Armenians were seeking a platform to unify them after losing their homes, it's important to

¹ Karim H. Karim, *The Media of Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2003), 14.

² *Haratch* Հանապ. ARAM, WebAram. Accessed 06 January 2025. <https://webaram.com/biblio/presse/haratch-%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%A1%D5%BB>.

mention that more than 60,000 survivors³ found refuge in France. 99% of survivors didn't know any European languages and it is important to mention that *Haratch* published only in Armenian.

For many Armenians, it served as a platform to learn Armenian language and culture. Mark Nishanian, a renowned Armenian philosopher and translator, in his speech with me,⁴ said that he and other Armenians that were the children of survivors living in Paris couldn't learn Armenian in school thus they learned Armenian through the newspaper *Haratch*. His statement shows one of the impacts of the newspapers, since the language is one of the important tools for preserving the culture. Additionally, the newspaper had a special section called *Mitq ev Arvest [Thought and Art]*, where the works by Armenians living in the diaspora and beyond published. Through it Armenians learned the works of Armenian writers and artists. By publishing every day in Armenian for 84 years, it had a significant impact on Armenians living in France.

To address all the research questions, the thesis adopts a qualitative methodology, specifically employing narrative analysis as its primary approach. As outlined by Clark and Braun, narrative analysis can be divided into two sub-types: thematic analysis and content analysis.⁵ Thematic analysis often involves a literature review aimed at identifying key themes and research gaps. However, this study primarily relies on content analysis, with an aim to examine how *Haratch* discusses and portrays the key areas identified like cultural preservation, political engagement, social cohesion, and educational impact. To explore *Haratch's* role in maintaining Armenian culture and identity, it draws on diaspora theory. Media theory will also be employed to understand how media shapes the vision of communities and groups. Through these methods, the thesis aims to answer the research questions of the thesis and assess the impact and influence of *Haratch*, particularly how it contributes to maintaining Armenian identity among Armenians in Paris.

I analyze this thesis through Jürgen Habermas' theory.⁶ Habermas argues that the public sphere is a platform where individuals come together to shape public opinion, and this also applies to groups under certain special conditions. Moreover, for diasporas, media serves as

³"France." Diaspora.gov.am, Armenian Government, <http://diaspora.gov.am/en/pages/37/france#:~:text=The%20community%20became%20larger%20in,estimated%20650%2C000%20Armenians%20live%20here.>

⁴ Marc Nishanian (August 24, 1946, Paris), Diaspora Armenian philosopher, literary scholar, translator, editor, and lecturer. I had the chance to talk with him on the topic on the occasion of three-day lecture in Budapest, 2024.

⁵ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. *Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101, 2006.

⁶ Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy, Beacon Press, 1984.

a diasporic public platform. By adapting the framework of Habermas' theory, I consider *Haratch* as the public platform for the Armenian diaspora in Paris. I argue that it created a space for Armenians to participate in cultural and political life and to gain knowledge, fostering a sense of community. His theory is important for understanding the relationship between media and society, particularly in the context of diaspora.

This thesis is structured in two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the impact of *Haratch*. I explore the main structure of *Haratch* and analyze what influence did the content have on Armenians in Paris and beyond. The second chapter focuses on the generational transitions. The newspaper was founded by Shavarsh Missakian, later being led by his daughter Arpik Missakian. The chapter examines the importance of this factor analyzing how the changes in the publishers of *Haratch* altered its influence on the community.

Chapter I: The Influence of *Haratch* on Armenians in Paris

1.1. An introduction to Armenians in France

As already mentioned the French-Armenian diaspora is one of the largest Armenian Diasporas in the Europe. Today, it has a significant impact both in France and Armenia. The diaspora has been able to preserve its identity and culture, with many Armenian schools, cultural centers, and churches still present in France. There are about 70 Armenian schools in France, 7 of which are day schools, as well as dozens of Armenian churches, cultural houses, media, libraries, and more.⁷ Many Armenians have made, and continue to make, notable contributions to French society. One of the first recordings of Armenians were in 591 C.E.⁸ Armenian inscriptions, believed to date back to the Middle Ages, have been discovered in both the Bourges Cathedral and the church of Tarascon⁹. In the 17th century, an Armenian merchant opened the first café in Paris. A century later, another Armenian introduced the madder plant to France, which was used for dyeing clothing. By the early 20th century, a small Armenian community of merchants, entrepreneurs, and students had established itself in France. The community grew significantly in 1915 following the Armenian Genocide, with around 60,000 survivors finding refuge in France. Throughout the 20th century, tens of thousands more Armenians migrated to France, coming from countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Armenia. Today, the Armenian population in France is estimated to be around 650,000.¹⁰ Armenians are primarily concentrated in cities such as Paris, Lyon, and Marseille, along with nearby towns. In recent years, thousands of Armenians, mostly from Armenia, have settled in northeastern France. There are approximately 500 Armenian community-based organizations in France, some of which are part of the Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF), established in 2001.¹¹ In 2016, the Hayassa Federation was founded in Paris by Armenians who had recently immigrated to France. This federation includes around three dozen organizations and has branches in Lyon and

⁷ "France." Diaspora.gov.am, Armenian Government, <http://diaspora.gov.am/en/pages/37/france#:~:text=The%20community%20became%20larger%20in,estimated%20650%2C000%20Armenians%20live%20here>.

⁸ Greenwood, Tim. "Armenia." The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity, edited by Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, Oxford University Press, 2012, pg. 115.

⁹ Town, Bouches-du-Rhône département, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur région, southeastern France, east of Nîmes.

¹⁰ "France." Diaspora.gov.am, Armenian Government, <http://diaspora.gov.am/en/pages/37/france#:~:text=The%20community%20became%20larger%20in,estimated%20650%2C000%20Armenians%20live%20here>.

¹¹ Ibid.

Marseille.¹² From this brief historical overview, we can see that Armenians have been in France for a long time, yet most continue to speak Armenian, preserve their cultural traditions, and participate in various organizations. Despite their long presence, the Armenian community remains active and continues to grow while maintaining its cultural identity.

As already mentioned, *Haratch* (1925-2009) was the first Armenian newspaper published in Europe after the Armenian genocide. It lasted for an exceptionally long time. It became a key part of the Armenian identity, connecting survivors to both their lost homeland and their new countries. Founded by dedicated journalist Shavarsh Missakian (1884-1957), *Haratch* covered both major and minor events in the Armenian community and made huge contributions to Armenian literature in Europe. Over two generations, led by Shavarsh and his daughter Arpik Missakian, the newspaper played an important role in shaping Armenian identity in exile, connecting intellectuals across Europe. *Haratch* published its latest issue on May 30th, 2009 from a total of 22,214. The cast metal type fonts and the last 2 cast iron marbles including the composing sticks and formes of May 30th, 2009's last issue were offered up to the association by Arpik Missakian and are on display at the association's headquarters.¹³ Thus, it can be observed that *Haratch* had a significant impact and influence on the Armenian community in France. It was indicating the profound effect it had on the Armenian community and its wide readership.

Newspapers (media) have a huge role on Diasporas and communities. In this anthology, diasporic media are understood as 'media that are produced by and for migrants, addressing issues of particular interest to members of diaspora communities'.¹⁴ Previous literature has articulated their functions, which include the provision of 'culturally relevant and locally important information to immigrants in the host society',¹⁵ serving as 'orientation and connective roles',¹⁶ creating 'an open space for self-reflective discourse among migrants'¹⁷ reinforcing identities and a sense of belonging¹⁸, facilitating 'the (re-)creation of alternative

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Haratch Յանադ." ARAM, WebAram. Accessed 5 September 2024.

<https://webaram.com/biblio/presse/haratch-%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%A1%D5%BB>.

¹⁴ Bozdag, Cigdem, et al. "Diasporic Media as the 'Focus' of Critical Media Studies: A Conceptual Discussion." *Diaspora, Identity, and New Media*, edited by Myria Georgiou, Hampton Press, 2012, p. 97.

¹⁵ Yin, Jing. *Immigrant Media Consumption: Examining the Intersections of Information Needs, Cultural Identity, and Media Use in a Host Society*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2013, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ogunyemi, Ola. "New Media and Nigerian Diaspora in the UK." *Diasporas and New Media in the Globalized World*, edited by Christian Fuchs and Kees Brants, Peter Lang, 2012, pp. 49-66.

¹⁷ Georgiou, Myria. *Diaspora, Identity and the Media: Diasporic Transnationalism and Mediated Spatialities*. Hampton Press, 2006.

¹⁸ Ibid

imaginative spaces alongside existing mappings',¹⁹ and contributing 'to the ethnic diversity of a multi-ethnic public sphere'.²⁰ However, we know very little about their production practices because they are hardly used in empirical studies. This hiatus in the literature is evident in the observation made by Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch that "the work of US news organizations is extremely well charted, whereas we know excruciatingly little about what goes on in newsrooms and media content in Africa, Asia and Latin America".²¹ It is interesting to note how little research has been done on the effect of newspapers, in particular, on Diasporas and communities in general, for there have been many more academic sources about the implications of their impact. Newspapers also play a vital role in sustaining these communities, so this is a fascinating case to examine and investigate. One site of intersection between these fields is with the theory and analysis of news and news media. Communication research is increasingly seeing its subjects as socially situated forms of text or talks that warrant analysis. In fact, this focus has been specifically applied to the study of news in the press. While much scholarly work has concentrated on the content of news, fewer studies have explored its impact on diaspora communities. This is a fascinating area of study, as many diaspora communities actively seek to establish their own newspapers in new environments.

¹⁹ Karim, Karim H. *The Media of Diaspora*. Routledge, 2003.

²⁰ Husband, Charles. "Media and the Public Sphere in Multi-Ethnic Societies." *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, edited by Simon Cottle, Open University Press, 2000, p. 206.

²¹ Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin, and Thomas Hanitzsch. *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. Routledge, 2009, p. 8.

1.2. The impact of *Haratch*

Being the first Armenian-language daily newspaper in Europe, founded by Shavarsh Missakian in Paris in 1925, *Haratch* had great cultural, political, and social impact on the Armenian community in Paris.²² The history of *Haratch* is tied to its founder. He was born in Zmara, near Sepastia, in 1884. Missakian was an influential Armenian intellectual and journalist deeply involved in Armenian journalistic circles. He began his career with the Armenian daily *Sourhandak*, later co-founding the Istanbul literary weekly *Aztak*.²³ Missakian escaped the roundup of Armenian intellectuals in the Ottoman capital on April 24 1915, but was arrested on March 26 1916, and imprisoned until the Mudros Armistice. This was a crucial turning point in his life.²⁴ Following his release, he served as editor-in-chief of *Djagadamard*, a daily newspaper of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnakcutyun). Missakian was later elected to the ARF Bureau and founded *Haratch* in Paris on August 1, 1925.²⁵

The name *Haratch*, meaning "Forward," was inspired by the German Social Democratic Party's publication *Vorwärts* in Leipzig, published by Wilhelm Liebknecht. This newspaper helped to structure and gathers the Armenian community in France.²⁶ From 1925 to 1939, *Haratch* informed, educated and structured the Armenian community of France estimated at 40,000 individuals in 1925 and 100,000 in 1939.²⁷ The publication served to organize, enlighten, and educate the Armenian population in France up until 1939. It continued to publish without interruption until the Germans invaded Paris, reaching a daily circulation of 5,000 copies and an equal number of subscribers. *Haratch* educated and guided Armenian refugees in France regarding their status, the renewal of residency permits, police laws, the right to work, military duty, as well as hygienic issues²⁸. There are a total of 22,214 issues of the newspaper.²⁹ All of this serves as evidence that *Haratch* had a many

²² "Haratch Յանւղ." ARAM, WebAram. Accessed 13 August 2024. <https://webaram.com/biblio/presse/haratch-%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%A1%D5%BB>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Jean Stépanian, avec Tigrane Yégavian, France-Arménie, numéro 341,

²⁷ Anahide Ter-Minassian, Haratch's 80th Birthday. France-Arménie, Dec. 2005, <http://www.acam-france.org/contacts/journaux/haratch-fin.htm#80ans>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Haratch Յանւղ." ARAM, WebAram. Accessed 13 August 2024. <https://webaram.com/biblio/presse/haratch-%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%A1%D5%BB>.

readers among Armenians and shows its impact on their daily lives. The newspaper, written in Armenian,³⁰ first page states:

We undertook this work after much deliberation. The demand for this daily newspaper is undeniable, especially for the Armenian communities in France and neighboring countries. Approximately fifty thousand compatriots live within these borders. Every Armenian community has its own newspaper, sometimes more than one in America, Egypt, Syria, Bulgaria, and Greece. Only France remained without one; this region is a new colony in Europe. As life gradually takes shape, the press should be one of the main driving forces behind this formation. We are a small part of European civilization, where everything can be assimilated.³¹

This passage illustrates why the Armenian community in France took on the challenge of starting this newspaper. Printing was the first step for this community to address the difficulties of preserving their identity and culture in a new territory full of challenges. The newspaper would help the Armenian community stay connected with other Armenian communities and keep abreast of developments in other regions, which was crucial at that time. From this, it is clear that the newspaper had an impact not only on the French Armenian community but also on neighboring countries. However the thesis focuses on its impact on the French Armenian community, particularly in Paris. This thesis argues that *Haratch* was instrumental in preserving Armenian cultural identity, fostering community cohesion, and shaping political consciousness in the French Armenian diaspora.

Before delving into the impact of *Haratch* on the Armenian community in France, one should mention that Europe experienced significant changes in its media landscape during the 1920s. This period saw the development of radio as a mass medium, the introduction of sound films, and huge number growth in the press and cinema. However, these changes occurred across Europe, varying between regions and between rural and metropolitan areas. Political and cultural elites often viewed these developments critically, expressing concerns about the corrosive effects of 'mass culture.'³² This context helps explain why the Armenian press emerged during this time. The Armenian community in France was primarily established after the 1915 Armenian Genocide, yet the first Armenian

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ "Haratch," 2 Aug. 1925 - 30 Aug. 1925, no. 1-13, p. 1, ARAM Archives, WebAram, accessed 15 Aug. 2024, https://archives.webaram.com/liseuse/pdf/v.html?file=/presse/haratch/pdf/HARATCH_1925_08-Aout.pdf.

³² Jochen Hung et al., "Modernization, Democratization and Politicization: Mass Media in 1920s Europe," in *The Wiley-Blackwell History of Media and Communication*, ed. Klaus Arnold, Paschal Preston, and Susanne Kinnebrock (Wiley-Blackwell, 13 Aug. 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119161783.ch6>.

publications in France did not appear until 1925. This delay reflects the broader media environment of the period and the challenges faced by the Armenian diaspora.

To publish a newspaper, you need both a place for the editorial office and a printing press. In its long existence, *Haratch* has changed addresses and printing presses several times³³. The rise of *Haratch* truly began in the 1950s. The *Haratch* editorial office relocated to the *Azkayin Doun* (also known as the "National House") in 1953. This was a private residence located on the 9th arrondissement of Paris' rue de Trévis, where competing Armenian organizations lived in cooperation.³⁴ After multiple changes of address and printing house, in 1973, *Haratch* moved to 83 rue de Hauteville in Paris, where it set up a press room and a workshop for the Linotype machine³⁵.³⁶ This was a period of new technologies in the printing world, and the adoption of the Linotype machine played an important role in enhancing the newspaper's influence. *Haratch* published in a 32/50 format. It was available by subscription and sold in Paris suburbs and certain newsstands. The journal frequently published literary or political analysis, *Mèr Khoske* (Our Word), Charvarche's editorial, and a section targeted to young writers.³⁷

Haratch comprised 4 pages. "A la une", the left column is reserved for Shavarsh's editorial, signed with his famous initials, or written by a collaborator in his absence. Published under the heading, *Mèr Khoske*, this editorial aims to be consensual. In the center in the newspaper was the section "current events". In large characters, there were sections which announce the latest news: French domestic politics and international relations. In the right column there were posts "Au jour le jour", a commentary section often provided by Shavarsh (he signs Vahé). There are also regular explanations on the status of Armenian refugees in France (their rights and obligations) and recent information on the evolution of this status (renewal of residence permits, police regulations, right to work, military service). The fourth page is reserved for advertising placards, programs of community events and meetings of FRA committees.³⁸ On page 2, articles of in-depth political or literary analysis, written by the pen, sometimes novelists, of regular or

³³ Anahide Ter-Minassian, Haratch's 80th Birthday. France-Arménie, Dec. 2005, <http://www.acam-france.org/contacts/journaux/haratch-fin.htm#80ans>.

³⁴ "Journal Haratch – ՀԱՌԱՅ [archive]," WebAram, accessed 15 Aug. 2024, <https://webaram.com/biblio/presse/haratch>.

³⁵ Linotype, (trademark), typesetting machine by which characters are cast in type metal as a complete line rather than as individual characters as on the Monotype typesetting machine.

³⁶ Denis Donikian, "457 – Haratch, Armenian Newspaper [archive]," Le Monde Blogs, 24 June 2015, denisdonikian.blog.lemonde.fr.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Anahide Ter-Minassian, Haratch's 80th Birthday. France-Arménie, Dec. 2005, <http://www.acam-france.org/contacts/journaux/haratch-fin.htm#80ans>.

occasional contributors. On page 3, life in the Armenian colonies of France and elsewhere, with particular attention paid to Armenian literature and theater, to sporting life and to the progress of the Homenetmen, to compatriotic associations of Armenian exiles from the Ottoman Empire, etc. The “ground floor” of pages 2 and 3 are occupied by serials that keep readers loyal. One of the serials is often devoted to events from the recent past, the other is always a novel, whether it is a translation or the original work of an Armenian writer such as S hahan S hahnour, Vaskène S houS hanian or Malkhass.³⁹ It is very important to mention that this newspaper offered subscriptions for six months and annually, and it was available not only in France but also in America and England. It was not just a community newspaper but one for many diasporic Armenians. The newspapers also provided information about Armenians who owned cafés, the locations of these establishments, as well as Armenian tailors and photographers. This was a key element in connecting Armenians, especially for settlers who did not know where to go for different occasions. The newspapers informed Armenians about where and what they could find within their community. The structure of *Haratch* fosters strong communication among Armenians in France. The newspaper includes pages that feature information about upcoming local events, sporting activities, and the achievements of community organizations. This is a vital aspect of community life, as it brings members closer together and helps to build connections among Armenians living in Paris. Through these efforts, Armenians reinforce a shared identity and common goals. The advertisement of events encourages Armenians to engage in communal activities and contribute to their community. Thus, *Haratch* played a crucial role in helping the Armenian community in Paris to form, grow, and maintain the strong presence it has in France today.

From the political content of *Haratch*, it is evident that the editor tried to keep readers informed about the political situation in France as well as developments within Armenian communities around the world. The editor also discusses the situation in Armenia under Soviet rule, often expressing disagreement with the Soviet government. It is important to note that the editor had connections with the Armenian Dashnaktsutyun Party⁴⁰, which was banned in Soviet Armenia at that time, yet sought to influence Armenian communities globally. Through editorials by Shavarsh or his collaborators, *Haratch* sets the platform for political discourse, addressing issues relevant to both French domestic politics and international relations. The “*Au jour le jour*” commentary in the right column provides

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ “The First Documenter of the Armenian Genocide: Shavarsh Missakian.” Shavarsh Missakian (1884-1957), Preface, <https://www.aztagdaily.com/archives/342529>.

insights into the political landscape, while regular explanations on the status of Armenian refugees in France address legal and social concerns specific to the diaspora. By informing readers about their rights, obligations, and the evolution of their legal status, *Haratch* actively engages in political advocacy for the Armenian community. The newspaper has in-depth political and literary analyses. One of the newspaper goals is to provide readers with a understanding of local and global issues on multiple levels. Its coverage of Armenian literature serves not only as a means of cultural preservation but also as an educational tool, exposing readers to a wide range of intellectual and artistic expressions. Additionally, the newspaper's updates on refugee status and legal rights contribute to social education, empowering the Armenian diaspora to navigate their lives in France with greater awareness and confidence.

In particular in the French Armenian community, *Haratch* has had an important effect on the Armenian diaspora. Since its founding, *Haratch* a significant publication has played a pivotal role in shaping the identity, unity, and political consciousness of Armenians in France and abroad. It has also functioned as a cultural and educational institution. Preservation *Haratch* has been very important in keeping Armenian culture alive. The newspaper often features Armenian literature, theater, and arts, which help maintain Armenian identity in the diaspora. Several pages focus on the life of Armenian colonies, with a particular emphasis on cultural activities. *Haratch* as mentioned before features works by prominent Armenian artists such as Chahan Chahnour and Vaskène Chouchanian, and includes both original works and translations, thereby maintaining the Armenian language is one of the main components of Armenian identity. Furthermore, it showed that from 1976, *Haratch* introduced a monthly supplement titled *Mitq ev Arvest* (Thought and Art). This bilingual (French and Armenian) literary and artistic supplement was published from December 5, 1976, to May 5, 2009, and comprises 351 issues. This journal represents an effort in preserving and promoting Armenian heritage, through the art. It provided a platform for artistic and literary expression within the Armenian diaspora. It publishes works by well-known Armenian writers and artists, both original and translated, which keeps the Armenian language in use. *Haratch* has helped bring Armenians in France closer together. It includes news about local events, sports, and community groups like Homenetmen.⁴¹ These sections help connect people, strengthen their shared identity, and encourage them to join community activities. By fostering a sense

⁴¹ Homenetmen (Armenian: Հ. Մ. Ը. Մ., pronounced ['hɔmɛnɛtmen], short for Armenian: Հայ Մարմնակրթական Ընդհանուր Միություն, meaning Armenian General Athletic Union) is a pan-Armenian diaspora organization devoted to sport and scouting.

of belonging, *Haratch* has played a key role in building and supporting the Armenian community in France over the years. As already mentioned *Haratch* has been a strong advocate for the Armenian community. It provides detailed analysis of French politics, international relations, and issues affecting Armenians worldwide. It also covers the political situation in Armenia under Soviet rule and often reflects the views of the Armenian Dashnaktsutyun Party, which was banned in Soviet Armenia. *Haratch* informs its readers about their rights and political issues, helping shape their political awareness and activism. The newspaper also has a big impact on social and educational matters. It covers political, literary, and cultural topics, which help readers, understand local and global issues better. By focusing on Armenian literature and arts, *Haratch* not only preserves culture but also educates its readers about different intellectual and artistic ideas. It also provides updates on refugee status and legal rights, helping the Armenian diaspora in France are more informed and confident.

Haratch's influence goes beyond its pages. It represents the Armenian diaspora's strength and aim to preserving their culture while adapting to a new society. By focusing on culture, community, politics, and education, *Haratch* has helped shape the Armenian community in France, keeping it strong and connected with its heritage. *Haratch* has helped in the survival and growth of the Armenian community in France. It has been essential for cultural preservation, community building, political advocacy, and education, making sure that Armenian identity remains strong and meaningful across generations. The section is divided into several parts to show that the newspaper served as the main platform for Armenians at the time, providing information about political events not only in Paris but also in many parts of the world where Armenians lived. After the genocide, it became a key source for news about Western Armenia. The division of sections highlights how the newspaper also functioned as an educational platform, offering a large number of works by Armenian artists. What's more important is that it included a section informing Armenians in Paris about local events, thus connecting the community. I argue that this could be one of the reasons why Armenians in France, particularly in Paris, remain connected to each other today and why they are unique as a diaspora in Europe. They had a major platform that served as a bridge between them. The number of copies printed shows how popular the newspaper was. In essence, it was phenomenal at the time, serving as the first and most important platform for Armenians. I also emphasize in my thesis that the newspaper was published in Armenian, which is a crucial aspect. Language plays a key role in preserving

Armenian identity because it not only reflects who we are but, in many ways, defines us. Our use of language shapes our identity both directly and indirectly.

Chapter II: The Impact of Generational Transition on the Thematic Field of *Haratch*

In this chapter, I examine the generational transition of the newspaper *Haratch*. As mentioned, already in its early years, *Haratch* was the first Armenian-language daily newspaper in Europe, founded in Paris by Shavarsh Missakian in 1925. The newspaper aimed to unite the diaspora, preserve Armenian culture, and advocate for the Armenian cause on an international stage. During this period, *Haratch* was characterized by its strong political advocacy.⁴² To understand the generational transition, its differences, and its impact, I explore Shavarsh Missakian's contributions.

Born in the village of Zonar, in Sepasdia (Sivas), Missakian studied at the Ketronakan Armenian School of Constantinople. He started working as a journalist at 16, first as editor of *Sourhandak*, and later, during the Hamidian regime, as a publisher and distributor of revolutionary literature.⁴³ In 1911, he moved to Garin (Erzurum), where he stayed for a year as editor of *Harach* in place of the assassinated Yeghishe Topjian.⁴⁴ When he turned to Constantinople, he joined the editorial staff of *Azatomart*. During the deportations and massacres of April 1915, Missakian managed to escape the mass arrests and lived in hiding in the precinct of Pera for one year. During that period he collected important documents on the Turkish deportations and smuggled them abroad. Unable to find Missakian, the government arrested his father and exiled him. He went into hiding after the roundup of April 24 1915, after that he sent information to the newspaper *Hayastan* in Sofia on the horrible committed against the Armenians. He was arrested on March 16 1916, imprisoned the he was tortured.⁴⁵ In 1916, Missakian tried to move to Bulgaria from Istanbul but was betrayed by a Bulgarian who served as a spy for Turkey. He was prisoned in March, Missakian was tortured for several months, after which he attempted to commit suicide. His death sentence was later commuted to five years' imprisonment. He was eventually freed upon the Allied occupation of Constantinople in November 1918.⁴⁶ Returning to Constantinople, he took over the management of the newspaper *Djagadamard*, and then immigrated to Bulgaria. Although he had hard times he continued his work in newspapers.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Shavarsh Missakian (1884–1957). Hairenik. <https://hairenik.com/vfp/Shavarsh-missakian/>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Anahide Ter Minassian. "Pour Chavarche Missakian..." France Culture.

<https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/chretiens-d-orient/anahide-ter-minassian-pour-chavarche-missakian-8843521>

⁴⁶ Shavarsh Missakian (1884–1957). Hairenik. <https://hairenik.com/vfp/Shavarsh-missakian/>.

In Bulgaria he married a *Dashnak* sympathizer Dirouhie Azarian⁴⁷. From Bulgaria he was then sent to Paris by the *Dachnak* party. *Dashnakcutyun* tried to have in Armenian communities an influence, and Missakian was one of those persons who could be the leader of the community. That was why he led the brand new Armenian community that had formed there. He took charge of organizing the young people of the "new generation" by founding *Nor Seround* ⁴⁸ and by offering them a newspaper, *Haiastan*. ⁴⁹ The 10th Congress of the FRA began a reconstruction congress in November 1924. In January 1925, Shavarsh was elected member of the Bureau, which was the highest authority of the FRA. The same year, he founded in Paris and here the longstanding history of the newspaper *Haratch* begun. To know the life story of Shavarsh Missakian is important. Passing through all the events that happened to him shows his goals to serve the community through the newspaper. In *Haratch*, he once wrote: "Our task is to protect all the sacred things that reside within our nation. This will provide us with the light to strive for better days."⁵⁰ He believed that every Armenian after the genocide should do something to maintain Armenian culture and identity, and it will help Armenians create a brighter future. Basically, he and his kind of people were missionaries; they tried to spread the "light" in their nation. I argue that the 20th century was the time when nationalism rose up,⁵¹ and newspapers had a huge influence on communities. The beginning of the 20th century was a turning point for most nations in the world. Many changes happened during that time, like the collapse of empires such as the Ottoman and Russian Empires.⁵² Also, new states came to the stage. With all these changes, newspapers started to have a huge influence, and printing became very popular. To have communication within a group, they needed a platform. For Armenians in Paris, that role was played by the newspaper *Haratch*.

⁴⁷ "Haratch." Armenian Cultural Association of Marne-la-Vallée, 31 May 2009, <http://www.acam-france.org/contacts/journaux/haratch-fin.htm#80an> . Article in France-Arménie, December 2005, by Anahide Ter-Minassian.

⁴⁸ the main militant youth organization, affiliated with Dashnakcutyun

⁴⁹ Paris donne une place en son sein à Chavarche Missakian." Nouvelles d'Arménie, 12 May 2007, <http://dartag.over-blog.com/article-6604440.html> .

⁵⁰ "Haratch," 2 Aug. 1925 - 30 Aug. 1925, no. 1-13, p. 1, ARAM Archives, WebAram, accessed 09 November 2024, https://archives.webaram.com/liseuse/pdf/v.html?file=/presse/haratch/pdf/HARATCH_1925_08-Aout.pdf.

⁵¹ Berberoglu, Berch, editor. The National Question: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the Twentieth Century. Temple University Press, 1995. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bstd1>.

⁵² Smiley, Will. Review of Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918, by Michael A. Reynolds. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, vol. 75, no. 2, 2012, pp. 391–393

From 1925 to 1939, *Haratch* informed, educated and structured the Armenian community of France estimated at 40,000 individuals in 1925 and 100,000 in 1939.⁵³ More than an information organ, the daily newspaper in Armenian was remembered as the bridge through which members of the same family regroup after the tragedy of 1915 finding there a little light of Armenia. That was very important at that time. A loss of homeland that one dreams of returning to, as reflected in the newspaper. The newspaper would thus play an important role in the Armenian intellectual's life from the interwar period and that was the work of newspaper through its *Mitq ev Arvest* section to its literary works and the large space given to contemporary writers that it would publish every day. In his newspaper he wrote;

Our language, our literature, our young generation are being disfigured, together with our mores. Our community in the dispersion is losing its character. What miracles could be wrought by our talented writers in Armenia, if only they were free? In Armenia there is voluntary or involuntary ignorance, confusion of minds, and tension of the nerves. In the Dispersion, the extollers of Stalin have become "talented poets." Our clergymen have become cunning and have deserted our faith, the faith of Christ; they have abandoned their calling. The adventurers have thrived. Our papers are full of charlatanry and dishonest controversies. An era of cheap patriotism has come into being, without the spirit of sacrifice. All these are bad signs, portending the decline of the race. When are we ever going to recover our soul? Whither are we going? Quo vadis, O Armenian people!⁵⁴

Shavarsh Misakian's writings in *Haratch* expressed deep concern about the state of the Armenian community in Paris and across the world. But mainly I discuss about Armenians in Paris. His critique came at a time when Armenians in Paris were struggling to keep their culture and identity intact while adapting to life in a new country. His concerns highlighted the challenges they faced in maintaining their cultural and intellectual heritage. Missakian's statement that Armenian culture and language were being "disfigured" resonated with Armenians in Paris. His words likely made the community more aware of the need to protect and preserve their cultural heritage. This may have encouraged more efforts to celebrate and maintain Armenian traditions and language in Paris. Missakian's writings were important in shaping conversations within the Armenian community. His strong

⁵³ "Haratch." Armenian Cultural Association of Marne-la-Vallée, 31 May 2009, <http://www.acam-france.org/contacts/journaux/haratch-fin.htm#80an> . Article in France-Arménie, December 2005, by Anahide Ter-Minassian.

⁵⁴ "Haratch," 1940, ARAM Archives. accessed 20 Aug. 2024, https://archives.webaram.com/liseuse/pdf/v.html?file=/presse/haratch/pdf/HARATCH_1925_08-Aout.pdf

criticism likely sparked debates about the state of Armenian culture and leadership. This could have led to more serious discussions and actions to address the issues he raised. When examining the newspaper under Shavarsh Missakian's governance, it becomes evident that he frequently addressed topics related to Armenian identity, culture, and intellectual thought. His contributions were characterized by a profound commitment to cultural preservation and the exploration of Armenian heritage. Missakian's principal objective was to safeguard and perpetuate Armenian cultural legacy. Politically, Missakian was affiliated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), albeit in a predominantly intellectual and cultural role. Although he was not primarily recognized for his political activism, his writings consistently resonated with the ARF's values and viewpoints. This alignment was particularly evident in his discussions on Armenian identity and issues concerning the Armenian diaspora. Shavarsh Missakian thus held a large place in the life of the Armenian community of France as well as in that of the 9th arrondissement until his death on January 26, 1957. The grateful Armenians then reserved a "national" funeral for him and buried him at Père Lachaise.⁵⁵

After the death of Missakian his only daughter, Arpik Missakian, took over the newspaper's management on January 30, 1957. The Armenian press, like the French press, is successor to a tradition marked by literature and politics, and the profession has been highly individualistic. Arpik Missakian is living proof of this. Born in Paris in 1926, born with *Haratch*, raised in a close circle of *Dashnak* activists and in the open and complex milieu of Armenian writers, musicians, painters and actors of the first generation of the diaspora,⁵⁶ she was not a priori destined to collect her father's heritage. She accepted it as a debt to be taken up. Since her adolescence, through observation and constant attendance at the *Haratch* editorial office, Arpik had acquired the basics of the journalistic profession, whether it was the role of the director, the rules of ethics, the reliability and objectivity of information, the choice of articles, the readability of the newspaper, relations with readers, as she had acquired practical experience of the daily problems posed by printing or by distribution.⁵⁷ The advice and lessons of her elders and friends - Chavarch Nartouni, Hrand Samuel, Nchan Bechiktachlian, Bédouch etc., played an essential part in it. Arpik was not alone during the times of being a head of *Haratch*. Her friends actively supported the new

⁵⁵ Paris donne une place en son sein à Chavarche Missakian." *Nouvelles d'Arménie*, 12 May 2007, <http://dartag.over-blog.com/article-6604440.html>.

⁵⁶ Cf. Krikor Beledian, *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France. From the Same to the Other*, CNRS Editions. 2001.

⁵⁷ Anahide Ter Minassian. "Pour Chavarche Missakian..." *France Culture*. <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/chretiens-d-orient/anahide-ter-minassian-pour-chavarche-missakian-8843521>

director from 1957. Shavarsh Nartouni (1898-1968), who left medicine to focus on Armenian literature, founded a more activist association and the magazine *Hay Pouj* in 1934. He became her mentor in exploring the cultural field. The role of Hrand Samuel (1891-1977), a man of high culture and a leading figure of the FRA, was quite different. From 1925 he collaborated with *Haratch*.⁵⁸ In July 1930, he inaugurated in Paris, at 51 rue Monsieur-le-Prince and near the Sorbonne, the Librairie Orientale, a bookstore which soon acquired a worldwide reputation among libraries and bibliophiles. Seventy-five years later, this bookstore is still run by his children, Alice Aslanian and Armen Samuélian, and remains a place of obligatory pilgrimage for any informed Armenian⁵⁹. At the same time, Hrand Samuel, calmly assumes political responsibilities. After the death of Alexander Khatissian (1945), he succeeded him as president of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic and after the death of Archak Tchobanian (1954) as president of the Central Office of Armenian Refugees. In 1965, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Armenian genocide, he presented to the UN a memorandum on the genocide of 1915 and on Armenian territorial claims. Despite his multiple activities, from 1957 to 1977, for 20 years, Hrand Samuel provided *Haratch* with a daily editorial whose content was generally political. If the founder of *Haratch* directed the newspaper for 28 years, Arpik Missakian has been at the helm for 48 years! For a quarter of a century, she alone has been the “boss” of *Haratch*, of a newspaper that she wants to be independent, at the service of objective information and free from any partisan commitment. Thus we see that in the Arpik’s time the newspaper has not only her views but also intellectual Armenians. The editors were different, and that time Arpik concentrated on culture and education for Armenians. In the Editorial Office where she shares responsibilities with her collaborator, Arpi Totoyan, she defines the line of the newspaper, the choice and prioritization of news, the arrangement of titles, the acceptance or rejection of articles sent by distant correspondents.⁶⁰ She tries to maintain a balance between independent Armenia and the expanding diaspora. And she keeps her sense of humor. *Haratch* has kept its austere appearance, but its front page has changed as Europe, “the Armenian world” and readers have changed. Four columns, rare editorials signed “*Haratch*”, new sections (“Armenian Front”, “Artsakh”, “Bolis”, “Genocide” etc.) born from the upheavals that have affected this “Armenian world” for 15 years. The major polemical articles have disappeared except those dealing with sensitive topics such as the recognition of the genocide, the denial of the Turkish state, Turkey’s

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

entry into Europe, the defense of the Armenian language and its spelling, the closure of an Armenian school or newspaper. Despite the identity crisis of Armenian communities affected by migration and globalization, Arpik Missakian knows how to welcome vocations and make *Haratch* play its role as a link. Thus, to cite only recent examples, the long reports on the Armenia of the cities and the countryside of Father Haroutioun Bezdiguan, as well as the poetic tails of Anahide Sarkissian, as well as the articles inspired by the 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet.⁶¹ On page 3, the serial of *Haratch* carefully chosen for its literary quality or its historical pedagogy, has always the same success. In December 1976, she founded a literary supplement. *Midk yèv Arvest* takes up the title of an old column of *Haratch* and plays the role of a magazine. This 4-page monthly, with which the writer Krirkor Beledian has been associated for several years, has given rise to a real emulation, to a circulation of ideas between Armenian critics, writers, poets, musicologists, aesthetes, film buffs, historians or political scientists, from the Americas to Armenia. The independence of a newspaper requires its financial independence. The newspaper is an industrial product sold at a fixed price where the costs of production and distribution are involved. *Haratch*, who receives no subsidies, balances his budget with subscriptions, community advertising, the obituary book and donations from his readers and friends. In France, the profession of journalist remains surrounded by prestige and makes young people dream. This is not really the case for the Armenian press. Publish in Paris, in today's conditions, an Armenian daily newspaper requires total self-denial and a form of national exaltation that amount to heroism. Forward! *Haratch*! Forward!⁶²

During her time at *Haratch*, Arpik Missakian played a more direct role in political reporting and commentary. Her work primarily focused on covering current events and political developments, making her a key figure in delivering political news and analysis to the Armenian community. She emphasized providing timely and relevant political information, including reporting on events and their impact on the Armenian community. Unlike Missakian, whose work included cultural and intellectual analysis, Minassyan's focus was more on delivering news. Her role was crucial in keeping the Armenian community informed about political issues and shaping public opinion through her journalism and editorial contributions. The newspaper from Shavarsh's time had a distinct style and approach, which differed significantly from the period under Arpik's leadership.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid

Arpik had already begun writing for a new generation of Armenians, specifically the children of genocide survivors. Her leadership continued this focus, shaping the newspaper to address the needs and concerns of this emerging audience. I discuss the differences between father and daughter, including their styles and the distinct impacts they had on Armenians in Paris. This analysis will demonstrate how the differing approaches of diaspora newspaper owners can directly influence the community they serve.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis shows how important the media is in shaping diasporic societies, with the example of *Haratch*. The main focus of this study is cultural, political, and social impact on the Armenian community in Paris. *Haratch* is not only tool for communication. It serves as a tool to keep identity alive and brings the community together, supporting education and politics. Through this people living far from each other keep their connection. While at the same time it also this is a means to teach shared values and create a space where they can speak about the challenges of diaspora life. Through the role of diasporic media we can see the continuation of this peoples identity and also their attempt to fit into new environment. Media brings people together with stories and traditions that unite them. It helps pass on culture, history, and language to future generations. This is very important for keeping unique cultural identities strong in today's globalized world.

It becomes clear that the media's role can change the community's life. When editors or media styles change, it can affect how a diaspora community uses and sees its media. For example, when the founder of newspaper Shavarsh died and her daughter joined *Haratch*, she brought different ideas and goals. These changes showed the needs of different generations and how the community adapts over time. Media in diasporic communities is not fixed; it grows and changes with the people it serves. By looking at the impact of *Haratch*, this thesis helps to understand how media supports the strength and growth of diasporic communities. It also calls for more studies on how media shapes the identity, unity, and success of these societies. Overall media is a powerful tool for diasporic communities, and understanding its role is important for their future.

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