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The Role of History Education in the Construction of Armenian Identity

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

"Stories chosen or invented about the national past are invariably prescriptive —

instructing people how to think and act as national subjects and how to view relations with

outsiders"

Hein and Selden

BACKGROUND

Public schools are one of the most important institutions that contribute to the construction of national identity. Textbooks and school activities being as the main tools of education serve as a channel of teaching language, history and culture of a nation and influence pupils' perceptions at an early age. Among diversity of subjects taught at school the role of history education in the construction of national identity is emphasized by many scholars. The way pupils perceive their history is the basis of how they perceive themselves as a nation and how will act as national subjects in the future. History textbooks, history associated readings and teaching methods used by the teachers while delivering history shape collective perceptions of national history, historical events and figures and influence pupils perceptions of national identity as a whole.

Since the Independence of the Republic of Armenia educational system has been totally changed focusing on more Armenian studies that include Armenian language, literature and national history. Construction of Soviet identity through public education has been gradually replaced by a construction of Armenian identity. Since then the main responsibility of history

education in public schools has been to make pupils aware of their historical past, heroes, important historical events which, in turn, has been gradually converted into collective memory and collective identity.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The role of history education in shaping perceptions of collective identity is significant enough in Armenia. This research aims to show how history education influences the construction of national identity. Particularly, the focus of this study is on history textbooks intended for use in Armenian secondary schools as well as on the method used by the teachers while teaching history. On the one hand, it is important to find out how religious and national dimensions are presented in history textbooks and how the perceptions of historical events and figures are converted into collective Armenian identity. On the other hand, methods used by teachers while delivering history-related content may, to different extent, influence pupils' perceptions of historical past and Armenian identity as a whole.

The study is unique since the existing literature in this field mainly covers the dimensions of Armenian identity or Armenian historical memory as a whole without paying much attention to where those dimensions are being taught first and how those dimensions are delivered in Armenian public schools particularly during history classes.

HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

The hypotheses of the following research are based on the prior research done on several other countries. Particularly they try to measure to what extent the depiction of historical events and figures influences pupils' perception of Armenia identity and to what extent teaching methods used by the teachers in secondary schools of Armenian influence pupils' perceptions of

Armenian history, historical events and figures. More specifically the research questions and hypotheses of this study are the following:

RQ$_1$: Does the depiction of events and historical figures in history textbooks influence pupils' perception of Armenian Identity?

RQ$_2$: Does the delivery method used by the teachers influence pupils' perception of Armenian historical past.

Thus, the following hypotheses try to answer the research questions:

H$_1$: The depiction of events and historical figures in history textbooks influences pupils' perception of Armenian Identity.

H$_2$: The delivery method used by the teachers influences pupils' perception of Armenian historical past.

CHAPTER TWO- LITERATURE REVIEW

NATIONAL IDENTITY

National identity is a category of collective identity through which people define themselves physically, intellectually, historically and culturally as a separate group in the world (Kymlicka, Yosef, and Margalit 1995; Wan and Vanderwerf 2010; Joireman 2003; Barca et al. 2015; Smith 1991) The issue of national identity has been widely discussed among scholarship especially after the rise of globalization when previously protected 'boundaries' of identity became fragile and controversial. Several authors have come up with different definitions of national identity. Morris's (1995, 14) definition suggests that "national identity is an individual sense of belonging to a collectivity that calls itself a nation". Sandra Joireman (2003.17) argues that 'national identity is the politicized way of ethnic identity' that, besides common cultural and social values, has a common political ideology as well.

Several scholars consider that national identity has a constructive nature. Constructivist approach assumes that identity is a socially constructed phenomenon, and it is subject to changes depending on historical, social, cultural and political context (İnaç 2013; Derrida 1978; Martin 1995; Torbakov 2011; Hopf 1998). Identity construction internalizes the main values of a nation and contradicts the values of other identities (Martin 1995). Any national identity has the 'other' of a 'self' and definition of national identity is achieved by contradicting the other (Derrida 1978; Martin 1995). Consequently, identity construction has subjective and objective components. Objectivity assumes a language, religion, lifestyle, all the values, traditions and myths of a nation, while subjectivity arises when all these aspects are being interpreted based on different socio-political realities (Edensor 1997; Smith 1990 cited in İnaç 2013).

ARMENIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Since the declaration of Independence in 1991, the newly established Republic of Armenia has faced the issue of redefining Armenian identity. The sense of Soviet identity should have been replaced by the sense of Armenian identity informed by Armenian history, language, traditions and values (Palandjian 2012; Terzian 2010). The significance of the development and preservation of Armenian identity is highlighted by the National Security Strategy of Armenia (2007) which defines national identity as the composition of Armenian language, literature, history and culture that aim to ensure the continuity of Armenian spiritual heritage. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of education in fostering national identity. "The education of national morals and tenets of patriotism should start at home and continue through all the levels of formal education" (National Security Strategy of the RA, 2007, 5).

According to Rutland (1994) the historical memory of Armenian identity is comprised of the sense of shared literary and cultural traditions coming from different centuries, the role of Armenian Church during different periods of time and the Armenian Genocide of 1915 followed by the sense of lost historical lands. In this regard, Palandjian (2012) also emphasizes the importance of Mount Ararat as a part of Armenian identity which is currently located in the territory of Turkey. According to her it is not only a religious symbol for Armenians but also the symbol of grater Armenia.

Panossian (2002) defines Armenian identity through three dimensions. Although he assumes the role of Independence and Karabakh War important in current identity construction, he is more prone to go back to historical events rather than events taken place in the recent decades. He highlights the significance of the representation of Armenians (1) as a pre-

Christian nation, (2) a nation that first converted into Christianity and (3) a nation that survived the Armenian Genocide.

HISTORY EDUCATION AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

It is widely discussed among scholarship that history consciousness of a nation is formed by the interpretation of past events (Akinoglu 2005; Barca et al. 2015; Kaplan 2006; Panossian 2002). National ideologies and values are established during the construction of historical consciousness, and they influence the interpretation of collective memory (Barca et al. 2015; Hein and Selden 2000; Wood 2015; Harnett 2003). Consequently, historical narratives shape collective identities (Soltan Zadeh 2012; Panossian 2002).

The main goal of history education officially stated in history teaching curriculum in different societies is to instill in pupils a sense of belonging, patriotism, and love towards their country (Soltan Zadeh 2012). National History education predominates over World History almost in all the schools of the world (Low-Beer 2003). Wood (2015), Kaplna (2006), Low-Beer (2003) and Stolan Zadeh (2012) argue that history teaching curriculum has political ramifications which pursue a number of purposes such as shaping pupils' perception of their nationality and citizenship. It has the power to create a sense of belonging to a particular group and contributes to nation-building. It also affects pupils' behaviors and perceptions about the nation they belong to and aims to convert them into responsible citizens of a state (Barca et al. 2015; Soltan Zadeh 2012; Kaplan 2006; Mirfakhraie 2008).

Based on the above-mentioned argument, the knowledge included in history textbooks is not restricted to mere providing information. It includes ideological connotations while representing the heroic past and it is used to justify the present order to the coming generations.

It is also devised to pave a way for the desired future (Podeh 2000; Barca et al. 2015; Soltan Zadeh 2012; Nicholls 2003; Hofman 2007; Akinoglu 2005). Hofman (2007) considers that the inclusion or exclusion of certain events and heroes is subjectivity itself, and the restricted pages of textbooks cannot cover all the important and less important historical events. No history textbook exists that presents the absolute reality. However, "there exists a continuum between subjective and objective discourses" (Hofman 2007, 18), and one cannot absolutely achieve either of them. Texts can solely try to approach to the reality (Soltan Zadeh 2012).

THE CONTENT OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

The selection of historical narratives to include in textbooks is of dual importance. It not only educates a whole generation but also serves as a tool to integrate culturally or ethnically different subjects of society, such as national minorities (Soltan Zadeh 2012; Mirfakhraie 2008). Soltan Zadeh (2012) argues that the emphasis of Iranian textbooks is on their Muslim identity given the fact that 97-98% of the Iranian population is Muslim whereas only 58-60% is of Persian origin. Thus, the emphasis of Persian identity would hinder the integration process of minorities into Iranian society.

Many scholars mention not only the importance of the selection of events in constructing national identity but also the selection of words while narrating the event or describing heroes. Ethnocentrism, a sense of superior nation, glorification, use of mythical, heroic adjectives and descriptive phrases dominate the text (Akinoglu 2005; Herkül Millas 2008; Hercules Millas 1991; Soltan Zadeh 2012; Mirfakhraie 2008). More importantly, the narration of national history covers the negative impact or failures of the heroes ascribing the latter to external, inevitable factors (Soltan Zadeh 2012; Hercules Millas 1991; Hofman 2007). The textbooks mainly fail to represent the negative sides or harmful impacts of their nation on the external world. For

example, Israeli history textbooks of the first generation written between 1948-1967 state that Israel had no fault in creating refugee crisis after 1948 war. They shifted the blame on the shoulders of Arab leaders. They also referred to refugees as Arabs but not Palestinians and the number of refugees presented in the textbook was less than that of provided by the UN (Podeh 2000).

The contradictory character of historical events can be identified by comparing history textbooks of two conflicting states. Some authors refer to the content of history textbooks in different countries arguing that some events may totally oppose each other or be described differently in terms of their importance and role in the existing ideology of both countries (Barca et al. 2015; Hein and Selden 2000; Soltan Zadeh 2012). Hercules Millas states that the main difference between Greek and Turkish history textbooks is that the image of Turks in Greek textbooks is dominated in the narratives given their long history under the Ottoman Rule, whereas Turkish history textbooks provide limited references to Greeks (Hercules Millas 1991; 2008). More interestingly, both Turkish and Greek textbooks describe the actions of one another as ´ barbaric'. In Turkish history textbooks Greeks are described as 'aggressors', 'cruel', 'pitiless' and in Greek textbooks Turks are described as 'satanic', disgusting', 'pitiless' etc. (Hercules Millas 1991).

HISTORY TEACHING METHODS

The methods used to teach history also have an influence on the construction of pupils' perceptions. Low-Beer (2003) singles out the importance of nationalistic or subjective way of teaching which may have the same or even more impact on pupils' self-perception and interpretation of historical events. Pupil's reaction and teacher's ideological background are interconnected. Particularly, a nationalistic way of teaching includes exaggerations and mythical

interpretations of the heroic past and xenophobic description and prejudices concerning the "others" (Low-Beer 2003; Soltan Zadeh 2012).

According to Apple (1993) pupil's perception and interpretation of knowledge obtained in a classroom through both textbooks and other activities is divided into three categories. In the first category, they may obtain the subject matter as an ultimate truth. In the second category, they may gain the knowledge but be open to discussion and critical analysis. Finally, the third category of pupils may totally oppose to the content of the textbook and interpretation of the events.

CHAPTER THREE- METHODOLOGY

This research is a multi-site case study which aims to show the role of history education in the construction of national consciousness and identity in Armenia. The methodology used in this research is qualitative. The collected and analyzed data include content analysis of history textbooks intended for use in the secondary schools of Armenia, direct observations in six secondary schools, open-ended questionnaire filled in by 9th grade pupils and interviews with history teachers. All the analyzed data helped to test and answer the hypotheses of this research.

Content analysis of history textbooks helped to reveal the thematic emphasis of history textbooks. It also helped to examine the language and methods used while depicting various historical events and historical figures that influence pupils' perception of the level of significance of the event or figure.

Direct observations of history classes intended to reveal the overall method of history education, particularly focusing on the composition of the classes whether they were textbook-based and textbook-dominant or not, whether additional materials were used during history classes or not, etc. Direct observations were followed by handing in open-ended questionnaire to pupils to reveal their perceptions, attitudes and feelings towards Armenian history, historical events and figures and Armenian nation as a whole. The reason that the questions were open-ended was not to restrict the pupils' answers to get more thorough understanding of their perceptions.

Finally, **interviews** were done with the teachers to find out their ideological background, perceptions of important historical events and figures as well as the emphasis of their preferred teaching method.

Sampling strategy for history textbooks is purposive since only history textbooks used in secondary (6th to 9th grades) schools of Armenia were analyzed. The selected four books represent Armenian history from ancient times to newly independent state of Armenia which gives the pupils an opportunity to shape a comprehensive perception of Armenian historical past. The reason that the study does not cover history textbooks used in high schools (10th-12th grades) is that the information included in these textbooks differs from department to department. Therefore, the results of selected history textbooks are more generalizable since they are universally used in all the secondary schools of Armenia.

Case studies were conducted in six secondary schools of Armenia. The sampling strategy for schools is convenience while sampling strategy for cities is purposive. The selected schools for observations were located in six Armenian cities each. Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor were selected as the three largest cities of Armenia by population. The other three cities such as Ijevan Gavar and Kapan were selected as being the three largest cities of Armenia from marzes bordering Azerbaijan. Such sampling strategy for cities is conditioned by the fact that the study assumes there might be some differences in education methods and pupils' perceptions regarding the ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Direct observations followed by filling in the questionnaires were done with the 9th grade pupils. Two history classes were observed in each school (overall 12 history classes). The sampling strategy for pupils is also purposive, since during the time of the research they were

about to finish secondary school, therefore studying Armenian history as well and could provide more diverse answers than 6th or 7th grade pupils could do. The number of the respondents was 220.

Interviews were done with six teachers from the selected schools and selected grades to see whether there is any relationship between pupils' responses and teachers' perceptions, and teaching methods.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation of the study is related to time constraints. The direct observation could reveal much thorough information if conducted in a long period of time. Two classes in each school were short enough to notice outstanding differences in pupils' perceptions as a result of differing teaching methods.

Second limitation is related to the design of the study. As long as the results of the research are based on case studies they cannot be generalizable to the whole population of Armenia.

CHAPTER FOUR- DATA ANALYSIS

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

This section intends to present the results of content analysis of four history textbooks titled "Armenian History: Ancient and Old period, 2007" used in the 6th grade, "Armenian History: Middle Ages, 2008" used in the 7th grade, "Armenian History: New Period, 2007" used in the 8th grade and "Armenian History: Modern Period, 2008" used in the 9th grade. All the textbooks were published between 2007-2008 by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. First, content analysis helped to reveal the thematic composition of the textbooks. After that the most important historical figures and events were chosen based on certain criteria which will be discussed during the analysis.

The descriptive results driven from the content analysis of four history textbooks reveal that the dominant themes included in four textbooks are the ones represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Dominant Themes depicted in four history textbooks	
Themes	Number of pages devoted (total pages=680)
Liberation Movements/Wars	193
Armenian Kingdoms	137
Republican History of Armenia	94
Armenian Culture	92

The total number of the pages of four history textbooks is 750 where 680 pages are devoted to historical themes depicted in the textbooks while 70 pages were used for other purposes (content, introduction, summary of the book, etc.) The dominant theme of history textbooks is Liberation Movements that comprise 193 pages of all the examined textbooks. Armenian Kingdoms are depicted within 137 pages. Republican History of Armenia and Armenian Culture comprise 94 and 92 pages of the textbooks respectively.   Thus, the

revealed four themes highlight the emphasis of the textbooks and history education in Armenia as a whole.

Content analysis of history textbooks intended to reveal not only the overall content and dominant themes of the textbooks but also to single out ten most important historical events and historical figures. This part is going to discuss the criteria used to define the most important events and figures.

Table 2. Criteria defining the importance of the event/figure
Frequency (number of pages)
Language used
Paragraph(s) describing historical importance
Frequency of end-of-the-lesson questions

Table 2 visualizes the criteria that were used to measure the importance of the events and historical figures. The first criterion is **frequency**. For historical events this component takes into consideration the number of pages devoted to the description of the event. The most important historical events were devoted at least ten pages of the textbook and more. Moreover, the importance of the events is also measured through considering how many times the event was given reference to within other topics of discussion outside the main pages given to it. The results showed that some historical events are referred to throughout the whole Armenian history emphasizing their historical importance of either preserving Armenian nation or being turning points in Armenian History.

In terms of historical figures frequency is measured not through calculating the pages devoted to the historical figure but through calculating how many times the name of the historical figure appears throughout the textbooks. Like in case of historical events, historical figures are also mentioned within other topics which emphases their importance.

The second criterion pays attention to the **usage of language** while describing the historical event or the figure. More specifically, this research differentiates between two types of languages used for the description. The first one is an ordinary language which describes the event without using any specific words, phrases or sentences to emphasis the importance of the events. Such events are mainly described to keep the chronological order in history. The second type includes usage of specific adjectives, phrases or sentences to highlight the importance of the historical event within the title devoted to the event and in other chapters and texts as well. In terms of historical figures the focus was both on the depiction of historical figures as personalities and on the role they had during a specific period.

Third criterion is related to the **historical importance** of the event. The most important historical events depicted in the textbooks are devoted either separate sub-title of "historical importance of the event" or at the end of the lesson at least one paragraph is devoted to explaining the historical impact the event had. This criterion is used only for defining the importance of historical events, since no historical figure is given a separate paragraph or sub-titled text to highlight his/her importance. Their impact is depicted in parallel with the event.

Finally, **end-of-the-lesson questions** are taken into consideration to see how much the textbook intends to focus pupils' attention on the particular event more than on the others. In this regard, mainly the frequency and type of questioning is taken into consideration. Most important historical events and figures are questioned at least with 10 up to 20 and more questions. More importantly, the importance of the event/figure was decided based on the type of the questioning. In contrast with the majority of the questions that try to focus pupils attention mainly on information, the questions of the most important events and figures decided in the framework of this research ask pupils to assess the importance of the event/figure, how they would behave if

they were instead of the mentioned historical figure, whether they would like to resemble the historical figure or not, what characteristic traits of historical figures pupils liked more, etc.

TEN MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS AND FIGURES DEPICTED IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

This section intends to discuss ten most important historical events depicted in Armenian history textbooks. The selection of the events is based on the criteria presented in the previous section.

Although the selected historical events are the most important ones they are not equal in terms of their role and importance in relation to each other. Thus, they are given intensity to be more specified.

Table 3 Defining intensity of the selected historical events	
Intensity	**Definition**
1	Was a turning point in Armenian History
2	Unified Armenian People
3	Contributed to the development of Armenia/Armenian Nation
4	Was vital for preserving Armenian identity
5	Was an issue/important of/for Armenian existence

The intensity is measured through a scale from one to five represented in Table 3 with the definitions of each score.

The intensity of historical figures is measured with the role they had in Armenian history defined in Table 4. The definition of the scores coincides with the one for historical events with slightly changed wording.

Table 4

Defining intensity of selected historical figures

Intensity	Definition
1	Made a turning point in Armenian history
2	Unified Armenian People for a common goal
3	Contributed to the development of Armenia/Armenian nation
4	Contributed to the preservation of Armenian identity
5	Struggled for the existence of Armenia/ Armenian people

Table 5 represents ten most important historical events and figures depicted in Armenian history textbooks. The events are represented in chronological order. Parallel discussion of historical events and figures is intentional since some of the historical figures have immediate role in the selected events and parallel discussion will ease the process of interpretation.

Table 5

Ten important events and figures in Armenian history

Most important historical events		Most important historical figures	
Name of the event	Intensity	Name of the figure	Intensity
Adoption of Christianity	4.5	Argishti A	3.3
Creation of Armenian Alphabet	4.4	Artashes A	3.1
Battle of Avarayr	4.8	Tigran the Great	4.9
Syunik liberation movements	4.7	Trdat the Great	3.1
Haydukian movement	4.6	Arshak B	3.5
Armenian Genocide	4.9	King Pap	3.8
May liberation wars	4.6	Mesrop Mashtots	4.3
First Republic of Armenia	3.8	Vardan Mamikonyan	4.8
Third Republic of Armenia	3.9	Fidayis	4.7
Artsakh War	4.8	Davit Bek	4.3

Events related to Armenian Religion and Language. As being the first Christian nation, the role of Christianity is emphasized not only within the Chapter devoted to the **adoption of Christianity** (4.5) but also throughout the other remaining three textbooks.

Armenian Church is depicted as having unforgettable role in preserving Armenian identity and in unifying people for liberation movements.

Concurrently, one of the most important historical figures associated with the adoption of Christianity is considered to be **Trdat the Great**. The intensity given to the king is 3.1 since the textbook refers to his efforts of declaring Christianity as a state religion to be a great contribution to the development and flourishing of Armenian religion and culture.

Outside the main chapter devoted to the adoption of Christianity, the role of Armenian Church is referred to during all the important turning points in Armenian history. For instance, after the declaration of Independence Armenian Church is depicted as having immediate role in the creation of Democratic Republic (1991) and in the promotion of state-building process.

Another religious event is **the Battle of Avarayr** which is depicted in the textbook as a straggle of Armenian existence prioritizing the role of Christianity in the preservation of

> *"..Armenians realized that conversion politics imposed by Persia pursued further goals of depriving Armenians from their unique culture and religion and understood the importance of preventing it… No one can deprive us of this religion (Christianity) neither angels nor people, neither a sword nor any fire…"*
>
> Armenian History: Middle Ages, 2008, 37

Armenian identity (4.8). It is considered one of the heroic pages of Armenian history symbolizing patriotism and setting the start of liberation movements.

Consequently, **Vardan Mamikonyan** (4.8), who was the leader of the Battle of Avaray, is depicted as one of the most important historical figures characterized as selfless, devoted, brave and rebellious patriot ready to die for the preservation of his nation and homeland.

The Creation of Armenian Alphabet (4.4) by **Mesrop Mashtots** (4.3) in 405 AD is depicted as a significant historical event that had a great role in preserving Armenian cultural and religious independence. It has also become a source of passing Armenian cultural, literal and historical heritage to future generations.

"The creation of Armenian Alphabet served as a powerful weapon in preserving Armenian identity and cultural independence. It guaranteed the eternity of Armenian nation throughout all the hardships Armenia faced during different centuries".

Armenian History: Middle Ages, 2008, 51

Events related to liberation movements. Haydukian Movement (4.6) started in Western Armenia and was a liberation movement directed to all kinds of dictators in Western Armenia. In the textbook the chapter devoted to Haydukian Movement includes the formation of the movement, biography of Fidayis that had great impact on the formation and flourishing of the movement, Sasun and Zeitun insurgencies. Consequently, the depiction of Armenian **Fidayis** (4.7) (Arabo, Aghbyur Serob, Andranik, etc.) comprises considerable space to show the spirit of brave patriot Armenians who inspired and unified Armenian people to fight for freedom and gave rise to Haydukian Movement.

In the framework of this research **Syunik Liberation Movements** (4.7) include Halidzor and Meghri Self-defenses and Liberation of Zangezur. Victories of Halidzor and Meghri are

depicted as one of the outstanding victories against Ottoman Troops. More emphasis is put on liberation of Zangezur since it was a struggle of existence and decisive for the current territory of the Republic of Armenia. One of the outstanding historical figures related to Syunik Liberation Movements is **Davit Bek** (4.3) who is described as great patriot struggling for the protection of his homeland.

May liberation wars (4.6) are depicted with great heroic and patriotic spirit. They emphasize the fact that Armenians' physical extinction was threatened and they were struggles of existence. Textbook labels May Liberation Wars as "the Battle of Avarayr of Modern Armenia" (Armenian History: New Period, 182).

The textbook depicts the outbreak of **Artsakh movement/war** (4.8) as being conditioned by the threat of extinction that Artsakh Armenians living in Azerbaijan faced. It is also referred to as a catalyst in the decisiveness to restore Armenians' century-long desired Independent statehood.

> *…the victory of May liberation wars was the result of Armenian national unity and collective strength… May liberation wars set the basis of Armenian Independence.*
> Armenian History: New Period, 184

Events related to Republican History of Armenia. The creation of the **First Republic of Armenia** is depicted as setting the start of the Modern History of Armenia. The importance of the First Republic is emphasized by describing it as a centuries-long desire and dream of having independent statehood and the declaration of the First Republic was the result of all the heroic struggles during liberation movements for finally gaining Independence. However, this event is not discussed as an issue of Armenian existence, thus intensity of this event is 3.9.

The **Third Republic of Armenia** (4.3) formed in 1991 is the most recent event in Armenian History which again is described as a final point of Armenian dream of getting independent statehood which now Armenians carry on enjoying. Alongside with other factors that were important for the preservation of independence, creation and development of Armenian Army was one of the prerequisites to secure Armenia's independence.

Armenian Genocide

Alongside will all nine events that were mainly depicting as either Armenian heroic past or great turning points in Armenian History, one of the most tragic events is also included as being the most important one. Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire in 1915 is depicted as one of the most painful pages of Armenian History. The description of Ottoman violence and their final goal of extinction of Armenian nation make the event be an issue of existence for which Armenian Genocide of 1915 has the highest intensity (4.9) in the framework of this research.

Armenian Kings

Armenian kings are the only historical figures that are devoted separate sections and are depicted as personalities rather than associated with specific events. Most of the Kings in Table 9 are given intensity of three to four since most of them are depicted as great reformers and patriots who were able to unify people and promote development. Only Tigran the Great is given the highest intensity (4.9), since he is depicted as an unprecedented King that Armenia has ever had.

SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey intend to show pupils' perception of Armenian heroes and historical events, to understand what are the most influential events and names in Armenian history by their perception and how the latter ones help to construct a perception of national identity among pupils. The survey was conducted among 220 pupils in six secondary schools. All the mentioned historical events and heroes were from history textbooks.

Figure 1 represents the results of the most frequently mentioned historical events by the pupils of all the six schools. It should be mentioned that pupils mentioned overall 26 events all of them being represented in one of the four history textbooks intended for use in secondary schools of Armenia. The study chose to represent ten events out of 26 as being the most frequently mentioned ones. The events that were mentioned by pupils less than five times are included in the label "various" which comprises 7.5% of the responses

Figure 1. Pupils' perception of the most important historical events
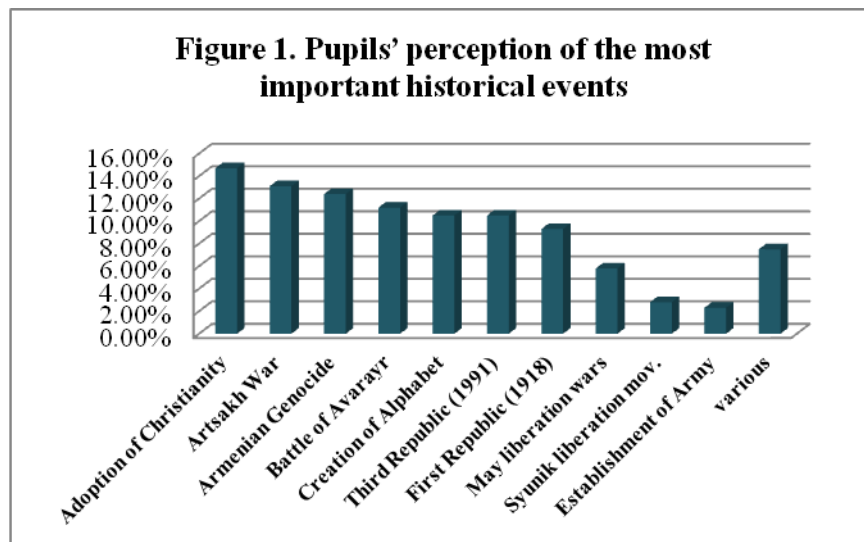
Consequently, the most frequent event mentioned by the pupils is the adoption of Christianity as a state religion in 301 AD (63 pupils or 14.7%). The second most frequent event that pupils consider to be one of the influential ones in Armenian history is Artsakh War (56 pupils or 13.1%). The commitment of Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the Battle of Avarayr are mentioned by 53 pupils (12.4%) and 48 pupils (11.2%) respectively as important events. The Creation of Armenian Alphabet and the creation of the Third Republic of Armenia (1991) are

equally mentioned by 45 pupils (10%). Finally, the creation of the First Republic of Armenia in 1918, May Liberation Wars of 1918, Syunik Liberation Movements and the creation of Armenian Army are mentioned by 40 (9.3%), 25 (5.8%), 12 (2.8%) and 10 (2.3%) pupils respectively as being one of the most influential events in Armenian History.

Figure 2. Pupils' perception of the most important historical figures
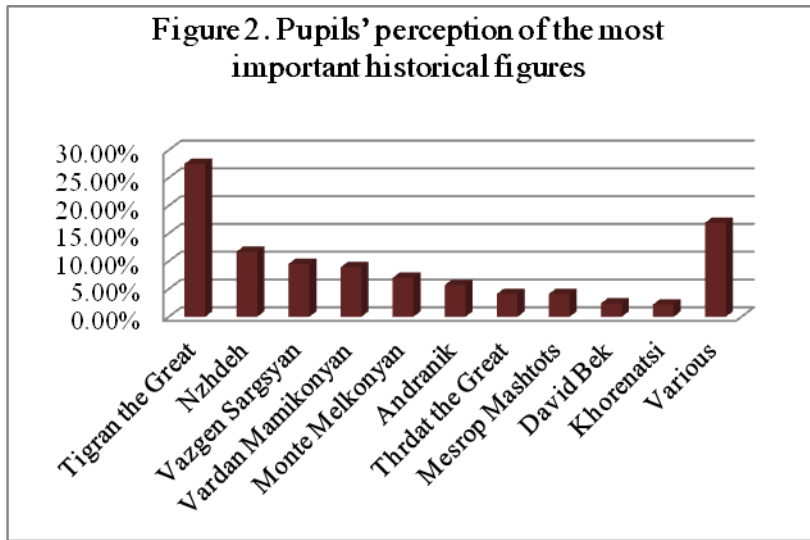
Figure 2 shows the most frequently mentioned historical names. Overall 35 historical figures were mentioned by the pupils. The names that were mentioned less than five times fall into the category named "various" which comprises 16.9% of the responses. It is obvious that Tigran the Great is the most frequently mentioned name by the pupils (23.5%). Nzhdeh, Vazgen Sargsyan, Vardan Mamikonyan and Monte Melkonyan were mentioned by 68 (11.7%), 55 (9.5%), 52 (8.9) and 41 (7%) respondents respectively. The impact that Andranik Ozanyan had on Armenian history is mentioned by 5.6% of the respondents while Trdat the Great and Mesrop

Figure 3. Pupils' ideals
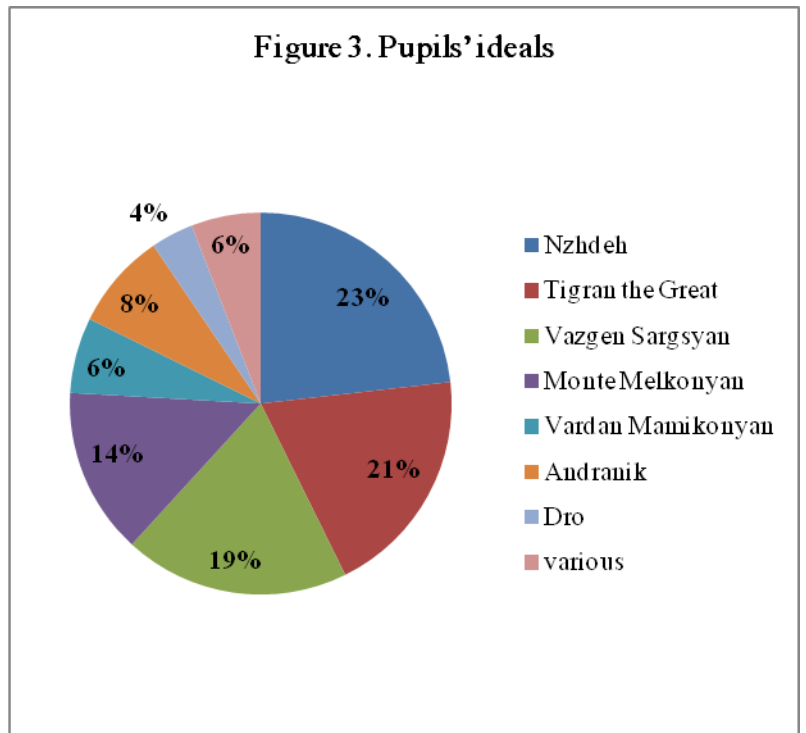
Mashtots are mentioned by equal number of pupils (4.4% each). Finally, David Bek and Movses Khorentsi are the least mentioned ones by the pupils (2.4%, 2.2% respectively).

Survey results also helped to find out that most of the respondents have historical ideals they would like to resemble to. Figure 3 shows pupils' perception of historical fugues that became ideals for them.

Figure 4. Common characteristic that each Armenian should have
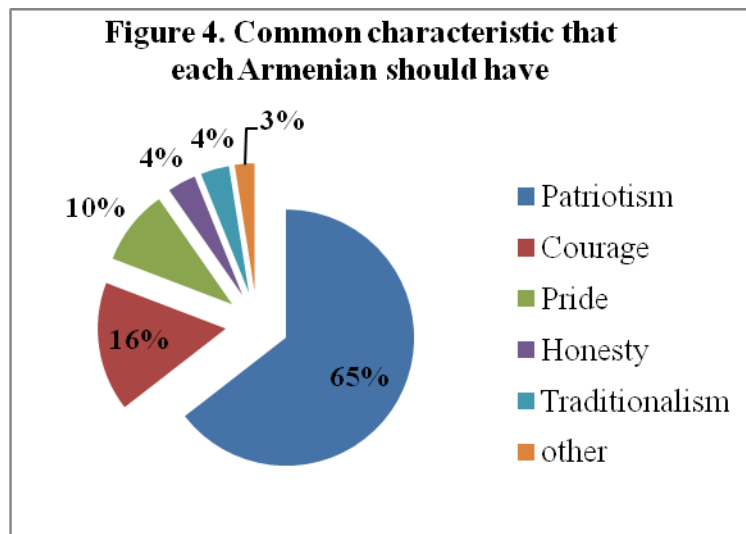
Although the name of Tigran the Great occupied the majority of the responses in the previous graph, as an ideal Geregin Nzhdeh is the most frequently mentioned one by the pupils (23.18%). Tigran the Great (19.55%) and Vazgen Sargsyan (19.09%) are mentioned by almost equal number of respondents. Monte Melkonyan, Andranik and Vardan Mamikonyan are considered to be ideals for 14.9%, 8.18% and 6.36% respondents respectively. The least frequently-mentioned name by pupils is Drastamat Kanayan Dro (3.64%). The category "various", which overall comprises 5.91%, includes names of the heroes that were mentioned less than five times. As we can notice, most of the responses coincided with the responses of the Figure 2.

Another descriptive statistics is used to illustrate pupils' perception of common characteristic features of Armenian people. Figure 4 illustrates the most frequent answers by the pupils. The most common characteristic for being Armenian perceived by the 9th-grade pupils is

patriotism (64.5%). More interestingly, most of the pupils provided the definition of their perceived patriotism such as love towards homeland, devotion to homeland, ready to fight and defend the homeland, etc. The second most frequent characteristic mentioned is courage (16.3%). Other four common characteristics possess relatively low ranks. Pride is mentioned by 9.7% of the pupils. Traditionalism and honesty are mentioned by equal number of pupils (3.7% each). The category "other" comprises 2.5% of the responses that covers characteristics mentioned only once or twice.

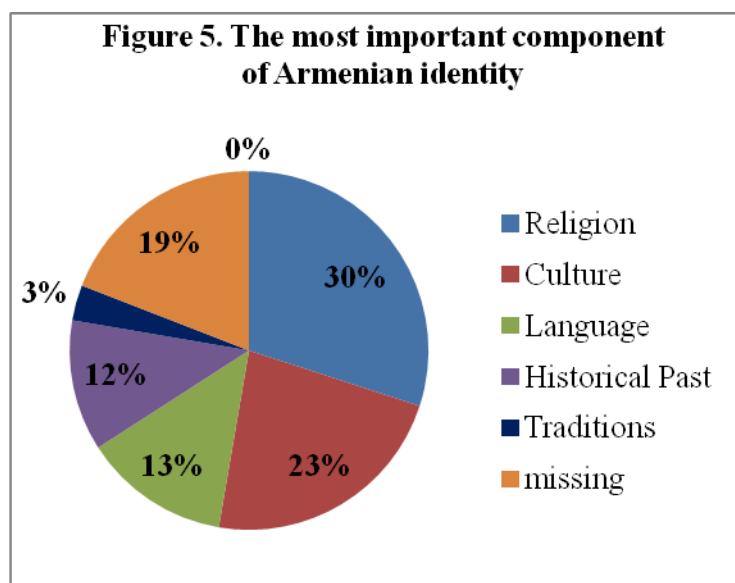**Figure 5. The most important component of Armenian identity**

Figure 5 illustrates the most important component of Armenian identity based on the perception of 9th-grade pupils. The number of valid responses to this question is relatively low compared to other ones (N=178 with 42 missing answers).

Thus, 37.1% of the respondents answered that the most important component of Armenian identity is Christianity which is followed by Armenian culture prioritized by 28.1% of the respondents. Language and historical past are mentioned by 16.3% and 14.6% respectively. Finally, 3.9% of the respondents consider traditions to be the most important component of Armenian identity.

The study revealed that a relationship exists between pupils' perception of the most important historical events and the most important component of Armenian Identity. Table 6 illustrates that 41 out of 66 who consider that religion is the most important component of Armenian identity also mentioned one of the religious events to be the most important one in

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Armenian history. Similarly, 15 pupils out of 29 who consider language as the most important component of Armenian identity mentioned Creation of Armenian Alphabet as the most important historical event. Finally, those who highlight the importance of history in Armenian identity mentioned Armenian Genocide to be the most important historical event in Armenian history (18 out of 26).

Table 6. Relationship between pupils' perception of the most important historical events and the most important component of Armenian Identity						
	Religion	Language	Culture	History	Traditions	Total
Religious events	41	5	18	0	4	68
Creation of Alphabet	4	15	2	0	0	21
Republican period	4	0	11	2	2	19
Liberation Wars	5	6	9	2	1	23
Armenian Genocide	7	2	0	18	0	27
Various	5	1	10	4	0	20
Total	66	29	50	26	7	178

DIRECT OBSERVATIONS OF HISTORY CLASSES

Direct observations were done in six secondary schools of Armenia each located in one of the cities of Vanadzor, Ijevan, Gavar, Kapan, Gyumri and Yerevan. The components that were examined during direct observations are presented in Table 7. The mean of each component is measured by taking into consideration the frequency of each component during the class. The scoring of the components is done through a scale from one to five were one means the

component did not appear during the whole class at all and five means the component appeared during the class the most.

The results of the direct observations reveal that the role of textbook is dominant during history classes. Pupils are mostly encouraged to memorize the historical events and dates included in the textbook (4.3). Another important result driven from direct observations was teachers' attention to end-of-the-lesson questions. Particularly teachers' educating in the schools of Vanadzor, Ijevan and Gyumri highly encouraged to have the answers of end-of-the-lesson questions in a written form which gives more importance to the role of textbook during history classes. The fifth component in the Table 7 illustrates that none of 220 pupils articulated any information outside the textbook content. Finally, in all the schools teachers more or less provided additional information during the class.

Table 7. The results of direct observations							
	Vanadzor	Ijevan	Gavar	Kapan	Yerevan	Gyumri	Total
The class was mainly textbooks based	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.3
Pupils were encouraged to memorize the information from the textbook	4.6	4.3	4.3	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.1
Pupils were encouraged to perform analytical skills	2.8	3.5	3.3	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.6
Much attention was paid to end-of-the-lesson questions	4.5	4.3	3.8	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.2
Pupils provided additional information from other sources	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Teachers provided additional information from other sources	3.6	3.3	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.2	3.9

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Interviews are done with the teachers who were educating 9th grade pupils in the selected secondary schools at the time of the research. The main aim of the interviews was to find out teachers' perception of the current history textbooks used in the secondary schools of Armenia and to find out the methods used by them during history classes. The descriptors are singled out in a way that can help answer the second hypothesis of the research. The intensity of each descriptor was measured through a scale from one to five focusing on relational analysis. The scoring protocol is introduced in Table 8.

Table 8. Scoring protocol	
Score	Definition
1	Not mentioned at all
2	Mentioned few times with no importance
3	Mentioned a few times with slight importance
4	Mentioned quite often with considerable importance
5	Mentioned quite often with high importance

Interview results (see Table 9) revealed that all six teachers consider that the core activities of history classes are textbook-based (with intensity mean of 4.5) and they are guided by the topics represented in the textbook. Similarly, all the teachers consider that historical events are represented well enough in history textbooks (with intensity mean of 4.5). On the contrary, teachers consider that textbooks lack proper representation of historical figures (with intensity mean of 2.9) indicating that some historical figures worth being discussed more thoroughly, however the emphasis of the textbooks is more on the historical events rather than heroes who had a role in that historical event (intensity mean of 4.1).

Table 9. Interview Results							
Descriptor	Mean						
	Vanadzor	Ijevan	Gavar	Kapan	Yerevan	Gyumri	Total mean
History classes are mainly textbook based	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5
Good representation of historical events in the textbooks	4.4	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.3	4.5
Good representation of historical figures in the textbooks	3.1	3.4	2.9	3.2	2.1	3.1	2.9
The information of textbooks is enough for pupils to perceive Armenian history	4.6	4.3	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.1
Additional information is provided quite often during the classes	2.3	2.9	4.2	3.9	4.6	4.3	3.7
Textbook emphasis is on the event rather than on historical character taking part in the event	4.2	3.9	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.1
While explaining, additional information is provided about the historical figures that are not represented well in the textbook	2.7	2.9	**4.2**	**4.3**	**4.7**	**4.5**	3.8

Particularly, teachers from Gavar and Yerevan schools mentioned that better-represented historical figures in the textbooks are Armenian Kings who are glorified more as a personality rather than associated with a specific event. On the other hand, most of the heroes of liberation movements particularly those of the recent times are not represented properly in the textbook and the emphasis of the depiction is more on the events.

Four out of six teachers went on stating that they provide additional information about the historical figures that textbook pays less attention to, since pupils need to be aware of not only

the importance of the events but also the heroic deeds of those historical figures that had role in that particular event. However, the other two teachers from Vanadzor (4.6) and Ijevan (4.3) schools consider that information provided in the textbooks is enough for pupils to shape certain perception of Armenian history, concurrently during their speech they attached little importance to providing additional information about those historical figures that are referred to little enough in the textbooks.

Table 10 illustrates interview results concerning teachers' perception of important historical figures in Armenian history. The intensity mean is again measured through the scoring protocol of Table 8. Tigrant the Great is mentioned by five teachers out of six as being an important historical figure. Mesrop Mashtots is mentioned only by the teachers from Vanadzor (4.2) and Ijevan (4.5). All the other historical figures mentioned by the teachers are singled out as being badly-represented in the history textbooks. Teacher from Gavar School gave highest importance to Monte Melkonyan (4.7) than to Garegin Nzhdeh (4.6). Teachers educating in Kapan and Yerevan Schools attached highest importance to Nzhdeh (4.9 each) whereas teacher from Gyumri School prioritized the role of Tigran the Great (4.9) than Monte Melkonyan (3.9) in Armenian history.

Table 10. Interview results						
Important historical figures based on teachers' perception	Vanadzor School	Ijevan school	Gavar school	Kapan school	Yerevan school	Gyumri school
Tigran the Great	4.8	4.9	4.5	4.6	0.0	4.9
Mesrop Mashtots	4.2	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mkhirat Sparapet	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0
David Bek	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0
Monte Melkonyan	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	4.9	3.9
Dro	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	3.5
Nzhdeh	3.8	3.8	4.6	4.9	4.9	4.5
Vazgen Sargsyan	3.2	3.7	4.1	4.1	4.7	3.9

Consequently, Table 11 indicates relationship between teachers' perception of Garegin Nzhdeh, Vazgen Sargsyan and Monte Melkonyan as being influential historical figures and pupils' responses related to the same historical figures.

Table 11. Teachers perception of the mentioned historical figures* the percent of pupils who indicated the mentioned figures to be important						
	Garegin Nzhdeh		Vazgen Sargsyan		Monte Melkonyan	
	Teachers (mean)	Pupils (%)	Teachers (mean)	Pupils (%)	Teachers (mean)	Pupils (%)
Vanadzor School	3.8	9.3%	3.2	7%	0.0	0%
Ijevan School	3.8	6.6%	3.7	8.1%	0.0	2.9%
Gavar School	4.6	11.5%	**4.1**	**12.1%**	**4.7**	**15.3%**
Kapan School	**4.9**	**17.6%**	**4.1**	**12.5%**	0.0	3.1%
Gyumri School	4.5	11.6%	3.9	8.2%	3.9	4.7%
Yerevan School	**4.9**	**19.5%**	**4.7**	**16.7%**	**4.9**	**11.2%**

The results reveal that the mentioned historical figures appear to be most frequently-mentioned ones in those schools where teachers attached the highest importance to the same historical figure. Particularly Garegin Nzhdeh was prioritized by the teachers of Kapan and Yerevan Schools, concurrently from all the six schools Garegin Nzdeh was mentioned the most in subsequent schools (Kapan 17.6%, Yerevan 19.5%). Vazgen Sargsyan was given the highest importance by the teacher of Yerevan School and out of six schools Vazgen Sargsyan was mentioned the most in Yerevan School. Finally, Teacher of Gavar school attached highest importance to Monte Melkonyan and out of six schools Gavar school pupils' mentioned Monte as being an important historical figure the most.

Another relationship is found between teachers' eagerness to provide additional information outside the textbook context and differences in responses regarding those historical figures that are not attached much significance in the textbook. Table 12 indicates that in the schools where the intensity mean of teachers' eagerness to provide additional information is high the number of pupils' responses increases regarding the mentioned historical figures.

Table 12. Eagerness to provide additional information outside the textbook context				
	Teachers' eagerness to provide additional information	Percentage of mentioned figures in each school		
	(mean)	Garegin Nzhdeh	Vazgen Sargsyan	Monte Melkonyan
Vanadzor	2.3	9.3%	7%	0%
Ijevan	2.9	6.6%	8.1%	2.9%
Gegharkunik	4.2	11.6%	12.1%	15.3%
Syunik	3.9	11.5%	16.7%	3.1%
Gyumri	4.3	17.6%	8.2%	4.7%
Yerevan	4.6	19.5%	12.5%	11.2

CHAPTER FIVE - FINDINGS

To test the first hypothesis of this research- that **events and historical figures depicted in history textbooks influence pupils' perception of Armenian identity (H_1)** - it is important to find out to what extent pupils' perceptions of the most important historical events and figures coincide with the most important ones depicted in the history textbook (defined and revealed within the framework of this research). The results of content analysis and open-ended questionnaire filled in by 220 9th-grade pupils helped find out that nine out of ten most important historical events perceived by pupils are depicted with great importance in history textbook and are defined as the most important historical events.

It is important to mention that the role of Armenian Church alongside with several religious events is depicted with great importance in history textbooks. The questionnaire results indicated that most of the pupils prioritized the role of religious events in Armenian history (the adoption of Christianity or Battle of Avarayr) considering them the most important historical events. It should also be mentioned that the majority of the pupils consider that religion is the core of Armenian identity (30%). More specifically, 41 pupils out of 68 who mentioned that the most important historical events is either the adoption of Christianity or Battle of Avarayr also mentioned that religion is the most important component of Armenian identity. Similar relationship was noticeable between those who mentioned the creation of Armenian Alphabet as the most important historical event. Although the number is not remarkable, 15 pupils out of 29 consider that language is the most important component of Armenian identity.

Furthermore, during content analysis it was decided that one of the four most discussed themes in four history textbooks is Armenian culture. Four history textbooks intended for use in the secondary schools of Armenia depict the origins and development of Armenian culture from ancient to modern times. Not surprisingly, pupils consider that the most important component of Armenian identity after religion is culture (22.7%).

The results of content analysis indicated that the depiction of historical figures is undermined compared with the depiction of historical events. Interviews with school teachers revealed that teachers also are concerned with this issue. They consider that only Armenian Kings are devoted proper depiction in the textbook, while in majority of cases (especially liberation wars) the emphasis is put on the depiction of the importance of the event rather than on specific individuals. With the help of specified criteria the results of content analysis indicated that from the selected ten most important historical figures six are Armenian Kings.

Further, the results of questionnaire showed that seven most important historical figures perceived by the pupils coincide with the most important historical figures defined within the framework of this research. Thus, taking into consideration the above mentioned findings the first hypothesis of this research is accepted.

To test the second hypothesis of the research – **history teaching method influences pupils' perception of historical events and figures (H$_2$)** – it is important to find the differences in the responses that were not related to the textbook and see whether methods used by the teachers influenced pupils' perceptions or not. Thus, interview results with the teachers revealed that teachers are concerned that most of the historical figures are not represented properly in the textbook though pupils need to know Armenian heroes. Most of the teachers also appeared to have historical figures in mind that they appreciate the most. Thus, comparing the three most

frequently mentioned responses that were not included in the set of historical figures defined through content analysis it was noticeable that relationship exists between the percentage level of those responses, teachers' perceived ideals and teachers eagerness to provide additional information. More specifically, those historical figures (either Nzhdeh, or Monte or Vazgen Sargsyan) that were not properly represented in the textbook but teachers attached the highest importance to them and were eager to provide additional information outside the textbook content were prioritized by their pupils and mentioned quite often. This means that teaching method also influences pupils' perceptions and the second hypothesis can be accepted, too.

CONCLUSION

The evidence driven from data analysis has indicated that history education in public schools shapes perceptions among Armenian pupils regarding the historical figures and events depicted in Armenian history textbooks as well as influences pupils' perception of Armenian identity.

Two major components of history education help to shape those perceptions such as content of history textbooks and delivery method used by teachers. Although history education in Armenian secondary schools is textbook-based and the majority of activates are related to history textbooks such as assigning the new lesson, narrating the lesson, answering end-of-the-lesson questions orally or in a written from, teachers' ideological perceptions regarding historical events and particularly figures influence pupils' perceptions as well.

The content of history textbooks is important enough, particularly the way the text depicts the historical events or figures, whether any level of significance is attached to it through the language used or not. The second component is the teaching method used by the teachers, particularly whether they prioritize textbook content and consider it enough to deliver the subject or constantly use additional information outside textbook content that can have impact on pupils' perceptions. This research revealed that pupils' perceptions are shaped by the delivery method when teachers prioritize the additional depiction of their perceived ideals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As long as the final results of the research are driven from case studies they are not generalizable to the whole Armenian population. In order to come up with more thorough conclusion it might be useful to do a similar research based on a representative population.

Another issue that might be worth taking into consideration is the assessment of teaching methods used. The results of this research indicated that one of the most common methods of teaching history is encouraging pupils to memorize both the content of the textbook and certain dates indicating important historical events.

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APPENDICES

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONAIRE

1. Rank order three names in Armenian history that you think are the most influential ones.

2. Rank order three historical events in Armenian history that you think are the most important ones.

3. How would you describe Armenian heroes overall? (try to use several adjectives).

4. Mention a hero you would like to resemble most try to describe him.

5. What does it mean for you to be an Armenian?

6. Is there any characteristic that each Armenian should have? Which one?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are history classes textbook-based or not?

2. Are historical events properly represented in the history textbooks?

3. Are historical figures properly represented in the history textbook?

4. Is the information included in the textbooks enough for pupils to shape proper perception of Armenian history?

5. Do you provide additional information other than from textbooks?

6. Are the pupils encouraged to memorize the dates included in the textbooks?

7. Are the pupils encouraged to provide analytical skills during the classes?

8. Do you think that historical events are better represented in the textbook then historical figures?

9. Is any of the historical figures an ideal for you?