The Armenian Diaspora Project

This project seeks to shed light on the Armenian communities which exist all over the world and how they came to be. Additionally, it seeks to showcase the relationships between population and number of communities in a country, along with other variables related to the Armenian diaspora.

For this research project, I decided to explore the Armenian diaspora communities which exist all over the world. My project's primary research questions were "Where do these diaspora communities exist?" and

also, what some explanations for why we see particular diaspora communities in different parts of the world. Additionally, my project seeks to shed light on the number of diaspora communities in various countries, and try to have a understand of the number of communities vs the community size per country.

The background to this research is primarily based on the history of the Armenian people. Historically, Armenia has had the second oldest diaspora in the world (Tololyan 2004). There have been several reasons as to why the Armenian people are spread all over the world. The historic reasons include travelling on the Silk Road for trade purposes, fleeing religious persecution, and fleeing for other economic purposes. As Tololyan states, a "… general principle of diaspora formation in the premodern period… [is that] most diasporas develop when a niche opens up in a host society that its rulers choose or are obliged to fill by encouraging diasporic migration." (IBID) The significant diasporas Armenia has had included communities in India, Jerusalem, Poland, Persia, Russia, and even in Venice, Italy at the San Lazzaro degli Armeni, which is located in Venice (*Inside the Vatican* 2012).

However, the diaspora today is largely not influenced by those historical events and movements. Sadly, the biggest reason for the existence of Armenian diaspora communities is the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The Armenian Genocide of 1915 was the first massacre of the 20th century, carried about the Young Turks of what was then the Ottoman Empire, or what we now know to be Turkey (Kiffer 1997). The Armenian people who were living in what was formerly known as Western Armenia, and is presently eastern Turkey, were persecuted and almost annihilated for wanting to keep their Christian faith and refusing to convert to Islam (Papazian 2006). Additionally, Armenians were viewed as internal enemies of the Turkish people and accused of siding with the Russian empire in plotting against the Young Turks revolution (Adalian 2019). For the above reasons, Armenians were forced to flee their homes in 1915 and escape to countries such as France, Lebanon, Syria, Russia, Argentina, Australia, the United States, and other countries.

The second largest reason for the diaspora communities' existence today can be attributed to the economic migration and outflow which was due to economic hardship in Armenia after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Agnieszka 2014). Most people again migrated to the Russian Federation in hopes of finding better work but were also tending to go the countries where diaspora communities had previously formed as a result of the Armenian Genocide. Presently the, largest communities of Armenians outside of Armenia are include in Moscow, Krasnodar Region, and the Saratov Region in the Russian Federation, Los Angeles, Boston, and New York in the United States, and Buenos Aires and Cordoba in Argentina, and Beirut in Lebanon.

The significance of this research is to show that there are many communities of the Armenian diaspora and a lack of really substantial, significant data on these people. The data which out there is a mix of estimates and official data. The best collection of this information in on Wikipedia's web page "[Largest Armenian Diaspora Communities](#)", which has been compiled to have both the official data from countries which have provided it as well as estimates. Of course, the most challenging aspect of trying to utilize this data is that every community/country data is measured using different methods, and the webpage has 67 different communities listed. Quite honestly, it is a challenge to even confirm whether or not the information listed is accurate, as many of the links are no longer functioning, and from different periods of time. Ideally, it would be best to have historic, accurate data on a variety of countries from the same period of time using the best measure of ethnic demographic information that is standard. Thus, the goal of this research is to highlight what is out there and present a rough picture of the world based on the information which though problematic, appears to be best available. There is even a policy implication from the data visualization, which is that Armenia, particularly the High Commissioner's Office for Diaspora Affairs, could embark on a project which is to have more accurate data collection and understanding of a population which they hope to engage with.

To obtain the data on the Armenian diaspora, I was able to use the "read_html" to grab the data from the table on the Wikipedia page which lists the largest Armenian Diaspora Communities. I was then able to use various tidyverse tools to clean the data and create it into a final data set which I had saved as a CSV file for the final analysis. Additionally, I wanted to have Google Trends information about certain key terms that Armenian diaspora communities members typically search, such as "Armenian Genocide" and more recently "Duxov", which was a slogan used in the recent Velvet Revolution in Armenia. I was able to download this data as a CSV and then for the purpose of the data analysis, I created a dummy variable which had 1 or 0 if a country was listed in the top ten countries which searched either of those terms – excluding Armenia and its neighboring country Azerbaijan, which I chose to have not count as countries with diasporas. Additionally, I used information of whether or not a country had an Armenian embassy by using data from the embassy pages website :https://www.embassypages.com/armenia . Unfortunately, the data from this website was difficult to obtain through a web scraping format in R, so I manually coded in the 26 country observations of whether or not there was an embassy using a 1 for the country has an embassy and 0 if the country does not. Additionally, I used coded whether or not a country was a post-Soviet Republic, using a 1 if belonged to the Soviet Union or a 0 if it did not.

For my analysis, I show to primary visualizations. The first just displays a correlation between the number of communities in a country and the number of diasporans. Quite obviously, there is a positive correlation, but a big issue here is reverse causality, as we can't quite be sure there is truly the number of communities causing more population or more population causing there to be more communities forming. Nevertheless, it is somewhat helpful to see that there is trend. That graphic is Figure 1.

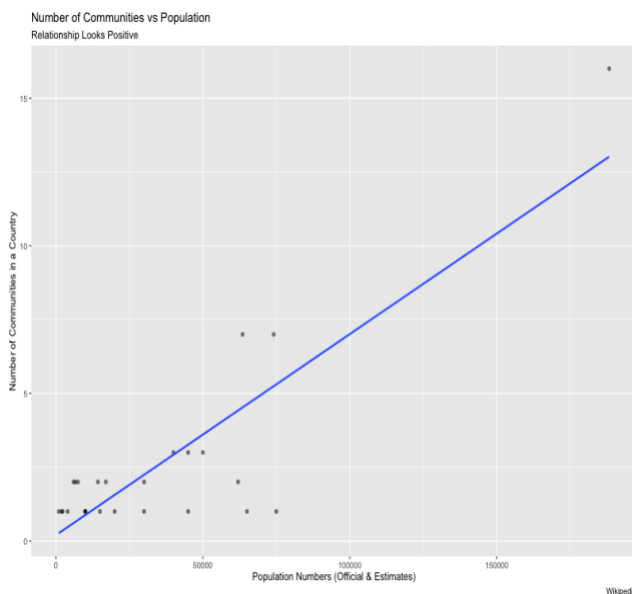Figure 1. Positive Correlation of Community & Population

Table 1. Multivariate Regression of Population on various regressors

	Dependent variable:
	Population
Top 10 Genocide Search	4,745.5
	(15,336.5)
Top 10 Duxov Search	7,710.3
	(15,207.7)
Number of Communities	6,943.5**
	(3,097.9)
Has an Armenian Embassy	2,993.1
	(11,879.8)
Post Soviet Country	-7,051.2
	(11,449.1)
Constant	10,164.7
	(10,062.9)
Observations	25
R^2	0.4
Adjusted R^2	0.2
Residual Std. Error	22,472.9 (df = 19)
F Statistic	2.1 (df = 5; 19)
Note:	$^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Additionally, I had the a multivariate linear regression included in my project and the results of that regression are in Table 1. The model I have above is a multivariate linear regression, where $Y = a + Bx$, where Y is my dependent variable for population and I have intercept 'a' with multiple 'B' coefficients for multiple x variables. I am interpreting my regression using the Frequentist perspective, and the coefficients for each variable state that for a 1 unit increase in x, we expect to a change in y for whatever coefficient we see. My x regressor variables are as follows: 'Top Ten Genocide Search' and 'Top Ten Duxov Search' mean that a country was a part of

the top 10 countries which searched the term Armenian Genocide or Duxov. I included these variables because I thought it would be an interesting measure of community strength and presence and used Google Trends to categorize both as binary variables a 1 being if a country in the top 10 list and 0 if it was not. The 'Number of Communities' is the number of communities there is in country and is a continuous variable. The 'Has an Armenian Embassy' variable is if the country has an Armenian Embassy in it and is a binary variable for 1 if there is an embassy and 0 if there is no embassy. The final variable is the 'Post Soviet', which is an indicator variable that shows a 1 if the country was formerly a member of the Soviet Union, and 0 if the country was not. The intercept is the baseline population of Armenian communities in my dataset.

My data and model is problematic, to say the least. I only have 26 observations and I have used population estimates and official number from Wikipedia, which have been compiled from sources which are outdated. Nonetheless, I can try to interpret what these numbers mean. We can see that none of the coefficients have any statistical significance except for population, which is positive, something that is pretty obvious. Basically, this regression, from a Frequentist perspective, is saying for an additional community in a country, we see an associated increase in Armenian diaspora population of 6,9434 people. I have tried to account for the fact that Russia is a huge outlier by removing it from the dataset, which at least helps the data be not as biased. As we can see with the R^2 and the Adjusted R^2, my model does a poor job of explaining population.

As I have mentioned there are significant limitations to my research. My input, which is quite honestly unreliable data, has given me an unreliable output. But I think that the idea of what I have tried to do with what is out there is still significant in that is can spark action in how many Armenian communities and people really exist out there and how both the Republic of Armenia and the diaspora can begin to work to understand one another. To me, first understanding even just the basic questions "How many Armenians are there in the world?", "Where are these Armenian communities located?", and "What influences the number of people in the communities in these countries?" is a great starting point for policy makers. Perhaps future studies can use this sort of as a foundation for what is out there and what is possible. My guess is that scholars, policymakers, and skilled statisticians as well as census experts can work together to create the data which would be necessary to do some rigorous analysis on the diaspora communities all over the world.

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