

THE EFFECTS OF THE ARMENIAN SCHOOLS ON THE ETHNIC IDENTITY
FORMATION OF THE ARMENIAN STUDENTS IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF THE ARMENIAN SCHOOLS ON THE ETHNIC IDENTITY FORMATION OF THE ARMENIAN STUDENTS IN TURKEY

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In this study, the discourse analysis of the historical procession of the Armenian schools, the last period of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment and development stages of the Republic of Turkey have been analyzed in terms of the influence of the Armenian schools on the formation of the ethnic identities of the Armenian students in Turkey. The relationship between the Armenian schools and the ethnic identity formation of the Armenian students, problematized within the regulations imposed by the Turkish republic in the field of education for Armenian schools and called as Turkification politics, has been evaluated in the context of in-depth interviews conducted with various Armenian schools, principals, teachers, students and graduates who still continue to exist. In this study, considering the fact that various regulations in the field of education such as the Turkish education system and curriculum, the regulation of the courses, the selection of the teachers and the contents of the textbooks were formed around the Turkish identity, it has been questioned how the Armenian students were able to realize their ethnic identity by staying in between Turkish and Armenian identities throughout their education life. How the students were influenced by the Armenian schools in the formation of the perceptions of the Armenian identity, the students who trained in both Turkish and Armenian schools, the transitions they experienced between the Turkish and Armenian schools, and the way that these transitions effected how the Armenian identities as the other are experienced were evaluated and examined comparatively.

Keywords: Armenian schools in Turkey, Armenian students, Ethnic identity formation, Turkification policies, Armenian identity

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DEKİ ERMENİ OKULLARININ ERMENİ ÖĞRENCİLERİN ETNİK KİMLİK OLUŞUMUNA ETKİSİ

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Bu çalışmada, Ermeni okullarının, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun son dönemi ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin kuruluş ve gelişim aşamalarından günümüze değin geçirdiği tarihsel sürecin söylem analizleri, Ermeni okullarının, Türkiye’deki Ermeni öğrencilerin etnik kimliklerinin oluşumundaki etkisi açısından ele alınmıştır. Türkiye cumhuriyetinin Ermeni okullarına yönelik eğitim alanında uyguladığı ve Türkleştirme politikaları olarak adlandırılan düzenlemeler kapsamında sorunsallaştırılan, Ermeni okulları ve Ermeni öğrencilerin etnik kimlik oluşumları arasındaki ilişki, günümüzde hala varlığını sürdüren çeşitli Ermeni okullarının, müdürleri, öğretmenleri, öğrencileri ve mezunları ile gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine mülakatlar çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışmada, Türk eğitim sistemi ve müfredatı, derslerin düzenlenişi, öğretmenlerin seçimi ve ders kitaplarının içerikleri gibi eğitim alanındaki çeşitli düzenlemelerin Türk kimliği etrafında oluşturulmuş olduğu göz önünde bulundurularak, Ermeni öğrencilerin, öğrenim hayatları boyunca Türk ve Ermeni kimlikleri arasında kalarak, kendi etnik kimliklerini nasıl gerçekleştirdikleri sorgulanmıştır. Öğrencilerin, Ermeni kimliği ile ilgili algılarının şekillenmesinde, Ermeni okullarından nasıl etkilendikleri, hem Türk hem de Ermeni okullarında öğrenci olmuş olan görüşmecilerin, Türk ve Ermeni okulları arasında deneyimledikleri geçişsellikler ve bu geçişselliklerin bir öteki olarak Ermeni

kimliklerini yaşama biçimlerini nasıl etkilediği karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirilip incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermeni Kimliği, Türkiye’deki Ermeni Okulları, Türkleştirme Politikaları, Etnik kimlik oluşumu, Ermeni öğrenciler

to all Armenian schools' laborers and students...

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I will start this study by telling about a feeling that I have had since my childhood but forgotten for a long time. In this study which I analyzed the effects of Armenian schools on Armenian identity formation, one of the schools which I went to in order to interview students, teachers and school principals was Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School in neighbourhood of Istanbul. This school was the school of the generation which came to Istanbul for boarding schools from Anatolia in the 1950s. My father also came to Istanbul Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School with a desire to learn Armenian after he fell in love with an Armenian book he saw in Kastamonu. Years after my father, this time myself entered the same building in 2004-2005 academic year as a teacher. I worked in this school as a counselling teacher for a year. I had difficulty finding the road to the school to which I went almost every day in those years maybe because it was years ago, maybe I didn't use any other transportation other than a school bus. While searching for the school in the streets of Üsküdar, I started to think how to ask the address of the school to the random people on the street. This was like a moment when a piece of my mind which did not function for years just came back all of a sudden. Because I had enough experience about Armenian schools and their names, I thought that it would be strange to the society to guess how the other person would react the moment I asked the people I met on the street "where is Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School?". Thus, my mind recalled one of the old methods and advised me to ask the people whether there was a church nearby. Yes, that was also correct, because I should have also been looking for a church since every Armenian school also has an Armenian church nearby. As predicted, I got positive response when I asked about the church because I didn't need to

indicate any names. It was enough to ask people “there was supposed to be a church somewhere here” because churches for the majority are places of worship with crosses on top [of the buildings]. While walking towards the direction told, when the cross on top of the church was now visible, I understood I was still on the wrong street. The church was there, the school was there but it was not Surp Haç Tıbrevank High School. It was Kalfayan, the last boarding school left in Istanbul. Desperately, I continued walking around and entered a store. There were three men in the store and I tried to learn the address of the school by highlighting the school’s name directly this time as I guessed for some reason one of the men might have been *Hay* (Armenian in Armenian language). After a while, I was in front of the school gate and yes, the man was a *Hay*.

Thus, I remembered and realized that I have internalized in the years when I was a student of Levon Vartuhyan Armenian School in elementary school and later of Sahakyan Nunyan Armenian High School: Refraining from telling people the name of the school you attend to.

During the time of this study, my own ethnic identity perception, my way of living Armenianness, my form of perception of Armenianness, my approaches to reactions and behaviours of the society, all of it, has changed. While researching the effects of Armenian schools, in which I both studied as student since elementary school and worked as a teacher [later on], on identity, I witnessed how my Armenian identity have underwent a transformation. I have experienced the fluidity of the identity which is mentioned in many works on identity first hand. I have re-evaluated what I am, my Armenianness, how those of Armenian identity are perceived in the society [and] how I am perceived; however, this time while I was thinking and trying to produce some things on it. My Armenian school which looked different when I was a student took a different shape when I was working there as a teacher, too, but now my perspective on the same school, my school, is much more different, more understanding [and] more mature. My Armenian identity has lived an

awakening and I had the chance to witness this in my own story with this thesis.

I had had an Armenianness when I was a student in Armenian school, I had had an Armenianness which I actually never understood when I graduated, when I went to university, while I was working as a teacher. Throughout the time I was working on this thesis, I started to understand these. Then, what did this thesis change so in me was that I started feeling more of an Armenian; this is actually the topic of this thesis.

During the studies of the thesis, did I start more of an Armenian because I started reading about the history of Armenians which I didn't have any idea till the day? Or, because I had the opportunity to speak Armenian more again thanks to the thesis? Is it because I started feeling a belonging to this culture more while researching the elements which create the Armenian identity and culture? Is it because I had the chance to do some readings on where and how Armenians lived in this geography since 3000 years? Is it because I remembered how it was like to be in spaces which are predominantly Armenian again in schools or other places I went to for the interviews and because I experienced all of these while I focused on a topic about Armenian identity? Why? Also, is it normal that an Armenian has never lived all of these which, I believe, changed my way of living my Armenian identity and many other factors? Why doesn't an Armenian who attended Armenian schools in Turkey know about the history of Armenians or why is the spaces where she can speak Armenian limited or why doesn't she prefer to speak Armenian even when she is a student in an Armenian school? Why is what she learned about her identity, culture and past from her family or close circles in conflict with the history text books in schools? Why isn't there an Armenian history class in Armenian schools? Which narrative is real? As it is told in the history textbooks, are Armenians really traitors who backstabbed the Turks? Who are the Armenians? How had this question to be answered in the Armenian schools? Under what conditions and how does the Armenian students'

consciousness of language and history form? How do students experience this situation?

Armenian schools began to operate under the status of minority schools after the Treaty of Lausanne peace, and they underwent various changes to this day. I want to examine the role of the Armenian schools and their education system in Turkey on the Armenian student's identity construction process. I will examine how school through its curriculum which is a part of government policies on minority education contributes to the students' identity construction and its effects on the ways that the students perceive themselves in relation to their own ethnic groups and to others. I want to understand what their opinion are about their identity and how they perceive being Armenian after having been educated in Armenian schools. The other major problem which I want to analyze is the notion of bilingual identity and its impact on Armenians. In the context of this thesis identity will be understood as being the result of a social construction. In this thesis the other major question is whether we can discuss the minority education system in Turkey as the part of the process of complete assimilation to the majority group.

The other main questions I would like to address in this study are: What kind of a role did the Armenian schools have in creating the cultural structure of the Armenian community? What kind of an Armenian identity did they want to create with the education policies used in these schools? How did the state want to shape the new Armenian generation with the status of being a minority school since Lausanne? How did these changes and transformations effect the emerging Armenian identity? What kind of an identity emerges when this Armenian identity which is tried to be re-built through various tools in schools and the Turkish identity which Turkish nation-state tries to create meet? How do Armenian students perceive their own ethnic identities in Armenian schools where they are exposed to the effects of both of these identities? How do the government policies with their impact on Armenian schools directly reflect on students? While searching for answers to these questions, I will also try to

understand how these factors are influential in the formation of identity, namely, the identity issue we roughly describe as "being Armenian", "feeling like an Armenian".

1.1. The Methodology which Created itself in Light of Experiences

In this study in which I research the effect of Armenian schools on Armenian identity formation of Armenian students, qualitative research methods is used and data gathering and data analysis process is supported by textual analysis. The questions I used in in-depth interviews are classified under the titles identity, minority, religion, learning mother tongue, social network, teachers, family, education, education system and school practices with the aim of understanding the main elements creating Armenian identity and how the ways in which the perception of these elements are transformed by government policies in Armenian schools and with the aim to analyze how this situation identity-wise reflected on students, schools, graduates and teachers. Each question group was prepared considering the characteristics of the interviewee and it continued to be shaped during the interview in line with the answers. I especially benefited from the book of *Geçmişten Günümüze Azınlık Okulları* when preparing the questions. I have also benefited from many works from the world literature, which deals with the relationship between minority education and identity formation. In this study, the participants are selected from persons with different characteristics in order to better analyze the effect of Armenian schools on Armenian identity. What is meant by different characteristics includes the differences of forms and time of the relationship of participants with Armenian schools. The concepts giving names to each question group were used by the participants in their identity analysis towards these concepts. For example, all questions in the group under the title of identity were asked in general for all participants. With these questions, it was tried to be understood how one made sense of himself and his identity. In order to assess the influence

of learning one's native language on identity, the participants' relationship with the Armenian language were analyzed. Responses given by Armenian-speaking participants to questions under the title of identity were compared with one another. Thus in this study, all the questions in the titles such as minority, social networks, and school practices were analyzed separately in each section with the answers given to the questions in the other groups of questions.

In this framework, determining whom need to be interviewed and by whom the participants will be consisted of and classification of participant groups are based on the comparison of students who have never attended Armenian schools or who left Armenian schools and transferred to a Turkish school levels in elementary, middle or high school or who transferred to Armenian schools after attending Turkish schools and students and graduates who attended only to Armenian schools. The main way for us to understand Armenian schools effect on identity perception of Armenian students is to determine what happens to Armenian identity of the student in absence of any Armenian school education in the life history of the student. Moreover, departing from the necessity to comparatively include the approaches of principals of Armenian schools and Armenian teachers on the effect of the schools on identity, participants are mainly divided into six different groups:

1. The first group will consist of students who were studying in Armenian schools from primary school up to high school and who are currently in their last year of their high school education. The participants in this group are selected among students who are senior year students in 2016-2017 academic year. There are five Armenian schools (Private Sahakyan Nunyan Armenian High School, Private Eseyan Armenian High School, Private Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School, Private Getronogan Armenian High School, Private Pangaltı Armenian High School) which gives high school level education in Istanbul. Students who are interviewed are students of Private Sahakyan Nunyan Armenian High School, Private Getronogan Armenian High School, Private Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School.

2. The second group will consist of Armenian students who have been educated in Turkish schools since primary school. We will investigate what it means to be an Armenian student in public schools as an "other" without learning, speaking or writing Armenian, and how this influenced their formation of identity.

3. The third group will consist of students who have gone to both Turkish and Armenian schools. The participants in this group are divided into two among themselves: Those who started their education in Armenian schools and transferred to Turkish schools and those who started their education in Turkish schools and transferred to Armenian schools later on. The reason for this divide is that whether the school an Armenian student attended to first is a Turkish or Armenian school has a great significance in our study in terms of identity formation. If an Armenian student attended to Turkish school first, when she transfers to Armenian school, she has the experience of otherness from an early age. With the thought that these students who transferred to Armenian schools after the consciousness of marginalization might have a different form of sense of belonging to their identity and schools, evaluations are conducted keeping in mind the period of transfers in this study. On the other hand, the effects of points where the policies enforced on Armenian schools reflect as problems on Armenian school on Armenian students who start their education in Armenian schools are embedded in the reasons why these students prefer to transfer to an Turkish schools later on. Thus, the comments of these students are mostly included especially in sections in which the problems in Armenian schools are covered.

4. The fourth group will consist of students who have graduated from Armenian schools for same time. The interviews with people in this group will be done to get an impression of what kind of awareness they experienced about their identity as a result of their encounters with being the "other" at work or college or another institution after graduating from school. Being in a space which is predominantly Armenian for approximately 12 years throughout their

education in Armenian schools creates their consciousness of difference in a different way, also. The experience of being an Armenian in Turkey starts after graduating from Armenian schools. How long has it been passed after your graduation and what kind of experiences you had in that period also have significant effect on your Armenian identity perception. Thus, in this study, the participants of this group consisting of graduates who are graduated in for same time have. 90% of graduates group are comprised of people who graduated from Armenian schools in 1997-1998 academic year. 10% is graduated from Armenian schools in 1998-1999 academic year.

5. The fifth group will consist of present headmasters of Armenian schools. Putting in practice of the obligation that Armenian school principals in Armenian schools are to be Armenian however deputy principals to be Turkish in the framework of national education system and determining the limits of principals authority in Armenian schools and the authority and its limits of deputy principal duty are concrete examples of application of Turkification policies in education. Thus, the questions posed to the participants in this group are organized separately in order to evaluate how these practices reflect on schools and what kind of problems they lead to. The perspectives of the principles on education in Armenian schools mostly have a determining effect on education policies of Armenian schools where they fulfill the duty of school principal. Thus, an educational perspective of the participants in this group has also affects on the perception of students in their schools of their school and Armenian identity. Departing from the assumption that with their different educational approaches, they also create different Armenian identities in comparison to each other besides the traditional structure and unique characteristic of each Armenian school, identity perceptions of students will be evaluated in line with the answers of schools principals in this context.

6. The sixth group will consist of, Armenian teachers. There are significant differences between Armenian teachers and Turkish and Turkish

culture class teachers in terms of their employment in Armenian schools. Teachers of Turkish culture class are state servants and assigned by MEB [The Ministry of National Education] and their wages are paid by the state. Armenian teachers, on the other hand, are hired by considerations of school boards and principals and their wages are determined and paid by the schools they work for. School principals who have the most say in hiring teachers hire people closer to their educational understanding or expect or ensure their teachers to continue their work in line with this understanding. In that sense, the Armenian faculty in schools and the education understanding of the faculty present a reflection of the approach of each Armenian school. Due to strict structure itself, each Armenian school either fires the teachers who are sensed not to be able to adapt to the structure or digests them into the structure. However, it is observed that teachers working in Armenian schools general continue their work for a long time [and] most of them work mostly in the same Armenian school till their retirement. The low number of schools and students also comes first in the factors leading this situation. Another factor is the issues to find teachers who can teach Armenian language classes or grade teachers. The difficulties in training teachers or finding appropriate teachers as the results of the policies of the government enforces in this topic. Thus, the majority of Armenian teachers we interviewed with consist of people who have worked as teachers in Armenian schools for a really long time.

In this study, Turkish chief deputy principals and Turkish and Turkish culture class teachers could not be interviewed due to time constraints however this was tried to be overcome by resources including studies conducted on minority schools. In general, interviewees in each group and schools in which interviews conducted are selected using snowball method while keeping in mind the factors of their accessibility and the time they can allocate to the interview.

There is no study conducted in Turkey on Armenian schools in Turkey and Armenian identity formation either in academic fields or in others. In

general, there are a few studies which focus on the Armenians in Turkey and those which are educated recently focus only either on Armenians living in Turkey and their problems (by evaluating them in the framework of concepts such as discrimination, racism, nationalism, marginalization) or in the forms of reports including problems faced in the minority schools in Turkey. We can say that the studies focusing only on Armenians in Turkey are started to get attention more after the assassination of Agos Newspaper editor in chief Hrant Dink in 19 January 2007 and following the identity-based and cultural awakening among Armenians in Turkey which has intensified and increased for a while.

Moreover, framing the works on Armenians in Turkey on the basis of concepts like discrimination and nationalism can be seen only in the last two decades. Before, Armenians are generally mentioned as domestic enemies in studies on Armenians in Turkey. Moreover, again in many studies, the massacres of Turks in the hands of Armenians or Armenians' betrayal of Turks are covered. Such books are books that are published in order to present a counter-thesis especially during periods where genocide debates are on the rise. From the establishment of the Turkish Republic till the 1980s, in the works on Armenian schools or minority schools, these schools were presented as hubs of agents in which missionary activities were ongoing, where plans to divide up Turkey were devised and where gangs were built up.

The fact that the researcher herself graduated from Armenian schools and worked as a teacher for two years in these schools provided many advantages to her in the research of this study. Moreover, the fact that family members and close circles of the researcher, too, attended Armenian school or still work there led this study to continue smoothly without any problems. Considering with the assumption that the same study were conducted by someone who was not an Armenian and did not attend Armenian schools as a student, we can understand how important the characteristics of researchers are for a research. For instance, if a person working on Armenian schools could not

speaking Armenian, it would be an element that would limit the study in multiple ways. Not being proficient in the Armenian language would cause inability to understand Armenian words used in interviews, what is written in Armenian textbooks or how Armenian language is taught in schools. Moreover, being able to speak Armenian would not be sufficient also in that sense. If the researcher had never been to Armenian schools, meaning where he conducts research, his comprehension about schools would also be superficial. That Armenians in Turkey mostly remain silent about their own identities and that they do not open up easily especially when they are asked about Armenianness, Armenian schools or the problems in these schools –as they do not feel safe around people who are not Armenian- is a unique situation to Armenians in Turkey. The distrust created by exclusion and discrimination causes such issues to be discussed in whispers even among family members or close circles. Thus, that the researchers have Armenian identity led participants to feel safer during the interviews. This situation which provided many conveniences both for the researcher and participants eliminates many difficulties which are to be faced during the study.

Moreover, another aspect that I don't want to move on before touching upon is the relationship between the otherness/being an "other" and sociology. The consciousness of being an "other", the consciousness of being a minority is created with the meanings attributed by the majority of the society. From which parts of you do those consisting of the majority of the society you live in marginalize you? Why are you different than them? What are your characteristics which differentiate you from the majority? The other is the one who is obligated to be aware of these differences constantly. The consciousness of being an "other" also includes how you react to this difference and how you place yourself in the society. Marginalization and discrimination against Armenians living in Turkey leads Armenians/others to crystallize their own differences in the reflection of the society's structure. All forms of different the other experienced about herself causes her to digest the characteristics of the

society she lives in faster, earlier and more intensely and to see the structure better. In the Republic of Turkey which is based on the division of us vs. them, the other's approach to society and sociology would stem from tougher encounters. The other has to know by whom she is being marginalized in order to survive. It is inevitable for her to face what kind of a society this one is. The other has to build her own self on the structure of the society she lives in which devalues and objectifies her in the society which considers her as an object of insult and humiliation. In short, the other becomes the self by looking into her own invaluable object from the eye of the collective self of the society. Because the devalued differences of the other are created as a result of collectivity in the forms of determining what these differences are. The majority remains in unity and togetherness by its forms of determining and reaction to the difference. Who is it that is not in this unity, who is the other? The answer to this question is the definition of the other created in the collective minds with the influence of the dominant ideology. To know in which ways she is differentiated also requires knowing the social structure of the dominant majority. Thus, sociological analysis presented by the other turns literally into a "defensive martial art". This study did not transform my perception on my own Armenian identity but it also transformed the way that I try to objectify my subjectivity. Thus, this thesis is at the same time a form of struggle of the other, by the other.

1. 2. To be an Armenian Student in Turkey: "My Nonentity shall be a Gift to Turkish Entity"¹

What does it mean to be a student in an Armenian school in Turkey? To be an Armenian student in an Armenian school in Turkey means to understand that

¹ "We are always swearing in one voice: 'My being a gift to Turkish existence' ... In the minority schools, the following is said about the children: 'My Nonentity shall be a Gift to Turkish Entity'" (Dink, 2017).

you are different than the majority as early as you elementary years the moment when you start saying the name of your school when you are asked. Even if this awareness is different from an awareness that is conscious and conceptual, in the following years an Armenian student in Turkey either ignores the question or lies when he is asked which school she attends due to the reactions he has been receiving when he utters the name of the school. It is similar to someone who refrains from saying his name which functions as an ethnic label due to the reactions he get when he utters his own name. His name and the name of his school are both different. An Armenian child living in Turkey learns from a really early age on to produce answers that will be perceived as normal by the majority and that will not be sensed to be different. What happens to these students when they start their education under a name which they cannot themselves even pronounce in the first years and which sounds strange to them also? It sounds strange to them also because it does not sound like any other school name they hear around. The student actually starts to understand throughout her education why she is different than others. He is different because in the school she attends to Armenian language is taught. While his other friends learn to read and write in Turkish he also learns a language that nobody uses, speaks or knows. Even if a student attending to an Armenian schools knows that he is different, he cannot explain it.

An Armenian student is different than the majority but in fact at the same time he is no different than the majority. He is also subjected to which ever curriculum taught to other students in the rest of the country. He also starts every day reciting Our Pledge. He shouts out every morning that he is a “Turk”, she is “righteous”, and he is “hardworking”. An Armenian student, too, “gifts her entity to Turkish entity” every morning. And every morning he has to confess, how happy he is that he is a “Turk”. He also attends to National Anthem ceremonies every Monday and Friday. He gets in the line and she sings the national anthem which tells that the red flag waving on the nation will never wither away with great enthusiasm. He also learns the heroism and

victories of Turkish national history in the classroom. He should also be always aware and awoke against domestic and foreign enemies threatening the existence of the Turkish state. However, Armenian students, before elementary school ends, will learn from the history textbooks that the people they are of the same origin with, meaning Armenians, were a domestic enemy for the Turkish state and when the teacher asks them, they will tell about the betrayals of Armenians who used to be called the loyal nation once upon a time in the Ottomans.

Besides inevitably understanding that he is different than the majority after a while, an Armenian student, be it in Armenian or Turkish school, has to learn that her identity which creates his difference is not much welcome [and] that the people of this identity are excluded, humiliated and disregarded. The actual story of Armenian students who keep shouting out “I am a Turk” all together for years meeting with Turkish identity starts right here.

Thus, in this study in which we investigate the effects of Armenian schools on Armenian identity, we also thought that we should first re-meet with Turkish identity. Considering the effects of schools on identity formation, what are the main characteristics that Turkish national education system wants to create? Whom does this identity include and exclude? When you conduct a research on Armenian identity formation in Turkey, you need to inevitably mention the Turkish identity formation. Why are these two identity formations so much intertwined? How do Armenian and Turkish identities meet each other in Armenian schools? How do Armenian students internalize these processes of identity formation which work in double ways? How are these identities represented?

Although Armenian identity in Turkey and the effects of Armenian schools on identity formation are tried to be discussed on the basis of the theories in the literature written on the impact of schools on identities, it is a unique form of encounter. The characteristics which we defined as unique situations stem from that the relationship of the Turks and the Armenians with

each other in the Turkish-nation state building and development stages presents a complicated situation in the context of historicity. Our study assumes that our evaluations on Armenian schools and Armenian identity can give healthy and quality findings only after this complicated situation is deciphered.

Thus, in our study the school/identity relationship is considered on the basis of nation-state and national identity formation. Departing from a general characteristic of nation-states, each chapter of the study covers the process of the Turkish nation-state building of Turks and the formation of Turkish identity in this process as well as the policies of the Turkish nation-state toward the minorities. Each nation-state turns to multiple tools in the process of creating its own national identity. Among these tools, education is no doubt the most effective one. Because education is the most effective way of transferring two most fundamental elements; language and history, to younger generations who are considered to be building the nation. In that sense, what kind of regulations and reforms did the Turkish nation-state offer? How were these adopted into Turkish identity and Turkish national education?

In this study in which ethnic identity formation is discussed in the framework of education and schools, The process of Turkish national identity formation in the establishment and development stages of the Turkish Republic and transferring the national identity in schools connected to Turkish national education system and its presentation to students will be analyzed. The characteristics of Turkish identity to which the nation-state aspire also determine the approaches and policies of the state toward minority and Armenian schools. Throughout the study, these tools and methods will be analyzed in line with their reflections on Armenian schools. Education takes its power from institutions in which every person at a certain age from all walks of life in society has to be attending everyday again and again till a certain age, meaning, and schools. The nation state determines the limits of intervention through the schools which it can shape the students in the directions it desires. The curriculum the student are exposed to, textbooks and their contents, the

organization of the classrooms, class periods, the definitions of which class will be taught in which ways and by whom are determined by Turkish national education system. All these determinations are shaped around the characteristics of Turkish identity.

Because Armenian schools with their minority status in Turkish Republic are bound to the same education system although they have the status of minority schools, the curriculum they follow and the text books they cover (except for classes taught in Armenian) are the same. Thus, this study has to include how Turkish identity is shaped in public school, too.

1.3. National State, Education and Identity Formation

According to Taner Akçam, “the national outlook (habitus)” is strictly related more to each nation’s process of building its own nation-state. In this study, with the national identity concept, certain characteristics of a nation shaped in the process of nation state building are meant. Thus, in this study, what is discussed as national identity includes certain characteristics that occurred in the process of establishment of Turkish nation state but could have changed over time. Moreover, in this study a direct relationship between national identity and nation state is highlighted. In building the lived mutual history and in determining the national identity, the nation state is given a central role. Collective memories toward the past and created symbols and meanings attached to them lay the ground for Turkish national identity by providing the group trust and unity.²

According to Akçam, in comparison to other nation states, Turkish nation state came to the scene of history much later: “The crows which took the streets in 1908 to celebrate the constitutionalism in Istanbul and Selanik noticed that they had no national anthem to sing and they celebrate

² Akçam, 1992, p. 36.

constitutionalism with French national anthem.”³ Even in early 20th century, there was no class on Turkish history in the Ottoman schools. In 1911, two third of pages of main books on contemporary history taught in Turkish education institutions was reserved to French, and the rest to other European states’ history. According to Akçam, one of the results of this late arrivals of Turkish nationalism is that the Turks rushed to catch up. However this rush turned into an open hostility towards other ethnic groups.

In the text books which are determined by Turkish national education, the Turks are strong, hardworking, smart or heroes. Mustafa Kemal and his cadre in their effort to construct a “nation” created the feelings of pride for the Turks and that “they should be happy to be Turks” echoed in the public schools corridors.

While drawing the boundaries of its own national identity, the Turkish Republic which was built around Turkish national identity after the War of Independence had to produce different policies for those who were outside of these boundaries. Because, the irreconcilable conflict between the characteristics of “Turkish identity” aspired to be created and “existence” of non-Muslim minorities are also the reasons of the policies enforced. Thus, in the chapter of our study titled “the effects of Turkification politics on minority and Armenian education”, besides what the main characteristics of Turkish identity are and how this identity describes the minorities, the answer to the question what are the reflections of these policies enforced on minorities and Armenians living in Turkey in the sphere of education will be discussed on the basis of the claim that “the history of Turkification policies is at the same time the history of minorities in Turkey”.

Throughout “the longest century”⁴ of the Ottoman Empire, Armenians achieved many developments in the field of education. When they entered a

³ *ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴ In this work Ortaylı has characterized the 19th century as the longest century of the Ottoman Empire (cf. Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, 2005).

period in the mid-19th century which is described as Armenian Renaissance, the topic on which the new generation of Armenian youth who came back to Istanbul after their education in Europe focused most was the issues of Armenian schools and improvement of education further in the schools. With the establishment of new Armenian schools and newly arriving Armenian intelligentsia from Europe, Armenian education got a new place with hundreds of thousands of Armenian students attending those schools.⁵

The reforms in Armenian schools in the field of education was a topic many *Tanzimat* writers touched upon in this period and it was argued that Muslim and Turkish schools should have had similar reforms in education field. Struggle with minorities which started also with the effect that those who were victorious in the war of education would also be victorious in the other fields continued by the founding cadre of the Turkish Republic who adopted nationalistic policies enforced especially towards Armenians and Greeks. The reduced numbers of [Armenian] population in Anatolia led to the closing of Armenian schools one by one. From the initial years of Turkish Republic's nation-state building process, the government determined its attitude towards minorities and Armenian schools and produced policies in education field to that end. Evaluating the condition of minorities and Armenian schools in Turkey in light of our analysis regarding the government policies' reflection on schools and students, we also see the effects of Turkification policies in education on schools. The right of minorities to establish and manage their own educational institutions after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey was assured by the Treaty of Lausanne signed between the Government of Turkey and the Entente States in 1923. Minority schools had neither a private school status nor a foreign school status; however, the private schools' legislation was applied to minority schools too. In addition to presenting statistics about the

⁵ cf. Karakaşlı, Kentel, Özdoğan, and Üstel, *Türkiye'de Ermeniler Cemaat-Birey-Yurttaş*, 2009.

minority schools in this study whose number have gradually been decreasing every year since the Lausanne, their characteristics will also be examined.

1.3.1. Turkification of Armenian Schools: Government Policies and Effects of Curriculum

Policies shaping Turkish education system worked in two ways. On the one hand, the government implemented its policies by embedding them into curriculum; on the other hand, it adopted and put in practice legislations which, for instance, leave Armenian schools without a status or which would make it harder to hire teachers for Armenian schools. One of the most important effects of these Turkification policies was that Turkish national identity was tried to be enforced on all the schools including Armenian schools through curriculum and textbooks changes approved by the Ministry of National Education. Another important consequences was the preparation of specially designed legislations regulations the operation of the Armenian schools. By these methods education is designed to enforce the Turkish identity even in minority schools. This can be seen most clearly through textbooks.

In introductions of all text books in Turkey, a portrait of a generation which could continue the Turkish national struggle and loyal to their nation was drawn. Especially in text books of classes that are deemed as ‘national’, the national identity consciousness aspired to be told does not only surface in the introductions but in the organization of the books’ contents and the language of the narrative as well. Classes like national history, national geography and their textbooks try to indoctrinate students with national history consciousness and patriotism. It was mandatory that teachers teaching these classes in Armenian schools had to be Turkish. Moreover, it was highlighted in the legislation that teachers who was teach courses like Turkish, Turkish language and Literature, National History and Geography, National Security were required to be selected from among those who had a sense of [belonging

to] national identity. The contents of Turkish and Turkish culture classes were created in the framework of the curriculum determined by The Ministry of National Education. The processes regarding assignments of these teachers to Armenian schools are also handled by MEB. In short, Turkish and Turkish culture classes' teachers were all assigned by the state. While on the one hand the effect of Turkish identity tried to be given in national classes in Armenian schools was felt, on the other hand, there was a special legislation in place in Armenian and minority schools regarding the teachers of these classes. Thus, it is evident that the mechanisms that are enforced by the government and that work in two ways are intertwined. Moreover, for instance, it is also forbidden that these classes are to be taught by an Armenian teacher in any school in Turkey. This is another element considered to be important in shaping the perception of students attending to Armenian schools regarding Turkish identity.

Then, how are Armenians presented in textbooks which are determined in line with curriculum? Again, we see that the answer to this question has multiple effects from various angles. How do Armenian students who grow up with these textbooks in which there is not one line that can be considered positive about Armenians feel about themselves? How negatively does that the students in Turkish schools are raised with these classes and textbooks affect their judgements about Armenians? How does that an understanding which perceives Armenians as enemies is told all students through schools determine and maintain the perception of Turkish society regarding Armenians? Considering it from a different angle, how does this cripple the identity perceptions of the Armenian student who attend to Turkish schools?

Moreover, for instance what are the effects of the obligation to have a chief deputy principal in each minority school in Armenian schools? The common thought in Armenian schools about this practice which is still ongoing today is shaped around Turkish chief deputy principal's existence, duties and responsibilities and the limits to their authority. Because, Turkish chief deputy

principal who can be more superior than the principal on many occasions are considered as tools for the government and MEB to track closely what is happening in Armenian schools.

In the chapters three and four in our study, government policies which work in two ways as mentioned before will be covered in detail. Various enforcements on Armenian schools since the establishment of the Turkish Republic will be looked into chronologically and year-to-year changes and transformations of the practices will be analyzed. Under the light of the interweavers' conducted by the Armenian school principals and teachers, it can be clearly seen that the Armenian schools today are in a struggle to survive and at the bring up extinction. It is also clear that there is a currently significant decrease in the number of the students as well.

That Armenian families prefer Armenian schools less and less for their children's education is a manifestation of the hardships that the Armenian schools are undergoing currently. For example, the fact that Armenian schools which have both minority and private schools status cannot get funding from the state due to their lack of a clear legal status causes great financial difficulties for these schools. The problems faced while trying to deal with these financial difficulties reflect on students and parents and this time students do not prefer Armenian schools and want to more on to private schools. The decreasing student admissions put Armenian schools into a greater hardship. Considering that the Armenian schools get their primary some of income by donations from parents on a voluntary basis during registration, the vicious cycle in terms of finances can be understood better. Evaluating the problems faced by Armenian schools from this angle, it is observed that the problems present are both the result and the cause and they get further complicated as they intertwine and become inextricable.

1.3.2. Dehistoricized Armenians: History without Identity / Identity without History

Memory “is a depot which records and conserves all experiences.”⁶ Memory as the center of records of the past also builds the identities of individuals and societies in time. Thus, there is an inseparable bond between memory and identity. Nation-states approached the study of history and historiography being conscious of how important the bond between memory and identity is in terms of maintaining its own existence. The building of national memory is a prerequisite for building a national identity.

History and historiography, in that sense, “create the memory of a certain collective identity”. Similar to all nation-states, Turkish nation state, too, shaped “history and historiography which builds the identity of individual, group or society” in line with its own aims. Re-considering the characteristics of Turkish national identity, we also understand how the elements creating this identity are also embedded in historiography. “The written history, recorded past and the forms of recording the past also hints the perspectives of the power or powers which build the identity.”⁷ Analyzing the history textbooks approved by MEB and used in schools, the forms of narrative about the origin of Turks, how they live, their beliefs, values or victory and heroisms are fed by history thesis determined and created by the Turkish nation state.

The situations about history classes and history text books in Armenian schools are covered in two ways in this study. The first is about what and how history textbooks including the Turkish national identity narrative tells about Armenians. Moreover, the experiences of history teacher and students while covering the sections about Armenians in history classes will also be covered in this framework. The form of narrative which is frequently seen in the Turkish historiography which includes someone’s victory is another’s shame or a

⁶ Metin, 2015, p. 21.

⁷ *ibid.*

celebration of one side⁸ is another side's mourning is highlighted and covered in a more violent way when it comes to Armenians cause discomfort among students. The attitude of the history teachers in Armenian schools while covering these sections reflects to students what their teacher think about their own identity and how the teacher describe Armenians. This will also be discussed from the perspectives of Armenian students attending to Turkish schools. The discriminatory behaviours which Armenian students attending to public or private schools are subjected to in history classes and the understanding of the Turkish society which is shaped through history textbooks written with this mindset are maybe the most important sources of discriminatory and exclusive mechanisms against Armenians. The ground of how Turks consider and perceive Armenians are created in classrooms and also reflect on Armenian students again in these schools in various ways.

In this study the content of and practices in the history classes and historiography will also be discussed in terms of the identity problematic created by the lack of Armenian history classes in Armenian schools. This situation will be evaluated by relating it to how history consciousness turns into identity consciousness and the sense of belonging created by history. Further the effects of the fact that Armenian students in Turkey cannot learn do their history will be discussed in connection with the kind of identity feeling of belonging that it creates in those students.

Considering the objectives of history classes determined in "Secondary Education Institutions History Program"⁹ determined by the MEB (Council of Education and Upbringing, it can be better understood how great a lack is the absence of Armenian history classes is in terms of identity formation of Armenian students. One of the objectives of history classes as defined in History Program for Secondary Education is indicated as "to gain history

⁸ Yılmaz, as cited in Metin, 2015, p. 21.

⁹ *Tebliğler Dergisi*, as cited in Metin, 2015, p. 15.

consciousness in the perception of past, today and future.” The gain of this consciousness is the ground for the next objective, that is, “to teach creating a national identity, the elements comprising this identity and the necessity to maintain national identity”.¹⁰ National identity formation and the consciousness to maintain this identity is an element that cannot be taught without creating a history consciousness. Moreover, the importance of national unity and togetherness is also possible with students being able to “build the connection between the past and the present”. These characteristics which are aimed for students to gain through framework and objective of history class can work on opposite direction under the condition of a lack of a history education. Considering their own Armenian identities, the lack of knowledge of Armenian students about Armenian history shows that they cannot reach the aimed senses and behaviours mentioned earlier. In the introduction of the books of Armenian history of Armenian which was decided to be published in 2012, it is stated that drawings were used frequently to make for the Armenian students learning their own history more interesting the process of learning about their history for Armenians who are scattered all around the world and that maps and drawings in the book will be beneficial for those Armenians who are scattered all over the world and those who want to understand and learn Armenian history and historical geography. “We hope that this book and similar guides would not only tell about heroic victories and our contribution to civilization in our history but also help us understand the reasons for previous defeats and guide us to build the future as faultless as possible.”¹¹

The value attributed to their own identity and culture by the Armenian youth in Turkey who are raised without developing an Armenian history consciousness which is hoped to be created with the publication of this book also decreases at the same rate with the lack of history consciousness. In

¹⁰ Metin, 2015, p. 16.

¹¹ Movsisyan, 2017, p. 4.

chapter 5 of this study, this situation and its results will be discussed along side with the commentaries of the participants and it will be tried to be understood through which activities this lack is tried to be overcome in Armenian schools and the effects of these activities on students.

1.3.3 Form of Relations of Armenian Students with Armenian Language after Making it Non-Functional

I don't believe that any other language is as pure, sincere and noble as our language. Armenian is a language in which insincerity is impossible. In fact, it is a language developed to bring people together as a family. If there were modern saints, their letters would have been written in Armenian, and if this world was to write a new Bible itself, it would have been in Armenian. Other languages are to develop science and culture; however Armenian language is born to expand [and] improve the human relations and to dignify human soul.¹²

“Language and history are two important concepts which were alive together since the existence of human kind. Just like it is impossible to think of a history without language, it is impossible to think a language without history. Naturally every language carries marks of history of the nation to which it belongs.”¹³ Although students do not take a class about Armenian history in Armenian schools, they are able to learn Armenian language. “In the process of education, while the building of history consciousness and culture is realized, the biggest tool is again, no doubt, language.”¹⁴ However, regardless of students being taught Armenian language, Armenian schools are subjected to various enforcements which makes teaching Armenian language harder or which prevent training Armenian language instructor or which impacts negatively on language education.

¹² Yeniçeri, 2014, p. 119.

¹³ Metin, 2015, p. 9.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 10.

The most important mission of the Armenian schools for the Armenians of Turkey stems from the fact that they are the last remaining institutions teaching Armenian language today in Turkey. For Armenians, losing the language means losing the identity. Thus, throughout their history Armenian language has been the most important element in protecting and maintaining their identity. In chapter seven of the study, we will try to understand why Armenian language has this much importance for Armenians. The approach in which the level of Armenian language proficiency determines the level of “being an Armenian” has led for long years to debates like “full Armenianness”, “partial Armeniannes” among Armenians themselves. According to a widespread belief among Armenians, for an Armenian to be a fully Armenian, he needs to speak and write Armenian very well. In the discussions on Armenian identity and main indicators of Armenian identity, the issue of “can one be an Armenian without speaking Armenian?” has always been discussed. Today, most of the Armenians of Turkey speak Turkish among themselves. Moreover, most of the students in Armenian schools also speak Turkish among themselves. When we make an analysis of when and how Armenian uses Armenian more, we can say that generally they use Armenian when they talk about “secret” things which they don’t want anyone to understand. The reservation to speak Armenian in public sphere started as a result of the Turkification policies of the Turkish Republic. Many Armenian student participants stressed that they don’t speak Armenian outside and they are even warned by their parents not to speak Armenian. Armenian which drifts away from everyday life like that has become less and less preferable gradually. In chapter six which titled “Identity and Language”, the form of practice of Turkish language and Turkish language-centered education system which is one of the most significant building blocks of Turkish identity formation in all schools bound to National Education, which also means Armenian schools, will be questioned and how policies in practice about Armenian language classes in Armenian schools which have a bilingual

education affect Armenian language education will be evaluated. In this chapter which will be covered in the framework of inseparability of Armenian language and Armenian identity, the approaches of Armenian students in Armenian schools to their own mother tongue Armenian and Armenian language classes will also be investigated. Today many Armenian students indicate that Armenian language education is hard. According to many Armenian students, having a hard and non-functional class like Armenian in their education causes them to spend less time on other classes. Thus, most of the students prefer to allocate the time they spent on Armenian classes to classes which would be useful in high school and university entrance exams. This caused the operation in Armenian schools drive toward pleasing students and parents. The increase in numbers of students who “escape” from the difficulty of Armenian and transferred to Turkish schools forced Armenian schools to change their policies about Armenian.

For Armenian students, the time they spend on learning their mother tongue in their schools is now considered a wasted time. Thus, escape from one of the main elements of building an Armenian identity, that is language, leads to an avoidance from attending Armenian schools. Thus, distancing from mother tongue has turned into distancing from identity, and distancing from identity into distancing from attending to Armenian school. Students and families in the Armenian community approach schools and Armenian language in two opposite ways. They either attribute great importance to learn Armenian and thus Armenian schools are preferred or Armenian is considered a tough class to pass and private Turkish schools or colleges are preferred.

According to Norton¹⁵, language is where people create our own subjectivity and a sense of self. With many policies practiced in minority schools, “the message” about their own mother tongue that it “is invaluable, inappropriate” is given to students in Armenian schools. This message has a detrimental impact on their sense of identity and their bond to their families,

¹⁵ Mercur, 2012, p. 9.

and their cultural community is broken¹⁶ In the long term, rejecting the mother tongue of students means to ignore children's linguistic and cultural inheritance as well. This means that they are deprived of a strong feeling of identity and their main cognitive development.¹⁷

1.3.4. Turning Inter-School Movement into Inter-Identity Movement

Who is an Armenian? What does it mean to be an Armenian? How is the Armenian identity defined? What are the components of the Armenian culture? What does it mean to be an Armenian in Turkey? Why Armenians in Turkey are not considered Armenian by the Armenian diaspora which is scattered to the rest of the world or by Armenians in Armenia? On what grounds do other Armeniannesses who think Armenians in Turkey are Turkified have this perspective? What does it mean to be defined as a Turk for an Armenian by other Armenians? Why are Armenians in Turkey perceived as they could not maintain their identity and they become Turkified? What types of assimilation policies are Armenians in Turkey exposed to and what are the effects of these assimilation policies on Armenian schools and Armenian students? In the final chapter of the study, these questions are tried to be answer first. The reason why the priority was given to the analysis of these questions in this chapter is that without evaluating in which ways Armenians in Turkey are exposed to assimilation, what forms of discrimination they experience and impacts of these on their Armenian identity, it is impossible to answer what types of differences there are in Armenianness perception of Armenian students who study in Armenian schools in Turkey and Armenian students who don't.

Armenians in Turkey has many unique characteristics in comparison to Armenians in rest of the world. These characteristics stems from the mindset and structure of Turkish society. How Armenians are perceived in Turkish

¹⁶ Monzó and Rueda, as cited in Mercur, 2012, p. 15.

¹⁷ Sánchez, as cited in Mercur, 2012, p. 15.

society also affects how Armenians perceive their own identities and this especially reflects on schools. In the forward of the work titled *History of Armenia*¹⁸, it is indicated that one of the first most important problems for the Armenians living in various locations in the world is to “preserve Armenianness” through education. In the forward in which it is stated that schools which are defined as the center of Armenianness help children embrace their own roots and identities despite having multiple problems, the author mentions that the book of Armenian history are prepared also as a solution to the problem of textbooks in schools. This history textbook is written in Western Armenian and translated in Eastern Armenian, Russian, French and Turkish so that Armenian communities in various places can benefit from them and that they are published by the press of public university in the capital city of Armenia, Yerevan, where Eastern Armenian is used. Armenians in Turkey, however, are banned to use this book in accordance with the regulation determining curriculum and content of the textbooks; it is even beyond the discussion. Considering the location of Armenians in Turkey, decision to write the book in Western Armenian which is used by Istanbul and its circles presents an interesting case. Armenians in diaspora who think that Armenians in Turkey are Turkified are mostly being educated in Western Armenian or they can speak Western Armenian because a great majority of them had migrated from Istanbul. Then, what happened to Armenians remained in Turkey? Is it possible in present day to preserve the Armenian identity?

In the final chapter of this study in which we try to explain how Armenian schools and the policies enforced on these schools, Turkish identity which is imposed to be internalized in Turkish national education system and the forms of this identity’s perception of Armenianness effect identity perceptions of the Armenian students in Turkey and their ways of living Armenian identity, Armenian identities which is created by the time and space-based transitioning and differentiations in students’ ways of relation to school

¹⁸ Movsisyan, *Ermeni Tarihi*, 2017.

are covered comparatively. Experiences regarding identities will be discussed under the light of our findings on identity and school relationship which we tried to analyze in detail in various ways throughout the study.

When, under what conditions the students feel like an Armenian the most, what it means to be an Armenian and how they define Armenianness, which Armenian school they attend leave an impact on their identity formation, how they experienced discrimination in different schools and different age groups, in short, where Armenian students were injured are tried to be analyzed with the questions in the interviews. Comparing how long of their education of students was in Armenian schools and how long was in Turkish schools is the base of these analyses. This comparison, especially, will be on the basis of to which direction the first school transition of students who attended both Armenian and Turkish schools is and the effects of this transition on student's feelings of identity and belonging to a group. How the time spent in Armenian schools or the time after graduation of students and graduates who only attended Armenian schools affected student and graduates' evaluation of the schools and their identities is also an important factor determining the direction of comparisons. Because transitioning from one school to another, or lack thereof, determines a transition from one identity to another, or lack thereof.

CHAPTER II

THE EFFECTS OF TURCIFICATION POLITICS ON MINORITY AND ARMENIAN EDUCATION

2.1. Armenian Renaissance and Armenian Educational Institutions

We can understand how the identity perceptions of Armenians throughout the [history of] Turkish Republic has changed with assimilation policies by analyzing the transformations in Armenian education institutions. How have been the interactions of this transformation with political and social lives? How did the political and social issues affect the schools? How did the Armenians' education understanding and attitudes towards education change? In this section, it will be attempted to seek answer to these questions. For this purpose, we need to determine how and in which ways the mindset and policies regarding Armenian schools formed, proliferate and developed.

One of the main factors that secured for Armenians to protect their cultural identity has always been “the schools”. Till the 18th century, one of the most significant characteristics of Armenian education institutions was that they were educational institutions “whose religious quality was predominant.”¹⁹ Armenians paid great attention to education and education institutions especially after their own renaissance. “In the period in which commercial bourgeoisie developed as the driving force of the Armenian Renaissance’ by the end of 18th century, significant transformations in the education system was witnessed.”²⁰ In this period, education started to free

¹⁹ Kevorkian and Paboudijan, as cited in Karakaşlı, Kentel, Özdoğan, and Üstel, 2009, p. 182.

²⁰ *ibid.*

from religious supervision, number of Armenian libraries in the neighborhoods increased, private schools and training centers started to accrued.²¹

Due to the arise in intellectual awakening movements among the Armenian popular segments, it was triggered an increase in the number of private Armenian schools and training centers in every district of Istanbul and thus from 1790, opportunities to transition to establishment of the education institutions in various districts in Istanbul and in Izmir. The small number of people who knew Armenian grammar till 1820-1825 as well as the feature of the school in Kumkapı to teach Turkish side by side the Armenian grammar in 1824, and by this naming the İstanbul Kumkapı School as “Ali Mektep College” were significant steps.²² It was an indicator of Ottoman Empire’s tolerance to Armenian minority that following the memorandum of Armenian Patriarchate dated 1824, Armenian communities started to establish schools and thus according to a statistics collected by Armenian Patriarchate in 1834 there were 120 Armenian schools of which 4 in Adapazari, 3 in Merzifon, 2 in Manisa, 2 in Bafra, 2 in Kayseri, 2 in Erzurum, 2 in Egin and others in other cities and towns in Anatolia depending on the Armenian population concentration.

In addition, the existence of Nersesyan School in Hasköy with its 600 students in which all science and technology courses as well as an Armenian, Turkish, French and Italian languages were taught is a typical example of this [tolerance]. It was a great step that the enthusiasm for education among Armenian community gradually expanded, the youth who went and came back from Europe started to continue [their education] in Medical school and the at-the-time newly founded Çarkçılık Mektebi [Maritime college] as well as the

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Bolsohays News, 2013.

first Armenian Boarding College in Üsküdar named “Cemeran Mektebi” in 1838 was established.²³

In the work of Osman Ergin (1977) titled *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi* post-Tanzimat situations of the Armenian culture organizations and institutions is stated as such²⁴: In the years following Tanzimat, expanding the doors of Ottoman State colleges more [to minorities?] and thus benefiting from governments services played an encouraging role [and] opportunities to take cultural activities to anywhere in Anatolia through charities for schools was expanded.²⁵ During the Tanzimat period, minorities exercised their rights to education and schooling in which they could find the opportunity to express themselves freely. “Tanzimat process and in general the modernization of Ottoman state paved the way to the developments that would strengthen the civil side of Armenian community.”²⁶ In the years following 1839, there were many reforms from military to architecture, from literature to art, and Armenians played a vital role in this transformation. “These years were a stunning period in which people who lived within the borders of Ottoman Empire ceased to be subjects of the ‘padişah’ and turned into individuals related to the state with citizenship relation.”²⁷

Ali Suavi (1839-1878), one of the intellectuals of the period, had a special interest in education for foreign minorities living in the empire. He highlighted that the control of the education of the minorities which he called “Non-Muslim People” was not done sufficiently and this constituted one of the main education issues in the country. According to Suavi who questioned the rights given to minorities in the government, this lack of control was a

²³ ibid.

²⁴ ibid.

²⁵ ibid.

²⁶ Ergüney, 2007, p. 16.

²⁷ ibid.

“historical” incident, a unique issue.²⁸ In this period, it is questioned that “interest and attention paid to education of Ottoman state administrators and military class was unfortunately not presented in regards to the education of Muslim people. The reason for why non-Muslims education was that well was due to the establishment and organization of their own education institutions in the framework of the rights given to “foreigners”. As a result of this, Turkish intelligentsia of Tanzimat period who noticed that the Muslim children which constituted the majority/Ottoman’s main subjects received a worse education than non-Muslim children and following [this period] the mindset which formed around “victimization” and later turned into “xenophobia”, which we will see further later, tried to build supervision especially on Armenian schools.

The interest of Ali Suavi on minority education concentrated on Christian and Armenian minorities. With reference to Christian schools in Istanbul, he referred in some of his articles to the science and education activities of Christians and special minority susceptibility of Armenians regarding their education rights. His article title “Ermenilerde Ulum ve Maarif” starts with the identification that with their 150 thousand population Armenians progressed [in] education and science more than the other peoples. According to Suavi, there were 3 main reasons why Armenians progressed in education and science: school book and competent (qualified having pedagogical formation).²⁹ “Notable persons of Armenians established associations, opened schools, translated and printed books and chose qualified teachers.”³⁰

These identifications of Ali Suavi are identifications of the period Armenians lived their own renaissance. From the second half of the 19th century, the direct effects of modernization efforts in Ottoman regarding constitution and education fields on Armenian community [shows that]

²⁸ Doğan, 1980, p. 462.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 463.

³⁰ *ibid.*

Armenians were a part of the modernization efforts.³¹ In this period, many wealthy families both Turkish and Armenian started to send their sons to Europe especially France and Italy, for education. These youth belonging to Istanbul Armenian bourgeoisie brought back an “awakening” movement; too, [this awakening] manifested itself not only in literature and press fields but also in education. When the Armenian youth returned back to the country accompanied by the education and social life they observed abroad, “frequently meeting together at Muradyan Koleji, they discussed the ‘miserable’ life their people lived through on the Ottoman soil. They were not happy about the internal affairs of the state; they were not pleased as well about the central governance of the people. The words of Odyan describe best of their complaints.³²

In those days what the people had was a bad willpower, bad schools and an old language. Like Young Turks, Young Armenians too constituted the engine power of the period called Ottoman modernization and although it was manifested in different forms they entered the same fight against the same status quo.³³

1840 is considered the beginning of the period in which Armenians leapt forward in education in the Ottoman Empire. In the past 26 years, they opened 46 schools. Establishing schools was considered one of the main elements of progress in education. Thus, education and schooling was not subjected to tuition.³⁴ For the Armenian community, the 19th century was a period in which the efforts towards modernization of education was intensified, the necessity to raise the quality of education was discussed by Armenian intellectuals, In this period in which beside enrollment increase in number and diversification of schools gained momentum, by 1834 the number of community schools in Anatolia reached 114. The most important of these schools was Cemaran

³¹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 187.

³² *ibid.*, pp. 182-187.

³³ *ibid.*, p.183.

³⁴ Doğan, 1980, p. 465.

School (1838) in Üsküdar which was the first boarding school, Kevorkyan School near (1810) in Bursa and Kayseri School. In the regulation of Cemar School prepared by Amira Bezciyan, there were significant subjects regarding the applications of modern education methods as well as protection and development of Armenian culture. For instance, it was asked in the regulations to be attentive to only use Armenian at school and not to use foreign words.³⁵

This sentence summarizes the sentiment of Ali Suavi regarding how well the education in Armenian schools: “In Samatya School run by a private community taught even English language, unfortunately this excellent school was ruined in the Samatya fire in 1866.”³⁶ The amazement he expressed by saying “even the English language was taught” and the admiration he showed by saying “this excellent schools” turned into a form of hostility in the parts where he told how the policies for [these] schools needed to be.

Although education of Armenians in rural is not comparable to Istanbul, Galata school is considered to be organized like “Darulfunun” (university) Suavi who claims such central school would appeal to 340 thousand Armenians in the country points out that in that case besides studying in the same location, the school would also have a social function that the Armenian would be aware of each other’s’ conditions.³⁷ Ali Suavi who analyzed the function of education as bringing Armenians together socially, includes number of newspapers, sending students abroad, theater and art activities and translations of important classical texts as outside of school indicators of progress of Armenians in education. Ali Suavi’s identifications on this matter are as such:

Is there any bigger indication for the progress of Armenians in the matter of proliferation of general education idea in their societies than that in 1283 only in Istanbul 16 newspapers appeared? Considering that the first Armenian newspaper in Istanbul ... emerged in 1255, in the span of 27 years 16

³⁵ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 182-185.

³⁶ Doğan, 1980, p. 465.

³⁷ *ibid.*

newspapers appeared which indicates how literate they are. In Istanbul 481 Muslims only have 89 newspapers.³⁸

Ali Suavi who states that Armenians had newspapers even in rural areas also highlights that there were translations from foreign language and cultures on science morality and history: “Especially from French Dumas, Victor Hugo, Saint Eugeinsu and others’ texts...”³⁹ Another arts that Armenians mentioned [by Suavi] saying “they even have theaters in Beyoğlu” eager to learn was the science of medicine. A great deal of medical student raised in addition to them they have well-known masters in science requiring talent such as painting and embroidery. Ayvazevski still in Petersburg is a painter who acquired fame in art of painting all over Europe. Their skills in architecture and engineering are also undeniable. They build beautiful and strong buildings in Istanbul.⁴⁰ The conflicts in the 18th century between artisans and Amiras [high government officials] regarding the administration of Armenian school system ended with transferring the administration after 1853 by Armenian Nation Regulation to an Education Commission which is appointed by a special election. With this commission, Armenian education system becomes bound by a central supervision. According to Necdet Sakaoğlu, that Armenians “after 1860s slowly left community education behind and put the administration of their schools under supervision of Education Ministry through an education commission and to some extent tended to secular education”⁴¹ led to an increase enrolled student number [and] towards 1900. “Student capacity of Armenian schools reached 100 thousand.”⁴² Islahat Fermanı [Ottoman Reform Edict] (1856) included the following significant articles:

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 466.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Sakaoğlu, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 187.

⁴² Sakaoğlu, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 187.

Muslims and non-Muslims were to be considered equal before the law, testimonies of non-Muslims were to be accepted in courts. In addition, it was forbidden to use terms that refers to insults towards non-Muslim people. All nationalities were to be admitted equally to government services, schools, military duty and taxes were to be collected equally and tax farming was to be abolished. In other words, with this edict Muslim people lost the status of “sovereign people” that they considered natural.⁴³

With *Islahat Fermanı* dated 1856, in line with the understanding of equality of the subjects before the law, the right for all non-Muslims who had the necessary qualification to register all schools including the military schools. On the other hand, with this edict, it was declared that any community was able to open schools (vocational, commerce and other schools) appropriate for their own culture and language however curriculum and teachers of these schools were to be supervised by the council of education. After this edict, non-Muslim subjects in the Ottoman Empire opened many private schools.⁴⁴ The number of Armenian schools Istanbul which was 42 in 1859 raised to 51 in 1847. “In Anatolia, there was 469 Armenian schools of all levels. By the way, one of the distinctions of Armenian schools was that although there was no obligation Turkish along with Armenian was taught and arithmetic classes were taught in Turkish.”⁴⁵

Thanks to their planned and programmed education system, Armenians had education institutions that met what the day necessitated. As a matter of fact, from the end of the 18th century, with the private schools which gradually expanded education was freed from religion, education was dominated by the modern understanding and libraries were established. Schools were in way better condition than Muslim schools equipment and tools but also quality of education.⁴⁶

According to Zamacı, in a report dated 1894 schools in the province of Sivas were exemplified and it was indicated that from the perspective of education and orderliness the most excellent schools among others were Armenian schools. “Administration of Armenian schools was of a commission consisting

⁴³ Ergüney, 2007, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁴ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 188.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Zamacı, 2009, p. 82.

of people of community or wealth and [the schools] were free to encourage education.”⁴⁷ The thing Zamacı felt the obligation to highlight in her article in which she sees Armenian schools as places of missionary activities and spy schools was is that the “excellent” schools Armenians created with their hard work and their interest in literacy:

Beside the activities of missionaries, the attitude of Armenian society towards education and their perspective on the matter have a great part in that the Armenian schools are excellent from all aspects. Because Armenians who are hardworking and keen on literacy paid great attention to education matter. In their capacity, they built churches and schools [and] supplied for their needs. In that way, they aimed at protecting both these institutions and the national self of their communities gathered around these institutions.⁴⁸

However, we can liken this article published in 2009 which includes both praise and critique to the Tanzimat period ideas and comments of Ali Suavi: To struggle against these schools and to provide Muslim students better education opportunities than non-Muslim students. In 17 March 1863, Armenian Constitution in its final form was approved by Ottoman State in the name of “Armenian Charter”. According to this constitution, the National Parliament chooses the Religious Parliament from the list prepared by the clergy and election of the Patriarch was subjected to the National Parliament. Still, the Patriarch was considered as the president of the parliament and all institutions and as the person whom the Padishah would deal with. “However with this charter the process of the Armenians’ education movement being freed from religion gains momentum.”⁴⁹In the third article of Armenian National Constitution published in 1863 what is required from Armenians to do about the works regarding education was explained as follows:

The duties necessary of the nation is first and foremost to endeavor to meet the cultural and material needs of the persons of the nation and later not to bring shame and harm on the faith and legend of the Armenian Church. Later, to give teaching and education that is likewise necessary for humankind to all classes of boys and girls with [the principle of] equality, and fourth; to keep

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 188.

church, hospital, schools and similar structures and national charities prosperous and proud and to raise their income appropriately and meet their expenses as much as possible.⁵⁰

Education Commission responsible for education within the body of the parliament was also founded with this constitution. With this constitution, Armenians became the first society which had a comprehensive and written constitution in the Ottoman State. Krikor Odyan, Vahan Efendi (Hovhannes Vahanyan) and Çamiç Efendi who were the members of the commission preparing the Constitution were also the member of the commission which prepared Kanun-i Esasi [The Ottoman Main Law] announced in 1876.⁵¹

After the establishment of the education commission in this period, number of schools started to increase quickly. Getronagan School which is one of the high schools still able to teach today and raised leading intellectuals of Armenians of Turkey was established in 1886.⁵² Additionally, Berberyan School founded by the well-known pedagogue Reteos Berberyan in 1876, Beşiktaş Makruhyan School founded in 1868 were examples of these. More so in Anatolia, Sanasaryan School which was founded in 1881 in Erzurum and taught seven languages and Yeremyan School founded in 1880 in Van are also schools that came into operation in this period. “Local initiatives founded to create a secular and modern school network, cultural associations” and “Proliferation of Armenian as a community language”, as Somel indicates, are other prominent developments after 1860.⁵³

Hobsbawm tells that after 1870 three dynamics emerged in many locations in Europe [but] especially in France are directly related with legitimacy issue:

⁵⁰ Zamacı, 2009, pp. 82-83.

⁵¹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 187-189.

⁵² “As a result of the Patriarch Nerses Varjabedian II, in 1886 meaning in the period in which Armenian Enlightenment developed at its fastest pace, Getronagan School with its 64 students most of which Antolian origin, in which besides the episcopos Karekin Sirvantsdiant, the founder of Armenian ethnography, humorist Hagop Baronyan and philologist Hrant Asadur gave classes was founded” (Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 188).

⁵³ Somel, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 188-189.

“national education” concept and adoption of elementary school institutions as the secular counterpart of education which was monopolized in the hand of religious institutions till that day; invention of national holidays, ceremonies and celebrations and construction of governmental and monumental buildings. What was experienced in the Ottoman State should not be thought separately from these.⁵⁴

In the articles 15 and 16 of 1876 Kanun-i Esasi the right of every Ottoman to private or general education and the right of the state to supervise on all schools were mentioned. “That way, private education freedom and protection of the privileges of the communities were indicated.” On the other hand, in 1878 the right for non-Muslims to register in military college was once again repeated but giving the reasons of disloyalty of Bulgarian and Greek officers during the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War military colleges closed their doors again to non-Muslims.⁵⁵

Before there were no new regulations in the field of minority education with Lausanne, we can see the first cores against minority education institutions in the opinions critical of freedom of Christian and Armenian education institutions in the Ottoman of Ali Suavi, one of the Tanzimat period intellectuals. Ali Suavi comments on the days in which Armenians progressed on every matter as such: On the contrary to what the Westerners suggest on the “Eastern Question” which is the current political issue of the time, Christian minorities in the Ottoman are in such freedom (liberty) especially in terms of the use of education right.⁵⁶ More so, they are not supervised by the state in such activities. What this identification means from the Ottomans is that the problem keeps continuing despite any type ‘reform and progress’. In addition, the empire had no policy till the foreign schools. To put it more accurately, the empire follows a policy that condones any wish of the foreign schools. Another significant point brought up with this is that there is an education war between communities. Everyone, every nation had their own plan [and] make education,

⁵⁴ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 190.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Doğan, 1980, p. 470.

science and progress. [In the field of] education Ali Suavi reminds his brothers of Islam that only one of these nations would pass forward. In short, who gets the best of it will be the side who works more, who exceeds in education and science.⁵⁷

With the consciousness of non-Muslims advancement in education war, Ali Suavi is an important writer who could exemplify to show where the oppressive mindset that we will see later gets their strength from as he advocated for leaps forwards in education in order for Muslims to win the education war while on the other hand he said that the policies practiced needed to be more oppressive. He also worked as the principal of Galatasaray High school and in this school had analysis on how Muslim student who started their education in this schools could be more successful in comparison to non-Muslim students who, according to him, were favored. In his writings, Muslim students are the victims. “Foreigners” are far more advanced in these lands than their own children and the way thing are going should be stopped by introducing some regulations. The oppressive policies against non-Muslim schools which starter to manifest themselves slowly in different forms after Abdulhamid era started to form with [thanks to] these ideas.

It is important to say before everything else that representatives of non-Muslims peoples formed the national consciousness in modern sense before Turks. Armenians, as mentioned in the previous sections, was the first community in the Ottoman that was governed by a constitutional law, in 1908 they had a 45 year long constitutional regime experience. Their concept of a nation was based on specified community; whereas ITC [Committee of Union and Progress] had no such nation base. “In the words of Niyazi Berkes, Turkishness of the *Jeune Turc* came from the name the foreigners called them. Otherwise, members of intellectual and high strata were still not Turks but

⁵⁷ Doğan, 1980, pp. 470-471.

Ottomans.”⁵⁸ However, ITC which got a say in the Ottoman administration with Abdülhamid II’s declare of the constitution, was not too late to “bring into line” the different organizations they worked with pre-coup. Kolağası Niyazi Bey who led the ITC forces in armed struggle in Macedonia revealed the Turkism hidden in the Ottomanism ideology of the ITC as he said “This country is ours and as long as there is [only] one Turk living on [this land], we will not let anyone to be a master but Turks.”⁵⁹

The pressure politics of Abdülhamid II which gradually toughened between 1894-1896 significantly slowed down the education movements of the Armenian community. In 1886, “Mekatib-i Ecnebiye ve Gayrimüslime Müfettişliği”⁶⁰ [the Inspectorate Administration of Non-Muslims and Foreigners’ Schools] was founded as part of education ministry. Its duty was to control non-Muslim and foreign schools and to observe their programs. More so, teaching Turkish became obligatory and a Turkish teacher whose salary was paid by the Ottoman government was appointed to non-Muslim schools.”⁶¹

According to Selçuk Akşin Somel, one of the distinctions of this period was a period in which distrust of Abdülhamid regime to non-Muslims especially Armenians reflected clearly on education policies and “which was a pressure period in which education directorate started to be created in rural areas were in fact founded with the purpose of supervising Armenian schools,”⁶² Somel also indicates that the priority for education directorates were on Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Sivas and Van provinces and 1881 was a year in which activities of Migirdic Portugalyan who indoctrinated students with revolutionary and nationalist ideas in Armenian Central High School in Van

⁵⁸ Ergüney, 2007, p.25.

⁵⁹ ibid, p. 26.

⁶⁰ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 191.

⁶¹ ibid.

⁶² Somel, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 191.

attracted notice. On the other hand, the close control of the Ottoman administration on schools manifested itself in canceling of gymnastics classes with the worry of “secretly” giving military training and the ban on a significant portion of the textbooks which included subjects like literature, history and religion.⁶³

Understood from a statistics, there were 81226 students of which 21713 girls in 813 Armenian schools in 57 provincial centers of Anatolia. 1884 teachers of which 1545 male and 539 female worked [in these schools]. Private elementary and high schools in provinces, students in orphanages, public high schools and students in Catholic, Protestant, Latin, American, German and French schools were not included in these numbers. In case of adding the number of the students in these schools, number for Armenian students in Anatolia reaches 96822. Adding the number of students studying in Istanbul, in the school year of 1901-1902, the number of Armenian students who spread all over the Ottoman State reaches 104500. These numbers (even if they were hyperbolic) show how well organized Armenians in the Ottoman state in terms of education and culture.⁶⁴ According to a census conducted by the Patriarchate in 1913-1914 school year, in those years there were 64 in Istanbul 1932 in general in the Empire education institutions. These data found in the resources published by Turkish researchers shows that only in Anatolia in 57 administrative zones in 813 Armenian schools there were overall 80 thousand students attending schools. With *Mekatib-i Hususiye Talimatnamesi* [guidelines for private schools] announced by the state in 1915, the state got the chance to control community schools more closely. The guidelines originated in the need to control non-Muslim and foreign schools more after the Ottoman’s participation in the First World War in 1914. In the guidelines, it was written that communities can only open schools in their own neighborhoods and villages, in schools which teach in languages other than Turkish, Turkish,

⁶³ Somel, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 191.

⁶⁴ Bolsohays News, 2013.

Turkish History and Geography classes were to be taught by Turkish teacher in Turkish language and they were to be put under state control. The leaders of the communities and related officials were to turn in all necessary official information regarding the schools when demanded.⁶⁵ As such, for the first time classes “Turkish history and geography” which will later on after Lausanne continue under the name of “national history” and “national geography” and Turkish classes taught by Turkish teachers started to be given. Later, with the introduction of the obligation to have a Turkish head assistant to the principal aside from the principal in every non-Muslim schools, these teachers (who were appointed to non-Muslim schools, especially Armenian schools, in order to control and collect all sorts of information about the schools but who were also teachers as their secondary position) were perceived as agent teachers. In the following sections, how the existence of these teachers reflected on education institutions, how they affected, especially psychologically, other teachers and students [and] what form they took today will be exemplified. Interpreting these guidelines announced in 1915 as a form of source for the problems in Armenian schools continuing today, it is important that it was enacted for the first time.

The purpose of founding this inspectorate administration is to prevent harmful activities of non-Muslim and foreign schools which are distant from all types of control and move freely and control them. In this field, such precautions taken or intended to be taken against foreign schools are positive indicators presenting becoming conscious in education and will to modernize slowly started.⁶⁶

These controls which were deemed positive in Bayram Kodaman’s book explains the predominant sentiment among Turkist circles starting with the Committee for Union and Progress cadres. “That Armenians are internal extensions of enemies surrounding us and that they want to take away the last

⁶⁵ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 192-193.

⁶⁶ Kodaman Bayram as cited in Zamacı, 2009, p. 80.

piece of land we got.”⁶⁷ “Maybe that is why the heaviest price was paid by Armenians.”⁶⁸

2.2. The Origin of Turcification Policy: “Us” and “Others”

From its foundation, the Turkish Republic have pursued the goal of building a nation-state and conducted its policies on the basis of this understanding. “The Turkish nationalism that was re-defined by the Kemalist cadre during the first years of the Republic”⁶⁹ was in fact developed in line with the new unionist mindset. According to Aktar’s argument, “New Unionism” had always been present as a sub-stream under Kemalist Turkish nationalism.”⁷⁰ Then, what was the “Unionist” nationalist understanding which Kemalist Turkish nationalism was abstained from at the beginning yet later on became in tune with like.

Dündar (2008) in his book in which he takes into account the process of Unionist Turkification and especially the demographic aspect of this process attempts to analyze how “Similar to the history of humanity, the history of Ottoman and Turkey has been subject to transformation in line with migration movements”⁷¹. Fuat Dündar in his book titled *Modern Türkiyenin Şifresi*⁷² finds it appropriate to call the masterful bringing together of the Turkification

⁶⁷ ibid.

⁶⁸ Ergüney, 2007, p. 32.

⁶⁹ Aktar and Ayhan, 2004, p. 42.

⁷⁰ ibid., p. 41.

⁷¹ Dündar, 2008, p. 28.

⁷² ibid., pp. 28-31.

“practical/application” phases⁷³ of this two-stroke policy of “ethnicity engineering.”⁷⁴ During the period of the Ottoman expansion, emigration and acceptance of safarads who were expatriated from Spain were the major migration movements, and during the decline, immigrations and especially the migration from the Caucasians were the major migration movements. With the last Balkan migrations an ethnic homogenization period started, the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) of Macedonian origin gained the power with the 1913 coup and thus opened a period of power in which the immigrants were the determinants in the fate of the country. This would also be the case for the Turkish Republic. In other words, Caucasian migrations provided demographic reason and a basis for Islamic policies, so did Macedonian migrations for Turkification policies.⁷⁵

Dündar, who cites in his book that he aimed at looking into the ethnographic studies, ethnic statistics and ethnic maps which was prepared by the Unionists who executed the relocation and resettlement of millions of people from one part of the empire to another like an engineering accomplishment in light of the data gathered from the archives, [argues] that the Unionists who made the ethno-religious communities living in Anatolia a research subject, had resorted to this tendency not for an empirical knowledge but to put their policies in practice in a “scientific” fashion⁷⁶. The data which

⁷³ Dündar construes this simultaneous politics as two significant processes of the Unionists, meaning, building knowledge phase and application of this [knowledge] phase.

⁷⁴ Dündar explains why he chose the words “ethnicity engineering” as such: [the word] engineer derives from Arabic origin “hendese” meaning mathematics. At the same time, engineer (mühendis) derives from Latin ingen, meaning war craft. These two origins define the Unionist operation perfectly. Before anything else, it is used as to tell that the Unionist operation is a mathematical operation and the Unionists utilized relocation and resettlement not only as a tool of Turkification but also as an instrument of war craft, a war strategy (Dündar, 2008, p. 32).

⁷⁵ Dündar, 2008, p. 28.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 29.

the Unionists gathered had a very significant place in reshaping of Anatolian population. “As Hobsbawm and Anderson mention, the censuses are one of the most comprehensive operations of power on its people and have a significant role in the building of the modern nation-state.”⁷⁷ In fact, the period of becoming a nation-state was started way before the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The power comprising of the Unionists attempted to realize the process of making a nation-state *vis-a-vis* the domination which they attempted to have on population.

It becomes clearer in Talat Paşa’s notebook “Kara Kaplı Defter” that the Unionist Turkification is a statistical, a mathematical operation. In this notebook in which the information on Armenian, Greek, Arab and immigrant populations were recorded, incoming and outgoing populations for the ideal population composition desired to be created in Anatolia was calculated.⁷⁸ “These population registers prepared recording the outgoing population on the minus section and incoming population on plus section show that the Turkification operation was performed as an ordinary mathematical activity.”⁷⁹

The origins of this mindset that considers people only as numbers and which still continues today actually goes back to the Western population policies which is based on science of statistics. According to Dündar, the background of the operations in which the Unionists had resort to such “mathematical reasoning” “can be taken back to the statistical anxieties which underlies in the political impositions of the Western world on the Ottomans from the 19th century.”⁸⁰ According to Dündar, the Ottoman rule which gained its legitimacy through religion and the power of subjugation against the Western mindset which imposed the participation of the Christian constituents

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷⁸ Dündar, p. 427.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

in the government in the ratio of their population initiated the Ottoman censuses through the reforms which were made under the Western compulsion. “In order to make sure of the participation of the non-Muslims in the government as equal citizens, the West subjugated the Ottomans into their own statistical mindset.”⁸¹ For the Unionists who added positivist mentality to this imperial experience, being a religious and ethnic majority was in itself a necessary and a sufficient tool of legitimacy. No doubt, at the same time this was supported by the system and the conjuncture of the international relations which did not make these power questions its ruling ability as long as it got the majority.⁸²

According to Dündar who looks into the tools that the Unionists used during the operations in trying to understand what constitutes the limits of their nationalism, “Despite the prevailing color of civil nationalism in the official realm, what really characterized the Turkish nationalism was ethnic nationalism. Behind the discourse of “How happy is he who says I am a Turk” of today’s nationalism”, for Dündar, there is “an ethnic dimension which records origin and ethnicity and is put in place in the strategic positions in the state or during critical periods.”⁸³

Then, how and in what direction did the Unionist politics which operated against the non-Muslims evolve during the establishment of the Republic? In order to try to understand the direction of the ideas of the state regarding the minorities evolved and how it developed from the establishment of the Republic to this day, we must inevitably look into how the Turkish consciousness formed and were formed, where the limits of Turkishness started

⁸¹ “The quality among the Ottoman subjects was through ensuring the communities to participate in the state along with their population strength. In other words, the Ottoman parliamentary system was in fact no different than an ethnocracy which cared for the participation of minorities in the proportion of their population, their proportional participation to the state” (Dündar, 2008, p. 427).

⁸² Dündar, 2008, p. 428.

⁸³ *ibid.*

and ended. Especially from the late periods of the Ottoman State, Turkish ethnic identity was an identity that built and defined itself *vis-a-vis* “the other”. After the Ottomans which included many ethnic identities and religions in its structure, the cadre which was the founder in building a new nation-state kept the Unionist leadership at arm’s length at first, but this distance gradually disappeared after the first years of the Republic. Thus, “it became evident shortly that the founding cadres of the Turkish Republic did not think differently than the Unionist mindset when it comes to the non-Muslims in general and the Armenians in particular.”⁸⁴

“Kemalism defines ‘us’ as “those included in the Turkish ethnic identity”.⁸⁵ The rest lays under the ‘others’ category. According to Aktar, Kemalism which asserts that all ethnic groups who have been living in Anatolia for centuries are in fact Turkish tries to contain them too in Turkish ethnic identity through this method. Because the aim is to expand ‘us’, everyone living in the country is declared to be Turks.⁸⁶ In situations where it cannot achieve this structurally non-Muslims are categorized as “minority” or “foreigner”.⁸⁷

Ayhan Aktar claims that as different from Gökalp’s systematization, Kemalist nationalism changed the criterion for allegiance to Turkish national community/Turkish nation by defining “having Turkish ethnic identity”, and during the early years of the one-party era ‘us’ was defined as “those included in Turkish ethnic identity” by the Kemalists. According to Aktar, once this

⁸⁴ Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı, 2011, p. 18.

⁸⁵ Aktar, 2004, p. 101.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 102.

⁸⁷ The situation Hannah Arendt defined as “the tragedy of the nation-state” is that a nation-state regime which furnished its rightful citizens with a racial identity once, and as such undercut the law that is the substance of the state. Nation-State project cannot build a republic; in every known example, it is destined to turn into a state of emergency tyranny of bureaucracy as it dissolves into law (Hannah Arendt, as cited in Berman, 2007, p. 31.).

definition was institutionalized, the minorities who have been living in our country by conserving their religious and ethnic identities were involved in the category of ‘different / the other’.⁸⁸

There are two dimensions to this understanding which were ossified during the one-party era. First was to expand the diameter of ‘us’ by considering all Muslim groups living in Anatolia as ‘ethnically Turkish’ and second was to consider the non-Muslims whom it cannot realize as ethnically Turkish due to historical/structural reasons *de facto* ‘minority’ or ‘foreigner’. The policies of the Turkish Republic as a newly founded state applied to the minorities were the policies for its survival and further development. This discriminatory and anti-minority mindset nourished itself from exactly these aspects. This is the reason why the policies which were developed on the basis of the division between those included in Turkishness and not emerges as anti-minority politics. Therefore, the history of Turkification politics is also the history of the minorities in Turkey.

According to Barış, the non-Muslims living in Turkey, on the other hand, thought that their life styles in the Ottoman Empire would continue in the Republican period. In this new order in which they were no longer subjects but citizens, they started living with more self-confidence. However, the reforms the Republic was to make, policies for the Turkification of the Minorities pressing on the minorities to leave their community life continued without interference for years and the attitudes of the minorities manifested in support of the Allied Forces during the National Independence were not erased from the social memory. Indeed, these are the most significant indicators that the lives of the minorities would not be the same.⁸⁹

Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan say that the minority politics of the Republic, to say the least, was based on threatening, intimidation, repression, assimilation

⁸⁸ Aktar, 2004, p. 132.

⁸⁹ Barış, 2007, p. 67.

and attenuation.⁹⁰ Indeed, as a result of this policy which was supported by many practices like the Thrace Incidents in 1934, the practices of 1936 Declaration, 1941 Random Draft of Non-Muslims, 1942 Wealth Tax, 6-7 September 1955 Incidents, seizure of non-Muslim foundation's property, population and culture of non-Muslims, and in it Armenians, continued to disappear throughout the Republic.⁹¹

While the practiced discriminatory “minority politics” signals the violation of equal citizenship rights with regard to non-Muslims, it also indicates that due to both their sociologically religious and ethnic differences and being considered as “threat risk”, they were not perceived as natural elements of the nation. “This clearly pointed that: Non-Muslims were not considered equal citizens.”⁹² Turks who constantly feel under threat, believed they could be destroyed (by domestic and foreign forces) and were expected to be always on alert and brave against these threats and built their identity on the basis of some sort of a fear republic.

While conducting readings and research for this study in which I will touch upon the process of how Armenian identity in Turkey was and is formed, I noticed that this issue, meaning “the issue of building the Armenian identity could not be distinguished much from the issue of building Turkish identity. This mutuality was for sure a significant point which was necessary for me to refer to in the attempt to understand the process of minority identity formation process. This is in fact the reason why I chose the title of this chapter as the Turkification politics and practices in connection with the minorities. I consider all of this as different clusters which are blindly interdependent and which simultaneously advance, transform, while from time to time vertically cut each other also time to time blanket each other. After the Unionist mindset which aspired to create Turkish consciousness in the nation-state building process and

⁹⁰ Kılıçdağı, 2011, p. 21.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹² *ibid.*, p. 21.

population operations, the history of which paths the non-Muslim communities who had a really different structure in the Ottoman period passed on is also the history of the building of the “Turkishness”/Turkish nationalism/Turkish ethnic identity process.

The discourse, which remains almost intact in today’s Turkish Republic includes ascriptions like “minority/other/foreigner/enemy/non-Muslim/trouble-maker/secret agent” and is accustomed to perceive these elements as a threat to itself, manifests itself in various ways in our country through both actors in the political arena and social movements or through behaviors reflecting on public space. The primary groups that this understanding which always needs an “other” for the continuation and maintaining of Turkishness damaged the most, for this reason, has been the non-Muslim minorities. The evaluation below made by Ohannes Kılıçdağı in Agos Newspaper in a recent newspaper column is one of the main themes to be referred in this study. According to Kılıçdağı, Turkey is a country which requires re-building every single day. Every state and nation, especially the nation-states, is partly like this. They have to reproduce the values, the assumptions, the practices that they are based on. Central national education, military, media exist for this. According to Kılıçdağı, the main question is, “what is the will of constituting a nation in Turkey” and “what kind of a collective psychology does this will depend on”. The answer to these questions is no doubt multilayered. However, one of the most distinct characteristics is that Turkey has been in a constant birth, in an establishment crisis. The minds could no way exceed the knife edged situation between existence and non-existence. That is why it is frequently said that “the Independence War is still ongoing...From this perspective, Turkey has not been freed, has not been established. Turkey is a ‘Never land’, ‘non-existent country’. Every morning its existential anxieties get refreshed, it lives all day with the worry whether or not it will reach the evening, for this reason it is aggressive to its surroundings. According to Kılıçdağı, the dialectics of the issue is that this anxious aggressiveness moves other potential violence against

Turkey, and at last this strengthens Turkey's anxieties and creates a vicious cycle.⁹³

Why does Turkishness or any identity (identification) always require a foreigner, minority, other? Because its own existence depends on the other's existence. If we think through Hegelian⁹⁴ dialectics, when two consciousness face each other, an existential war starts, however with that war starts the process of being aware of their own consciousness. If we consider the fear of annihilation, the anxiety created by the idea that there are internal and external forces that always wish to annihilate them as a form of false consciousness, in fact Turkishness can never set itself free⁹⁵ either. A Turkishness created in this way for sure would turn in to a "paranoid despot". While the "paranoid despot" tell the "schizophrenic machine" "I will not let you be", the schizophrenic machine responds with "let me be".⁹⁶

"Because its survival depends on the death of the victim; however the victim can die once but it has to continue living, its existential energy should be replenished. It finds itself in an endless dilemma."⁹⁷ On the relationship of Armenianness with Turkish identity, in the same article Ohannes Kılıçdağı, with an allegorical tone, attempts to explain the situation in which the Turkish Republic with this mindset comes to the grave of its victim, brings the victim

⁹³ Kılıçdağı, 2016

⁹⁴ cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 2003.

⁹⁵ cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 2003.

⁹⁶ It looks easy to differentiate schizophrenia and paranoia in its linguistic and phenomenological senses. (even the forms of paranoia that are called paranoid): "leave me alone" of schizophrenia and "I will leave you alone" of paranoia, the combination of the signs in paranoia, mechanical arrangements of schizophrenia, the large paranoid communities and small schizophrenic crowds, the plans of reactionary wide integration in paranoia and active lines of escape in schizophrenia, all of these sit on different platforms (cf. Deleuze, *Two Regime of Madness*, 1998).

⁹⁷ Kılıçdağı, 2016.

out of its grave and kills it again and again, and imprison itself inside a vicious cycle.⁹⁸

It wants its victim to both die and live, it wants its victim to live so that it can kill it again. That is why it looks for, finds ‘the Armenian’ in everything, it creates ‘the Armenian’ everywhere. Every threat to it shall be “Armenian” so that it can kill it, torment it with inner peace...Even if there is not one single Armenian on earth, no doubt the Turkishness would create it.⁹⁹

Jenny White in her work *Müslüman Milliyetçiliği ve Yeni Türkler* questions how Turkish nationalism and Turkish identity is shaped, what it means to be a Turk, how the discourses about Turkishness are materialized and while she assesses the role of limits and purity of Turkish identity in its reproduction, she tries to show the effort to “similarize” the population against the “enemy” definitions and its fear of border transgressions and how it keeps the taboos alive. According to White, no matter what category it is in, any nationalist develops a self-representation strategy which includes certain knowledge about Turkishness in relation with historical narratives explaining Turkey and Turkishness. Because these main components of Turkishness are moved by nationalist leaders and their followers in political community, they may get in conflict with each other, coincide with each other or change in time. What is striking is that from the early years of the Republic the main element which bonds the Turkish national identity has continued in a quite consistent fashion.¹⁰⁰ Then, how did this continuation hold on? In the following sections of this chapter, I will attempt to explain both how this continuity was possible and how the components of this continuity one interlinked with minority politics.

Building the identity of Turks *vis-a-vis* the other is like a wrap that covers every issue in the nationalist history of Turkish Republic. Any ethnic element outside of Turkish ethnic identity is considered as an element that

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ White, 2014, p. 15.

taints the purity of Turkishness and profanes it. “In Orthodox Kemalism’s understanding of the nation, being a Muslim is considered as a main element of Turkish blood, and solidarity is envisioned as the unity of the blood and the race.”¹⁰¹ This understanding is paired with a severe fear of disintegration of unity and thus of the national unity. Therefore, the society becomes a product of a sentiment of constant threat.”¹⁰²

Kaya conveys Kymlicka’s ideas about minority nationalism in the article “Avrupa Birliği Bütünleşme Sürecinde Yurttaşlık, Çokkültürlülük ve Azınlık Tartışmaları: Birarada Yaşamın Siyaseti.” Will Kymlicka defines the minority nationalism as a universal phenomenon and he makes a significant distinction regarding the forms of the state response to the minority demands both in Western and Eastern Europe. Kymlicka, argues that in Western Europe the national minority demands are considered as some sort of *justice and equality pursuit*, whereas in Eastern and Central Europe they are viewed in relation to *national security being threatened*. While in the West, the aim is to find a more or less fair conciliation point for both the majority and the minority; in the East the aim is to prevent the minorities to become a threat to the existence of the state or territorial integrity.¹⁰³ “As it is evident here that there is a huge difference between the two perspectives summarized above. On the one hand the discourse of *right and justice*, on the other hand the discourse of *loyalty and security*.”¹⁰⁴ After making such a comparison, Kymlicka indicates that the justice discourse is no doubt preferable than the security discourse and asserts the idea that it is possible to export the Western model to the other countries.¹⁰⁵ The examples Kymlicka gives in his works are mostly

¹⁰¹ White, 2014, p.15.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ Kaya, 2006, p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 19.

concerning Eastern and Central European states and national minorities. From the perspective of the relations between the minorities and the state, it is very well possible to make a connection with the examples that Kymlicka gives and the example of Turkey. It is possible to say that there are multiple similarities between the tendency of Turkey to govern the cultural, ethnic and national diversity and the tendencies apparent in Eastern and Central European states.

¹⁰⁶ While the discourse of loyalty against the minorities was predominant for long years during the Ottoman era, with the initiation of the process of becoming a nation-state, the discourse that considers the minorities as a national threat overlaps with what Kymlicka signals as security discourse, too.

Similar to Eastern European states, there is a strong tendency of Turkey to evaluate the demands voiced by the ethnic and national minorities in relation to security and to lie heavy on the discourse of national security. “Turkey in fact has a long history in terms of making various subjects like Kurdish issue, Cyprus issue, political Islam, minority cultures and EU membership a security issue.”¹⁰⁷ All these matters can be evaluated by some groups in military and political institutions as a matter of national security and a chain of threats against the national security and unity.¹⁰⁸

2.3. The History of Turkification Politics is also the History of Minorities in Turkey

The treaty signed in Lausanne after the Independence War constitutes the source of the concept of majority, minority and identity which have prevailed till this day in the Turkish Republic. In fact, it can be argued that the Lausanne Treaty negotiations were the place in which historically later founded republican regime’s main principles were determined to a certain extent. In that

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

sense, it is necessary to indicate at once that the relationship with the Lausanne Treaty falls way behind the current stage today in regards to human rights and minority rights. In Lausanne, the most significant principle which Turkish delegation adopted in defining the minority was the principle that in the Turkish Republic, similar to the Ottoman state, there were three minority groups (Armenian, Greek and Jew) and legal rights of these groups were to be protected. Persons who belonged to these minorities were to have the equal rights with everyone as the citizens of Turkish Republic.¹⁰⁹ Since the Lausanne Treaty was still molded with the mindset which sees non-Muslims as a threat to the national security, many articles which intended to protect the rights of the minorities were not *de facto* implemented.

Although the identity of the Turkish Republic was built on Turkishness, instead of what this concept entails, how it needs to be interpreted, defining the characteristics of those who belong to this identity, it focuses on those excluded from this identity. Within this context of nationalist approach, non-Turks are left outside of definition; when it comes to [the question] who is a Turk, the definition adopted in the early years of the Republic is formed in accordance with cultural nationalism as in those who speak Turkish language and share Turkish culture. Although this definition theoretically raises the chance for all Muslim and non-Muslim minorities in Turkey to be included in Turkish citizenship and to adopt the Turkish identity, the stratification which existed in relation with religion as the main category in the Ottoman state re-crystallizes and rises to prominence. Thus, the Turkish identity becomes an exclusive element instead of a unifying component and although the state adopts the secularism principle, in addition to Turkish identity Muslim-Sunni sub-identity becomes active in the social structure.¹¹⁰

According to Aktar, Taha Parla brings up two faces of the Kemalist nationalism. One of these is a defensive, equalitarian, ethnically diverse,

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

cultural understanding of nationalism. Second is an understanding which is put in practice especially against non-Muslim minorities and in which “ethnic sovereignty-exclusivity-exclusionism”¹¹¹ characteristics of Turkish element is put forward. Minorities who became the target of the second understanding have remained as citizens who were considered as ‘conditional’, ‘limited’, ‘forgotten’ and ‘after all not one of us’ in the Republican Turkey. “Marsel Franko in his writing names the condition characterized by ‘being forgotten’ as ‘half citizenship, being a guest’ and ‘Civil Code Turkishness’.”¹¹² The reflection of ethnic nationalism which emerged after the first years of the Republic when the cultural nationalism was active on the definition of citizenship also develops in the same context: “Although re-defined minorities have legal and political rights in theory, in practice they can fully benefit neither from these rights nor the newly emerging social rights.”¹¹³

Then, what kind of policies did the Kemalist founding cadre apply against “the minorities/internal forces” who were considered as a constant threat by the society and how did these politics constantly repeat themselves in the Turkish politics without slowing down after the one party era? What is the connection between Turkification politics and sanctions practiced against the minorities? Aktar in his work defines the political practices shaped around the hegemony of Turkish ethnic identity as “Turkification policies”. According to Aktar the intention of these policies was “from the language spoken on the streets to the history learned in schools, from education to industrial life, from commerce to state personnel regime, from private law to settlement of the people in certain regions in every dimension of the social life domination and reassertion of Turkish ethnic identity.”¹¹⁴ Every action and effort conducted

¹¹¹ Aktar, 2004, p.133.

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ Kaya, 2013, p. 37.

¹¹⁴ Aktar, 2000, p. 101.

with the aim of Turkification in this sense at the same time and inevitably has become an ‘anti-minority’ politics. To see what ‘us’ and ‘them’ consists of, how they are defined carries the tips of what kind of a nationalism predominated during the first years of the establishment of the national state in Turkey. Kemalist nationalism in which belonging to Turkish national identity is only through being included to “Turkish ethnic group” is different in that sense from both Gökalp and “Empire nationalism” of the Sultan Abdülhamid II era. This difference emerges in many places where Kemalism is felt.¹¹⁵

With the Resettlement Law which was passed in 1934, Kemalist cadre Turkified its ethnic policies further. The Armenians in the central Anatolia were exiled to Istanbul already before the Resettlement Law. “Later, the exile of the Thracian Jews to Istanbul, too, is one of the most striking examples of minorities put to forced settlement...”¹¹⁶ According to the second article of the law, minorities who did not feel devoted to the Turkish culture were to be subject to resettlement to ensure assimilation. With article 11, “Internal Affairs Ministry was given the authorization to subject the minorities whose first language was not Turkish to resettlement due to cultural, military, political or social reasons.”¹¹⁷ During the incidents known as 468 Thrace Jewish Incidents, [which occurred] two weeks after the Resettlement Law had passed, there were attacks on houses and shops of the Jews, women were raped, those who would not leave their place were threatened with death. After these incidents, Jews in the Thrace escaped to Istanbul. The economic dimension of the Thrace Incidents was explicated by American Consulate officer Charles E. Allen in his report prepared for the situation of the minorities in Turkey in 1938 as such:¹¹⁸ “Throughout the history the Turk learned that there is no better way than

¹¹⁵ Barış, 2007, pp. 65-66.

¹¹⁶ Güven, 2005, p. 99.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

relocation in order to led up debt and confiscate the property of valuable goods.”¹¹⁹

Beside the settlement policies, Turkification measurements in cultural and economic realms were continued. With enlisting of non-Muslims in 1941 and later with the Wealth Tax Law which was raised in 1942 and which can be considered as a form of deportation law Turkification policies had gradually became more poignant. The seemingly liberal minority policies which CHP followed since 1946 was in fact determined only in regards to foreign politics and party tactics. As a matter of fact, there is a secret expert report which shows clearly that in 1946 the ruling elites of CHP did not consider non-Muslims as Turkish citizens and which include strategies of the state to definitively deport this section of the population. In this report, Turkish nationalism was defined as a unity of language, culture and ideal, at the same time, it was expressed that non-Muslims had not felt devoted to any of these principles and thus they had continued their community lives without the intention of integrating with the Turkish culture. “This attitude of non-Muslims were based on the lack of a historical bond with the Turks as they contributed neither the establishment, nor the advancement and nor the defense of the Ottoman Empire.”¹²⁰ Minorities like Greeks who were in the position of bringing their own state forward preferred to have a connection with their own nation-state instead of showing loyalty to the Turkish state. Every attempt of the government towards unification had failed. “Non-Muslim minorities showed no imminence to Turks and although partially they still could betray. According to this report, expecting these groups to carry through the party principle of language, culture and ideal unity with Turks was “to ask for the impossibility.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 122.

¹²¹ *ibid.*

Therefore, the “problem” could only be solved with forcing the non-Muslims to migrate outside of the country. According to the report, 90 percent of the non-Muslims had lived in Istanbul and constituted “an urgent problem”. However, before moving forward to the solution of this problem, the rest of Anatolia needed to be cleansed from non-Muslims. As a result of the population exchange, there was no Greeks left living in Anatolia. The Armenian issue in Anatolia appeared to be solved thanks to the deportation in 1915. However, because there was a tendency of rise in the numbers of the rest of the Anatolian Armenians, they needed to be first moved to Istanbul. In Istanbul, it needed to make it easy for the non-Muslims to migrate abroad, to prevent their access to economic and financial resources here, for example it needed to be avoided to employ them in state enterprises. According to the report, the main problem was constituted by the Greek minority: “In Istanbul, we should take serious precautions especially against the Greeks. In this sense, there is in fact only one sentence to say: till the 500. Anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul, there should not remain one single Greek in this city.”¹²² Politics practiced for Turkification “reached its peak point of discrimination with the enactment of the Wealth Tax Law and right after its enforcement.”¹²³ In 11 November 1942, the Wealth Tax Law with the law no. 3305 was enacted. “During the time the Wealth Tax Law, which was annulled in 1944, was in effect, 53 percent of the collected 315 million liras was taken from the non-Muslims.”¹²⁴ “According to some data 1400 and to other 6-8000 people were sent to working camps.”¹²⁵

This law which caused a major replacement of the assets of the non-Muslims in fact became one of the major pillars of Turkification of the

¹²² Bali, 2003, p. 554.

¹²³ Kaya, 2013, p.41.

¹²⁴ Akar, 2009, p. 144.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 89- 90.

economics. Turkish bourgeoisie created itself on the basis of the wealth of the non-Muslims. “Although enactment of the Wealth Law meant the violation of the minority rights settled in the Lausanne Treaty, not one single Western country which was a party to the Treaty protested the discriminatory practices of the Turkish government.”¹²⁶ Minorities were left alone in their pursuit of their rights. “In comparison with the other discriminatory regulations, the Wealth Law caused a pretty much loss in confidence of the non-Muslims. Therefore, the hope that the non-Muslims would be treated as equal citizens with the establishment of the Republic diminished to a great extent. This practice was followed by a great wave of migration of the non-Muslims. “Especially following the two years (1948-49) of the establishment of the Israeli state approximately 30000 Jews migrated to Israel.”¹²⁷ “However, the migration abroad was not limited to Israel. The table showing the quantitative distribution of Turkish citizens between 1927-55 who were categorized in accordance with their religions shows the critical fall in Christian and Jewish populations.”¹²⁸

After the election victory of Democrat Party in the spring of 1950, non-Muslim minorities hoped that the liberal politics of the new government would also bring a more democratic attitude for the minorities of the country. A series of measures taken by the DP were also the indicators that the state elites approached the aforementioned minorities with quite tolerance. However, the air of happiness created by the relationship between non-Muslim minorities and the DP administration which appeared improved at first left itself later to the understanding that the view of the DP on the non-Muslims was not much different than of the CHP.¹²⁹ With the Turkish offices making the activities of

¹²⁶ Güven, 2005, p. 117.

¹²⁷ Bali, 2003, p. 537.

¹²⁸ Güven, 2005, p. 118.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 174.

the non-Muslim communities harder, similar to the past the non-Muslims began to be treated as second class citizens. Simply, the liberal minority politics followed by the DP since 1950 appeared just as a display created with the calculations of foreign politics and party tactics. Aggravation of debates regarding Cyprus in 1954 completely depleted the good faith of the DP government for the non-Muslims.¹³⁰

Minorities underwent through Turkification politics in various forms up to today. The history of Turkification starting with the Turkification of economics and bureaucracy to Turkification of language, from Turkification of cultural and educational institutions to settlement politics, from “Thrace Jewish Incidents” in 1934 to forced migration of Armenians between 1929-1934, from “the Campaign of Citizen, Speak Turkish” during the 1930s to non-enlistment of minorities in the military in 1941, from collection of “Wealth Tax” from non-Muslims in 1942 to “6-7 September Incidents” and to Cyprus Issue is for this reason is the history of the minorities. This history is the history of injustices against the minorities.

2.4. Turkification of Education: Government Policies for Minority Education Institutions

The role of the education institutions was significant in building the state of Turkish Republic on an ethnic base in the framework of the nation-state as a political/ideological model.¹³¹ “During the first years of the Republic, while education was imagined as a tool of raising good citizens in the process of building the nation-state, the responsibility of the state in this field was more emphasized.”¹³² “The homogenization of society and gathering everybody around the Turkish nation became the main purpose for the founders of the

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

¹³¹ Gülpınar, 2005, p.195.

¹³² *ibid.*, p.187.

Republic of Turkey.”¹³³ “Many instruments were used to homogenize society and gather people around the Turkish culture, education being one of the most significant instruments.”¹³⁴ That is why, one of the main reforms of the young Republic was the fundamental transformation of in the field of education as one of the most significant tools.

Education has always been at the intersection of politics, culture and economy in the society and played a significant role especially in the building processes performed in this field by the nation-states. More so, education, thanks to the intersection points in these fields, has been a process which produced and reproduced the social.¹³⁵

The main focus of education in the 19th century was how to understand and dissolve the differences in the society which was organized around the nation-state.¹³⁶ This process of transformation which can also be described as the nationalization of education aimed at homogenizing the Turkish people in the nation-state. In the newly founded Turkish Republic the minorities in the new country built on the basis of nation-state model in which Turkish language, Turkish culture, Sunni-Hanefi Islam belief were at the center, [minorities] as multilingual, diverse ethnic and religious identities were considered as a threat to the ‘indivisible unity of the nation’ and met with different policies than the Ottoman Empire era.¹³⁷

In the Ottoman Empire era, non-Muslim minorities had the right to establish and administer their own educational institutions. However these rights were started to be limited before the establishment of the Republic. The mindset that viewed the minority schools as homes of missionary activity and agent schools started to make same changes on these rights.

¹³³ Özdoğan, 2015; Polat, 2011; as cited in İbrahimoğlu and Yılmaz, 2015, p. 1638.

¹³⁴ İnce, as cited in İbrahimoğlu and Yılmaz, 2015, p. 1638.

¹³⁵ Gülpınar, 2005, p.188.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p.189.

¹³⁷ Oran, 2004, p. 111.

Before the Independence War, the schools of non-Muslim minorities living in the country had a different position than the other education institutions with their internally established order. However the first clue regarding that this situation would not continue as was hidden in the answer The Minister of Education Hamduallah Suphi Bey to a journalist asking the question what he thought of the non-Muslim schools. He explained in no uncertain terms that the future for the minority schools was dark:

As known in our county due to really painful and really bloody events, non-Muslim schools cannot continue to serve as political propaganda centers. Considering the generality of these schools, as long as they remain by the hands of committees which generate centrifugal movements which incite directly every day the conflict between the children who belong to different elements of the country, consenting to their existence would mean to free a subversion organization founded against the security of the country. We will enforce the maximum stipulations of control in order to forbid non-Muslim schools from these activities.¹³⁸

It is clearly evident in this statement of The Minister of Education Hamdullah Suphi Bey that non-Muslim schools were considered as an element of threat to national security, a movement, a propaganda tool. The Ministry in 1922 started the applications of their first sanctions after this statement by declaring that the existing Alliance schools could continue their activities however they would not be able to open new ones. It is also striking that during the constitutional debates regarding the Citizenship Law in the same period there was no mention of non-Turkish Muslims. Clearly, the new Turkish identity was to include ethnically non-Turkish Muslims” However, this identity would not include the non-Muslims. The proposition of the Commission of Citizenship Law stating “Regardless of religion and race difference, the people

¹³⁸ Bali, 2003, p. 186.

of Turkey are called Turkish.” was criticized by Parliament member Hamdullah Suphi Bey in reference to the non-Muslims in the country¹³⁹:

First, accept the Turkish culture [addressing to non-Muslims (author’s note)]. Then we can call you Turkish. But you keep emphasizing on the difference in language and religion and existing separatist tendencies. Then you come to us and say ‘Consider us as Turks’. If you keep opposing like this, I cannot do anything for you. Because, I don’t believe your sincerity.¹⁴⁰

From this speech, it was asked by Hamdullah Suphi Bey from minorities [not] to emphasize their language and religion differences, thus in short, to disregard the main elements that make minorities themselves and to dissolve under Turkishness.

Regarding the opposition of PM Celal Nuri Bey about what would be the situation for Jewish, Armenian and Greeks if they were not to be granted citizenship [and] with the proposition of PM Hamdullah Suphi Bey, article 88 was changed as such: “Regardless of religion and race difference, the people of Turkey are called Turkish by citizenship.” The inscription “by citizenship” added to the article of the changed law is an indicator that they considered minorities as ‘so-called citizens’. The meaning of this change is that although the non-Muslims have the same citizenship rights and duties before the law, they are not considered as Turks in the public.

Therefore the newly passed Citizenship Law does not consider non-Muslim minorities as Turks. This would mean that it chose to consider them as foreigners. The consistency between this law and the sanctions against minority schools also explains why they view minority schools as an element of threat which grew through “xenophobia”. Minorities are internal forces and minority schools are the homes of activity which would hurt the indivisible unity of the nation. With this discourse, The mindset that created the Turkification politics which turned into anti-minority policies would manifest itself in both political and social lives by constantly assuming different forms.

¹³⁹ Güven, 2005, p. 82.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

The right to establish and administer their own schools for minorities during the Republican era was secured with Lausanne Peace Treaty signed in 1923 by the Grand National Assembly of Turkish government and the Allied states. The Third section of the Treaty titled “Protection of the minorities” includes certain regulations regarding the protection of some rights of minorities including the education rights in the newly founded Turkish Republic.¹⁴¹

With the Law of on Unification of Education passed in 3 March 1924, all schools were connected to Maarif Vekaleti in which is later called as the Ministry of National Education, With this law, the dual structure of “school-madrassa” was terminated. While the unification of education and teaching abolished the duality between religious and secular education institutions, at the same time, it also abolished the multiple education authority between the schools established and administered by Muslims, non-Muslim local minority and foreigners and it connected all schools to Maarif Vekaleti [Ministry of Education].¹⁴²

The new system which also brought the centralization of the curriculum gave all the authority to the Ministry of National Education [MEB] on issues like which classes would be taught in minority schools, which curricula would be followed, in which languages the classes would be taught and from what origins of teachers would teach the classes.¹⁴³ Today, the effects of this decision have become the source of the problems of minority schools which are gradually closing down. One year before the Unification of Education, the decision of about the language of education and about the ethnic origins of teachers was made. Also, the salary of minority teachers was not to be paid by the Ministry of Education.

Later in 1923 the Board demanded that all classes in all minority schools would be taught by teachers of Turkish-origin, that Turkish, history and geography classes would be taught in Turkish and again these classes would be taught by Turkish teachers assigned by the Ministry instead of teachers

¹⁴¹ Kaya, 2013, p. 2.

¹⁴² Gülpınar, 2005, p. 191.

¹⁴³ Kaya, 2013, p. 2.

belonging to minorities. “The salary for these new teachers would be higher than their equivalents and despite all the opposition, they were to be paid by minority schools instead of the Ministry of Education.”¹⁴⁴ In the same institution, one teacher was to be paid more than his colleague who had no difference than himself other than nationality [origin]. Additionally, although 41st article of the Lausanne Treaty mandated the state to support the minority schools financially in practice this was omitted altogether. While the non-Muslim schools expected financial support from the state after Lausanne, they met with an opposite practice. Many schools started to close down due to financial hardships:

[The newspaper] *Tercumani Hakikat* [The Voice of Truth] which reminded that during the Independence War Jews and Armenians made a lot of money on the expense of Turks found it very appropriate that salaries of the teachers were to be paid by minority communities. Two prestigious schools belonging to Greek community had to shut down as they could not pay the salaries of Turkish teachers for a few months.¹⁴⁵

After about a year over this decision in 1925, Prime Minister İsmet Paşa gave a speech in Teacher’s Union. With this speech which reflected clearly the national education philosophy of the Republic declared the end awaiting minority schools:

We want national schooling; what does this mean? We would understand it more clearly in comparison to its opposite. If they ask what the opposite of national schooling is, we can say, maybe it is religious schooling or international schooling. The schooling that you will give is not religious but national, not international but national. This is the system... Our schooling will be ours and for us... In this monolith, foreign culture should all be dissolved. There cannot be other civilizations in this national body.¹⁴⁶

At the end of this speech, İsmet İnönü talked about what kind of duties he had given them and how teachers of the system should educate the generations with national schooling.

Here we offer openly to those who see themselves belonging to other communities other than the civilization of Turkish nation: they shall be with

¹⁴⁴ Bali, 2003, p. 187.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Bali, 2003, p. 190.

Turkish nation... This homeland is of this only nation and nationality. We are not saying this as a matter of speech. This policy is the whole life of this homeland... This is the general aim of the system that we call schooling.¹⁴⁷
This speech became an early warning of Turkification politics that were to be put in practice by Board of Education for minority schools. In 1925, a circular letter regarding minority and foreign schools was published. In this memorandum, it was declared that Turkish, history and geography teachers needed to be Turkish.¹⁴⁸

According to Gülpınar, The Turkish Republic which took place in the arena of history as a late nation-state approached education from an “authoritarian pedagogical” perspective and today it tends to continue to do so. In fact, for Gülpınar, if we speak in hyperbole, the history of the Republic itself is the history of pedagogy of its people in the process of building the ideal nation. From the late period Ottoman reform attempts to the date, the nationalizing and civilizing projects were formed not on the basis of popular-democratic demands of the masses and classes but mostly on the basis of bureaucratic *Weltanschauung* (worldview) and in relation to its official culture.¹⁴⁹

The role of the Turkish national education system in providing the national unity was really significant and it tried to create a xenophobic curriculum. While on the one hand intervened with the education in minority schools, on the other hand it was building its national education on the basis of this opposition: “The clearest source of information about a nation or what characterizes the members of this nation is its education system. Till very recently, Kemalist nationalism was taught in the curriculum and textbooks as a culture fearing and suspecting from outside. Ideal nation is homogenous and ruled by the state which provides order and unity. Cultural amalgamation and hybridity is perceived as a threat to the state. Since the Turkish-Islam Synthesis

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Barış, 2007, p. 85.

¹⁴⁹ Açıkkel, as cited in Gülpınar, 2005, p. 193.

out in practice during the 1980s, the school curricula, too, emphasized the organic relation between Turkishness and Sunni Islam.”¹⁵⁰ Till that day, the textbooks suggested one ideal: national unity and solidarity [and] integrity, meaning having one voice. Raising different voices meant disorder in society. Kenan Çayır writes that the concept of the nation in the textbooks “does not include differences or tolerate them”. National culture is framed as something absolutely frozen and unchangeable. The education itself was defined narrowly aiming to provide the necessary consciousness for protecting the national culture and “being vigilant to the inside and outside threats. There was no space left for any other opinion on any other issue.”¹⁵¹ From 1926, there were many decisions one after another to ensure the creation of the “full Turk”.

In 1926-1927-1928 many changes like these followed one another. There were decisions teaching that courses like physical sciences, mathematics, history which were previously taught in French now to be taught in Turkish that the first languages of the persons who would be teachers in foreign schools should be Turkish that Turkish teachers were to be assigned by the Ministry of Education and teachers to be chosen from Turks and those who had the national sentiments. From that point on in these schools it was going to be emphasized to learn Turkish and absorb Turkishness as the most important thing in order to ensure the formation of the pupils’ identity will to the model of the “full Turk”.¹⁵²

In a short span of time, classes which were to be taught in Turkish and teachers who were to teach these class were made the tools which would carry out the ideology of the system into the minority schools. “With a memorandum accepted in 1926, it was asked the teachers of the classes taught in Turkish to

¹⁵⁰ White, 2014, p. 113.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁵² Bali, 2003, p.186.

be chosen from the persons with a national sentiment.”¹⁵³ The new system did not forget to make changes for the minority teachers who were deemed as not fit to the description of the persons with national sentiments. “In 1927, it was asked from all the teachers working in the minority schools to take a Turkish language proficiency exam and those who failed were discharged.”¹⁵⁴

In 1945 with the foundation the Democrat Party, Turkey entered into the multi-party system and attitude towards the minorities started to change towards in a slightly more tolerant direction in the contentious context of multiparty life. The constituency in Istanbul consisting predominantly of non-Muslims played a great part in this. For example, with entering into the multiparty life, “certain limiting regulations in minority schools were ended. In 1948, in Jewish schools Jewish religion and history education could be given. The regulation in place since 1937 which necessitated control of minority schools by an Internal Affairs Ministry official was abolished in 1949. Media had clearly less interest in “failure” of Turkification of minorities.”¹⁵⁵ “In this new era, CHP leadership criticized the racist politics of the fascist regimes and was attentive to differentiate Turkish identity politics with these ideologies.”¹⁵⁶ “However, despite all these efforts to aspire for the non-Muslim votes, in 1946 elections almost all non-Muslim constituencies voted for the Democrat Party.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p.191.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Güven, 2005, p. 119.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 122.

2.5. Demographic Change and Closing Down Minority Schools

Closing down the schools and the constant drop in student numbers became more evident after Resettlement Law and Wealth Tax.

It is necessary to understand the closing down of the schools due to various hardships through schools being shut down. Because minority schools did not want to close down, in the simplest sense, they had to close down. However here again I would like to say “been closed down” instead of “had to”.

After the establishment of the Republic, while schools belonging to many communities were closed down, only schools in Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada remained open from the schools belonging to Armenians, Greeks and Jews. In the majority of these schools it was seen that populations of Armenian, Greek and Jewish living in the country thus in relation to that number of students attending to minority schools has been reducing from year the year. Beside the practices, the laws enacted and many bureaucratic limitations put forward as a part of the Turkification politics as we tried to give various examples above, minority schools had to shut down due to authoritarian and restrictive practices which changed frequently in relation to foreign politics, especially the Turkey-Greece relations.

While in the school year of 1923-24 there were 138 minority schools in the country, in the school year of 2001-2002 this number dropped to 22. 16 of these schools, which all located in Istanbul, belongs to Armenians, 5 to Greeks and 1 to Jews.¹⁵⁸

Due to a series of changes in the process before the establishment of the Republic, the minority schools which were considered as barriers before building the desired new nation-state based on Turk-Islam synthesis started to

¹⁵⁸ Kaya, 2013, pp. 2-3.

lose their (limited) autonomy during the Ottoman Empire as well as their differences and identities.¹⁵⁹

One of the main factors of this development was the significant drop in the number of the minorities in the country. Events in domestic and foreign politics showed their effects on these schools as their number gradually falling down.

During the mid-1960s, while the image of discrimination of Greeks and Greek schools increase, student numbers in these schools decreased simultaneously. “The first breaking point was the deportation of Greeks of Greece origin who live in Turkey in 1964.”¹⁶⁰ Population and settlement policies aimed at minorities are directly related to the drop of student numbers in these schools and closing down of the schools one by one. The decrease in Greek population in Istanbul like this caused a gradual decrease in the student numbers of Greek schools. While in the school year of 1963-1964 the number of students in Greek schools was 6757, the following year it decreased to 5272. The dramatic decrease in the 1960 caused closing down of the schools one after another during the 1970s.¹⁶¹

After much hardship at the end of the 1970s, a great decrease in student numbers in many Armenian schools is seen. In the school year of 1961-1962, while 8994 students from 32 Armenian schools received education, in the school year of 1972-1973 the student number fell to 7366. After the years when

¹⁵⁹ Kaya, 2013, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁶¹ “Closing down of the schools still remain today in the memories of Greeks as a tremendously saddening event. In an interview with a retired Greek school principal, the interviewee narrated the issues as such: “These things cut me too to the bone, I really dislike schools closing down. One poet says closing down a school is [to turn off] the sunshine, meaning turn off the lights, turn it off, the sun shall not be seen! No light!.. I went (to the school she attended), rang the bell, they rented it to a dentist to make money, I said, ‘this is my schools’, oh, come on in ma’am’. I climb upstairs how...I felt like bursting into tears! my first class is there, the palce where we ate is there, those stairs we climbed down!!!I really don’t like schools closing down, not at all!” (Kaya, 2013, p. 67).

the problems in minority schools were experienced most intensely, in the 1990-1991 school year the number of Armenian schools decreased to 18-19 and the number of students who attend to these schools decreases to 4491.¹⁶²

Similar to other minority schools Jewish schools too were shut down one by one due to low student number besides other reasons, however this process starts earlier in comparison to Greek and Armenian minority schools. As mentioned above, the changes made on education system in the beginning of the 1920s affect the minority schools negatively.¹⁶³ The decrease of the Jewish population from year to year and the hardships faced to meet the expenses causes the closing down of the remaining Jewish schools later. An interviewee which was a student in the 1960s states that there were in total 4 Jewish schools in Istanbul in those years.¹⁶⁴

During the recent decades, this table has not changed much. Turkification politics aimed at the minorities caused both decrease in population (Turkish-Greek Population Exchange, Thrace Jewish Incidents, economic collapse after Wealth Tax and forced working camps) and closing down of the school due to the decrease in population. When we come to the year 2013, we face the following case: In 2012-2013 school year it is recorded that the total number of students attending to Armenian schools was 2137, of which 67 is from Armenia, number of students attending to Greek schools was 230 (including the Greece-origin students), the number of students attending to Jewish schools 6888.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Yıldırım, as cited in Kaya, 2013, p. 67.

¹⁶³ Kaya, 2013, p. 67.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 20.

Among the issues the minority schools face today problem of the curriculum is central,¹⁶⁶ that the history of minorities cannot be taught in the schools,¹⁶⁷ that some of the classes are necessitated to be taught in Turkish, and the origins of the hardships in training teachers for minority schools, all of them are based on the aforementioned period and regulations. The ideology of creating a homogenous society “without minorities” being effective throughout the history of the Republic caused the problems of the minority schools to be carried to the date extensionally. Closing down of the school as mentioned above affected the lives of the minorities continuing to live in Anatolia.”¹⁶⁸

2.6. Minority Schools and the Impact of Social Events on Schools

“Minority schools conduct their activities in accordance with the Private Education Institutions Law and the Private Education Institutions regulation. There is no special law or framed regulation for minority schools.”¹⁶⁹ Minority schools consist of small number of school which is included in the education system in Turkey, however different from the other schools; teaching in two languages, one in their own language and official language.

The government policies with which minority schools treated till this day “were formulated in the periods when the foreign politics was most tense. The issue, which will be touched upon and exemplified further, [of] how the Turkish foreign policy directly affected the minority schools, will be analyzed.

¹⁶⁶ “The same curriculum applied in public and private schools is applied in minority schools. Moreover, academic programs of minority schools need to be approved by MEB and this practices mainly started in 1927” (Kaya, 2013, p. 23).

¹⁶⁷ “The sameness of the curriculum means that the history textbooks which include discriminatory remarks against Armenians and Greeks are also taught in minority schools and teachers have to teach these classes in accordance with the curriculum. Moreover, similar to other schools, in minority schools too no classes regarding histories or cultures of the minorities are taught” (Kaya, 2013, p. 23-24).

¹⁶⁸ Kaya, 2013, p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid*, p. 20.

In the following chapters most of the changes in the regulations or practices about minority schools were in parallel with the developments in the country following a certain social event.

From the 1930s, Turkey had a more moderate relationship with Greece. One of the positive developments between the two countries was the cultural protocol between “the Republic of Turkey and the Kingdom of Greece” signed in 1951. The protocol approached even the issues of negative statements in the textbooks about the “other” country which is still not solved in either of the countries today: Article 14 of the said protocol state that signing governments will be attentive inside the limits of their own regulations that the textbooks published in both countries will not include any impropriety about any of the two countries.¹⁷⁰

In this period, “the academic and administrative limitations related to minority schools were removed. For example, Theological School of Halki could start to accept students again from Greece or other Christian countries. Special organizations were founded in order to meet the certain needs of the minority schools. Certain number of teachers from Greece was allowed to teach Greek students in Istanbul; similarly, Turkish government was able to send Turkish teachers to support the Turkish minority schools in Western Thrace. At the same time, it was also agreed by the relative governments upon to provide necessary class material. With approval of the Ministry of National Education, journals and books from Greece were sent to Greek minority schools.” Therefore during this period problems regarding the main factors which would have caused a disruption of education in the minority schools, at least in the Greek minority schools were attempted to be solved. However these positive changes did not reflect on the other minority schools.

The relationship between Greece and Turkey progressed positively till the early 1950s however starting with the 1950s the Turkification policies of economic and social life in Turkey gradually started to get a new initiative.

¹⁷⁰ Kaya, 2013, p. 40.

“With the growing of the Cyprus issue in the beginning of the year 1950, practices aiming at Greeks occurred in the way that would include other religious minorities living in the country. The hate speech in the media and politics presented Greeks as enemies and made them targets.”¹⁷¹

In the newspapers accusations about Greeks who were alleged to have anti-Turkish activities increased and the effect of these articles on the Turkish public was immense. “Shortly before the 6-7 September attacks, with the help of the media, too, suspicions of the Turks regarding the “loyalties of the minorities” and the antipathy felt against the non-Muslims were revived.”¹⁷² Turkish media in their depiction and evaluations regarding 6-7 September Incidents was adhered to disloyal, “traitor citizen” accusations for the minorities. Right after the attacks, while the media had still been free to report and while the censorship implementations of martial law had not started yet. In the newspaper reports minorities themselves were held responsible for the occurrences of acts of violence.¹⁷³ Istanbul media on the day of September 6 published multiple examples regarding non-Muslims who were attacked because they insulted “Turkishness” or they acted provocatively. “Reporters went as far as claiming that “those who burned down churches and schools were Greeks themselves”.¹⁷⁴

In her study, Dilek Güven considers the incidents of 6-7 September 1955 as one of the precautions taken to complete “the project, which was initiated by the Young Turks, of ethnic and demographic homogenization of Asia Minor” of civilian institutions intertwined with the state. The project of ethnic-cultural unity which constitutes the new base of legitimization for the state did not allow the existence of different religious and ethnic identities.

¹⁷¹ Güven, 2005, p. 41.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

Especially the non-Muslims were considered as “disloyal citizens and the future traitors of the young nation-state”. Christian and Jewish populations were tried to be assimilated with campaigns like “citizen, speak Turkish!” or with implementing limitations on non-Turkish culture and education institutions. At the same time, with the help of various retaliations –for example, 1934 Thrace Incidents or with the removal of economic survival conditions like , Wealth Tax - it was attempted to ensure that the minorities migrated from the country “voluntarily”.¹⁷⁵

According to a report of the American Consulate, 6-7 September Incidents had three main targets: besides wiping out the economic foundations and religious communal lives of non-Muslims minorities, it aimed at ruining these groups psychologically, too.¹⁷⁶

In Nurcan Kaya’s book, it is claimed that there were no rapid declines in the Greek population after the 6-7 September Incidents. For example, in the school year of 1954-55 the number of students attending to 55 Greek schools was 6495 whereas in 1955-56 school year the number of students attending to 56 Greek schools was recorded as 6589. Although these numbers does not provide data for the Greek population living in Turkey in those years, that no decrease was seen in student number was linked to the relocation of the population in the city and the concentration of it in the centers. “A large proportion of Greeks migrated to central neighborhoods like Beyoglu, Kurtulus and Ferikoy. While the schools in the emptied neighborhoods remained without students, in the neighborhoods in which the population concentrated the number of students increased.”¹⁷⁷

With the 1960s and 1970s, Greeks in Turkey have become a subject of international political bargaining. Remaining Greek population “spends really tough years in the context of insecurity and uncertainty, thus, so does the Greek schools.” First of all, most of the regulations for the Greek schools were

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.140.

¹⁷⁷ Kaya, 2013, p. 42.

applied to other minority schools later on. “the treatments which created the legal base for the minority schools to face with unfair practices which almost made them nonfunctional”, are at the same time discriminatory treatments which led to leaving other minority schools without teachers, students and books.¹⁷⁸

In 1962, the practice regarding the officers assigned by the MEB in their capacity as Turkish head assistant to the principal.¹⁷⁹ With 1963-64, from time to time there were threats and attacks on Greek schools. In April 1964, in the news titled ‘the special rights of the Greek schools are being abolished’ the Minister of National Education Dr. İbrahim Öktem announces the abolishment of privileges to the Greek minority schools with the following words: “from now on it is natural that we are strictly bound with the mutuality principle on the issue of the kind of rights which are not vested to the Turkish minority schools in Greece.”¹⁸⁰ In the same period, Papa Eftim, founder of Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate makes a statement which would constitute an example for the biases against Greek schools: “One would wish that Turkish and literature teachers of these schools would focus on singing the anthem. At least, they shall punish those who cannot sing it well, shall give them a failing grade.”¹⁸¹ Nationalist teachers should be assigned to Greek schools; these teachers can only be put in line by this way. They need to be set straight with the supremacy of Turkishness.¹⁸²

In 1964, schools were notified that the discipline records about the teachers of Turkish and Turkish culture classes are needed to be filled out with taking the opinion of head assistants to the principals. This way, duty and

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

¹⁸² *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

responsibility of filling out the records for the teachers of Turkish and Turkish culture classes which were protected constantly more in-depth by MEB were taken from the minority school principals and given to Turkish head assistants of the principles. With the Private Education Institutions law passed in 1965, repairs and renovations in the minority school building became subject to permit by the Ministry of National education. One of the interviewees who was an administrator at a minority school during the 1970s narrates the period as such:

Look, I had to ask for permission from [the Ministry of] Education even for getting the walls painted. For God's sake, why would you get permission to get the walls painted, you don't ask for money or anything, you are in the endeavor for cleanliness...No, you have to get permission, if you don't you can't even get your walls painted. This is a simple thing, I mean whitewashing of the walls! Why, you must ask them. I couldn't understand any [given] reason. I mean, I couldn't find anything sensible or reasonable, we needed to get permission from [the ministry] when necessary even for mending a broken window.¹⁸³

Considering the Ministry of National Education already had no budget allocated for minority schools, a sensible and reasonable explanation for this situation in the minority school could be made only as such: To make things harder, as the phrase goes, to make them [school administrations] go all around the house to do the most simple works. To make them [school administration] tired, wearied out, to bring them to their knees... This means 'you cannot even change a [broken] glass'. To make the minority schools continue their education in the limits and nerves that get gradually narrower. By wearing them out psychologically and mentally, to force them to be obedient. Looking at this situation from the perspective of Turkish Republic it appears as a "sensible and reasonable" explanation.

Another step which left the minority schools without students was the initiation of the practices regarding that "in the minority schools only students who belong to the same minority and who can prove this belonging can

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

study”.¹⁸⁴ These limitations were applied first in the Greek school and later with a regulation published by the Ministry of National Education in 1971 it were deemed appropriate to apply them to all minority schools. In 1968 things were made even harder for students and “it was determined that for the students attending minority schools to be ranked as successful in the classes taught in Turkish their grades for promotion and class grades required to be at least 5. It became impossible now to pass these classes, unlike other schools, by utilizing the grade average and by the approval of the teachers’ board.”¹⁸⁵

Therefore, students attending the minority schools were discriminated against once again by being not treated equally with the rest of the students in the country. If we interpret it ironically, they had to know Turkish way better than the students in any other school. In short, minority students were not deemed successful in their classes if they did not learn Turkish extra well and they were to experience “Melting into Turkishness” meaning assimilation which is one of the main aims of Turkification politics from a very young age.¹⁸⁶

In 1968, another practice that we can consider as another form of population and settlement policy was pronounced. With the decree stated in the memorandum published by Istanbul Directorate of National Education in 6 September 1968 and with the number of 510-i 62, we witness how “the practices regarding getting non-Muslim minorities to migrate from one location to another” which was well-known and well-used by Turkish Republic understanding since the Unionists implemented on schools and students. With the memorandum decreeing that “students who are to register minority schools need to register to the closest school to their place of residence, that they

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ The detailed commentary on the relationship between the assimilation policies and the conditions of the schools with the formation of the identity will be touched upon in the section about Armenian identity. In this section, it was found appropriate to discuss Turkification of education and minority politics in general.

cannot register schools located in the further neighborhood”, indeed some minority neighborhood schools were affected negatively by this limitation. Considering the possibility of seeing the development of minority profile concentrated around the schools, we can understand more easily the hegemony they aspired to build on the population. Today, only in places where non-Muslims predominantly live the schools could survive. Keeping in mind the conditions of the time, most of the minorities could not get their place of residency to another neighborhood, meaning they couldn’t move and as a result of that they had to register their children to ordinary or private schools. Schools who admitted students from further neighborhoods [in return] lost a great majority of their students. In an interview with an Armenian High school Principal, she explained this problem as such:

The main issues were the registration difficulties. Student registrations. First of all there was the issue of neighborhood, for example student attending to Getronagan High School had to live in the surrounding area. In this location in Beyoğlu residence was almost non-existent and we couldn’t admit students from Kurtuluş or from the other side [of Istanbul]...whereas Getronagan... the word meaning in fact Central it was founded as a school which would admit students from all neighborhoods of Istanbul.¹⁸⁷

Decrease in population in Beyoğlu which witnessed Wealth Tax and 6-7 September Incidents reminded itself in the 1970s through a new way of sanction. These anti-minority politics which affect each other continuously and consecutively and thus which we witness the link between them frequently made themselves most obvious in the education institutions.

In the 1960s, Assyrians and students of other ethnic origins studying in minority schools were broken off from their schools. With this decree, registering to the minority schools would become continuously harder. “In 1970, proficiency exams for entrance and transfer to the minority schools were initiated. Authorization of Turkish head assistants to principals was increased. Activities organized in minority languages was [started to be] regulated.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 50.

For example, in 1970 it was stipulated that for students graduating from Greek schools had to take a proficiency exam for Turkish and other classes in order to continue to middle school. This practice continued for two years and because many students could not pass the exam they had to attend middle school in private and public schools.

“In 1970, schools were notified that all the documents incoming to the minority schools were to be seen by Turkish head assistants of the principal and all the outgoing letters were to be initialized by the same persons.”¹⁸⁹ In the 1970s, limitations and sanctions against minority schools were related with difficulties in registration, increase in authorization of Turkish head assistants to the principal and sanctions requiring more usage of Turkish language: The decrees to have Turkish translation for activities organized in minority language and obligation to send these translations to Directorate of National Education and requiring Turkish performance, poetry, singing and folkloric shows simultaneously in these activities is one of the indicators for how homogenization policies in Turkish ethnic identity formation were implemented in minority schools.¹⁹⁰

Evidently, any decree and memorandum published by the Ministry of National Education would not let minority schools to have a sigh of relief. Especially the difficulties caused in registration are one of the main elements leading to the decrease in student numbers. Also, mandates regarding the registration changed the student profile. With some sort of force, making sure that students who had to register only to the schools close to their place of residence, who wanted to continue to the middle school after elementary school but failed to pass the entrance exam (which was not held in public schools) register to the public schools indicates how diligently the policies concerning minority schools were thought through and how important they were for the TR government. It is indeed not a coincidence that the mindset which is aware

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 50-52.

of the main role of interference into education which would bring interference into many other elements too lies this heavy on minority schools. They cannot assimilate children of non-Muslim minorities enough in order to make them the citizens of the nation state that they aspire to form around Turkish national values, Turkish culture and language. Minorities who were left without teachers, students and schools were made gradually less and less harmful in materializing this ideal. To what extent can the students who had to move away gradually from their language maintain their own cultural identities in a system in which it is impossible to take classes about their own histories?

Students as the users of the education system are also a product of this system and there is no other social category which carries their current attitudes and abilities, signs of their previous gains this much. Because as many studies indicate, the effect of social origin is applied throughout education and especially during the main turns of their education.¹⁹¹

In the process of nation state building forming citizen identity through education as one of the priorities for the TR that aspired to create it by developing a xenophobic discourse and advancing assimilating policies in the minority schools in accordance with unity under Turkish identity. Turkey has still not secured fully the legal protection of its multiethnic, multi-religious structure and equality of all citizens. “This is the reason why issues like ideology and aim of education, monolingual education, nonexistence of minorities or mentioning them in a hostile fashion in curriculum and textbooks and inadequate precautions in the struggle against discrimination still remain as unsolved issues.”¹⁹²

The 1970s is a period in which pressure on minority schools, principals of these schools and their teachers increased further. “Appointments of teachers are not assigned, schools remain without teachers. Attitudes of some inspectors which exceed the limits of their authorization is narrated as pressure tool used in this period. Even just following the curriculum, teaching for instance religion classes in the schools or having classes in minority languages would

¹⁹¹ Bourdieu and Passeron, as cited in Güllüođınar, 2015, p. 188.

¹⁹² Güllüođınar, 2015, p. 208.

sometimes turn into “issues” by inspectors. It was not easy to resist these practices and the cost of resistance was the dismissal from teaching without presenting a reason. Because appointments of teachers were approved by MEB, in the case MEB did not approve [it would mean that] they were dismissed from their jobs.¹⁹³

In the examples we encountered we always face the issue of justification. Generally, MEB does not present a justification for any sanctions it enforced. Unjustified practices always create a constant sentiment of unworthiness or being a second class citizen in minority schools. More so, because it is not clear from what direction and in which form these impositions would come and they are expected to be followed without questioning from the day of their publication, they are like the sword of Demokles which keeps swinging upon minority schools. Thus, overcoming these difficulties became really hard. Because they have no legal check and balances. Being a teacher in minority schools also gradually hard and it “went beyond to be a choice”.¹⁹⁴ An interview with a principal of a Greek school defines how hard the situation for teachers was:

I mean it was not something recommended to work as teacher in minority schools. It was not something safe for one’s health. I mean it was not something that sane people would choose; it was a bad thing I mean to be a teacher in minority schools. They had to live under many many pressures. I for one remember that an inspector visiting my father’s school pulled out his gun and put it onto my father’s desk...that’s how they inspected the school!¹⁹⁵

On the other hand, whenever the political and social developments in Cyprus and Greece turn grim, unease among teachers and administrators pervaded. What would come to the minority schools was a waited in distress: “Of course when such thing happened we were scared...Some situations made us uneasy

¹⁹³ Kaya, 2013, pp. 54-55.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 56.

because when something happened we used to say “oh this thing will reflect on our schools” because they were reflecting on schools.”¹⁹⁶

In 1976, condition to teach elective classes in Turkish was introduced. “Same year, it was pronounced that main authorization and responsibility of the educational activities like student clubs for Culture-Literature, Drama etc. – including the activities performed in minority languages- would be in of Turkish and led by Turkish culture class teachers.”¹⁹⁷ “In 1977, it was declared that since these teachers are government officers, it was not possible for principals to mark qualification-discipline grade which would base employee personal rights of said teachers and attend their classes for the purpose of inspection.”¹⁹⁸ The Coup D’état in 1980 was felt in minority schools as in all other public institutions and affected the schools negatively. “A minority school principal who just became an administrator when the 1980 Coup occurred expressed her feelings as such:

[T]here was a lot to do in the school, we couldn’t come to the school that morning [of the Coup] for example...Something like that!...And after, of course you feel [the pressure] more constantly, it is a military pressure after all. The District Directorates of National Education was divided into zones. In first, second and third zones, in all of them, there were military people as directors of national education!

During the 1980s, political developments in Armenia again reflected on Armenian schools negatively. Harassments against Armenian schools started, graffiti on the walls saying like “Karabağ will be avenged” were written on the walls. During the 1990s, who could register the minority school thus who is a minority was decided by registration commissions consisting of inspectors. The issues regarding the appointments of quota teachers for Greek schools caused classes without teachers.

¹⁹⁶ Kaya, 2013, p. 59.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Memorandum of Istanbul National Education Directorate dated 13 July 1977 and number 236/35, as cited in Kaya, 2013, pp. 68-69.

In 1991, commissions which control the applications for registering to minority schools were founded.¹⁹⁹ In 1992, it was settled that in Greek schools as many Greek language classes as the Turkish language and literature classes could be taught.²⁰⁰ According to Nurcan Kaya, although the minorities had no part in it, it is indicated in the problems and experiences of how they were affected by the foreign policy, how the schools approached by bias faced arbitrary and unjust treatment, how the equality principle secured by the constitution and education rights of the minorities were violated and how all of these affected the existence of the minorities in Turkey.²⁰¹

Although all citizens have equal rights and responsibilities in theory, in the daily life, belonging to Turkish ethnicity constituted the base of identity politics of the state. This politics manifested itself first in the field of National Education. The distinct decrease in the number of minority schools, the obligation to use Turkish as the academic language and sometimes the subjection of these schools to arbitrary inspections by the Ministry of National Education are the main [steps] in Turkification of education institutions belonging to non-Muslim communities.

Turkification in the field of education is supported significantly by “the precautions in the field of economics to accelerate “national bourgeoisie formation process of the state.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Memorendum of Istanbul National Education Directorate dated 8 August 1991 and number 235/18 sent to District Directorates of National Education, as cited in Kaya, 2013, p. 69.

²⁰⁰ Passing a course and Credit Regulation of Board of Education and Discipline dated 7 September 1992 and number 271 published in Bulletin journal number 2386.

²⁰¹ Kaya, 2013, p. 68.

²⁰² Güven, 2005, pp.173-174.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ARMENIAN SCHOOLS

3.1. Armenian Schools in the Turkish Republican era and Policies for Armenian Schools

The policies started at the end of 19th century in Ottoman Empire continued after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. As a result of these policies, Armenians have been the most vulnerable among non-Muslim minorities whose population decrease evidently. Comparing the population and school numbers today and a century ago, we face a huge gap. It is seen that in parallel to the population, the number of Armenian schools decreases on a yearly basis. According to the data [provided by] the Patriarchate, in 1901 there were 818 Gregorian Armenian school in Anatolia. In this number, Catholic and Protestant Armenian schools and Private Schools are not included. In 1913-1914 academic years, the number of elementary schools in independent provinces is 1084. According to a different source, there were 1746 Armenian schools in Anatolia.²⁰³ “Analyzing by the date of Republic’s establishment, 5865 students in 47 Armenian schools received education in 1923.”²⁰⁴ Besides 8 schools belonging to Catholic Armenians, there was a Protestant Armenian school in Gedikpaşa which 200 students attended. In the early years of the Republic in Anatolia, only Sarkis Gümüşyan and Surp Mesropyan schools in Kayseri were institutions which provided education.²⁰⁵ Now that there are 16 Armenian school in Turkey shows the gravity of the situation.

²⁰³ Kaya, 2013, p. 9-10.

²⁰⁴ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 194.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 194.

In the Republican Era, the majority of the Armenian population in Anatolia migrated to İstanbul. While in 1927 69% of the Armenian population lived in İstanbul, this ratio is 89% in 1965. Besides other reasons, the main factor of this migration is the Armenian schools that were closed down. Families either sent their kids to İstanbul for boarding school so that they could learn their mother tongue or they also moved with their kids. In the 1950s, during the Patriarch Karekin Haçaduryan I period, studies were conducted to recruit students from Central and Eastern Anatolia. As a result of these studies, children left their parents and came to İstanbul for boarding school to learn their mother tongue and study in this language, thus, a great migratory wave occurred in the 1950s. Karagözyan Private Armenian Elementary School which still in business today is one of the boarding schools the migrant population preferred. When we look into the data of 1965, Anatolia was left almost without Armenians. The majority of Armenians were now in İstanbul and there was not one Armenian school that was still open.

One of the most important factors of Armenians' protection of their identity is the Armenian schools. The Armenians schools which tried to sustain their existence after the Lausanne Treaty, especially from the perspective of Armenian language, the Armenian schools had a really significant position in terms of maintaining the cultural identity through associations and organizations of the schools. According to Ayşegül Komşuoğlu, the legal status of Armenians designed by the Treaty of Lausanne gave them the opportunity to establish their own schools, religious and secular organizations to teach younger generations the Armenian language, to publish books and newspapers in Armenian, to worship in their churches etc. These regulations helped them to live as a community to maintain their cultural values, i. e. prolong Armenian identity.²⁰⁶ Throughout the history of Turkish education system, many discriminatory policies were enforced on minority schools and Armenian schools. The demand of a proficiency document from teachers working in

²⁰⁶ Komşuoğlu, 2007, p. 403.

minority schools right after the Tevhidi Tedrisat [Unity in Education] act is one of the many discriminatory practices which we will discuss later.

With the law on unity of education [introduced] in 3 March 1924, all education institutions, including the madrasas, were bound to the Ministry of Education. Right after the introduction of the law, with a memorandum published, The Ministry of Education indicated that the proficiency documents of teachers working in minority schools acquired from patriarchates or rabbinate were invalid and teachers were to take the exam and in case of failure in the exam, they were not to continue as teachers. Besides, the ministry notified that minority schools which lacked sufficient faculty were to be closed down and students [of these schools] were to be transferred to Maarif [public] schools.²⁰⁷ Although the union of education law seemed like practicing on the basis of secularism principle, right after the law which indicated that “teachers who failed in the exam cannot teach”, the law announcing that “at the same time, in the case of insufficient number of teachers, the schools would be closed down” was considered as part of the assimilation politics against minority schools. In short, because the teachers who were subjected to taking an exam, and if failed being terminated, [and also] in the case of failing in the exam and at the same time in the case of insufficient number of teachers, [they] would play a role in closing down of the schools, “accordingly, in order to continue their work, teachers of Armenian origins who worked in Armenian schools had to acquire the qualification document by being subjected to the exam given by the relevant authorities.”²⁰⁸

In the school year of 1927-1928, a positive development in terms of Armenian schools occurred and from that date it was recognized by the official authorities that the Armenian education institutions, too, are education

²⁰⁷ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 195.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

institutions providing education at the High school level.²⁰⁹ *İstanbul Armenian schools Regulation* was published in the 1930's. In the İstanbul Armenian schools regulation dated 1936, it is indicated that “in education, it is went by regulations and orders about curriculum programs and methods approved by the ministry of culture.” In the 6th article of private education institutions law number 5580, this matter is regulated as such: “Education curriculum and weekly course schedule applied in the institutions is determined on the basis of methods and rules applied in the official institutions. In the case it is deemed appropriate by the Ministry, different education curriculum and weekly course schedule can be applied.”²¹⁰

Throughout the history of the Republic, the opening of Surp Haç Tıbrevank seminary in Üsküdar İstanbul by permission during the Democrat Party government can be considered as a significant development for Armenian Education Institutions. The first principal of the school founded in 1954 was archpriest Karekin Kazancıyan who was to be elected patriarch in 1994. During the 1950s, “During the era of 81st Patriarch Karekin I Haçaduryan, Sahak Papazyan traveled around central and eastern regions of Anatolia and gathered students.”²¹¹

“However Surp Haç Tıbrevank seminary theology department was closed down with the memorandum number 420 11.30 406 in 24 December 1969 by İstanbul National Education Directorate due to lack of students.”²¹² On this matter, the leading lawyers of the community indicated that the Seminary was aspired to be turned into civil [status] on the basis of being incongruent to the secularism principle.²¹³ Thus, the school taking the name Private Surp Haç

²⁰⁹ ibid.

²¹⁰ Kaya, Nurcan, 2013, p. 23.

²¹¹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 196

²¹² ibid.

²¹³ Bakar, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 196.

Armenian High school continued their education life with the status of minority school. After the schools closed down in Anatolia, children and youth in Anatolia who wanted to learn Armenian but there were no Armenian school left around them came to İstanbul and registered to these schools and were able to learn Armenian. Students who were raised in this school wanted the same for their own children later and thus mostly migrated to İstanbul. Private Yeşilköy Armenian Elementary School which is one of approximately thousand schools which closed down in the 20th century re-opened in 1957. There is no other Armenian school than this one which re-opened in the Republican Era.

Although Armenian schools differed from one another till the 1960s, they were schools that were known as generally successful and even some non-Armenian families registered their children to, [and] had high level of success rate in [university] entrance exams. As a result of the decrease in Armenian population with the effects of the political and social developments in Turkey and thus the loss of qualified workforce in education and administration fields and financial hardships caused by the appropriation of properties of minority foundations, it is stated that in some of these schools which were previously successful, the quality of education during the 1970s dropped. Overcrowded classes, High school graduates becoming teachers, problems in training and appointing new teachers [and] difficulties in acquiring class materials played roles in this regression.²¹⁴

In 1965, Private Education Institutions Law number 625 was passed. This law that banned foreign and minority schools to open new ones and construct new school buildings is still in practice today. With this law, “Schools are frozen quantitatively”²¹⁵ From this date forward, it will be witnessed that in the statistics regarding the minority schools there is only decrease in the number of schools.

²¹⁴ Kaya, 2013, p. 33.

²¹⁵ Akyüz, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 197.

In the 1961-1962 school year, there are overall 88 minority elementary schools. In 1961-1971 school years, in comparison to other minorities, the only minority group whose school and student numbers did not decrease was Armenians. In 1961-62 school year, the number of students attending 19 Armenian school all located in İstanbul was 5700, in 1964-1965 school year it was 6000. This increase in student number is explained that as Kumkapı Bezciyan School was turned into a Vocational High school there was an increase recorded with students from various age groups being admitted. Considering the same period from the perspective of Greeks, 8 schools were closed down and there was a 40% decrease in the number of students. In the 1970-1971 school year, there were a total of 272 teachers in Armenian elementary schools of which 241 were women and 32 were male.²¹⁶

An interviewee who was a student in the 1970s indicates that in those years Armenian families from Anatolia had an average of 3 children, thus number of children in the school age was higher in comparison to today and class sizes were on average was 40, 50 people. S/he also adds that due the financial difficulties caused by seize of the foundation properties in the 1970s the physical conditions of the schools was far from meeting the needs of the students. Discriminatory treatment against minorities and seizing of their properties increased immigration abroad while at the same time it causes the loss of qualified teachers working at these schools. While in the past college or university graduate teachers gave the classes in the 1960 High school graduate teachers too started to teach as needed.²¹⁷

In the 7th article of Thirds Section of Private Armenian High schools and Middle schools Regulation dated 1976, it is indicated that it was the main aim “to assure the students to gain utmost level skills in expressing clearly their thoughts in oral and written communication by using excellently Turkish and

²¹⁶ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 198.

²¹⁷ Kaya, 2013, p. 34.

Armenian.”²¹⁸ Time table and education program approved by the MEB were applied at schools. On the other hand, it was fundamental that classes other than Turkish and Turkish culture were to be taught in Armenian. According to the 40th article of the regulation, first registrations to Armenian schools were checked in by register and admissions commission and other registrations were by the school principals. Registration of the students who transferred from schools other than Armenian schools was checked in by register and admission commission. According to article 74, head assistant to the principal was proposed to the Governorate from among the Turkish and Turkish culture teachers working at schools or teacher who had the same conditions.²¹⁹ With this law too, the authority to decide who were to be the head assistant was completely left to state authority.

In 1975-1976, there were big problems in Armenian schools to in regards to teacher appointments and although there were applications which were appropriate to all conditions prescribed in the regulations, approval of the teacher proposed could take long time. According to interviewer who conducted with an Armenian High school, the second main problem was the approval of the teachers:

It used take a year to get the approval for the teachers and for a year without approval the teacher couldn't teach, couldn't start their work. Of course, there are no teachers in classes, registrations to school was difficult as well. For example I remember in my first year, we 11 friends had to open up a training workshop...Parents rightfully they didn't want to send their kids to the schools.²²⁰

The problems in hiring teachers and teacher proficiency in the 1970s continued to this day in different ways. Discriminatory policies which are the source of many problems are not just limited to laws or regulations about the running of the school, its curriculum and structure. The attitudes of the inspectors sent to inspect the schools can be also considered examples of this situation.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 197.

²²⁰ Kaya, 2013, p. 56.

Negative prejudices against Armenian schools could be seen easily in the attitudes of some inspectors during the 1970s. In an interview with a retired Armenian school principal, this anecdote about inspectors was shared:

Of course inspectors unfortunately had the same mindset. Inspectors coming there, there meaning inspectors generally coming to our schools! Of course I cannot say that for all of them. But from time to time with malicious intent, yes I highlight it with malicious intent, biased, with the worry or mindset that as if there are some faulty business going on there or there can be things there that shouldn't be there they would come in and keep stirring up trouble.²²¹

Another example which reflects the inspectors' understanding in the 1970s is told by a retired Armenian school principal as such: "I don't know what their biggest paranoia was. Mother language for instance."²²² The principal tells that while they were visiting the classrooms with the inspector, the inspector pulled a book from in front of a student, opened a page and asked the student to read it, after the kid did so, the inspector turned to the principal and asked "did this kid read it correctly? Is that really what it says or something else" and the principal replied "well...I don't think there is something else there, the kid read whatever it was written there. What if you are really curious, you can take the book and make it read somewhere else."²²³ In school inspections, this and many similar events are witnessed. There is actually no reason for this distrust to Armenians and hence the Armenian schools. Because of the inspectors who investigate with "foul intention" and creating trouble with various materials they deemed inappropriate (especially books written in Armenian language or poems, a photograph of an Armenian poet presented on the wall or a bust of the school founder), during the inspection times, administrators and teachers at schools were feeling uneasy. The problems lived in the 1970s was carried to another level in the 1980s.

As the 1980 Military Coup left deep effect on many things in the country, effects of the events also reflected on Armenian schools. The other

²²¹ *ibid*, p. 57.

²²² *ibid*.

²²³ *ibid*, p. 58.

political issue which has been influential on Armenian schools is “Karabağ”. In the 1980s, political problems between Armenia and Karabağ reflected on the Armenian schools which had nothing to do with the events, harassments towards Armenian schools started.

It was written on the school wall “Karabağ will be avenged”. During that time, Armenia-Karabağ issue is really [a] hot [topic], they write it covering the whole wall, kids panic, some days of school...One day even one crazy [person] got to the top trying to break the cross and yells “Allah Allah”, kids panicked they don’t come inside. Of course now it sounds like insignificant to you from outside, but for them [children] it was a tremendous trauma!²²⁴

Besides the students who went through that trauma, teachers were also traumatized with a memorandum sent to their school on the same issue. A regulation that could be considered as a humorous element today was circulated and with that regulation it was decided to erase Armenia from the maps:

There were regulations, for instance I remember, I think it was 1983, either 1982 or 1983. There was this regulation saying “to erase Armenia from the maps” and we removed Armenia from the maps, erased it with acetone, erased and there was this odd thing [that] it became obvious that it was worn and erased, I mean it, such a thing happened.²²⁵

The regulation for erasing Armenia from the maps in textbooks is an interesting example for both how the knowledge to be taught to students can be changed on demand with the curriculum change and also how the contents of the books were “erased” due to political problems with Armenia. Making [teachers] to erase a country whose existence was accepted by the world and was a legitimate country then with acetone from the maps is education system’s way of surveillance on the “knowledge”.

By the school year of 1980-1981, in 26 Armenian schools the number of “essential teacher” was 122. The lower record of student number in the 1960-1970s was mostly related to that after the 1966 Varto Earthquake, children of Anatolia who couldn’t find a community school around their premises started to attend Armenian schools in İstanbul. To provide education

²²⁴ Kaya, 2013, p. 62.

²²⁵ *ibid.*

for the children of many families who migrated from Southeastern Anatolia to İstanbul, Kalfayan and Karagöz Orphanages and Halıcıoğlu –Nersesyan, Topkapı Levon Vartuhyan, Balat Horenyan ve Kumkapı Dışı Boğosyan-Varvaryan schools were applied to.²²⁶

Because Armenian schools which accomplished to still stand today have no authorization to establish new schools or construct new buildings due the law dated in 1962, preventing the closing down of the existing schools, trying to keep them alive and finding solutions to the problems the schools face with became the major issues. The struggle of existence of Armenian education institutions, whose place in embracing and keeping alive their identities is undisputable, is thus a struggle of existence of the Armenian identity.

As of today, Armenians of Turkey have 16 schools, all located in İstanbul. While 2 of them provide education only at High school level, 3 of them have both High school and elementary school levels. 11 of them are just elementary schools. The number of students attending all these schools is 2965, of which 1393 is male and 1572 is female.²²⁷ “According to the information acquired by Agos, in the school year of 2015-2016, in all Armenian schools 2947 students get education. The majority of the schools which were still in practice in the school year of 2016-2017 are located in the neighbourhoods in which Armenian community predominantly reside.²²⁸ This number that is indicated as three thousand currently signals that the number [of students] was maintained, when it is compared to ten years ago, almost half diminished.”²²⁹ For example, in the school year of 1972-1973, number of schools is 32, number of students is 7366. In 1999-2000 school year, number of schools is 18, number of students is 3786. In the past forty years, there is a 50% decrease in number

²²⁶ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 199.

²²⁷ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 43.

²²⁸ We can contrue this as an expansion of the effects today of the law which intoduced the obligation of attending a school in the promixity of student’s residence.

²²⁹ <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/12882/okullarda-alarm-zilleri-caliyor>

of school and 60% decrease in number of students. According to the latest information, while in 2017-2018 school year, the number of students registered to elementary schools is 348, number of students who just registered to High schools is 208, in 2017-2018 overall number of students in Armenian schools is 2992.²³⁰

The distribution of Armenian schools to neighborhoods is as such: Getronagan Armenian High school (Karaköy), Esayan Armenian Elementary School and High school (Taksim), Surp Haç Armenian High school (Üsküdar), Sahakyan-Nunyan Armenian Elementary School and High school (Kocamustafapaşa), Bezciyan Armenian Elementary School (Kumkapı), Dadyan Armenian Elementary School (Bakırköy), Merametcıyan Armenian Elementary School (Feriköy), Aramyan-Uncuyan Armenian Elementary School (Kadıköy), Levon-Vartuhyan Armenian Elementary School (Topkapı), Yeşilköy Armenian Elementary School (Yeşilköy), Karagözyan Armenian Elementary School (Şişli), Tarkmançats Armenian Elementary School (Ortaköy), Kalfayan-Cemaran Armenian Elementary School (Üsküdar); Pangaltı Armenian Elementary School ve High school (Pangaltı), Kocamustafapaşa Anarat Hıgutyun Armenian Elementary School (Kocamustafapaşa), Pangaltı Anarat Hıgutyun Armenian Elementary School (Pangaltı), Bomonti Armenian Elementary School (Bomonti).²³¹

The table below indicates the number of students who are registered to Armenian schools as of September 2017.²³²

²³⁰ İşhan, 2017.

²³¹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 184.

²³² İşhan, 2017.

Figure 1: 2016-2017 Academic Year Student Enrollment Statistics

İlköğretim	Yeni Kayıt	Okul Mevcudu
Aramyan-Uncuyan	22	180
Kalfayan	20	66
Bomonti Mihitaryan	15	84
Bezciyan	30	120
Dadyan	43	392
Feriköy	15	156
Samatya Anarad Hiğutyun	17	72
Sahakyan-Nunyan	40	235
Esayan	3	140
Yeşilköy	22	275
Karagözyan	47	190
Pangaltı Mihitaryan	20	110
Tarkmançats	27	170
Levon Vartuhyan	27	92
Toplam	348	2282

Lise	Yeni Kayıt	Okul Mevcudu
Esayan	48	137
Getronagan	55	228
Pangaltı Mihitaryan	40	87
Sahakyan-Nunyan	37	175
Surp Haç Tıbrevank	28	83
Toplam	208	710
Genel Toplam	556	2992

3.2. The Problems in Armenian School Caused by Discriminatory Government Policies

In the previous chapter, we tried to analyze the general condition and the problems caused by the enforcements on Armenian schools in the period between 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century on the basis of historical chronology. Most of the problems mentioned are still present today in different ways. In this chapter, the problems experienced in schools will be examined under the headlines that we see as the most essential features: under the titles like the obligation to have a (Turkish) Chief Deputy principal in Armenian schools, the status of Armenian schools in the education system, student registration, the budget allocated by the state to Armenian schools, authority and limits of Turkish and Turkish Culture teachers, first information about laws and regulation which have an effect on these problems experienced

in various ways will be given, next, the impact of these practices on schools will be touched upon and lastly, in light of the interviews conducted what has changed today or what remained the same will be discussed.

3.2.1. The Impact of (Turkish) Chief Deputy Principal Position as the “Eyes and Ears” of the State on Armenian Schools

The position of “Turkish Chief Deputy principal” which has always become a matter of discussion for Armenian schools till this day was a result of the changes made during the 1930s. with the decision regarding the administration of education institutions belonging to minorities on the basis of a series of regulations introduced in the second half of the 1930s, the Ministry of Education imposed the obligation in 1937 to appoint a “deputy principal” of Turkish origin to minority elementary schools and a “Chief Deputy Principal” to High schools in order to raise the students studying in all minority schools “appropriate to Turkish culture.” According to Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan the purpose of these decisions “was to control closely the programs, administrative and financial operation of these schools:”²³³ The reason for this is hidden in the authority given by these decisions to the deputy principals and head assistants to principals, in this way, “Deputy principals and Chief Deputy Principals obtained the right to control administrative and financial operations of the schools’ education programs”²³⁴ This decision introduced in 1937 was revoked after the schools year of 1948-1949, however was re-introduced again with the regulation number 5887 in 1962.²³⁵ Thus, from this date, “in every Armenian school in Turkey there is a (chief) deputy principal appointed by the Ministry of National Education (MEB).”²³⁶

²³³ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011 p. 44.

²³⁴ Bali, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 196.

²³⁵ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 195-196.

²³⁶ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 44.

The reason why we want to focus on this matter which we will analyze in detail in the following sections is the effects of these persons appointed in minority schools on school, principal, teacher and students in many forms and levels. Additionally, developments in the social life change how this position is utilized by the state. This new face seen in the schools shows itself in different forms in different times however what does not change is that it is always a significant step of control in Armenian schools.

Moreover, it was indicated in an interview with an ex-deputy principal that before they start their positions in minority schools, (Turkish) Chief Deputy principal are briefed that is not written and in the characteristic of a warning. It is asked verbally from the to-be deputy principals who are warned with this briefing that they will witness a different culture and way of life to make sure that the regulations are followed in schools and they oversee that.²³⁷ It is seen that (Turkish) Chief Deputy principals whose job also includes reporting annually about their schools to branch directorate start their postings with various prejudices. When asked about his thought after his posting, an ex-(Turkish) Chief Deputy principal who indicated that he previously had prejudices about minorities indicated that the issues like minority rights and problems is some sort of touting and there is actually not many problems.²³⁸ A participant who was a student in an Armenian school in the 1970s said that “I remember being really scared of them; I mean you would hear a needle drop... A pressure was felt. Also, we felt that Armenian teachers were also a bit tense around them, I mean we felt it back then” and expressed how they feared generally from (Turkish) Chief Deputy principals at schools. In the 1980s, we see that this situation did not change. A participant who attended an Armenian school during that period describes the Chief Deputy principal as a government official who controlled everyone including teachers, students and principal.

²³⁷ Kaya, 2013, p. 86.

²³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

The participant who indicated that Turkish Chief Deputy principals were on top of everything and they were the people who ruled the school in practice said that in grade 5 the deputy principal also taught Turkish class [and] what he did was only to teach it with the condition to recite the national anthem and the address to the youth most accurately and most loudly. Another participant indicated how offended s/he felt back then with the “cower and cowardness” of teachers against the deputy principal.²³⁹

Chief Deputy principals are described by higher levels of administration as “Turkish” Chief Deputy principal and this highlight [on Turkish] is also repeated by Chief Deputy principals themselves from time to time. This situation which also reflects the ethnic view of the state is perceived as an indication of discrimination.²⁴⁰ Chief Deputy principal may act in schools like “the representatives of the owners of the country among the Armenians who are perceived as an untrustworthy element.”²⁴¹ According to Kılıçdağı, this situation creates an impression that Armenians are not citizens of this country [and] they need to be assigned a “pure Turkish” person in charge who is the owner of this country. Moreover, when Chief Deputy principals take a vacation, the same understanding continues and only one of the “Turkish” teachers who teaches culture classes or a Chief Deputy principal of another school can stand proxy for them. On the other hand, when the principal takes a vacation, either deputy principal or someone s/he assigned in his stead stands proxy. In the situations when people the state assigned are in leave even for a short period of time an “Armenian” principal or teacher cannot stand proxy. This makes [us] think that there is an issue of lack of trust against Armenians. In terms of showing the role the state attributed to Chief Deputy principals, when we analyze the speech given to Chief Deputy principals by Naci Akay in, City National Education Director of İstanbul in that time in 27 January 1995 at

²³⁹ Kaya, 2013, pp. 96-97.

²⁴⁰ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 46.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*

a meeting involving both Armenian school principals and Chief Deputy principals, we witness that this attributed role is uttered openly and clearly: “you represent the Republic of Turkey in these schools. As you know, principals of these schools are chosen in not by us but the people of the minority. But we choose you... You are our eyes and ears in these schools. It is your duty to follow what is happening there and inform us. We will never leave you alone. We trust you.”²⁴² Seeing no harm to use this discriminatory and marginalizing language at a meeting including Armenian school principals and deputy principals can also be evaluated as a form of ‘warning’ for Armenian schools. This role attributed to Chief Deputy principals who are assigned the duty of “informing about what is going on there” puts the principal who are expected to be the real administrators of the schools in a position of reporting to their own subordinate [and] not being able to do their job without their approval.

In her answer the question “What kind of problems are experienced in Armenian school in your opinion?” Armenian language instructor Hermine who still works at Armenian schools indicates that the major problem she sees is them being controlled by the state constantly:

If you say problem, first of all being controlled constantly by the state is an oppression. Because there is this person inside our schools called deputy principal. Ok, this might be minimized by personal initiatives, but you know it at once that you are always under the surveillance. You want to improve something you want to do something all the time, you are required to ask permission. Knowing that everything we have is under inspection, of course inspection is necessary but it is discomfoting to be put under constant surveillance. Do we reflect that on students? No. That is different. When you get to preparing a new book, this book you prepared has to be approved completely. Or something that you use has to be approved. For instance, having a book from a different country at school constitutes a crime. But if I teach world literature I need to use them. What do you restrain from whom, or why do we pack [hide] what. It is evident that freedoms are limited, it is a well-known thing.

Another issue that needs to be consider alongside with the position of head assistants today is that “the classes like Turkish and Turkish culture, history,

²⁴² Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 46.

geography, Turkish language and literature, Sociology²⁴³ (Social Sciences in elementary schools) is taught by teachers appointed by the Ministry.”²⁴⁴ The double-headedness causes that there are two types of teachers in schools premises. While teachers of culture class who were appointed by the state and who are government employee works in line with this status, other teachers work as if they are employees of a private institution.²⁴⁵

The current understanding of head assistant to principal and its application style causes a “double-headedness” issue at schools. A situation emerges as if the culture classes teachers who are headed [led] by Chief Deputy principal and contract teachers headed by the principal consist of two distinct groups. This situation can also lead to a tension.²⁴⁶ Principal of Getronagan High School Digin Sirun expressed her opinions about this as such: “Of course, there is discrimination automatically. There are two types of teachers in the school. Like one is bound to this the other is bound to other etc. This is a really negative thing. I mean think about a family living under the same roof, father is responsible for one child, mother is for another. Something like that.”

In an interview for Bianet in 29.09.2010, Garo Paylan who is an administrator in Yeşilköy Armenian School and the Coordinator of Education Commission founded by the community foundation affiliated with Armenian schools indicates that they want the practice of Turkish deputy principal appointed by the state to be revoked with the following words: “National Education [Ministry] always feels the need to assign a colony inspector to our

²⁴³ Sociology class has a “special” status. Although it is a philosophy group class and teachers of the other classes belonging to this group like logic, philosophy, psychology are able to be selected by the schools, sociology teachers are appointed by the Ministry. It is understood that Sociology, too, like history, geography etc is considered as “potentially harmful” and as such in the category of classes that cannot be left to “any person” to teach (Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, p. 44).

²⁴⁴ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 44.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 45.

heads as they think “they are up to no good”. Yes, the name [of the position] is “Turkish deputy principal”. Turkish culture teachers, meaning teachers of Turkish, history, geography, revolution history are also appointed by the National Education [Ministry]. Schools are like double-headed. Turkish culture teachers are bounded to Turkish deputy principal and Armenian teachers to the principal.”²⁴⁷ Paylan construes that the name [of the position] in the law, Turkish deputy principal, is “in itself discriminatory”.²⁴⁸

Using the word “Turk” in the name of the position of deputy principal to which only people who are “of Turkish origin and Turkish republic citizen” can be assigned since 1937 is the most obvious indicator that the minorities are marginalized even in the constitution in terms of the definitions. However, the regulation of Private Education Institutions of 2008 reveals using the word “Turk” in the title of the position and this position is now called Chief Deputy principal as is the case in other schools. This is still the case with the regulation passed in 2012.²⁴⁹ In 2010 with the regulation announced, in the process of assigning Chief Deputy principal minority school are given the right of having a word [in the process] albeit limited. With the regulation which was put in practice in 2012, a similar article to the one in 2010 is included: “One of those, Chief Deputy principal is assigned by the governor’s office with school principals’ consideration is taken into account.”²⁵⁰ With these positive changes, Armenian school principals and administrations can only express their opinion in the assignment of the Chief Deputy principals. In practice, however, this regulation has not yet actualized. Chief Deputy principals are continued to be assigned by governor’s office without consulting just like the past. In the history of Armenian schools in Turkey, the position of (Turkish) Chief Deputy

²⁴⁷ Pelek, 2010.

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Kaya, 2013, p. 86.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 106.

principal who are assigned by the state [and] who became a symbol of discriminatory and oppressive inspections has always been one of the most important problems in the eyes of [everyone] be it administrator, teacher or student. Chief Deputy principals with the inscription “Turkish” in their title constitutes a concrete example that our Armenian citizens whom we can describe as belonging to Armenian identity or of Armenian origin, are being marginalized first and foremost on the basis of their identity in the schools they attend to [but also] by being reminded of the existence and power of the dominant ethnic group against the Armenian identity in the Armenian schools in which Armenian culture and identity is tried to be preserved. The division between “us” and “them” is embodied with the word “Turkish” which comes at the beginning [of the title] Chief Deputy principal. This system which consists of a (Turkish) administrator representing “us” and Turkish and Turkish culture classes teachers who are in the jurisdiction of this administrator and an (Armenian) administrator and (Armenian) teachers who are in the jurisdiction of (this jurisdiction is also defined by MEB) the Armenian administrator also hurt the relationship between teachers and students with this duality it creates.

3.2.2 Turkish and Turkish Culture Teachers in Armenian Schools

While Turkish, geography and history classes have been taught by teachers assigned by MEB since the early years of the Republic, later Revolution history, sociology and National Security classes were added to them. In 1915, with the Mekatib-I Hususiye Talimatnamesi / the Circular of Private Schools Turkish, geography and history classes were decided to be taught by Turkish teacher in Turkish language. This regulation continued in the Republican era. While teachers of Turkish Culture classes received their payments from minority schools till 1955, with “the Act regarding Minority School Turkish and Turkish Culture Classes Teachers” passed in the same year with the addendum of Social Sciences, Revolution History, Sociology, National

Security classes, it was decided that the teachers of these classes to be assigned by MEB.²⁵¹ From that point on, the wages of the teachers of these classes would be paid by the state not the school they work for. Moreover, the registry supervisor of these teachers was Turkish Chief Deputy principals. This practice continued till 1933 and later although to changed after it was decided the school principals to be second registry and discipline supervisors of the teachers, first registry supervisor of Turkish and culture class [of the teachers] remained to be deputy principals.

During the 2000s, two positive developments happened regarding the aforementioned situation of Turkish and Turkish culture teachers in Armenian schools. One of them is the development regarding registry supervisors. The other is about hiring of the teachers.

Regarding this positive development with the repealing of the situation of Turkish Chief Deputy principals being the register supervisor of Turkish and Turkish culture teachers which is one of the most significant practices causing many problems in schools and resulting in unequal positions among teachers in Armenian schools, Sahakyan Nunyan High school principal Digin Talar: “There is no registry supervisor any more. Registry report is not filled out for any one any more...it has been 5-6 years, we don’t fill them out, there is no such thing left... The [reports] of Turkish culture class teachers used to be filled out only by Chief Deputy principal, we were not their registry supervisor. Now it is much better, the registry supervision is abolished automatically.”

Second important development is that with an amendment in December 2010 to the Private Education Institution Regulation of 2008 Turkish and Turkish Culture teachers are started to be assigned in line with the offer of school principal’s office, approval of governor’s office and ministry’s opinion.²⁵² Today, teachers of Turkish and Turkish culture classes who want to work at an Armenian school submit their application to Armenian schools and

²⁵¹ Kaya, 2013, pp. 114-115.

²⁵² Kaya, 2013, p.124

the schools can have an interview with the applicant teacher and choose the person who is deemed to be appropriate can be chosen from among the applicants. However, these teachers are still in the status of government official and receive their payment from the state. This situation which can be evaluated as a positive development makes the schools' job harder due to the obligation for teachers to be a government official. Moreover, because assignments cannot be done due to the internal mechanisms of bureaucracy in the summer term, culture classes at the beginning of the school year are frequently witnessed to be without a teacher or unfruitful.²⁵³

However, during the years before this new decision was put in practice which has more positive aspects in comparison to its aforementioned negative aspects, while Armenian schools had no say in hiring these teachers and had to work with teachers assigned by the state. With this regulation, they can choose the teachers who will work for their schools with a mutual agreement.

Digin Talar “the most important one of what has got better. That Turkish culture class teachers are chosen by us, offered to the governor's office and getting their approval made us really relieved...” in previous years, however, many issues arose due to working with someone whom they don't know at all. The participant who is still the principal of Sahakyan Nunyan High School today expressed that in previous years, the memos regarding the teachers to be assigned to Armenian schools which needed to be announced with a memo to all schools by MEB were not announced to other schools enough, and thus there was not one application around, that is why MEB had to “send whoever available at the moment” and the first applicant was sent out: “now teachers in the National Education community learned that they will get the job in schools (she refers to Armenian schools) [only] when they apply and have an interview, now applications to us are more frequent.

In response to the question what kind of changes happened in the conditions of the schools in comparison to the past, Getronagan High School

²⁵³ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 44.

principal Digin Sirun gave the examples of assignment of culture class teachers and the repeal of registry supervision for these teachers.

In the past, of course I can only take my years into account. The 80s and the 90s were worse years. The 2000s are pretty easy... for instance assignment of culture class teachers, in terms of not having registry supervisors for them etc, there were developments which were much more positive... this is an issue of last 5 years, we can now choose our culture class teachers. They submit applications, we forward them to MEB...Positive steps are taken on that issue.

In the in-depth interviews conducted regarding these two different teacher profiles in Armenian school, the question of “can we talk about equality in schools among teachers?” was posed. The principal of Sahakyan Nunyan High schools [responded] this question [as follows]: “if we are talking about equality, first of all, their condition as they start to work is different. Our Armenian students are friends who sign a contract with us and work; the others are friends who were assigned by the state. There is a difference first at the point of origin, the point of laws they are subjected to. But we live the life together at schools; there is no difference and such. Thank God, friends who work with us in recent years are much more progressive, really good teachers; the ministry is much easier about that, they are being more tolerant to us. While we couldn't find a teacher for month in my first years, now because they gave us the right to choose our teacher, we demand the teacher with our own will, [we appreciate], and till today there was no rejection of a teacher we demanded at least in our school. So, we move on with our own choices. In that sense, our freedom has grown. For the last 3-4 years, we demand [teachers]. We interview teachers, if they want to; they submit an application, like you apply to a normal job... In that sense the faculty got way better. And there is no vacancy anymore.”

However, the freedom to choose the teachers does not change the fact that they are still government officials. Because there are two different statuses among teachers working in Armenian schools, while culture class teachers who are assigned by the state and government officials work in accordance with their status, other teachers work as if they are employees of Private School. For instance, if a Turkish class teachers weekly working hour is 30, Turkish

teachers working in Armenian schools as a government employee has also the same [hours]. That is why; the attendance of Turkish culture teachers as government employees in education improvement activities by staying after hours beyond those 30 hours cannot be provided. However, because teachers of other classes are contract labour, their weekly class and working hours can be higher.²⁵⁴

In the past, this unequal situation which lingered on for a long time among Armenian teachers who work on contracts approved by and paid by school administration and Turkish and Turkish culture teachers who are assigned by the state also caused Turkish and Turkish culture teachers to act more easily or what we can call arbitrary unlike other teachers as they had no responsibility to the school administration and the principal.

The participant Nayat who worked in Sahakyan Nunyan High school in the past:

Considering the division of labour, there is more burdens on Armenian teachers. Other than that, if you look into secondary activities after hours we are in fact equals. It depends on the teacher a bit. But they are not obligated, there is a situation like we are obligated but they are not they can do it if they want. For example, she/he can say I don't to certain things. There was this school promotion fair. The principal brought together all the classes, someone who will take care of them, won't let the kids out is needed. One teacher said like, I am a government employee you cannot make me do drudgery. Those who cannot adapt much ask for their re-assignment after a couple of years. With those who are permanent, who are well-adapted, it is easier to have division of labour. The law also changed, before it was 5 years. Now they can get an extension as much as they want every year.

The assignment period for Turkish and culture class teachers in Armenian schools was 5 years in the past. This period is now not limited and teachers who can adapt to the schools can extend their assignment.

That Armenian teachers in Armenian schools cannot teach Turkish and culture classes and that these classes can only be taught by citizens of Turkish origin is an important indicator of the aim of national education system in building Turkish identity. That the citizens of Armenian origin who graduated from history, geography, Turkish language and literature departments of

²⁵⁴ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 46.

universities cannot work in Armenian schools in their own specialization is one of the discrimination-based policies of the state. That way, who can be a teacher or not in an Armenian school is determined by the ethnic borders drawn by the state. In the in-depth interviews conducted, the participants were asked “would you like Armenian teachers to teach all classes in Armenian schools? Or what meaning does the obligation of certain classes being taught by Turkish and Turkish culture teachers in Armenian schools carry?” A majority of the participants indicated that they would not want an education system in which all classes are taught by Armenian teachers. The participants think that no matter s/he is a Turk/Armenian, teachers who are good at their specialization should teach.

Tibrevank High School principal Digin Jaklin who indicated that they would prefer a teacher who is both Armenian and equipped in both the subject and their profession for sure however they would not be asked to teach a class just because they are Armenian: “If they are good teacher I would want them [to teach]. But not just because they are Armenian. But if they are good teachers and Armenians, of course I would want them. But I wouldn’t want them to teach any class just because they are Armenians.”

The participant Nayat also tells similar things but also touches upon that maybe an Armenian could teach Turkish literature class better: “It shall not be mandatory but that class should be taught by the person who is best at it. It doesn’t matter Armenian or Turkish...For example, maybe an Armenian person will teach a literature class better...the job should be given to those who will do good. But of course that would be a big financial burden for our schools.”

Sahakyan Nunyan High school principal Digin Talar who indicates that Armenian school who experiences many difficulties due to financial problems growing year by year cannot handle such situation: “Now speaking realistically, if they say, hire all your teachers on your own, pay them on your own. If they say that, it would be the best. But if you say Turkish language and literature, Turkish for example, they shall be taught by Armenian teachers also,

we have not enough staff [for that]. Let's say, they say Armenians shall work, there is not [enough] Armenian to do that. The best would be hire Turkish culture teachers yourself with the condition of paying their wage yourself like the other Private Schools, it would be the best. But do we have the financial situation to do that, no.”

Our Armenian language instructor participant similarly indicated that identity does not matter and classes should be taught by someone who is good at their job. However, an Armenian who is really good at Turkish should also be able to teach Turkish: “I don't think it matters much who teaches these classes. For example, some other person (she means other than Turks here) who is really good at Turkish should be able to teach Turkish class. The best would be someone who is equipped in the profession. Identity doesn't matter.” However, according to the participant Hermine, it is also not nice to have an obligation for Turkish classes to be taught by Turks: “Enforcing it as an obligation is not nice. Why it is the case is obvious.”

The participant who has been working in Armenian schools as philosophy group teacher for the past 7 years expressed his/her opinions about the obligation for culture classes to be taught by Turkish teachers as such: “it is evident in the name, Turkish national education. There is of course this thing, this highlight. There are culture classes toward that education. At the end, by whom are they [the classes] taught? The teachers sent by MEB teach them. There is also a situation like this. After all, wages of culture class teachers are also paid by MEB. Other teachers are paid by the foundations.” That the wages of teachers are paid by two different institutions; Turkish culture class teachers by MEB and other teachers by institutions; and that the teachers who are accepted to position with the condition of being of Turkish origin are assigned by MEB show how any form of regulation about these teachers is intertwined with national education understanding.

Kaya in his work mentions that Turkish and Turkish culture class teachers in 1960s and 1970s had a specific ideological approach. In an

interview with a retired Turkish teacher, the participant indicated that when he started the job he was given a note and in that note, there was an inscription saying “you are assigned to management”.²⁵⁵ According to the participant who indicated that because of this inscription which would mean some sort of administration or management, he felt privileged [and] he started the position knowing that he was different from other teachers [and] that his supervisor was deputy principal, not the principal: “national education also looks into the issue like that, I mean when you go in through that door, like as if you put your step on a foreign land and you burden your real mission [that is] representing the nation in the country.”²⁵⁶ Similar to the example of Turkish Chief Deputy principals, Turkish and Turkish culture class teachers too started their job in Armenian schools carrying a mission determined by the state. The division between “us” and “them” starts inside the borders of the school and Armenian schools gets the character of a land belonging to the foreigners in the country. Thus, national education [ministry] assign teachers to Armenian schools who would represent the Turkish national education in all means with a some sort of conquer mentality.

“Dewey notes, that across Europe, education was nationalized at the end of the nineteenth century... The role of teachers was redefined so that they became agents of national state... Dewey’s analysis helps to explain the role of education in promoting nationalism as a dominant ideology thought much of the twentieth century.”²⁵⁷ The reflection of the role attributed to the teachers by the dominant ideology in European nationalism on turkey emerges as the “Turkish” teachers assigned to Armenian schools. This mission of Turkish and culture class teachers caused segregation among teachers at schools for a long time. The situation of otherness experienced in both ways brought together the issues like distrustfulness. These issues of distrust experienced not only among

²⁵⁵ Kaya, 2013, p. 120.

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Dewey, as cited in Osler and Starkey, 2005, p. 19.

teachers but also with students also affected the attitudes of students toward Turkish culture class teachers. Turkish teacher who said there was an unbreakable wall between him and the students thinks that they were uneasy: “they don’t want to see you as their teacher I mean, they can’t, they get uneasy, they are scared.”²⁵⁸

According to the teacher participant Nayat, she can feel like an ‘other’ from time to time because Turkish teachers work as teachers in Armenian schools too: “they might feel that way when we speak Armenian among each other. I felt that in Ms. F. Sometimes there is chit-chat, it is not about her actually, but she gets upset that she doesn’t understand. I think if I don’t speak any Turkish and be part of such group, and they speak their own language, I would also get curious about what they talk. His might be disturbing to them.” Participant Nayat who gives an example of a Turkish teacher in Dadyan School where she was a student in the 1990s indicates that what bother this person was that Turkish culture class teachers were perceived as agent/informant:

There was this teacher way back then in Dadyan. S/he published a book back then. For example, like at the beginning of the 1990s, teachers were assigned to the schools more like a watchman, s/he wrote about his/her feeling about that in his/her book. What happens in the schools in fact, their aim is to report to the national education, the national education already perceived them as informants embedded inside the schools...” participant Nayat who mentioned her teacher who was uncomfortable with such mission given by MEB to him/her and how s/he turned these feelings into a book said that why MEB limits the assignment period of Turkish teachers to 5 years is the fear that Turkish culture teachers would start to feel closeness to the Armenians: “that is why they didn’t get an extension back then. Like, after 5 years you can be Armenianified, you can start feeling closeness, you won’t be an informant. That is why they didn’t give them extensions. Now there is [a possibility] to extend it forever.

Till the 90s, that MEB limited the assignment period to 5 years because it was impossible for MEB to inspect and direct every teacher assigned to Armenian schools whether they acted in accordance with their mission or not is one of the precautions taken [by the ministry]. That a good number of teachers from whom they ask reporting regarding what was going on in the schools as an

²⁵⁸ Kaya, 2013, p. 122.

informant got used to the schools in time and that they started to feel hesitant to report the information demanded forced MEB to take such precaution. It is a positive development for Armenian schools that this five years limit was repealed and teachers can extend their position as long as they want. One of the reasons why this is considered a positive development is that Armenian schools started to have a say in choosing Turkish culture teachers today. That teachers who apply to the school in consultation with Armenian school principals and administrators are again chosen by Armenian school principals and administrators is one of the most significant indicators that oppressive and controlling attitude ongoing in schools for years has positively changed.

3.2.3. The Issue of Having No Status

The laws and regulations to which Armenian schools are subject today are National Education Law number 1739, the Law regarding Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education number 3797, some articles of Government Officials Law number 657, Private Education Institutions Law number 625 and changes included in it, MEB Private Education Institutions Regulation, Private Armenian High schools and Middle Schools regulation and memoranda published by the ministry.²⁵⁹

Armenian education institutions have some main differences with other minority schools. As be known, for Greek minority schools there is the principle of reciprocity. Ulus Jewish High School operates mostly as a private education institution.²⁶⁰ Minority schools are also subject to some regulations prepared during the 1950s and 1970s. Greek schools regulation is dated 1954, Armenian school regulation is dated 1976. Moreover, there are a couple more regulations regarding Armenian schools. Armenian schools regulation introduced in 1936, regulation specifics to Armenian kinder gardens and curriculum program, Armenian minority elementary schools regulation,

²⁵⁹ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 197.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 193.

Armenian minority Middle school and High school regulations with its grounds are in this context.²⁶¹

As Garo Paylan also expressed, Armenian schools are not in public school status but they are not Private Schools either. For the schools which are deemed public or private to suit the state's interest and due to this having no status experience many hardships, Paylan tries to summarize the situation as such: "Sometimes they inspect them [the schools] really strictly as public schools and sometimes they put the school under financial inspection as Private Schools. We have no special status." We see that Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan also uses similar expression while commenting on the situation: "...in fact these schools operate as public schools in practice, however they are not deemed so by the state. In other words, there is a great difference between their legal status and their actual situation."²⁶²

With the aim to understand the problems created by this situation, the participants who worn in Armenian schools either as a teacher or principal were posed the question "what are the effects of minority schools kept out of the Private Schools regulations (the issue of no status)?"

Sahakyan Nunyan High school principal Talar: "we are subjected to some obligations for Private Schools most of the time, we object to these and try to solve it. For example, the biggest problem of this year is to be subjected to taxation, the obligation to be financial institution. There were cases for schools at court about this, schools were fined saying that you have to be a financial institution. Fortunately, the cases were won." The participant principal Talar who draws attention to that the difficulties regarding these are ongoing, also indicates that they [the state] think in Armenian schools students are charged for tuition like Private Schools [and thus] there is an understanding that the schools should be commercial institutions, financial institutions. Participant Talar who indicates that "however there is no certain amount we

²⁶¹ Büyükkarcı, as cited in Kaya, 2013, p. 83.

²⁶² Kılıçdağı adn Özdoğan, 2011, p. 43.

charge, people do donate as much as they can but if the parents do not donate, we go under a lot of difficulties. We get difficulties like that due to this no-status position” expresses that as long as minority schools are subject to private education institutions [regulation], this situation cannot be resolved unfortunately.

One of the teachers of Getronagan High school, Rita, cannot understand that Armenian schools are considered the same with Private Schools and they are being compared to them. That the Private Schools are commercial school hence they operate on a certain financial benefit does not fit the current situation of Armenian schools: “our schools are foundation schools and they are schools with financial difficulty. Its income is not the same but they are evaluated the same. It is wrong of course, but because they are in Private School status, the state does not help out either.”

Getronagan High school principal Digin Sirun evaluates the issue of no-status position of Armenian schools as the lack of a determined legal identity. According to Silva, this situation indeed negatively reflects on Armenian schools which are neither private nor public school: “our status is that we are minority schools. All other Private Schools are profit-oriented. They invest on business. For us, it is symbolic; there is a representative of the employer. This is a negative thing I mean, what is our real identity is not determined legally.”

Participant Hermine who thinks the state needs to solve this issue of no-status position, opines that this situation causes disorder: “they shall solve it already, I think it is not nice, these attitudes, but I don’t know, the state policy.” The participant indicates that she witnessed the system in Austrian High school and in our schools but they are far from each other: “they are also schools which teach foreign language, so are we. They have their own autonomy, their own checkmark system. They have private education system. They are Private Schools. But even our state-bound status is debatable. We are included in state-bound Private Schools.”

The meeting of structural requirements of Armenian schools which are considered in Private School status, that are demanded from all private schools also causes many difficulties. The inspection of Armenian schools by the state utilizing the same standard for inspecting private education institutions which are profit-oriented creates an unequal situation. For example, the limit for the number of students to be recruited in Private Schools is regulated by the Private School Standards Regulation which was put in practice in 1985. To be subjected to this regulation that brings a lower limit to square meter per each student is not applicable to the structures of Armenian schools buildings. Subjecting Armenian schools which were mostly built either in 19th century or early 20th century to inspection on the same conditions with newly built Private School buildings causes practical difficulties.²⁶³

During the interviews, as a response to the question “are there anything that you see as a problem regarding education in school? Or in your opinion what kind of problems are there in education system of Armenian schools?” Tibrevank High school principal who touches upon the issue of no-status position experienced in Armenian schools

Digin Jaklin: “Of course we have financial issues. This is the biggest issue. Because we are foundation schools, we are schools who stand with donation. We are Private Schools but there is always a misunderstanding. When you say private blahblah school, there is a common perception of being rich. It is also the case in all official institutions, although they know, they cannot comprehend. We are thought to be of Private School status. But we are minority schools. Because we are institutions bringing forward the voluntary basis with financial issues, we stand still that way.”

Another participant indicates as the cause of status confusion about Armenian schools that they can be misunderstood in multiple things and they are evaluated along with Private Schools. “financially too, it is thought that we are rich schools. When they see private in the name, oh well, a private school.”

²⁶³ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, pp. 43-44.

That the state does not offer any solution to about the no-status issue in minority schools which can be solved really easily by the state causes leads to conclusions that the state prefers these schools to be no-status.

3.2.4. Registration in Armenian Schools: Proving Armenianness

While registration to schools were checked in by school administrations themselves till the 1970s, today parents of Armenian origin children who want to register to Armenian schools apply to registration bureaus created by the National Education Directorates and with necessary documents and order of registration [obtained] after they are confirmed by registry research conducted by the related office that they are Armenian-origin at hand, they can register a student to an Armenian school. The number of students who were to be registered to schools was determined by the principles in Private School Standards Regulation introduced in 1985 and students outside of quota could not be registered. Despite the decrease in student numbers that are considered as the main issue in Armenian education institutions, a comparative analysis of Lausanne minorities throughout the years shows that Armenian community is more successful than other minority education institutions in maintaining their education institutions.²⁶⁴

Students who could not register to Armenian schools due to the limitations introduced in the late 1960s about student registrations to Armenian schools is one of the most important reasons for the decrease in student numbers in Armenian schools today. In 1936, the full authorization for registration was given to schools principals. Due to the limitations which continued till the 1970s, education rights of many students and their parents were violated. Moreover, these limitations were enforced in the way that would violate a person's to determine their own identity.

²⁶⁴ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 198.

Participant Digin Sirun indicates that the condition for Armenian students to be of Armenian origin for registering to Armenian schools has been like this since the Lausanne. “in the past, it was proven through population logs, it was a really hard thing. Or sometimes we would go to courts.” Other minority students who did not fulfill the requirement for registration of being Turkish nationals of Armenian origin, such as a Greek or Assyrian student, cannot also register to the schools.

Only Armenian minority. There can be both positive and negative aspect to it. According to most of the people in our community, children should be among each other and Armenian culture should be taught more. There are people who also think they should go out meet children of other origins but I for one think that growing up together from a young age would have more positive effects on them. If someone wants to learn Armenian they are welcome to. A Turk who wants to that also can.

Families who want their kids to be around kids who are also Armenians like them in Armenian schools they attend to are in the opinion that they won't have this chance anyways after they graduate. However, according to the participant, students from many different ethnic groups should be able to get education in Armenian schools.

Despite the fact that the state subject Armenian schools to Private Schools legislation, it does not provide the same opportunities they give to Private Schools like accepting any student the schools wants to Armenian schools. Till recently, students who will register first time to Armenian schools were required to apply to the commissions arranged by MEB. Whether they can acquire the letter confirming their eligibility to register or not also depended on the population log research conducted by the commission. Because it was impossible for students who had Turkish republic nationality but were not from an Armenian father, they were required to “prove” their Armenianness somehow.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 47.

In the past, if in the family of the student to be registered had someone who converted to Islam but later reverted to Christianity, this also used to cause many unwanted issues in the registration process. This understanding and practice, according to Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan is ongoing. In the period the practice was changed, only the condition to have an Armenian father was repealed. According to the new civil code number 4721 dated 2001, the article “husband is the chief of the unity” was repealed and the article 186 of “the unity is ruled by the partners together” was amended.²⁶⁶ Therefore, being born of an Armenian mother also started to be accepted as sufficient for registration. Tibrevank High school principal Jaklin says that in comparison to the past the registration process got much easier: “In the past, only the father being an Armenian was the condition. Right now, either father or mother, any of them being Armenian is a sufficient condition.” In mixed couples which became no longer a taboo in the Armenian community in recent years and started to become prevalent, while only the “lineage” of the father mattered in registration previously, now it is sufficient to have an Armenian mother also.

Moreover, from 2001, the job of family log research assigned to the commission was transferred to Turkish Chief Deputy principals in schools. Thus, principals can only take the registration of students with the “order of registration” from Chief Deputy principals. However, the Chief Deputy principal has no chance to determine whether or not the applicant student is a Turkish republic national, “real and pure” Armenian. In this situation which s/he can learn by asking higher authorities, because it would be hard to go to the commission and also it is tiresome bureaucratically, it can be said that considering Armenian mother sufficient for registration expanded the rights of registration. However, according to Kılıçdağı,Özdoğan the understanding

²⁶⁶ ibid.

which is the real source of the issue and the practice that is its reflection is ongoing.²⁶⁷

It was revealed with the report published in Agos Newspaper in August 2013 that non-Muslim minorities living in Turkey have been coded on the basis of their ethnic origins since 1923. After this report, the debates on lineage code were heated and with the impact of these debates in 2015 and with the circular published by the National Education Minister Nabi Avci ‘the lineage code’ practice which had been creating issues in Armenian schools every year was repealed. With the circulation, the authorization for registration was again given back to the principals like before. However, this circular does not prevent the state to collect lineage code logs in the state.²⁶⁸ The existence of a lineage code specific to non-Muslim minorities is a product of the population policies of the Turkish republic inherited from the İttihat Terakki / Union and Progress Committee mindset.

The participant Digin Talar who works as a principal in Armenian High school indicates that this is the law and the conditions for registration to the school included the members of Turkish Republic national Armenian minorities. However with the repeal of lineage code condition, they take registration on the basis of statement and their job got easier. Still, this situation which is left to the parent’s statement creates another hardship: “We don’t know it anymore. For example they say I am an Armenian. I have no instrument to research this. We ask Badriarkaran (the Patriarchate) when we are not sure, and they give us a document. That is how we take registration” the participant who indicates that there was a lineage code before however now this code is not required tells how they registered students back then: “We used

²⁶⁷ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 47.

²⁶⁸ Agos newspaper revealed in 2013 that the certificates of identity registry copy of non-muslim minorities living in Turkey have included a “lineage code” since 1923. As a result of the events following official issues a parent who came to armenian school for registration experinced, it was revealed that the minorities have been blacklisted secretly for the past 90 years. Since 1923, lineage code for Greeks is 1, for Armenians is 2 and for Jews is 3 (cf. Balancar, 2013).

to take prospective registration. Inspectors used to collect the prospective applications, and then it was researched whether they were Armenian origin in the logs in national education. There was a lineage code that we were not aware of. If there was that lineage code, the approval used to come, if not, then it used not to.”

The repeal of the conditions of the code requirement for registration and ability to register on the basis of statement can also cause some issues in mixed marriages. Sahakyan Nunyan High school principal who had the chance to observe that the issue might arise in religion classes with the experience with a students with a mixed-couple family who registered to their school: “I had such experience. The father of the kid was Hay (Armenian), the mother was Muslim. But the family abandoned him. The kid was raised by the uncle [mother’s brother].” The principal who told that the pressure of the father who came up years later to force the kid to be a Christian did not work, the kid said he was a Muslim and he didn’t want to take the classes taught in their school about Christianity tells that the kid did not want to learn Armenian either or did not say he was an Armenian and self-identified as Turkish and Muslim.

Whatever the kid feels like it, so be it. I mean can you force him to be, no. The father didn’t understand the kid. The kids feels like Turkish, feels like Muslim, we said, if he feels like it, he needs to be raised like that. The kid was raised by his uncle. The kid feels like his uncle. There is nothing wrong about this... it was also really tough, questioning of his identity for the kid. How hard it was for the kid. How oppressive it was. I wouldn’t want that for anyone to live through. The kid felt like a minority here. Single. Lonely. He could bare it just for a year, and then his father took him to vocational High school. The kid’s name was Ohannes. When we called him Ohannes, he wouldn’t even look. He rejected his name. Who needs that?

With his rejection of the name that is an indicator of the identity, the student rejects to be in an institution consisting of Armenian identity and culture and thus rejects to take classes. Although this student who was eligible to register in accordance with the log research was considered an Armenian in the logs, he does not feel like an Armenian. This situation exemplifies a special example that is not seen much commonly in identity discussions. Considering with the issue of who is an Armenian or who can be considered an Armenian which we

will focus on in the following chapters, that the logs in the past and parent's statement and the approval of that statement today are looked for in registration disregards the fact which identity the student feels belonging to. As a result, a student in turkey who wants to register a Turkish school is not required to prove their Turkishness for registration. According to the study titled *Türkiye Ermenilerini Duymak*, those who are subjected to this practice" feel like "this is a double-standard and they were offended.²⁶⁹

3.2.5. The Share not Given to Armenian Schools: State Budget

40th Article of the Lausanne Treaty is in regards of the rights of the minorities to establish, run and control of education and teaching institutions. In that sense, minorities are able to establish any kind of schools on the condition that they will meet the expenses and to teach in their own languages in these schools. 1st paragraph of 41st article of the same Treaty regards the elementary education of the minorities. According to this paragraph, Turkish government is to provide education in their languages in the elementary schools located in cities and neighborhoods that are predominantly a minority group on the other hand it will prevent the obligation to teach Turkish in the said schools. However, despite the 41/2 article of the Treaty which regulates the right of minority schools to get their share from the budget, this rule was not followed in practice. Till 1956, although really insignificant there were financial support from the state budget via the cities to Foundation institutions however this support was cut later.²⁷⁰

One of the most significant problems of Armenian schools today is, thus, the budget deficit. The state after 1956 withdrew the insignificant financial support and left the schools alone to solve this issue by themselves. Garo Paylan who is an administrator in Yeşilköy Armenian School and the

²⁶⁹ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, p. 42.

²⁷⁰ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 194.

Coordinator of Education Commission founded by the community foundation affiliated with Armenian schools, attracted attention to that the schools lacking the financial support of the state are also the victims of the state ideology.²⁷¹

Armenian (minority) schools have no distinct law for themselves. These schools are considered as institutions functioning on the basis of the Lausanne however at the same time they are bound to National Education Main Law numbered 1739 which regulate education generally, in addition, Private Education Institutions Law number 5580 dated 2007 and to MEB Private Education Institutions Regulation which was enacted in relation to the previously mentioned law. However, they have serious differences than the Private Schools in terms of their operations.

While the Private Schools are established for the purpose of profit, pursuing such a goal for Armenian schools is impossible in terms of the conditions they are in and the functions they need to perform-such cultural continuity of Armenian community in Turkey. These schools, due to the social and cultural role they bear will/cannot reject students willing to register. Children of the families which cannot or partially pay the education expanses are admitted. And because it is not possible for them to reject a student similar to a public school, they have a really heterogeneous student body in all terms (socioeconomic status, intellect and skill levels etc.). Moreover, it is hard for these schools to meet the building standards required from every Private School. It creates problems that the state utilizes the same standards in inspecting Armenian schools as the standards it uses to inspect the Private Schools seeking profit.²⁷²

The Armenian schools which experience many issues stemming from being subjected to the same procedures with Private Schools almost for the first time had an advantage of being subjected to the Private School regulations and benefited from the state support for Private Schools. Sahakyan Nunyan High

²⁷¹ Pelek, 2010.

²⁷² Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, pp. 42-43.

school principal Digin Talar who says they have been supported for the past four years tells about the developments they experienced about this as such: “by giving the support which is given to students and parents in Private Schools to all kids, really all kids, four years ago through positive discrimination, they made us comfortable. They have been giving it for four years but they have given to everyone for four years.” The participant indicates that they supported 6 people last year however, and this is an indicator that the support will decrease gradually in the following years and at last it will disappear: “if that goes away, if its amount also decreases a lot, I have no idea what we will do next. I am sure administrations think about this, however I have no idea how this budget will be balanced.” For this table showing how dire the financial conditions are for Armenian schools to be changed, according to the participant, the state support is a must: “of course, if the state helps us, it is much more possible for us to survive and it would be nice. Let be forget, 15-20 minority schools on the land of Turkey is in fact a color, an honor of this country. Considering this angle, the state at first should support us.”

According to Tibrevank High School principal Digin Jaklin, the state gives just a little bit of support: “you apply for it, and for that, for instance, there was funding 3-4 years ago, this year it decreased a lot. It is so little like there is a name but nothing else. Because we are also private schools, we received education support a couple years ago.”

This situation of Armenian schools which is considered neither public not Private Schools reveals itself the most in the issue that they don't receive funding from the public schools budget. According to Tibrevank High school teacher Rita, all schools are in financial hardship because the state does not create a [financial] source. The participant who tells that although students were given something like a private education bursary one time, the bursary was cut down and only a few was able to get it this year has a negative view on this attitude of the state: “you already have financial concerns. The state needs to support here like it supports its own schools. It seems they want these

schools to shut down and disappear. Otherwise, they have to support for sure.” Considering the situation of Armenian schools whose numbers have been in decrease year by year as they also experience financial insufficiency due to the decrease in student numbers, this comment of the participant shows how great the problems of Armenian schools today are.

According to Getronagan High school Digin Sirun, indeed if the state wants its minority to live and support their schools, it needs to extend help: “well, they have been giving some things per student for the past two years. But this year they cut it down considerably. We don’t know what will happen next year. For the past two years, the state has taken over a certain burden. Before that, I mean in the first years after 23, there used to be something called provincial support used to be given but it used to be so little they didn’t even care to go pick it up. I mean they say it wasn’t even our travel expense, it wasn’t worth our trip.”

Armenian schools that cannot get funding from the state cover the financial expenses with the money collected from the parents as donation. However, we witness in the recent years that the parents prefer to send their children to Anatolian High schools, colleges or other Private Schools. With registrations taken away from the middle school or High school to other schools the number of donor parents decreased considerably. The support of the parents whose children are registered also decreases gradually. Sahakyan Digin, “in terms of finances, in terms of budgets of the administrations, we are in worse days. Unfortunately, the support of our community to our schools decreases every day. In the first years the support of the parents was much more. Maybe their ability was better.” Jewellery which is one of the most significant means of living for Armenian community is no longer a profession that brings profit like it used to due to the economic problems in Turkey. Armenians who are the shopkeepers in Grand Bazaar are also affected negatively with the changes in Grand Bazaar started in 2013.

“As you know, our parents’ financial power is not much different than the shopkeepers in Turkey. Let’s say there is a deadlock in the bazaar (she means grand bazaar), that deadlock affects all schools. The families who used to give their donations with ease without even bargaining now cannot pay us with that ease. Or maybe they don’t feel the need to embrace anymore.” As Principal Talar also indicated, every event in the Bazaar affects the schools directly. Besides, even if they send their kids to them, the new generation does not feel the responsibility for Armenian schools like the old generations did. To what way the feeling of belonging to the schools turned is also evident in the amount of donations.

Due to the lack of share from the state budget, the only place Armenian schools can create income for themselves is the donation system that works on voluntary basis. In this voluntary basis, an amount that a parent can afford is asked. Students who come to Armenian schools for registration but have no money also receive education with the money donated by more affluent parents. In Armenian schools, no student is turned back due to financial condition or s/he cannot afford it. Armenian schools who have been trying to stand with this same mentality for years continue to struggle as much as possible with the state’s oppressive education policies and problems created by these policies.

The total number of Armenian schools which was shut down due to similar reasons between 1980-2011 was five, which makes the problems the schools are currently undergoing through would be quite clear. The number of the Armenian schools which continue their educational activities in the 2017-2018 academic year is sixteen. Even though each year these financial problems of the Armenian schools occupies the agenda of the Armenian community every September, so far we cannot say that any reasonable solution is found. For instance, these issues appeared on the pages of the Agos Newspaper in 01.10.2015 under the title “In schools, alarm bells ring” in the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year, were reminded in the following academic year again

in Agos Newspaper with the headline “Schools started the new academic year again with a few [students]” 18 September 2017. The title of the report about Armenian schools in 24 August 2017 was “Schools open with problems”. In another report about the schools in 15.11.2016, it was reported that not enough funds were raised in the event organized to close the budget gap of Feriköy school and the financial difficulties continue with the title “Feriköy’s budget deficit is not closed”. A similar headline, “In Bezciyan, the budget deficit is not closed” was used in 14.10.2016, this time to tell about the financial difficulties of Bezciyan school.

CHAPTER IV

CURRICULUM AND THE POWER OF TEXT BOOKS

4.1. Nation-State and Effects of Curriculum on the Student's Identity Formation

The nation-states which became prevalent at the end of the 19th century engaged in new arrangements especially with regard to education in their nation-building processes. The public schools were seen as only spaces to raise appropriate citizens for the modern state where populations were thought to be a nation caused that they covered education and every element regarding. "State-supervised schooling has long been recognized as the quintessential mechanism by which nation-states turn children into citizens or individuals into political persons, and this has fundamental effects upon the person thus enculturated into a new civil and/or civic identity."²⁷³ The most important characteristic of identities which Baumann mentions as civil or civix identity is that they are created consciously toward a certain trajectory and with a specific aim. The governments who became aware how important schools and education were in this process considered their education policies among their top priorities: "Certainly, most governments since the end of the nineteenth century have seen it as one of their prime duties to establish, fund and increasingly direct a mass system of public education." That is why; without much due it became "curricula", "new sacred legends of national glory"²⁷⁴ According to Baumann who argues that without public schools neither nations nor national conscience collective can occur. "The school became the school of nation, in many ways the mission station of national consciousness...in all

²⁷³ Baumann, 1999, p. 37.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*

cases, no matter where, the curriculum became a tool to forge a superethnic, and often newly religious, national consciousness.”²⁷⁵ According to Baumann who tells that Ernest Gellner’s (1983) claim that “The nation-state would be nothing, nowadays, if it had not taken possession of the schools”²⁷⁶ is appropriate, for without the public schools as the institutions of mass education nationalism can neither exist nor prevail. This intertwined character of nationalism and education stems from the undisputable importance of state schooling in building up a “national consciousness”. In that sense, preparation and implementation of school curricula is one of the most important topics to focus on. Because school curriculum is not an isolated element and it intertwines with many contexts, its effects do not disappear after the student leaves the school and become part of the social life.

The curriculum defines every activity from the very moment the pupils step into school and determines not only which classes will be taught using which books, for how many hours and even by teachers with what characteristics but also how all other in-school activities are organized in that regard the influence of schooling and curriculum in the formation of ethnic identities cannot be ignored. Jenlink&Townes describe the ease using a specific curriculum in the information of the pupils towards the members of an ethnic community as follows: “When curriculum that represents a predominately ethnocentric view is encountered, students from that background find themselves well mirrored in that curriculum because the cultural assumptions embedded within the curriculum are familiar.”²⁷⁷ The curriculum with its impact on identity formation and recognition becomes an important instrument will be taught to national identities aspired to be created in what ways and by whom. According to the writers of *The Struggle for Identity in Today’s Schools*, school is a site of identity formation. “Schools are microcosms of our larger

²⁷⁵ Baumann, Kastoryano, Schiffauer, and Vertovec, 2004, p. 2.

²⁷⁶ Gellner, as cited in Bauman, 1999, p. 37.

²⁷⁷ Jenlink and Townes, 2009, p. 107.

society and provide an important structure for the formation of student identity. What students learn about themselves and others while in school establishes a solid foundation for who they are the rest of their lives.”²⁷⁸ This important structure rises upon the curriculum. In that sense, the curriculum is a specific programming tool shaping the identity of a individuals which will be carried throughout their lives. This arrangement does not only leave its imprint on the person’s own identity formation but also affects how the person perceives the society they live in and other members of the society. Therefore, the school life experiences of the students determined by the curriculum can be seen as one of the most fundamental locations where students acquire their social identities. The directions are all important in the content and aims of a curriculum also include in which ways the determination of the collective identity of the society, in which the students will take part in the future as full members as Jenlink&Townes stress,

Like the formal and hidden curriculum encountered by students, schools are sites where political, economic, cultural, social, and personal contexts intersect. All of these contexts impact the formation of student identity. At this site, students are immersed in a complex web of interrelated contexts that provide confirmation and conflict as to who they are and who they will be.²⁷⁹

The boundaries of the national identity that the nation-states aspire to create in accordance with the nationalist understanding are drawn by the curriculum which is framed as a result of the nation-state’s education policies, sources and tools of the curriculum. Due to the curriculum arranged in accordance with the dominant national/ethnic identity, many generations with different ethnic identities got education in a similar understanding under the domain of dominant identity and culture. Because the sources and tools of the curriculum are in no sense objective, what is included in the curriculum or not, what is left outside is always shaped in accordance with the interests of the dominant groups. That is why; tools used by the curriculum are also a part of a political process. Moreover, with the human images presented by to students in a

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 103.

specific way, the curriculum supports the political ideology of the nation-states and provides its continuance.

Besides the curriculum present officially in the education system, there is also another type of curriculum which is not written and taught. This other type of the curriculum which is also known as hidden curriculum is mostly shaped around values and beliefs. According to Jenlink&Townes, “this definition of curriculum is concerned with all activity that occurs in the school that affects the classroom without the knowledge of the teachers or students and that occurs but is not disclosed in the written, taught, or tested curriculum.”²⁸⁰ Jenlink &Townes indicate that hidden curriculum focuses more on “values, beliefs, and opinions attached to the instructional materials, learner, system, theory, or content” Moreover, it is also argued that hidden curriculum is a text read not only inside the school but also outside and it is also hidden curriculum which mediates the interpretation forms for children’s’ experiences. In short, all types of values, beliefs, views and acts of students are under the continuous influence of the values of that hidden curriculum.²⁸¹ Thus, curriculum is a political initiative as it strengthens the order of ruling that is dominant in the nation-state and it encourages this order by the people.

4.2. The Curriculum of Turkish National State and the Perception of the Other in Textbooks

Textbooks are the most important among the sources of a curriculum. These sources which reach to all students of a certain age group in the whole country find their power in this ability to reach out almost all of the population in a short time. However, the power of the textbooks does not only stem from that. Another reason why textbooks are this effective is the characteristics of the information that they spread. The information presented in textbooks is

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 100.

²⁸¹ *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

considered primarily the minority students as time and not questioned whether it reflects the reality or not by their readers who are especially in elementary and middle school years and therefore not in a position to question them. From the moment these books are published and distributed by the approval of MEB, they are perceived by students as a source through which they can access to the true knowledge. Students continue to learn to shape their views about themselves, their surroundings and the world basically through these textbooks that they encounter during their elementary school years.

Textbooks in Turkey, too, have always been one of the most important tools of curriculum as they determine the limits of “appropriate knowledge”. Textbooks are prepared with the aim of transferring an essential message to students with the topics covered or deemed to be inappropriate through the images used in the covers of the books, their contents and the language they use. Textbooks as sources which normalized the codes of the dominant discourse by determining what can be discussed and what topics are taboos are one of the most fundamental elements which reflect “the official discourse” in Turkey.

Curriculum imposes on students a from at a young age that determine what kind of characteristics those who have national identity should have. Same curricula also teaches students the attributed characteristics of those who do not belong to national identity that is assumed characteristics of the members of other ethnic groups existing in the society meaning different ethnic identity have through textbooks. For example it is not have to find many discriminatory statements about non-Muslim minorities who are not included in Turkish national identity in the textbooks used in the schools in Turkey. Curriculum has a key role in determining how different ethnic identities will be represented. In organizing the knowledge which will be transferred to students in classrooms, it determines within in the framework of its own notion of have that (Turkish) nation should be which knowledge is acceptable and valuable to teach students, which is inappropriate in building national identity and which

requires to be hidden or unspoken. Considering this in detail from the perspective of students as the youngest generation constituting a society, it is quite a frightening situation. The curriculum followed in public schools determines and limits the relationship of value and belief systems of students with their surroundings and at last tries to shape their perspectives on the world by adding the knowledge that the government in power believes to be more important and by ignoring the knowledge that is deemed either unimportant or risky for the government. The attitude of the dominant nation-state regarding different geographies, different cultures, different identities, thus, finds its reflection in the curriculum and text books used in a country.

The majority of school teachers in Turkey organize the framework of their classes through the textbooks published by the National Education Ministry even though they don't use them. Although these textbooks give the impression that they are objective, it is impossible to say that they are based on objective knowledge. The reason why they look like objective to people is the fact that these have the still power & authority at this bad to support them legitimate students in the ages of the public. Besides the language of these books is in the address from creating the impress, on that it is the state power who directly speaks to the new generations.

The address form of the language which creates a feeling among students that it comes from a higher authority creates a perception that the knowledge provided is applicable in every period under all conditions.²⁸²

When we look at the textbooks recommended by the Turkish curriculum today, we see how the question "who are we" is answered as part of the nation-state narrative. Who we are has to be constantly reminded also by other application in public school curriculum besides textbooks. We can say that the answers to the question "who we are" as the dominant ethnic group and who those others excluded from this "we" are hidden inside the curriculum followed in schools in Turkey.

²⁸² Çayır, 2014, pp. 1-2.

In actuality, misrecognition is an acceptable outcome to those of the dominant culture who desire to reproduce only their cultural perspective. In this case, the inter-subjective experience is devoid of reciprocity because the curriculum that represents only one cultural perspective refuses to recognize the Other's perspectives. This lack of reciprocity is also a political tactic used in the colonization of student identity.²⁸³

The perspective on “the other” in curriculum and textbooks which do not include any other legitimate identity and culture other than the Turkish culture and identity and the depiction of the other identities, they did so in formed with in a framework of their own nation-state understanding lead students to create deep-rooted prejudices about the other cultures and identities and know them through their deformed misrepresentations. Students learn from whom the Turkish society is comprised of, what kind of a past it has, its contemporary position and the vision that the next generations should carry in line with the curriculum determined by the Turkish national education system. Curriculum which aims at creating a feeling of belonging among students to the Turkish state and society which is framed in a historical context also creates an understanding of “we” in this way. What has never changed till this day in curriculum and textbooks which has been changed based on certain changes from year to year is the endeavour to create a mutual identity which is bound to the Turkish nation and Turkish state and united around these values. What Çayır mentioned in his work as “collective memory” and ‘collective identity’ through which the national identity is shaped on are created primarily through text books.²⁸⁴ The collective memory of the collective identity is shaped on the basis of sharp distinctions between those who are included and those who are excluded from this national identity. The political history and culture of the Republic of Turkey are re-written as to determine also the content of the collective identity and of citizenship consciousness. Thus, textbooks cannot be considered independently from the historical context of the country.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Jenlink and Townes, 2009, p. 107.

²⁸⁴ Çayır, 2014, p. 9.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 24.

According to Çayır, the identity narrative in textbooks is more singular in the countries like Turkey where education is planned to be central. Even if they are prepared by different publishers and different authors, the “we understanding” presented in the textbooks are almost identical; as if all textbooks are prepared by the same person; they have the same language and understanding. Çayır argues that the narrative defined by the central education system of Turkish Republic is possible to be seen directly especially in the chapter of “I am learning my past” in 4th grade Social Sciences textbooks and in the chapter of “Turks’ Emergence in the History in the 9th grade history textbooks.²⁸⁶ This is applicable to all sorts of classes like music, arts as part of the curriculum besides national history, national geography, Turkish language and literature. All of the courses students take are constructed to develop first and foremost this “we understanding”. However, exactly because of this construction, there are issues in the narratives regarding ethnic and religious groups. Because, what happens in reality and what is told in the textbooks in Turkey does not match up with each other. “The national identity narrative in textbooks is built only on the history of Turks and what is more, in an essentialist and exclusivist way.”²⁸⁷ It is seen that the answers states generally develop to the question “who we are?” is not static. Even though [it is asserted that the collective identity is constantly being revised on the basis of new developments²⁸⁸, We can say that in Turkey this is not the case. When we decipher and make the codes of identity construction in Turkey comprehensible, we face a nationalist, discriminatory, homogenizing and marginalizing discourse which remained the same since 1923.

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 25.

4.2.1. Marginalization of Armenians in Turkish Text Books:

Since 1926, preparation and choosing of textbooks is left to the responsibility of the National Education and Upbringing Department. When we look into how Armenians, issues about Armenians and Turkish-Armenian relations are covered, how and in which ways they are taught or what kind of a language is utilized when they're being taught in the textbooks students read, study and discussed from elementary to high schools in the discourse which Turkish national education system tries to create with curriculum regarding ethnic groups outside of Turks, we see that Armenians stand in a different position than the other minority groups or different ethnic religious groups in terms of the way they are covered. Because the events in 1915 continue to be relevant today, Armenians are frequently mentioned in text books. The ideas that were developed as thesis by the Turks against the Armenian thesis are still present today in text books. In the sections of textbooks in which foreign and domestic enemies threatening Turkish Republic are mentioned, for instance, Armenians are included among the "domestic enemies". As Osler and Starkey put "nationalist discourses encourage xenophobia because they make a sharp distinction between national citizens and foreigners."²⁸⁹

Because of the textbooks which shape the perspectives of the society and students on the Armenians and the Armenian issue with a discriminatory and hostile attitude, the prejudices which were developed in our society effect both Turkish and Armenian students differently. Because the questions of how "the Armenian" is taught in classes are not the central topic of this study, we will confine ourselves just to give a couple of examples which, we believe, would reveal the situation.

We see the narrative constructed regarding Armenians in the Turkish national education system curriculum and textbooks especially in "Turkish Republic History of Revolution History and Atatürkism" books and starting

²⁸⁹ Osler and Starkey, 2005, p. 20.

with 10th grade History books, in History 11, Social Sciences 7 and Contemporary Turkish and World History” books.²⁹⁰ In addition, we witness that Armenians are intensely covered under the title the “Armenian issue” which appeared in the textbooks since the 1960s. Because the reflections of the events in 1915 on domestic and foreign politics of today’s Turkey are ongoing and continue to be relevant, the topics aiming to respond to the Armenian claims and Armenians in the textbooks get a considerable coverage. For instance, in the teacher’s guide book, teachers are asked to touch upon this issue for “the necessity of currency principal”.²⁹¹ In the guide book for *TR Revolution History and Atatürkism 8* book, the statement of “for the necessity of actuality principal, the teacher should touch upon Armenian claims and explain that they are claims that do not match up with the historical facts” is included. Although here the effect of curriculum and textbooks on students are discussed more, one should not neglect the similar effects proceed by the curricula used for the education of teachers, curriculum sharing the same sensitivity about education of teachers is an indisputable fact. Teachers are expected to fulfill their duties as part of the same official discourse in the Turkish national education system as they are the first-hand people who transfer the national narrative to the students. One of the most important duties of a teacher in Turkey is also to show their students the truth against the Armenian claims. The 1915 events²⁹² which are covered in the textbooks as Relocation Law is included in the textbooks starting from the 7th grade. In this

²⁹⁰ Çayır, 2014, p. 33.

²⁹¹ *ibid.*

²⁹² 1915 events are a genocide to some historians and a massacre according to others. Two societies supports two thesis about the intention of Union and Progress government, the number of loss, and relocation conditions of Armenians. The point where both parties agree on is that Union and Progress deported Armenians under war conditions and many Ottoman Armenians died during this deportation (Metin, 2015, p. 40).

process starting from the earliest age, teachers are given the duty to transfer the defensive discourse of the Turkish state against the Armenian claims:

Indicate to your students that the Russians in that frontline also made some Armenians to revolt and caused many of our civilians to be murdered. Indicate that upon these developments the Ottoman State passed the ‘Relocation Law’ in May 1915 to emigrate and relocate Armenians living in war zones. Explain that it one was haven to answer that the lands emigrated Armenian were relocated be fertile that, there were outpost built for their security there and also opportunities for them to practice their old professions and jobs were created.²⁹³

When we look at this and other texts which are composed with the aim of responding to the Armenian claims, we see that these claims are frequently repeated: Ottoman state paid attention to all kinds of needs of Armenians while relocating them and provided everything it could to Armenians along the in relocation route. Ottoman State did what it could for the Armenians. However, despite all of this, due to some other conditions, Armenians faced loss of life and property:

If Armenians acted in their locations as before, the government wouldn’t have had to take these precautions... During the migration, some of the Armenians lost their lives due to natural conditions and lack of order. This shouldn’t be forgotten either: approximately one hundred thousand Turkish soldiers died only in Sarkamış due to natural conditions and neglect. Turkish nation is definitely not responsible for what happened to Armenians during their migration. Thus, thousands of Armenians reached Syria safe and sound and continued their lives under the protection of the Turkish state.²⁹⁴

In the text books which containing sentences like “if Armenians “behaved” the government wouldn’t have had to take such precautions”, it was highlighted that Turkish nation was not responsible for anything. The author who indicates that the whole Turkish nation cannot be hold accountable for the precautions taken by the government in fact includes statement involving generally all Armenians with the language he used. The common characteristic of such discriminatory, hostile texts is that they use a language as if they mean all Armenians when they refer to Armenians. The basic response to the Armenian genocide claims consist in the creating the impression of “innocent Turks”

²⁹³ *MEB Sosyal Bilgiler 7 ÖKK*, as cited in Çayır, 2014, p. 33.

²⁹⁴ Mumcu, as cited in Metin, 2015, pp. 115-116.

against the “traitor” Armenians in the minds of the students starting from the 7th grade. However, such impressions created in the minds of the students about Armenians also affect their attitudes in their adult social life after they graduate from schools. Thus, a certain national identity and memory turns into collective identity and memory.

While covering the Armenian issue in the textbooks, one other frequently used idea is that “while Turks and Armenians were used to live in peace together, Armenians rebelled against the Turks under the influence of “foreign enemies”.

To make their job easier, the Russians used the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia like a tool. They were imposed the idea that they were to be independent in the regions they located in, and thus, Armenians along with the Russians attacked on their innocent sinless Turkish neighbours. Armenian committee people raided on many cities, towns and villages with wild-eyes ragingly and killed the Turks without sparing children, the elderly, and women.²⁹⁵

Before “the wild-eyed” Armenians who killed “innocent, sinless” Turks fell for the “ruses” of the enemies, they lived on their homes in peace. More so, they had even better living conditions than Muslims. Regardless, they “misbehaved” and fell for the desire of independence:

An Armenian citizen who is presented as Karapit Nedeniyan, a carpet seller in Grand Bazaar (with the reference of journal of *Bilim ve Aklın Aydınlığında Eğitim* vol:38, s.11) is being narrated as such: “oh, those who caused this, oh, God damn you. We used to live in peace. We used to enjoy ourselves like Muslims couldn’t. They deceived our youth and made them work for their own interest. Now we are all spread out in every part of the world.”²⁹⁶

All in all, textbooks nurtures a feeling of “we” that tells that Turks have been tolerant throughout the history however they should be awake all the time against the foreign and domestic enemies with the constructions like “we tolerated but they...”. Moreover, Turkish national identity in textbooks today is still described through exclusion, denial, disregarding, misrecognition, threat and hostility.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Mumcu, as cited in Metin, 2015, p. 116.

²⁹⁶ *MEB T.C. İnkılap Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük 8*, as cited in Çayır, 2014, pp. 45-46.

²⁹⁷ Çayır, 2014, pp. 45-46.

In 2002, with the act of the National Education Ministry Education and Upbringing Board number 272-273, dated 14/06/2002, the first concrete step was taken about “teaching Armenian Issue”: with the decision of MEB regarding “Inclusion of topics about Armenians in middle schools (high school) History 1, History 2 and TR Revolution History and Atatürkism classes teaching programs” and “Inclusion of topics about Armenians in the elementary grades 5 and 7th Social Sciences classes teaching programs”²⁹⁸ “Armenian” topic is included in teaching programs. In this programs Armenian issue is not covered separately as before and it is scattered in units with varying titles. For example, in the 4th grade program, Turkish-Armenian relations are not touched upon at all. However, it was included in teaching program of the 5th grade social sciences class under the title “Second Unit: How did we reach the Republic?” in the section “Aims/Actions” as Aim 2 which starts with the expression: “To be able to comprehend the aims and actions of Armenian gangs during the War of Independence”.²⁹⁹ The topic of Turkish-Armenian relations and Armenian issue which found a place for itself at the 5th grade in 2002, was also included in the 8th grade for the first time Turkish Republic Revolution History and Atatürkism class in 2014-2015 academic year. In the section Explanation, “the historical development of Turkish-Armenian relations, 1915 events and Armenian claims regarding these events, terrorism, missionary activities, reactionism, separatism topics will be covered”³⁰⁰ was given as the content. This attitude, which we tried to exemplify above, is transmitted through textbooks in schools for the purpose of building a national identity for the dominant ethnic group by developing a negative perspective toward other peoples’ histories. Next generations are educated both in accordance with the borders drawn by the cadre which pursue the statization process and with the

²⁹⁸ Metin, 2015, p. 36.

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

³⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 39.

teachings of “pain inducing”, “oppressor”, “barbarian” against the “other” which is highlighted in textbooks.

Its hypothesis, however, that each nation-state is engaged, by means of its schools, in creating “its” minorities in its own image, can be researched even in the smallest scale... It is through schools that the state imparts these styles of how to vis-à-vis nationals and foreigners alike, and it does so through both the explicit curricula... The question to be answered now is this: How do the self-identifications of minority students respond to, and partly reflect, the styles of how to that are imparted at school?³⁰¹

Armenian students who get their education at high school level in Turkish schools, too, uses the same textbooks along with other students of the dominant culture. On the other hand, students attending Armenian schools, too, cannot have a healthy relationship with their teachers when these topics are being covered. At the same time, the students can pass these classes by being forced to learn such negative prejudices about themselves. School curriculum and textbooks, which aim at creating a national identity, hurts the perceptions of students of other ethnic identities about their own ethnic identities. An Armenian student who is in 5th or 7th grade can feel a necessity of hiding their identity outside of the school because of this or if they attend Turkish schools, they might feel a necessity of hiding their identities at school.

4.2.2. The effect of Turkish Education Curriculum on Armenian Schools and Armenian Identity Formation

Since the establishment of the Republic, vital decisions about education like curriculum writing and choosing books have been taken by the National Education Ministry. Since the early years of the Republic, the content of textbooks and curriculum has been prepared in accordance with a national and nationalist understanding. Education system in Turkey is regulated by ‘National Education Fundamental Law’. However, in this law, education system is mentioned as ‘Turkish National Education System’. Turkish national education system which was shaped on an ideological basis is an important tool

³⁰¹ Baumann, 1999, pp. 151-152.

of Kemalist ideology not only in terms of the law's wording but also in terms of its instruments and practices. Reducing policies at the number of Armenian schools together effective with the reduction of the Armenian population for several reasons pursued since the establishment of Turkish Republic hand by hand with many assimilating regulations in the education system of the country.

The curriculum followed in all schools since the passing of Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu [The Act of Educational Unity and the policies regarding teachers' training, choosing and assignment, the content of the textbooks, etc were all directed toward the construction of a the consciousness of Turkishness inspired by the Kemalist cadres. The curriculum to which Armenian schools are also bound has a single-centered, ethnocentric and nationalist structure. This structure in education aimed at assimilating the minority students from multiple angles:

Majority-controlled education in settler states has played an important role in the subjugation of minorities. Historically, the primary aim of education was to assimilate and “civilize” or in other words, obliterate minority identities through the replacement of their language, culture, religion, and pedagogy with that of the colonizing powers.³⁰²

Whichever identity the nation-state is built on, schools and their curriculum lays the ground for a more complicated identity formation for those who are outside of this identity. The question Baumann et al. tried to answer in their studies conducted in four different countries regarding which was formulated as this issue “how then do nation-state schools manage to maintain and update their old links with the national imaginary despite there being so many school pupils who are not nationals or else not ethnically recognizable as such”³⁰³ has also been illuminating for this study in which we try to analyze how the pupils living in Turkey as a multicultural country experience “nationality” or “ethno-national identification”. In terms of both how other ethnic group members

³⁰² Dyck, 1997; Halverson, Puig, and Byers, 2002; Peacock and Wisuri, 2002; Satzewich, 1996; Thorton, 2001; as cited in Abu-Saad, 2006, p. 1086.

³⁰³ Baumann et al., p. 10.

outside of the dominant culture are perceived by the dominant culture and also how they perceive their own ethnic identity, curriculum has been a significant tool for the nation-state to create its own minorities on its own also by determining which knowledge will be disseminated. While they shape their own national identities in the framework of a narrative, the knowledge involved in this narrative, be it imaginative or real, are implanted in the young minds from a really young age through public schools: “Each of the civil cultures co shapes ethnicity and ‘produces’ its ‘own’ unmistakable minorities. This implies structural power relations are turning out to such minorities’ disadvantage.”³⁰⁴

We witness that many similarities between the depictions Ismael Abu-Saad³⁰⁵ on how Palestinian Arabs as a minority are affected by education policies which are directed toward assimilation and the experiences of Armenians in Turkey. Turkish National Education System continue to delegitimize the identity of the Armenians, by suppressing the preservation and maintenance of the Armenian identity within the Armenian schools system. This has been achieved by systematic control of the curriculum both in Turkish and Armenian schools to exclude the historical narrative of the Armenians. With these narratives excluding Armenians, how the Turks as the dominant ethnic group should perceive the Armenians is also included in their own narratives. The knowledge about Armenians which is disseminated through schools is limited by the what curriculum determined by MEB. Besides being taught as an enemy for years in public schools through text books, Armenians do not have control inside their schools either. With the curriculum determined as a result of the state’s education policies, marginalization of Armenian minorities was maintained and Armenian minority was tried to be put under control in Armenian schools. Armenians do not have a say in the preparation of textbooks which are an important tool of shaping negative views about

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 2004, p. 300.

³⁰⁵ *cf.* Abu-Saad, 2006.

Armenians in the Turkish education system either. Moreover, they do not have autonomous control of their school system and do not hold any of the key decision-making and policy-making positions in the national educational infrastructure, which is reflective of their position in Turkish society in general. The Armenian school system has its own curriculum but it is designed and supervised by the Turkish Ministry of Education, where virtually no Armenian educators or administrators have decision-making powers.

Turkish national education system aim for students getting education with the curriculum followed in Armenian schools to learn Turkish culture and values, thus, in the government-sponsored curriculum for schools Armenian students are required to spend many hours in the study of Turkish culture and history and the Turkish language. Thus, they are required to develop identification with Turkish values and further Turkish nationalism “at the expense of the development of their own national awareness and sense of belonging to their own people.”³⁰⁶

The nationally specific imaginaries shape effective schemes of classification which govern meanings of culture and imply conditions of integration for those who represent cultural otherness. This marks out the relative place of particular cultural affiliations and defines legitimate spaces of identification in the framework of the nation states, for identification is the central link between the imagined national communion and individuals’ emotions of belonging or loyalty towards it.³⁰⁷

The regulations especially regarding the content of language and history classes and class hours through curriculum has an intense effect on identity formation of Armenian students attending Armenian schools. The lack of a course on Armenian History in Armenian Schools causes the creation of Armenian generations who do not know anything about their history. De-historicized Armenian students take Turkish history classes on the other hand and as a result they graduate from Armenian schools knowing more about Turkish history than their own.

³⁰⁶ Abu-Saad, 2006, p. 1091.

³⁰⁷ Baumann et al., p. 242.

According to the Armenian Schools curriculum, information regarding Christianity is taught to Armenian students in Religious Culture and Morality course. Moreover, these classes are covered in Armenian. Armenian students who attend Turkish schools are exempt from Religious Culture and Morality course [Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi] Religious Culture and Morality course which the religion of Islam is taught. In the education system, with the start of the TEOG exam practice, because Religious Culture and Morality covered in Armenian schools as part of the curriculum is not part of the exam and because students are not exempt from these parts of the exam, certain disadvantageous situations occurred for Armenian students.

Making errors in calculating the TEOG exam results of non-Muslim students who need to be exempt from religion questions in TEOG exam prepared in line with the curriculum caused Armenian students to experience certain disadvantages. In the results of first TEOG exam first given in November 2013, non-Muslim students were considered absent from the religion exam and students received “0” points.”³⁰⁸ With the announcement of exam results in June 2015, it was seen that the same mistake was made. The National Education Ministry (MEB) calculated the results of students who attend private schools and are exempt from the Culture Religious Culture and Morality course by giving them “0” points.³⁰⁹ That is why; many students lost at least 20 points in the exam. Due to these negative developments, in the TEOG exam given in October of 2015-2016 academic year, for the first time in education history in Turkish Republic 218 students attending Armenian schools were asked questions in Armenian about Christianity in Religious Culture and Morality exam. This situation was really significant as it occasioned for the first time an important modification of the Armenian schools’ curriculum which was first put in practice some 40 years ago and which included the Christian religion courses to be changed. Moreover, Armenian students who do

³⁰⁸ Agos, 2015.

³⁰⁹ *ibid.*

not attend Armenian schools were exempt from Religious Culture and Morality in TEOG.³¹⁰

Analyzing this and similar situations which we will cover in detail in the following chapters, it reveals how the state controls Armenian identity formation through education policies and curriculum. Similar to how it introduces regulations which would ensure that Turkish national identity is internalized and a feeling of belonging is developed by all students attending public schools through curriculum, it also does so to prevent or hurt Armenian identity formation of Armenian students in Armenian schools.

Thus, in our study in which we investigate the effects of the state's enforcement of an education policy which would prevent the raising of an awareness about Armenians' own national identity on identity formation of Armenian students, following the effects of curriculum and textbooks, in the next chapter, the importance and effects of history on identity formation in the nation-state, the structure of history teaching, the contents of history textbooks and the experiences of students with their history teachers in Armenian schools in history classes will be covered.

³¹⁰ Curriculum and text book studies in this topic was conducted by a commission led by High Priest Tatul Anuşyan consisting of religious culture teachers and pedagogy experts. In the studies, first of all a textbook to be taught in 8th grade was prepared and in TEOG questions from the topics covered in this books were asked. Following the argument that in the case of preparing the questions in Turkish it would had created conceptual problems, the questions were decided to be asked in Armenian. After clearing all question in Education Board regarding curriculum, this curriculum was approved in February. Thus, instead of a curriculum which was approved 40 years ago, for the first time a different curriculum was approved (Kuyumciyan, 2015).

CHAPTER V

NATIONAL STATE AND ARMENIAN ETHNIC IDENTITY FORMATION IN SCHOOLS THROUGH HISTORY COURSES

5.1. National State and National Identity Formation in Schools

Reviewing the establishment processes of modern nation-states at the end of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century, we see that it is also a review of how the ‘national identity’ is constructed. ‘National-state’ and ‘national identity construction’ appear as two phenomena that cannot be considered separately. The most effective and efficient tool of the nation states in their construction of national identity is education. The aim of education, or in Baumann’s terms, “national-state schooling” is to shape the citizens whom the newly established nation-state determined as belonged to itself in the framework of their own nation state’s ideology.

According to Baumann, when we investigate the close relationship between nation-state identities and nation-state schooling, we should approach the problems that we face with the question “what exactly is it that schools pass on to the citizens-to-be, or indeed to those of their pupils who are not citizens or nationals in the legal sense?” Baumann’s answer to this question is “civil culture”³¹¹. According to Baumann, each nation state in or sample establishes a particular discursive field in the schools which is crucial for enculturation:

The nationally specific imaginaries shape effective schemes of classification which govern meanings of culture and imply conditions of integration for those who represent cultural otherness. This marks out the relative place of particular cultural affiliations and defines legitimate spaces of identification in the framework of the nation states, for identification is the central link between the imagined national

³¹¹ Baumann et al., 2004, p. 3.

communion and individuals' emotions of belonging or loyalty towards it.³¹²

Considering the schools themselves as a special spaces of identity formation, this space has to turn in to ethnic identification in the nation-state. In that sense, asking the question Baumann asked as quoted below for the Armenian students living in Turkey, what we need to analyze is how the Armenian students were exposed to identification in line with the education policies of the Turkish nation-state.

...We engage with a reality where nation-state schools are no longer schools of nationalism, yet we continue to recognize that state-directed schooling is always related to identity-shaping purposes within the framework of that nation-state...How then do nation-state schools manage to maintain and update their old links with the national imaginary despite there being so many school pupils who are not nationals or else not ethnically recognizable as such?³¹³

In this part, while attempting to comprehend what sort of an identification the students who were left out from the ethno-national identification were exposed to, the issue we will principally discuss is why history and history teaching in the national-state education has such great influence in the identity formation.

Although there are similarities in the main characteristics of nation-state building processes of the countries, still every nation-state has its own approaches deriving from their own political conditions. In this sense, we see that the Republic of Turkey which was established after a major empire like the Ottoman had to follow its own unique nation-state project. We will investigate here the specific element of the Turkish used national discourse which were used in schools in its nation-state building process and what kind of national identity the history teaching aimed to create and how this situation reflected itself on the identity formation of the students on Armenian schools and Armenian students studying in public schools. I would like to introduce this part with an example Baumann gives on France to show the common situation in mostly all nation-states in terms of national state and school relationship.

³¹² *ibid.* p. 242.

³¹³ *ibid.*, p. 10.

Baumann gives an example from French Minister of Education's confession. This "confession" published in France's most established newspaper, *Le Figaro* (Bayrou 1994) which is a confession about reinvention of a 'civil religion' in France. The French Republic had declared ethnic and religious loyalties illegal for all times. "France is more than a country full of people, pursuing individual rights. It is a community of destiny. This ideal is pursued first and foremost at schools. This laicist and national ideal is the very substance of the school of the Republic and the Republic and the foundation of its duty toward civic education."³¹⁴

5.1.1. The Importance of History and History Lessons in National State Education

What is the place of the dominant ethnic group that is considered to be the nation in the process of nation-state construction or what their place should be can be found in the introduction chapters of school books in Turkey. Authors of these books, according to Copeaux, strive to create "a historical consciousness" for the kids "which gives them the feeling that they are a part of a strain of generations that has a legacy of a great value."³¹⁵ In this construction process, in the societies like Turkey that are built on ethnic basis, it should be told to the people that what it is to be a Turk and that Turkishness is in fact really old ancient and rooted fact about which they all should be proud of. In that sense history and historiography as well as history classes taught and studied at schools had to be given a great significance in the nation-state building process.

Similar to all modern nation-states, the significance attributed to the history education with its strengthening of the bonds that keep the nation together and

³¹⁴ Baumann, 1999, p. 58.

³¹⁵ Copeaux, 1996, p. 179.

the feeling of belonging it creates has an important place in the establishment of Turkey, too. It has been possible to build the nation's ethnic roots on an exclusive past only through somehow keeping other ethnic groups out of "us" in the multicultural societies.

Teachers dictate information to the learners that is from an oppressive historical ideology. The learners become passive by not talking, sharing, or having dialogues with others; conversely, they receive, memorize, and repeat what has been dictated, thus creating a system where those in power deposit information and the oppressed are passive receivers of the information...The oppressed groups become the objects of history rather than the subjects. "A subject of history is a conscious maker of history... As objects of history, their actions are determined by history...This is a form of deculturalization or the educational process of destroying a people's culture and replacing it with a new culture."³¹⁶

Thus, the dominant ethnic group which is the creator of its own history can create its own nationalism through this history. Considering nationalism as an ideology of ethnic identification, we see that it is "historically and situationally contingent. Moreover, nationalism "characterizes the politics of complex societies, invokes culture and ethnicity as a criteria of membership in the polity". It claims, "a collective historical destiny for the polity and or its ethnically defined members." ³¹⁷ what kind of space the Armenian students whose actions are determined by the history can find for themselves in the narrative of Turkish ethnic identity which the nation-state strives to create? Keeping Jenkins' notion of "historical destiny" in mind, Armenian students in schools are far from being a group that shares the same destiny with the Turks. Accordingly, they are left out from all historical references that are frequently repeated in the identification politics of the nation state such as "sharing the same destiny", "mutual past", "mutual ancestor" (hence "mutual future", too). However, they are obliged to learn the history of an ethnic group whose "historical destiny" is different from them.

Historical destiny may seem an odd notion – even dated or anachronistic – to introduce into the argument. To some, mindful of the terrible ends to

³¹⁶ Spring, as cited in Cooper, Hamilton, and Torres, 2003, p. 20.

³¹⁷ Jenkins, 1997, p. 146.

which notions of history and destiny can be bent, its use may appear irresponsible. But it is crucial. One distinguishing feature of nationalisms is their appeal to the past an ethnic-national history embodied in such things as myths of origin, royal genealogies or cultural romanticism – in the construction of a collective project for the future. This is the inspiration for Benedict Anderson’s evocation (1983: 147) of Walter Benjamin’s imagery of the ‘angel of history’: looking back, in nostalgia and anger, but irresistibly propelled forward at the mercy of progress. Nationalism differs from Benjamin’s angel, however, in that it does not present its back to the future in futile resistance to change. It is, rather, actively in the business of moving forward, in pursuit of the historical destiny that it claims for itself. Perhaps a more appropriate image is Anderson’s other description of nationalism, as Janus-headed (1983: 144), simultaneously looking ahead and behind.³¹⁸

According to Jenkins, “ethnic identification” is a socially constructed “historical project”. As it was also highlighted by Baumann, “nationalism can be thought of as a specimen of the big family of “*we-talks*”.³¹⁹ While the national state which always has to check its back looks at its back through its rear-view mirror, it also moves forward by creating it the past in accordance with its own ideology. The nation-state owes its own existence to the identity it strives to create and it is aware of that. This awareness is what makes national-state persist. In this created past, there is always the definition of those who are considered to be the appropriate members of the group “we”. With this definition that does not include those who are not similar to it, the historical boundary with the other ethnic groups becomes determined.

This is also an indication how effectively history is used in drawing the ethnic boundaries. Nationalism that is historically bound to ethnicity forms an ethnicity that is constantly redefined by the creators of the official history discourse. These definitions are reshaped especially in the political breaking points of the state. They are also reshaped on the basis of determining who belongs to this ethnicity, what are the boundaries of this ethnicity, and whom to be left outside. History is an effective tool in making these boundaries explicit.

³¹⁸ Jenkins, 1997, p. 162.

³¹⁹ Bauman, as cited in Jenkins, 1997, p. 143.

Who stays in or out constitutes the official historiography with the support of historical narratives.

History combines with the give-and-take of the moment in the social construction of ethnic boundaries and identities. To paraphrase someone else – from a different tradition – actors may make their own identities, but they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing.³²⁰

Therefore, history is not just a course to be taught in classes. History courses are imperative for the continuity of the nation-state itself. It owes its continuity to the national-identity that requires to be built from one generation to another. However, since Turkish national identity strives to place itself inside a boundary, the lived reality has to be replaced by “history”.

5.1.2 History Lessons and Turkish National Identity Formation in Schools

In his article titled “Türkiye’de Tarih Öğretimi ve Yurttaşlık” “Teaching History in Turkey and Citizenship”, Etienne Copeaux analyzed how a new national historical narrative starting with the Kemalist republic was shaped. Between 1931-1932, it was preferred to teach a new national history narrative based on the history of Turkish ethnicity. One of the premises, and in my opinion the most significant one, is to tell the history of one ethnicity rather than telling the history of a land. Thus, it is hard to extract a national history from the Anatolian land history through which Greeks and Armenians have passed. According to Copeaux, another difficulty building such a narrative is based on the articulation of multiple distinct narratives (Islamic history, history of Central Asia and Anatolian history). “It is a delicate task to build a sense of belonging or a notion of citizenship on such historical narrative.”³²¹

The aim of history lessons is to help understand the present in the context of the past; to arouse interest in the past; to help to give pupils a sense of identity and an understanding of their own cultural roots and shared inheritances; to contribute to pupils’ knowledge and understanding of other countries and other cultures in the modern world; to train the mind

³²⁰ Jenkins, 1997, p. 142.

³²¹ Copeaux, 1996, p. 167.

by means of disciplined study; to introduce pupils to the distinctive methodology of historians; to enrich other areas of the curriculum; and finally, to prepare pupils for adult life.³²²

Yazıcı in his work titled “Tarih eğitimi ve Çokkültürlülük” “History Education and Multiculturalism” argues that the close relationship between history education and nationalism in Turkey was recognized in the Second Constitutional Period. Intellectuals of the era inspired especially by the French nationalism comprehended the significance of history education in creating crowd psychology. With the nation-building project of the founders, it was required for them the founders to put “precise” emphasis on citizenship education in schools especially in the first years of the Republic.³²³

History textbooks are an excellent source for the analysis of national imaginaries. Moral communities are constructed by presenting the history of the collective to the next generation...History textbooks highlight quintessential lessons of the past for the present, and by doing so define the future. It is through such textbooks that the notion of ‘what a nation stands for’ is passed from one generation to the next. The concepts presented are, of course, not to be confounded with reality: they reflect how the nation wants itself to be (or what it wants to be seen as), rather than what it actually is.³²⁴

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, nation state and national identity formation are the process that operate interdependently. Another indispensable component to be augmented to these two is “national history”. According to Eissenstat:

The history and historiography of the Turkish Republic are fundamentally tied to Turkish identity politics. As in all states, the process of nation building and the elaboration of a national history have gone hand in hand... The Turkish republican after the first few years of Turkish independence, the Kemalist elite found it necessary to develop a fully elaborated historical narrative of self in order to meet the varied ideological needs of this nation-building process.³²⁵

The quote from Atatürk saying “it is important to write history as much as to make it”, his history theses in the scope of historiography, and his initiatives

³²² Baumann et al., 2004, p. 34.

³²³ Ersanlı, as cited Yazıcı, 2015, p. 123.

³²⁴ Baumann et al., 2004, p. 33.

³²⁵ Eissenstat, 2003, p. 103.

such as Turkish History Institution can be seen as evidences of how important history was for a for the formation of the Turkish nation. According to Copeaux, “Even this particular attention Atatürk paid on history” can be considered “a reason to learn history.”³²⁶ However, According to Eissenstat, why historiography was this significant was due to an important issues from the perspective of Turkish Republic. According to him, Turkishness bears a meaning only for the founding elites: “A central question in the recent Turkish historiography has been the nature of nation building in the republic. A sense of ‘Turkishness’ as a meaningful term of political identification was limited to relatively small intellectual elite...”³²⁷ Education as the most significant step to make it historiography significant for others than the elites was a matter of course. Turkishness was obliged to be learned by heart by the new generations as a precious and prideful characteristic through education policies and history lessons in the schools of the new state.

However, the cultural diversity existing in Anatolia for centuries and the witnessing of this land on the existence of ethnic identities other than the Turks create certain difficulties for Turkish historiography necessities great attention in the constitution of the nationalist narrative. One solution to these difficulties was to regard everyone a Turk and telling that they non-Turks had forgotten their Turkishness: “This first attempt took the form of the ‘Turkish history thesis’, which attempted to solve the problem of Anatolian diversity by arguing that the territory had actually been settled by Turkish nomads millennia ago and that non-Turkish speaking populations in Anatolia largely consisted of ‘Turks who had forgotten their language.’”³²⁸

Thus, considering Atatürk’s saying “how happy is he who says I am a Turk” from this angle, we can see that he attempted to make it easier to place other ethnic constituents in the definition of “Turkishness”, too. However, non-

³²⁶ Copeaux, 1996, p. 181-182.

³²⁷ Eissenstat, 2003, p. 99.

³²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 103.

Muslims are not included in this definition. Copeaux who argues that with the establishment of the Society for the Study of Turkish History (Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti) in 1931 the creators of the historical narrative was directly Kemalism also highlights that anti-Turk propaganda in Europe in the late Ottoman Empire period caused a great “trauma” among Turks.³²⁹ Turkish historiography which was also used to awaken the feeling of “pride” among the Turks that was lost after the long war years, has to tell that “Turkish nation represents the most noble and advanced human type in the world since the beginning of humanity ... its race is molded with an unprecedented aptitude in military, governance, politics as much as in arts like literature, painting, music, architecture, sculpture.”³³⁰

According to Eissenstat, who investigates the works of Yıldız in order to analyze the historiography in the Republic of Turkey:

Yıldız’s work shows how such an identity was developed and examines the range of definitions of nationhood that were explored in the early years of the republic. Although its dense jargon and uneven editing have, perhaps, limited the book’s impact on popular discussions of Turkish identity, the central point Yıldız makes is a fundamental one: the Kemalist project of nation formation came not out of a simple declaration of nationhood but developed out of a complex historical process of trial and error.³³¹

“The pride of Turkishness which was knocked about with the military disasters” in the late Ottoman Empire period “was procured more or less thanks to Atatürk’s extraordinary efforts.”³³² The idea that the mutual past goes way back is the primary element of pride for Turks in the textbooks: “national consciousness and Turkish consciousness have to derive from historical knowledge”³³³. Because of mutual past, everyone is “from the same blood”. In

³²⁹ Copeaux, 1996, p. 40.

³³⁰ *ibid.*

³³¹ Eissenstat, 2003, p. 100.

³³² Copeaux, 1996, p. 180.

³³³ *ibid.*

the school books, while the investigation of national culture/ root/ affinity becomes crystallized, the national consciousness is held together with a subject of pride and harmony (unity).³³⁴

Equally important in the development of a serious scholarly literature on the *Kimlik Sorunu*, or Identity Problem, as this issue is often referred to in Turkish intellectual discourse, has been the process of democratisation and growing pluralism in Turkey since the late 1980s. Along with the question of developing civil society institutions, the identity question has been one of the central concerns of the intellectually vibrant and politically important 'Second Republican' movement.³³⁵

5.2 Turkish Identity Politics and Effects on Minorities

The fact that Turkey lived through the process of nation-building and creating a citizenship identity all at the same time was probably the most significant reason why citizenship in Turkey does not sustain a pluralist structure. Because "Turk" which is a name of the nation for the founding cadre was also the name of the citizenship identity of the Republic and it did not make a clear distinction between these two. Hence, those who couldn't find a place for themselves in the Turkish identity which was built on an ethnic base as they do not share the same ethnic constituency had to either call themselves (how happy is he who says I am a Turk) or had to be called by someone else (They are generalized to be Turk) a Turk.

With this ethnocentric understanding, it is really difficult for any cultural community in Turkey to find a place beside or among the Turks. Non-Turks are in the position of either being memorized by their betrayal (non-Muslims) or being ignored (Muslim non-Turks)."³³⁶ Considering the historiographies of nation-state in general, the black and white distinction in all constructions have to exist. A citizenship identity built onto ethnic foundations

³³⁴ *ibid.*

³³⁵ Eissenstat, 2003, p. 100.

³³⁶ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 125.

meant an assimilation process for non-Turkish groups who didn't have same ethnic references."³³⁷ Similar to other nation-states, in Turkey it is possible to see a significant reflection of this assimilation process in schools.

In many modern nation-states, national identity is not inclusive of all of the state's citizens; rather, it is limited (in varying degrees) to the members of the dominant group. Because such states are structurally unable to meet indigenous/minority groups' basic human needs for identity, inclusion, and equality, the formation of ethnically based identity and political organization is a natural alternative. To the extent that such alternatives are considered threatening to the state, it will deal with indigenous/minority groups by developing systems of control, based on varying degrees of force, depending on the state's claim (or lack thereof) to be "democratic."³³⁸

According to Copeaux, although a fully defined "Turkish ethnicity" is doubtful, Turkist definition of Turkish identity is present in language and ideology. Unifying Turkish ethnicity and Islam as a criterion for belonging to Turkish nation strengthens the notion of minority. This caused the exclusion of non-Muslim Anatolian people from this belonging and the creation of Turkish Muslim identity.

Discursive assimilation became visible in this mirror. But moreover, the different modes of negotiating minority interests cast light on the unintended costs of each nation state's practices of inclusion and exclusion...Each of the civil cultures coshapes ethnicity and 'produces' its 'own' unmistakable minorities. This implies structural power relations turning out to such minorities' disadvantage.³³⁹

From the analyses of Baumann quoted below, we can make an analysis of the relationship created with Islam in the nation-building process of the Turkish Republic and see that have for this relationship was effective in defining the notion of minority. Because the Republic of Turkey which emerged with the claim that it was a laic and secular state couldn't define Turkish ethnic identity without Islam, it had to depend on what Baumann called "civil religion":

³³⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

³³⁸ Abu-Saad, 2006, p. 1085.

³³⁹ Baumann et al., 2004, p. 300.

The nation-state claims a privileged position against both these other identities, ethnic and religious. It claims to be post-ethnic, replacing all ethnic bounds with bonds of rational association and ethnically blind equal provision. The first claim cannot stand up since all nation-states make use of pseudotribal ideologies, not to speak of ethnic discrimination, to prove their worth as imagined communities. The second claim is that for replacing religious community by a secular consensus on a religiously neutral common ground needs filling in by quasi-religious ideologies of civic culture, which amounts to each nation-state producing its own civil religion.³⁴⁰

The Turkish identity which shaped its history with a discourse that considered the pre-Islamic Turkish era as “less Turkish” found an influential place for itself in the history textbooks taught in schools. However, “it is not just a matter of an approach peculiar only to historiography; this issue also touches upon the feeling of belonging, collective memory and at last the notion of Turkish citizenship; thus, when the history of the citizens is defined as a non-Christian past; it seems difficult to qualify Christians as Turkish or Turkish citizens.”³⁴¹

We indicated before that one of the most significant discourses that the Turkish ethnic identity referred to while re-building itself in the nation-building process is to neglect others. Considering this discourse of disregard vis-a-vis education policies, we can see the critical function of the textbooks. “The role of the textbooks today in creating a group whose minority element is insignificant at demographic and cultural levels while at the same time dangerous at the political level is really important.”³⁴²

It is possible to argue that the practical aim of creating an “other” in historiography is to keep the nation together and develop a “group prejudice”; because it is possible to refer to identities if only in societies in which there is an other. It can be seen that this repeated “us/them” binary brings together the function of protecting the ethnic boundaries as much as of strengthening the intra-group boundaries.³⁴³

³⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 136.

³⁴¹ Copeux, 1998, p. 179.

³⁴² *ibid.*, p. 184.

³⁴³ Günal, 2006; Tekeli 1998; as cited in Usta, 2011, p. 161.

Then, how does this process move forward considering history education and history textbooks? The discourse in history textbooks that excludes the existence of ethnic groups other than Turks in Anatolia first wipes out the other this way however later revives it in the history books as the enemy. The history textbooks that are one of the most significant tools to feed the animosity against the other cannot write the history of “the Turk” without the existence of these enemies. It is a case how self-contradictory it is that while they consider the other as never existed on these lands, at the same time they present it as the domestic enemies who in fact strive to divide up the country. “It is obvious that in Turkey the history textbooks are written with a language that strikes as extremist and with an ideology that would place from time to time nationalist discursive pieces in effective and permanent spaces in young brains who read them.”³⁴⁴ What is mentioned here is a situation that we can consider in the axis of Turkification policies. Just as the history of minorities is the history of Turkification policies in this country, Turkishness which finds itself a place in the official history created through the history textbooks is itself the approach in official history that exists against minorities / against the other.

In the textbooks, “us” against “the others” constitutes the primary matter of the history. Here, “to create new group bonds or to strengthen a pre-existing group bond further, in other words to reveal “us”, someone else has to take over the negative characteristics that are not ours.”³⁴⁵

Turkishness is again created vis-a-vis the other. The national consciousness of the Turks has been created by consciousness created against the other. This is one of the forms of the understanding that has always been dominant in the TR solidified in the history textbooks.

It is possible to argue that the discourse reflecting the nationalist point of view of Kemalism, official theses and especially the fabricated perception of the enemy has a significant place in the textbook “History of Turkish Republic” taught in highschools today. Accordingly, the founding cadres fought in all corners of the country against the enemy, forced the enemy

³⁴⁴ Günel, as cited in Usta, 2011, p. 161.

³⁴⁵ *ibid.*

outside of the national borders and made today's structure possible by establishing the parliament/ the Republic. In this period, in the written history, it is constantly strived to make a link between domestic enemies and foreign enemies.³⁴⁶

We mentioned how important the need to have an enemy both on soil and outside in the creation of the Turkish identity however what is needed to be highlighted here is that the existence of history classes and their textbooks is a proof how great the significance was paid to them in creating the identities of the students.

YAZICI in his work, in which he mentions the concerns of minority students regarding curriculum and textbooks where students' their own cultural identities are also covered as cultural classes given by Turkish-origin teachers and among them history classes and regarding the ways how the identities of minority students are covered, argues that significant political changes in the country were at the same time made breaking points for history education. He covers these brekaing points as four periods and analyzes how cultural diversity was covered in history textbooks in these periods. These periods are Early Republican Era, Humanist Era, Turkish-Islamic Synthesis Era and Post-2007 Era.³⁴⁷

In the period defined as Early Republican, while explaining the sections in history textbooks regarding Anatolian history, Copeaux argues that this history was cut back. Therefore, comprehension of Turkish children of the Anatolian history is possible in a lacking way. "Byzantium as a component spreading to a millenium in the Anatolian history and Armenian constituency of this land comprising a characteristic going immemorially back were excluded almost altogether in the school narrative."³⁴⁸

Not all resources available is used, the data leading to the desirable conclusion is referred to wheras others are omitted and finally 'history desired to be written' is written. The main problem in the textbooks,

³⁴⁶ Usta, 2011, pp. 171-172.

³⁴⁷ YAZICI, 2015, pp. 122-123.

³⁴⁸ Copeaux, 1996, p. 178.

however, is clear statements and hate speech... Ottoman past is deferred, rejected; minorities are marginalized, antagonized; and other states as a bloc are presented as against this created "us". What is interesting is that states and nations whose interests and ambitions can be predicted as different are presented as one in unity against 'us'.³⁴⁹

"After Atatürk's death, both in the one-party or multi-party periods, there have been foundational changes in the culture politics. In this period called humanist period, according to Copeaux, a rise of historiography which opposes Kemalist historiography without rejecting Kemalism and aspiring to integrate with the Western School is witnessed.³⁵⁰

As an effect of the humanist period on history education, negative statements and sections regarding non-Muslims were taken out both from the curriculum and textbooks. However, this did not mean that marginalization of cultural ethnic diversity in the country ended. Because, while negative statements regarding non-Muslims were abstracted from the textbooks; "their historical existence in the geography of Turkey was ignored in the textbooks."

Copeaux emphasizes three main axes in history education in Turkey. Accordingly, it calls for being awake in the case of danger with this it highlights othering and the others, it flatters the Turkish pride and it protects the Kemalist thought. Besides, 'the other' in its definition is accused of threatening group belonging and its boundaries.³⁵¹

According to Yazıcı, although negative and almost offensive statements against non-Muslims were taken out, because in the historical sense they were never mentioned, humanist history understanding started to be criticized by the 1960s. Turk-Islam Synthesis trend which emerged by highlighting Asian and Muslim characteristics of Turkish history argued that history and thus history textbooks could be used if necessary in accordance with the aims and desires of national vision. In this understanding of history shaped by a national history concern, cultural ethnic diversities were re-otherized. With the national history

³⁴⁹ Usta, 2011, pp. 178-179.

³⁵⁰ Copeaux, 1996, p. 54.

³⁵¹ Günal, 2006; Copeaux, 1998; as cited in Usta, 2011, p. 170.

understanding, the political conditions of the period were also a significant element in marginalizing the cultural diversities.³⁵²

Although in most modern nation-states with minority populations, the explicitly assimilationist agenda of the school system has been abandoned, government-run schools remain alienating places for all too many minority children. As a result, minority youth continue to drop out of the mainstream educational system in disproportionately high numbers.³⁵³

5.3 History Lessons Effect on Armenian Minority Youth

5.3.1 Armenians and Turkish History Textbooks

How the Armenians were mentioned in the history textbooks after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, how the question of “who is an Armenian” is answered and taught in the period from elementary to highschool require a long and careful study. That is why in this section it will be touched upon in general how the Armenians were reflected in the history textbooks in the periods of Turkey’s socio-political breaking points or in the periods when events regarding the Armenians were high in the coverage and examples particular to their eras from one-party era to this day will be given.

In which ways are the perceptions of Armenian students about their own ideas shaped during the history classes? How is the relationship between Armenian students studying in the Armenian schools and their history teachers? What kind of a reaction do history teachers assigned to the minority schools give when they cover the section of the curriculum regarding the Armenian Issue and receive from the students? How does the same situation unfold for students who have not attended Armenian schools or have previously attended minority schools but now continue to Turkish schools? Considering the nexus of history and identity, how does the lack of a separate class discussing Armenian history reflect on young Armenian generation’s

³⁵² Yazıcı, 2015, p. 30.

³⁵³ Abu-Saad, 2006, p. 1086.

affectivity on the Armenian identity? What does being forced to learn not their history but the history of the dominant ethnic group lead to in terms of identity crisis or being ashamed of their own ethnic identity or taking pride in their own ethnic identity?

Especially history textbooks and information, statements and remarks in these books regarding other communities are the most significant elements affecting future generations' perception and comprehension of each other. In fact, it is an undeniable fact that history and history textbooks had a major role in the birth of the Republic of Turkey and the building of contemporary and modern Turkish nation. Considering the effects of history textbooks on shaping the students' comprehension of themselves and their surroundings and their worldview, it is possible to argue that –although it is not directly related it is somehow effective- history textbooks had a role in current problems pressing on from past to the day by passing on from one generation to another.³⁵⁴

History education becomes emotional and contraversial when people in the past faced injustice by one person or a group be it in reality or in perception. As well-known in Turkey discussions regarding the Armenians has always been one of top most sensitive topics. The sensitivity of “the Armenian Issue” gets even more explicit when it comes to history education. Information presented in the history textbooks in our country regarding who the Armenians really are, where they came from, what they do, what kind of a nation they are, where and how they live were written down with sometimes more harsh and sometimes more softened down language in different periods, however at the end Armenians were never taken out of the context of foreigner/enemy/the other. History textbooks have been one of the most significant tools in the establishment processes of the nation-states and late in securing their legitimacy. However, in this mindset, other peoples' histories must be handled with their negative sides as they can only gain an identity for themselves through this.

We can see the significance of history in building the nation-state in Turkish History Thesis strived to be built with the establishment of the Republic. These theses are on how to define the Turkish race and what their

³⁵⁴ Yazıcı, 2005, p. 43.

historical responsibilities are. In history textbooks, Armenians are not present in this definition and “mutual history”. Even if they are, they exist as ‘traitor, enemy, foreigner’. When Armenian students hear this “cut down history narrative” as a class with the obligation of a ‘Turkish’ teacher regarding “the Armenians” mentioned with humiliation as if they have no culture or no trace in these lands they lived on for millenia, what kind of a perception does this in-betweenness, feeling of belonging, view of identity/consubstantiality create regarding their Armenian identity? Young Armenian generations raised up obvious to their history which is old and also interestingly create their own ethnic identity through being deprived of such facts which could create a feeling of pride or even on the contrary through feelings of ‘exclusion, humiliation’ that are far from ‘pride’.

From the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in the period that we call the early Republican Era, Armenians are mentioned more as treason domestic enemies in alliance with the foreign enemy in the sections regarding the Armenians in history textbooks: Armenians were touched upon in the history textbook of Suleyman Edip and Ali Tevfik published in 1929 with the title *History Lessons to Elementary School Children Fourth Grade [İlk Mektep Çocuklarına Tarih Dersleri Dördüncü Sınıf]* under the section *The Breakdown of Ottoman Empire [Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Parçalanması]* and the following statements were used; “Greeks, Armenians joined with the enemies, killed Turkish youth unjustly. They plundered the houses, shops.”³⁵⁵

Among the textbooks in Republican and one-party period the textbook titled *Tarih III [History III]* is the first approaching the matter as “Issue” mentioning “the Armenians” and using the term “the Armenian Issue. The Armenian Issue topic in the book was covered under the title “Armenian, Crete and Macedonia Issues”. This is how the topic was covered in the book: “In the Berlin Agreement, the Ottoman State supported the reform in the provinces where Armenians lived. Some of the Armenians didn’t consider the reforms there adequate. They fell for the desire to build an independent rule and from 1888 they revolted around Mus by establishing Revolting committees (1895). Abdulhamit Government suppressed these movements with force and was able to

³⁵⁵ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 45.

eliminate the interentions of the European states without harm. Because Russia who considered Armenians' national movements as against their interests provided political assistance to Babiali in this matter."³⁵⁶

In another example, Armenians are mentioned as oppressors of the Turks. "Since the Mondros Ceasefire Agreement, they didn't get tired of "killing Turks en masse both inside Armenia and neighbourhoods adjacent to the border". For this reason, "in the spring of 1920, the cruelty of Armenians on Turks became intolerable."³⁵⁷

Regulation of history textbooks for highschoools started with Atatürk in 1929. With the establishment of Turkish History Committee [*Türk Tarihi Heyeti*] in 1930 and after the publication of the book titled *The Outlines of Turkish History* [*Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*], in 1931 highschoool history textbooks were prepared for highschoools with four year education. The textbooks prepared with the help of The Outlines of Turkish History [*Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*], were the most important examples of Kemalist education.³⁵⁸

In the textbook History 2 published in 1933, even in the section regarding the Seljuk period Armenians are presented as traitors: "During these events, Keyhusrev who noticed the betrayal of the Armenians, smashed Kilikya by sending an army; he did not only took back the lands the Armenians claimed, he also imposed a tax on them again."³⁵⁹

According to Copeaux, the Armenians are mentioned in terms of their conflicts with the Turks. However, neither "the established Armenian state nor the Ottoman role in 1915 incidents" is mentioned. When there is an obligation

³⁵⁶ Metin, 2015, p. 53.

³⁵⁷ TTTC, 1931b;72, as cited Yazıcı, 2015, p. 125.

³⁵⁸ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 49.

³⁵⁹ Tarih II, 1933 cited Metin, 2015, p. 51.

to discuss these, in the short sections there are only discussions on the losses of the Turks and the mistakes claimed that are made by the Armenians.”³⁶⁰

From 1973 onward, the Armenians were placed at the center of marginalization with the assassinations of the Turkish diplomats. For the first time in 1976 with Öztuna in the *History 3 Textbook* “The Armenian Issue” entered the history textbooks and was never to be taken out since then. According to Öztuna, during the second Abdülhamit era a new element was added to the enemies of the state: the Armenians. The textbook included such statements about the Armenians “There were supporters of the Armenians who are a completely barbarian tribe” or “the precautions against the Armenians fell short given their cruelty against Muslims”, “Armenians didn’t hesitate to dress up as Turks and killed the Armenians”.³⁶¹ For example, in the textbook published in 1977 with the title *History 3rd Grade [Tarih III. Sınıf]* the Armenians were again mentioned as those who drew their weapons against the Turks in alliance with the enemy:

Some Greek and Armenian citizens who lived in welfare and peace for centuries in the Ottoman Empire took action for their own national interest in the time of the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire. They believed that the Ottoman Empire was gone completely. That is why, they desired to gain benefits for their own national interests in alliance with our enemies, and established committees with this purpose... In the meantime, some Armenian citizens living in Anatolia established a community depending on the Armenian Patriarchate. Their aim was to build an independent Armenian state in the Souther Anatolia and in the Cukurova region... Hence, the local Armenians collaborated with the French and drew a gun against the Turkish people.³⁶²

After the 12 September military coup the Turk-Islam Synthesis continued and the attitude toward the cultural diversity remained without a change.³⁶³ With the 1990s, there are some examples which mention the Armenians in a positive manner in the history textbooks. As a well-known example, in the narrative

³⁶⁰ Copeaux, as cited in Usta, 2011, p. 170.

³⁶¹ Öztuna, as cited Yazıcı, 2015, p. 130.

³⁶² Oktay, as cited Metin, 2015, p. 66.

³⁶³ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 131.

covering the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians were mentioned as “the loyal nation”: “The Armenians as part of the non-Muslim community remained loyal to the Ottoman State till the 93 War. That is why they were named “the loyal nation”.They worked in agriculture, art and commerce as well as took responsibility in the administrative positions in the Ottoman State.”³⁶⁴ However the sections, where it is told that this nation was loyal but later lost its loyalty, and by the end of the 1800s and before the First World War started to rebel against the Ottomans by embracing the idea of independence like the other nations were the sections where the first foundation to show Armenians internal enemies are laid.

Moreover, in these years in the history textbooks, minority schools were defined as places where rebellious ideas first flourished since 1856 under the titles like “the Armenian Issue/Problem, the Ruled and Minority Schools”: Minority schools were claimed to be “the biggest obstacle before the unity of education in the country” and “because they are free from the state regulation”, they are the places where the ideas of nationalism spread rapidly and at the same time animosity against Turks was promoted. “On top of that, minorities opening their own schools with separate status and aim did not only prevent the unity of education it also intercepted “the realization of the idea of the Ottoman citizenship.” ³⁶⁵

With the year 2011 and with the US and Europe joining in the genocide discussions, history textbooks were also prepared to disprove the thesis claiming “the genocide”. This becomes clear once the contents of the sections covering Armenians was in the textbook History 10 prepared by Cazgir et al is investigated. In the historical narrative that is also written to prepare students in the framework of the official history, the statements under the title the Armenian Issue/Problem where 1915 Deportation Law is discussed are

³⁶⁴ Koprman et al., as cited in Yazıcı, 2015.

³⁶⁵ Merçil, Miroğlu, and Halaçoğlu 1992; Kara, 1999; Koprman et al., 2000; Okur et al., 2011; as cited in Yazıcı, 2015, p. 133.

striking: This practice also secured the safety of the Armenian people. Because, these mobs were also killing the Armenians who did not take part in terror acts or the rebellion. Moreover, “If the Ottoman State had had an intention to annihilate the Armenians, would it have been possible to take such great precautions during and after the migration?”³⁶⁶ Also, there are also statements claiming that with the “Decree of Repatriation” issued in 31 December 1918 “the Armenians subjected to migration came back and took their properties and estates again”³⁶⁷. According to Yazıcı, this statement means that the Armenians returned and that doesn’t reflect the reality.³⁶⁸

In order to hold the national unity together, history textbooks include straits of mutual pains and suffering too besides narrating the history of Turkishness through certain victories and successes. This situation puts a nation that causes pain, that is cruel and oppressive against a nation that is in pain in a suffering and sorrowed position in the textbooks. Narrating the other through suggestions showing them as they are “causing pain”, “cruel” or “barbaric” to the younger generations, “is to make surely impossible” for the younger generation of diverse cultures or diverse ethnic identities “to come to terms in the future, to consider diverse cultures and beliefs as equals, to put effort toward claiming and protecting universal values.”³⁶⁹

However, the books are materials that are shaped by the negotiation of different acts and decision-making mechanisms such as various MEB National Education Ministry bureaucrats, authors, publishers, programmers. From this perspective, textbooks, especially history textbooks, are at the center of the political contest in a country. In the discussions about the textbooks, as Michael Young highlights, alternative views about the society and the past/future of the society are directly or indirectly expressed.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 137.

³⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 138.

³⁶⁸ *ibid.*

³⁶⁹ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 32.

³⁷⁰ Young 2000, as cited in Çayır, 2014, p. 2.

In every country, textbooks include a variety of elements like how to classify knowledge; limits of local, national and universal culture; how to read history; how to create the feeling of “us”; meaning a collective identity. From this perspective, textbooks can contribute to the expansion of basic rights and freedoms in a country by enriching the imaginations of the students, and thus, supportive the social cohesion; or from the opposite side, they can also elevate social conflicts and inequalities with their discriminatory rhetoric, can be a part of the problem instead of the solution.³⁷¹

5.3.2 Being History Teacher in Armenian Schools

History courses carry a different meaning than the other culture courses in Turkish. However, this difference assumes a very distinct quality in the minority schools. The indisputable importance of history courses in creating the national identity becomes clearer considering their role in the imposition of ideologies of the states on students through education. Students attending the public schools create their national/ethnic identity under the effect of official historiography which has a unilateral view on history. The process of national/ethnic identity creation of students who attend minority schools and have to study in history classes in which the same national consciousness was continuously humalities this are identities acquires a quite distinct meaning. There are two really significant aspects to this: First is the mention of themselves as enemies and second is the strange situation in which they had to raise up with the history of another ethnic group, not the history of their own ethnic group. Moreover, the discourse in the history classes which also leads to prejudices developed among students in other schools about themselves causes this hostile attitude to reveal in societal life and social relations too.

³⁷¹ Çayır, 2014, p. 2.

History classes have been the agents of official ideologies of almost all states. The content and the shape of the discourse, however, depend on the political conditions of each country. In that sense, it is possible to consider almost all analyses on nation-building process in Turkey vis-a-vis history courses. Contents of history classes which are re-considered and changed in various political periods in Turkey provide interesting data in that sense. This official history passing from one generation to another through education caused also the transmission of the answers as to the question of how to handle the issues regarding the Armenians from generation to generation.

It is also this understanding that history courses used to build a national identity in Turkey are named “national history” or why it is mandatory to teach the cluster of classes consisting of so-called “Turkish and Turkish Culture” only by Turkish teachers. According to an interview we conducted with an Armenian School principal, the situation regarding the teachers of Turkish and Turkish Culture classes assigned by the National Education Ministry has changed in the last 5 years. Now, those who wish to be assigned to teach Turkish and Culture classes in Armenian schools apply with a letter of application to National Education Ministry, the admission from the letters is conducted by the Armenian school principals.

According to the school administration, this is a positive development because being a history teacher especially in the Armenian schools requires a distinct scholarship and sensitivity. In the frequent cases where Armenians are mentioned with a hostile attitude in the history textbooks, teachers are required to empathize with Armenian students. If history teachers cannot develop a feeling of empathy in the classes in which they cover the sections about the Armenians in history classes, this situation reflects on the class. Because, topics that both teachers and students are concerned in covering among the sections are generally the same topics. One of the most frequently experienced example of this is the sections covering the issue of Relocation/Tehcir. An

interviewee working as a history teacher in an Armenian school addresses the problems She faces in such situations as following:

You see an emotional slowdown. If you can feel it, if you have the feeling of empathy, you can sense the wall against you in the eyes, in the looks. I feel like it is like the Kerbela of the Armenian society, a heavier thing, the point where their existence solidifies, something that has been told through generetations. There can be an interpretation of the narrator on this that as She is one of those who caused the Relocation, or someone from that camp. Because the narrating subject is someone, they the students think, comes from that main thing causing the Relocation. First he is a Turkish teacher. Second he is a Muslim teacher. I mean, there might be reasons stemming from that. Third, because of this position of the narrator, the students might not want to talk as the teacher is in a position of not being able to answer. Fourth, it might still continue as an element of fear. I think this is one of the most important factors. I mean the Relocation ended in practice but it might not be something continuing psychologically. I meani it might not ended in the mind..When I start the sections on these topics, I ask the kids if they want to talk about it. I mean what it was or what it wasn't? Mostly, they don't want the topic to be discussed. I mean some kids tend more to move on as if the topic was covered.³⁷²

An interviewee who is at the 12th grade in an Armenian highschool and also attends the preparatory school for university entrance exams tells hiSher experience in the preparatory school when they were covering the topic on the Armenians: “The teacher treaded the thing under the foot, he talked about it jokingly well there were 1.5 million Armenians those times and we killed 1.5 billion.”³⁷³ Although she was not affected personally as her classmates or teacher did not know she was an Armenian, by saying “I didn't oppose to the teacher. I was just silent. I wanted to say something but there were too many people, I hesitated. There were books my father read. There is the info about the population of those years and all, I wanted to bring those books and show”³⁷⁴, she expresses how she experiences the difference between the history told and the history she learned.

³⁷² Yazıcı, 2015, pp. 183-184.

³⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 185.

³⁷⁴ *ibid.*

Another example for how important the history teachers' role is can be revealed again with the comments of a history teacher working in Armenian schools. The history teachers we will exemplify preferred to listen instead of teaching the class on the topic regarding the Relocation: "Because they cannot talk already. Nobody ever listens to them."³⁷⁵

Among the minority community, especially Armenians are in a different position than the other minorities as the genocide issues remains constantly fresh. They were always raised by their families or close circles with the advise "not to talk much around" or "never talk" about these issues. "Another barrier to identity formation may come from within the family. Too often minority status parents may not discuss ethnic or racial issues with their children since the adults themselves remain uncomfortable with issues having to do with either race or ethnicity."³⁷⁶

The obligation of the history teacher to transfer the knowledge presented in the framework of official history and that the students have their narratives of their own stories acquired outside of this knowledge is one of the main reasons of the problems experienced in the classes when these sections are covered. That the historical knowledge they learned from their families or from their circles and the knowledge transferred in the class are in conflict reveals itself in students in the way of not wanting to talk about it. Another significant reason of this situation is of course the advises of course from the families and circles advising not to talk about much or ever about this issue. If the history teachers in Armenian highschools have never had a reading other than the official history sources, with the lack of empathy when they meet the students, they cover the section technically in a hasty manner. As evident in the last example, a history teacher who tries to empathise can have a different conversation with her students. In that sense, it is really important for teachers to improve themselves. This is important in terms of the mutual interaction

³⁷⁵ *ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 303.

between the student and the teacher and the mutual understanding of the feeling of the students due to their ethnic identities. Because this is not just about the students, evidently a history teacher responsible for the official history narrative has a different experience in the minority schools. From this viewpoint, a regular issue in daily life in Armenian schools can be experienced more deeply in comparison to the Turkish schools. Another important point to highlight here is that Armenian citizens in Turkey cannot become history teachers just like they can't be judges, police or military officers. Armenian citizens have no right to teach any classes taught under the title Turkish and Turkish Culture classes. These occupations from which they are banned are loaded with heavy symbolic meanings. Another interviewee who is an Armenian teacher in an Armenian highschool approached the issue through the distinction between us and them and commented on it as follows: "I believe because of the historical fears that such a decision was made about the history class. My teacher can teach their own classes' way better. This stems from the lack of trust to the other...Honestly, because they see us as others. I cannot tell anything else about this."

Another interviewee who works as a philosophy group teacher in an Armenian highschool considers these issues as a political decision and says: "I couldn't teach sociology classes either, later we were able to do so. Of course Armenians should be able to teach. The state shouldn't assign teachers. They should choose their own teachers in their own schools." Another interviewee who works currently as a principal in an Armenian highschool expressed her ideas as such: "of course it is also wrong that someone who is a citizen of this country who had the same education cannot teach...It is also a problem that needs to be solved." Moreover, this situation also affects the choice of departments that Armenian students study in universities. Most of the students do not choose a department that they cannot work as a teacher after graduation. The determination that the section on Armenians in history textbooks has a notion that would cause more hostility in comparison to the sections regarding

other ethnic minorities prevents an Armenian citizen to teach Turkish history. “This situation developed more specifically to Armenian students” as Yazıcı notices in his work and caused a “weird” attitude among students against history classes.³⁷⁷ A history teacher who think Armenian students don’t like the history of revolution class and present a weird attitude against this class says:

I mean my observation is that Armenian students I teach made the history of revolution completely technical thing that is rendered to the level of math for 5 years... Whereas it is the opposite in Turkish schools. The history of revolution in Turkish schools is really dynamic...The history of revolution in highschools is a hot class in fact, I mean it is a class like fire in the hands of the teacher.³⁷⁸

What is the reason of this “weird” attitude? To have a different perspective when analyzing from the opposite view, we can ask such a question: while talking about the significance of history classes in building the ethnic identity we analyze how the historical consciousness of the dominant ethnic group is created. Then, as a result of every intervention of the state for the building of this consciousness to the curriculum or the program of the courses what type of bond between Armenian students living in Turkey and their ethnic identities is forged? When we consider the situation of Armenian students whose own history is not told in the classrooms, who have to study with the history curriculums and textbooks which marginalize them, there emerges another interesting picture. Because students in Armenian schools do not have a feeling of belonging to the history told, history classes in Armenian schools are less effective. Different than Armenian schools, in Turkish schools narratives of victory and heroism which triggers in students feelings like pride, belonging, loyalty history courses is not just a course but an effective course touching upon daily political discussions: History teacher who witnesses just that most of the students go through the feelings of excitement or sadness for the losses as they see themselves a direct part of this history if you are teaching in a highschool comprised of Turks and Muslims” and draws attention to the

³⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 163.

³⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 189.

teacher's ability of always increasing or decreasing "the heat in student's blood" in such classes.³⁷⁹

As evident in the comments of a history teacher working in an Armenian school, a teacher in history class has the power to the extent that She can increase or decrease the heat in young students' blood. History told in tandem with individual belongings and identities makes the students to live mutual bonds and past and a feeling to live in a group enthusiastically. However, this enthusiasm takes a different feature in the Armenian schools. They could have listened to, comprehended and internalized their own stories in their own languages instead of an ongoing history narrative in which their stories are not told, Armenian students living in Turkey can create their "in-between", "fragmental" and "wounded" identities in a healthier environment in a healthier way. Configuration of history curriculum, textbooks and thus history lessons in Turkey on an ethnic religious based singular identity affects negatively the individuals and students who do not share that identity in the sense that they consider themselves a part of the history taught and this the society and that they develop a belonging.³⁸⁰

5.3.3 The Effects of History Classes on Discriminatory Behaviours

Yazıcı says that the students has a perception that there is no awareness of the people in the society they live in regarding the cultural diversity in the interviews conducted with minority students and concludes that the attitude of a student who highlighted "the obligation to hide their identity outside of their own Armenian community" is related to this lack of awareness: The statement of another student saying "if there was an awareness, what is in the history books wouldn't have been written and when someone says I am an Armenian outside they wouldn't have looked at her/him like She is not a human

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 213.

being.”³⁸¹ And experiences like this of students with cultural diversity in society signals “the lack of knowledge on cultural diversity or the low level of awareness and further problems” of the society in Turkey. In fact, minority students indicate that the value of cultural diversity is not cherished and is not considered as richness, on the contrary that it is perceived as a threat against Turkey.

Besides being a topic covered in history classes, “*The Armenian Issue*” which is included in history classes taught in Turkish schools has also the characteristic of a topic that the Republic of Turkey frequently faces in the international platform and in which there are various debates in the public. It should be able to be re-evaluated to teach this topic which managed to make it to our day in the historical process to highschool students. Considering not every highschool graduate is able to continue to higher education in the conditions of Turkey, it is clearer to understand the significance of teaching such a contemporary topic in highschool.³⁸²

In his study in which he investigated from which sources students gather their information about Armenians in Turkey, Metin asked highschool students to “*rank the sources effective on you gaining knowledge about the Armenian issue starting from the most effective.*”³⁸³ According to the answers given to this significance ranking question containing eight options, 37.92% of highschool students showed their history teacher as the most effective source as their primary choice in the significance ranking.³⁸⁴

Given the central importance of the early years to the production of ethnic identities, it is important that young children are not only encouraged to understand and experience a range of different cultural events and symbols but, more importantly, they are helped to begin to develop a critical reflexivity with which they can challenge existing stereotypes and prejudices and also

³⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.143.

³⁸² *ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁸³ Metin, 2015, p. 31.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 27.

develop a more grounded appreciation of their own identities and also those of others.³⁸⁵

Because the majority of students in Turkey gain their first knowledge about others outside of their own ethnic identity and diverse cultures from the history textbooks prepared in line with official historiography, their perception of cultural difference starts to be shaped in this framework at a significant level. Prejudices they have about Armenians who are mostly mentioned with a marginalizing attitude and a hostile discourse reflect negatively on the everyday lives of the students participated in the study.

Statements of a student who attended an Armenian school in elementary and middle schools and transferred by his/her own choice to Turkish highschool exemplifies how the prejudices created with history teaching in schools revealed when she started the Turkish school.

In history classes you face discrimination. There is a constant mode of humiliation of your people. There is this mode among religion or other teachers Turkish teachers to provoke you because they are nationalists. There is this mode of sedition. When you don't get into that stuff when you don't talk about the issue there was this constant asking questions, you know, there was this, the teacher fixated on me things like that happened. Then, this grouping happens among friend circles too. You are different; you are not with us like they don't include you. All of these are discrimination and they are things that seem like really simple. In fact, especially during that puberty phase they have a great effect and they cause injuries in a person. And leave irreparable damage.

Generalizing accusations which can reach to chauvinism and blanket a whole cultural ethnic group and exaggerated statistics lacking historical evidences, they will open wounds that would be really hard to heal in the minds of the students of the cultural ethnic group textbooks.³⁸⁶

Nişancı in his study titled *Etnisite Kavramının İdeolojik Serüveni* [Ideological Adventure of the Ethnicity Concept] argues that the source of the problems is mostly due to the lack of sufficient knowledge of the other ethnic groups. According to Nişancı who claims that most of the sources of knowledge different ethnic group have about each other are based on historical,

³⁸⁵ Connolly, 2003, p. 180.

³⁸⁶ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 215.

social and political cases, they also base on the knowledge produced with the dominant ideological apparatus of the state. As a result, communities which are intertwined and share most of the aspects of life fell far away from each other in accordance with certain political aims and by ascribing ideological and political meaning to ‘cultural differences’ enriching the human life, the perception that for one group’s survival the other should be “foreign” and gradually ‘enemy’ most of the time has become an inevitable fact.³⁸⁷

Students, teachers, and other cultural workers in schools have multiple identities, constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation” (Hall, 1990, 34). Because these multiple, social identities are constructed within, not outside, discourses of recognition (or misrecognition), we need to understand them as constructed in specific historical and institutional contexts within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific ideological embedded enunciative strategies.³⁸⁸

The fear of one of our students who attended Armenian school in elementary and middle school and later transferred by choice to a Turkish school experienced in Turkish class can be evaluated from multiple angles:

We had this new Turkish teacher in our middle school; he used to ask really hard questions in the exams, his exams were really hard, really heavy. For instance, he made us memorize “Atatürk’s The Address to the Youth”, he was asking about it in the exam. He made us memorize the Turkish version of the Address to the Youth; too, he used to ask every single word in it. He used to do the same thing for the Anthem too. Also, we used to cover the old Turkish epics, in one of those epics there is this god called Bayulgen, and according to the epic Bayulgen creates people from mud. We said, we were really young children, it is ridiculous that how can you create a human from mud, especially this friend of mine Aras, he said what a ridiculous thing this is, our Turkish teacher told our friend “I will sue you for insulting the Turks”. Yes...We were really scared, because insulting the Turk is article 301 and it was right after Hrant Dink was dead. It was a couple of years after he was dead. And we were petrified. We were really. I think we put a complaint about him, we told what happened to the counsellor. We said to the counsellor He wants us to read the Anthem seriously, he thinks we are insulting the Anthem, our counsellor talked to him then he softened a bit. He threw pencil case at me twice but missed.

³⁸⁷ Nişancı, 2015, pp. 195-224.

³⁸⁸ Jenlink, 2009, p. 19.

Evaluating the interviews conducted (especially with the interviewees who are currently in their senior years in highschool or those who were students after 19 January 2007 when Hrant Dink was murdered), we can say that the murder of Hrant Dink was a turning point for students in their perception of their own Armenian identities. This turning point which we will briefly mention here will be discussed in detail in the last chapter of the dissertation. The process which progressed with the prosecution of Dink on the basis of article 301 due to his articles in Agos newspaper published since 2003 under the title “Armenian Identity” and later death threats toward him ended with his murder. We tried to discuss chronologically how the political developments in the country reflect on schools in the previous chapter. In this example, the reality directly experienced by every individual in any Armenian educational institution (be it a teacher, student or administrator) is that prejudice and hostility against Armenians could result in death. The source of the fear in the statement of the interviewee “we were petrified” in the example above is not just a reaction of a Turkish teacher in an Armenian school to the situation. This fear is a fear in the struggle of existence. Laughing at a story about a god creating humans in an old Turkish epic which is in history textbooks which show them as internal enemy, as traitors was considered by the history teacher as a situation requiring punishment. This punishment is not one that should be applied inside the classroom. It is a case to be processed in the courtrooms with a threat to a middle school kid to be sued with the chance of ‘Insulting Turkishness’. How important the interaction between teachers of such sensitive classes like history and students comprising of different ethnic groups in minority schools can be understood from this example. Narration of the interviewee at the end that the same teacher threw pencilcase twice at him/her and missed shows how much hiSher experiences with this teacher affected him/her. Because, She had to experience that hiSher own teacher approached him/her and hiSher friends with negative feelings just like other people who have ethnic prejudices.

As we exemplified in various ways throughout this chapter, we can see the source of hostility against Armenians which still continues intensely in Turkey in the history textbooks based on the discourse about Armenians in the textbooks.

This marginalization creates this impression especially for Armenian students that in history classes it is tried to be taught that the people who have “the same ethnic identity with them” are “cruel”, “bloodthirsty”, “traitor, enemy of the land, a people with no honor”. Thus, history textbooks “creates a totally other identity and show other cultures as enemies. People who don’t read other sources than official history get exactly the same understanding that the government strives for. They see difference as danger.” That is why in societies which have no knowledge about different cultures; we are in a position of being marginalized. That is why, because people cannot gain this consciousness we are excluded in the societies as minorities.³⁸⁹

Minority students indicated that “their ancestors are covered in history textbooks as traitors” as part of the marginalizing discourse “reflects directly on society and causes hostility across different cultures in the society.”³⁹⁰

Generally in the interviews, Armenian students define the discriminatory and hostile attitude against themselves as ignorance. Recollection of one of our interviewees who attended to a Turkish school in highschool regarding the students who are not informed about the diverse cultures in the geography they live or who are informed about it in a prejudicial way is as such:

There was this incidence, in the Hocali massacre in Azerbaijan and in Turkey, too, there were these things circulated “all Armenians are bastards”. In fact, for instance one friend of mine said, I would never forget, ‘All Armenians are bastards yes that is true’ but then came to me and said ‘well, except for X and X’s family’. Like that... It is the history class anyways... For instance, the classic, everyone would look at me when the teacher says Armenia, Armenians, or we Independence War or the First World War... Teacher would, it depends on the teacher’s identity, if She didn’t want to hurt me She wouldn’t say much for instance. There were teachers like that too but they weren’t our history teachers. Our English teacher did that once. Also, there is a great difference between the discrimination I faced at first and later on. At first, it was the first time everyone had an Armenian friend and for the first time, for instance at least if they had a friend or someone they knew earlier, for the first

³⁸⁹ Yazıcı, 2015, p. 163.

³⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 177.

time they were being this close, you are in the same class. At first, after a little bit of discrimination, after such hesitating attitudes they liked me. And there was this thing in people “dude you are such a good person I mean where was I, you are such a good Armenian, such a good Christian.” They used to repeat that especially... I used to say sometimes “how many Christian Armenians have you seen” ... I mean in such instances they started to like me more.

Armenians facing misrecognition think that the sections in the history textbooks covering their own identities in a single-sided fashion do not reflect the reality. The main reason of this is that nation-states have a single-sided nationalist perspective in the history discourse. The knowledge people generally have about the Armenians in Turkey caused them to consider the Armenians as a non-human creature. Accepting the Armenians as humanbeings is again possible only through marginalization. The level of reaction an Armenian citizen receives when She tell the other “I am an Armenian” is hidden in the “OK” in the sentence “That is OK, you are a human too”.

They liked me as a person and discrimination started to decrease. Almost to a point of none. Later when someone made a joke... someone laughed in a class “well X is Christian and such”, people in the classroom suppressed the kid saying “what are you doing, the kid is getting offended by what you said” and everybody defended me...We reached to such a point when they knew me better actually...About discrimination, I think they define this thing like monster in their heads due to lack of recognition and when they meet you “oh wow they are just like us”...They did that a lot, I mean what were you expecting like I should get a horn.

A student who attended Armenian school in elementary and middle schools and transferred to Turkish school in highschool had an experience regarding humiliation and exclusion as the following:

For instance, a friend of mine asked me whether we ever get periods. I mean when She asked that I was in grade 9 but it was at the end of grade 9. And we used to talk with this person and she learned that I was a Christian later that term, she noticed I didn't attend the religion classes. I don't know how that is possible...I was really surprised and angry when I heard that. I was really angry and sad that they were this ignorant, they were oblivious to us. There was this ajax ads then, I am highlighting this on purpose, there was this monster in those ajax ads, I told her that we have a human dress that we wear when we are to meet with humans meaning you. I responded with like when we go back home we are like those monsters in the ajax ads. And she believed that. After that day, I had minimum interaction with people. There was no plus or minus, no extra. No school organization, no eating drinking event. I attended nothing. I was in this mentality that no one shall ask me for anything, I am gonna leave after graduation. No one should be there, noting more noting less.

“Erikson's (1968) description of the seven parts of the adolescent identity crisis has important implications for youth of disfavored groups. For example, acquisition of a sense of self-certainty versus a sense of self-consciousness is more difficult when one is visibly and culturally different.”³⁹¹ What we observe here is about how far we can perceive the difference at the extremes. She is different because she doesn't attend the religion classes thus She is not a Muslim. Her knowledge about Christians or Armenians is full of prejudice and far from reality. Thinking that an Armenian or a Christian cannot get her period is a concrete example showing that even the relationship with her own body and the body of the other is seen in a marginalizing perspective. The angry reaction of the student facing the ignorance of the opposite side was met with the need to tell the other that she has another extreme bodily character. She described herself as a creature that walks around in human disguise in the daylight and as a monster at night and the opposite side believed that. This incident happened in a big neighbourhood like Bakırköy in Istanbul and again in a considerably big female vocational highschool. Moreover, Bakırköy is one of the rare neighbourhoods in İstanbul where Armenians reside densely and even there is an Armenian school and a church there. How can a highschool student have such extreme imaginations about the Armenians? I think this is the question that needs to be answered.

For members of racial and ethnic groups, it is not the concept of adapting to the context that causes problems but the experience of oppression that leads “to marginalization, making it difficult for minorities to have a positive sense of their cultural identity, which is linked to self-esteem and other psychological variables.”³⁹²

Hearing from a young age that their ethnic identities are mentioned as “savage” or “those who slaughter Turks” causes both being subjected to marginalization by the dominant ethnic group and psychological traumas in their connections with their own identities. According to the writers of *Identity Development of Diverse Populations*, the question of ethnic identity formation in minorities

³⁹¹ Spencer, Swanson, and Cunningham, 1991, p. 380.

³⁹² Birman, as cited in Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper, 2003, p. 274.

must “begin with the reality of living in a dominant culture that has a history of oppression”³⁹³

5.3.4 The Dehistoricized Armenian Schools

In the building of Turkish ethnicity, Copeaux considers the introduction chapters of history textbooks in which national sentiments “has to take its power from history” are one of the clear indications that historical narrative aims at not only the introduction of history but also “creating an emotional bond with the past.”³⁹⁴ The feeling of belonging would be clinched together with this emotional bond. The emotional bond with the history is an essential factor for a nation in the nation-state building. Then, do the Armenians who attend Armenian schools perceive this history only as a class? And even if they see it as a class for grades, it is not possible for them not to be affected. This situation which can cause confusion about feelings of roots and belonging especially in the early ages is also an ironic situation. Copeaux who says that “in every country, in the same identity, various feelings of belonging can be recognized which determine themselves differently” exemplifies how the notion of “roots” creates certain problems especially in history teaching with the example that in France the black kids of African colonies in Africa were made to memorize the class about “Our Ancestors Galouise” is still being ridiculed today in France.³⁹⁵

This situation can be read from the perspective of Armenian students as “Our Ancestors Turks”. Although being forced to learn another culture’s history is an example that can still be ridiculed in France, it continues in education institutions in Turkey today. In the French case, the African colonies were mentioned in history textbooks as enemies or traitors. Whereas, being in

³⁹³ Torres, Howard-Hamilton, Cooper, 2003, p. 17.

³⁹⁴ Copeaux, 1996, p. 167.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 168.

the position to learn the history of Turks with history textbooks which shows you as an enemy in Turkey is a more staggering experience. In a program titled “Being a Minority in Turkey, an anecdote which an Armenian father shared regarding his child attending an Armenian school is a good example for this experience: “I have two sons, both of them attended Armenian schools till middle school. I faced this question one day Dad, why did we slaughter the Turks?” I said why, what’s the matter... Someone messed with you, what’s up, I said. He said ‘no’ the history text book says it. He said ‘We slaughtered the Turks’. He was a child I mean, he was in elementary school. Honestly, I had great difficulty for what kind of an explanation I should offer, what I should say.”

The history written in the text books and the history that is heard and learned in the family or in the circles are not the same histories. History replacing the reality causes confusions for Armenian students regarding both the reality and their own identities. No other class like history class confuses the students to that extent. An Armenian citizen who graduated from Armenian schools evaluates this situation as such:

I attended an Armenian school. History textbooks taught in the Armenian schools are the same history textbooks taught in highschools all over the country and in these history textbooks Armenians are shown as traitors, they are the traitors, they stab in the back. And you, as an Armenian, reading this fall into a psychological confusion because wow, we happened to be traitors. We did such things. But you don’t hear that in your family. You hear a different history in your family. Confusion of these two histories in the head of a child of yours really creates very serious problems in the future.

Another Armenian citizen who said that she noticed that she actually did not know the Armenian history or culture and the feeling the lack of it started at a late age when She was in senior year of highschool: “Here is the trauma of ours, mostly when we get to the senior year, when we started to get back on our feet, we had the trauma. Because, we didn’t have the chance to study Armenian history, Armenian literature, Armenian art and Armenian music in schools.” The education policies which make it obligatory for Armenian students to be taught Turkish history also don’t let Armenian history be told. An Armenian

school principal tells the following regarding that the Armenians are not educated with their own history:

None of us know, those who know are rare I am sure. This is truly a significant lack. Actually, all kids have a right to be informed about our culture in Anatolia and history. Of course, this is a great lack. It is also hard to find someone who is equipped with this knowledge. Knowledge is strength, power. We say “we are something” without knowing about it. I am sure if we know, we would protect our culture, schools or community institutions with more care. I think if we know the things built brick by brick we would back our society more.

Generations who have too little of knowledge regarding their own culture and history cannot build a strong connection with their identities on the basis of belonging. Moreover, as the interviewee highlighted, if are that accumulation that have been created with time and energy can be transferred, students will start to claim their own cultures more. If they know what the ethnic identity they belong to is, meaning, if they have the opportunity to learn the knowledge of who are “the Armenians”, in what time, where, how they lived in a historical framework, they will be conscious of what they sustain by their own existence. “The authors of the National Curriculum believe that teaching history offers effective means to prepare young people for citizenship; learning about culture, beliefs, customs and institutions will, together with shared experiences, enhance their identities and develop awareness.”³⁹⁶

One of our interviewees who evaluates the reflection of the lack of a course in which Armenian history is taught in Armenian schools on students as part of the assimilation politics and who have been an Armenian teacher for a long time claims that this situation stems generally from fear. The nation-state created an enemy from the citizen of a minority and continues to fear from that enemy³⁹⁷:

³⁹⁶ Baumann et al., 2004, p. 34.

³⁹⁷ What Fatih Rıfki Atay wrote regarding the Izmir fire is an interesting example for why the Turks have a fear against the minorities in the relationship with Turkishness and otherness because at the root of it there is the feeling of inferiority. As Copeaux also highlights, due to the trauma Turks experienced their feeling of pride was hurt and Atatürk tried to create this feeling with history theses: “Why did we burn Izmir

Really painful really painful...I mean why wouldn't it be taught? This is a lack. Now here families get a lot of work. Knowing nothing...This is what is desired. To assimilate, the method of assimilation is to make them not talk, and this is being done, well, will make them not speak in the language; make them not learn their history. Then, to exist in that, family gets a lot of work. But being banned shows already that somethings are being feared of.

The statement of the interviewee saying that the lack of knowledge of students as they don't see Armenian history in schools can be compensated by the family is also an indicator how the Armenian schools were left inadequate in sustaining the Armenian identity. Another teacher who works at Armenian schools claims that the decisions regarding this matter are made consciously:

The lack of history classes is a really negative thing. As an Armenian, history of Turks is taught from start to end and we know that we have to learn. But there is nothing regarding the history of Armenians. Of course this is also a political decision. It is a decision made consciously for sure.

Another Armenian teacher who worked at Armenian schools previously but now teaches at Turkish schools approaches the issues from a really different angle:

Yes there is not a detailed history class in our schools. They used to teach it a bit in Armenian language classes in the middle school. Turks teach their national history but I think their national history doesn't tell the consciousness of being a Turk. I think even if it is allowed to add such a class into the curriculum, I don't think we have someone who is equipped to teach such a class.

Following the interviewee's statement highlighting that even if there is a course the problem would still not to be solved, because people who are equipped to teach such a course was not brought up among the Armenians as a people who has little knowledge where to read and learn their own history from the establishment years of the Republic of Turkey, the Armenians in Turkey have to remain silent about their own history. Similar to their feeling for the need to

down? Were we afraid that if Kordon villas, hotels and clubs remained intact we couldn't break free of the minorities? When the Armenians were replaced during the First World War, we burned down whatever neighborhood and districts that was inhabitable in Anatolian cities and counties again with this fear. This is not something that comes from just the plain feeling of destructionism. There is also a feeling of inferiority. Every corner resembling a European piece, as if being Christian or foreign, it was in the absolute destiny of not being ours. If there was another war and we lost, would it be enough leaving Izmir in plots to protect the Turkishness of the city?" (Atay, 1984, p. 325).

hide that they are Armenians as they have reservations to state their own identities, this situation, too, reveals that history and identity are inseparably interdependent. Another interviewee who worked as a principal for more than thirty years in an Armenian highschool mentions the events they organized to give the students the consciousness of being an Armenian and living the Armenian identity without being assimilated.

For instance there are memorials. We commemorate our well-known people like our poets and authors. This of course creates a bit of feeling of belonging in kids. Other than that, we have our holidays, holidays specific to us. There is the History of Literature. But how adequate are they, there can be more. For instance, experience, let's say kids are in university age or when they attend a preparatory school, well they abolished them also, but different views on them awakens a identity consciousness in them. Questions from around like where did you come from creates a consciousness in them that they are different. The lack of teaching Armenian history is primal in why there is not a healthy identity formation among kids. Meaning, who is it, what is it? What is the past of this person, they do not know and this is a really bad thing.

In this study in which we evaluate the effect of the environment in which we get education on building of Armenian ethnic identity, another interviewee who works as a principal of an Armenian highschool reflects on the relationship between the lack of knowledge among the Armenians about their own history and identity as such:

We don't know our history. It is like this, I have no knowledge about my own history, although I am not Turkish myself, I know the Turkish history. It is bits and pieces but I know. How many kings we had, what kind of governance we emerged from, with patchy knowledge... This is also a bad thing of course; it is like a people who don't know their identity.

The lack of an education on the history of their culture which is tried to be compensated by some organizations at schools is commented on by another school principal interviewee as such:

In every event, the things that are actually about the kids, that we present to the kids or we train the kids with, that we introduce to them need to be a part of their culture and identity, we are really careful about that. For instance we had the fifty year anniversary of our highschool. We told the history of our schools's establishment, for instance how the people built the school by carrying brick on their backs in the 1960s, we told that. They watched that for instance. After that, they started to protect their schools with a different mood. We want to have such practices. We organize events in which their language is

used, their literature is used, and their songs are used so that their love and respect towards them would grow. For that, this is the way. Although most of the Armenian schools cannot teach Armenian history or Armenians' cultural history as a class, they do not take an initiative to convey it to the students. However, there is a visible difference between discourses of students who were interviewed in Getronagan Highschool which paid great attention to this and which have practices in every opportunity possible that raise awareness among students about their own identities by organizing events that could provide this conveying and discourses of students in other schools. The education policy of the school is not focused on preparing the students well for the university entrance exams like the most of the other schools. For instance, philosophy group teacher who work at this school said they covered Armenian feminist women in Human Rights class. In general, such elective classes are considered in schools as classes in which students can practice towards university entrance exam and practice doing tests. It is evident that students learning their cultural histories or names who left a mark in this history and their work plays a great role in providing their own consciousness and their self-confidence. The answer of a student who is in senior year in highschool to the question what kind of problems there are in education at schools presents an appropriate example for this situation. "In the education system there is the introversion of a people who experienced genocide, this is the biggest problem. They are having a great difficulty in expressing themselves, for instance when a discriminatory teacher says a bad thing, there is no group that can answer other than in Getronagan."

Another school principal commented on that some sections of Armenian history can be taught in Armenian language classes or in religion classes but teaching a separate Armenian history class in Armenian schools in Turkey "would be utopic to teach Armenian history in this land".

What happens when a people cannot convey their own values, priorities, language, faith, philosophy of life and experience to the next generation? Or, although they do want to do so, when they are banned, legally

limited, what happens to a people who are forced to erase the memories of their experiences on the lands they lived for millennia. Isn't this cultural treasure which cannot be conveyed to the next generation is the people itself? *Cangülüm Anahit ve Kazben*³⁹⁸, Karin Karakaşlı in the foreword of the book on Armenian mythology titled *Cangülüm Anahit ve Kazben* asks “I always had an interest in other people’s mythologies. However, there has never been a Turkish source about the Armenians which I am a part of. Let’s say I was lucky, I had the luxury to research Armenian sources and more so to ask questions to a lover of history and mythology such as Sarkis Seropyan and make him tell everything. But, what about the others?”³⁹⁹ The group Karakaşlı mentions as “others” are the rest of the Armenians living in Turkey. “Everyone who shares this land especially the Armenians should have had the right to benefit from this fortune, to get surprised with the abundance of Anatolia with her the gods.” This right Karakaşlı mentions has never been given to the Armenian people. Not only the Armenians, “although they live on these lands for thousands of years, the state has learned neither to see the peoples like the Greeks and the Assyrians as equal citizens of this country or to respect their histories and protect their cultural legacy.”⁴⁰⁰ That is why Karakaşlı in the foreword of the book mentions the Armenian gods and goddesses as “Now gods and goddesses were talking. Despite all that time they were silent, they had so many to tell”. Although it is not taught in schools, that at least it reaches to the people as a book is returning some of that right that was taken away from them albeit small.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁸ Seropyan, 2003, pp. 13-14.

³⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁰⁰ Kaya, 2017.

⁴⁰¹ Seropyan, 2003, pp. 13-14.

CHAPTER VI

IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

In this chapter where we will discuss the relationship between Armenian language and Armenian Identity vis-a-vis its impact on Armenian schools in Turkey, firstly the relationship between national identity and language [and] how the language policies implemented by the Turkish national-state in creating Turkish identity reflect on Armenian community both in terms of social life and education will be discussed. Next, Armenian language will be considered as one of the most significant determinants of Armenian identity and discussions about this will be investigated. Lastly, how Armenian language classes are covered in the Armenian schools as the last and only element where Armenian language can be taught in Turkey, the effects of learning Armenian language on students will be covered on the basis of the interviews conducted about Armenian language instructors' thoughts and the problems they faced in schools.

6.1. National Identity and National Language

That the language is one of the main reference points in shaping the identity of individual and society, [and] with the spread of nationalist movements, formed the basis for the nation-states to utilize the language as a highly significant part of their politics.

According to Joseph, “a consistent theme within studies of national identity over the last four decades has been the central importance of language in its formation.”⁴⁰² The existence of a national language is the primary foundation upon which nationalist ideology is constructed. national languages

⁴⁰² Joseph, 2004, p. 94.

are not actually a given, but are themselves constructed as part of the ideological work of nationalism-building.⁴⁰³

Thus, language has become the most significant tool of national identity formation in the nation-state. The necessity of people considered of the same nation to speak one mutual language forced the nation-states to create policies toward that end. In this way, for the nation-states while the unity in language creates the consciousness of “us”, it also becomes a symbol of a mutual identity the nation shares. According to this understanding, the consciousness of being “us” can only be possible through speaking one language. The main reason for that is the understanding that national identity can be ensured with unity in language.

“When a language is symbolically linked to national identity, the bureaucratic nation-state faced with a multilingual population may exhibit “monolingualizing tendencies.”⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, in the framework of nationalist ideology, language is also a tool for reducing or even wiping out the differences on the population consisting of “us”. In the nation-states, while a standard language and thus through that production of culture is ensured, the existence of different languages are ignored, disregarded or its various usage (education, media, public life etc) is prevented through legislations. That speaking the same language connects people together with an invisible bond at the same time creates a boundary with those speaking different languages. What Fichte tried to say with “the first, original, and truly natural boundaries of states are beyond doubt their internal boundaries”⁴⁰⁵ helps us understand why this side of language is this important for the state:

Those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself, long before any human art begins; they understand each other and have the power of continuing to make themselves

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Heller, as cited in Blackledge, 2000, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁵ Fichte, as cited in Joseph, 2004, p. 110.

understood more and more clearly; they belong together and are by nature one and an inseparable whole.⁴⁰⁶

That each nation-state chooses to follow monist policies in language requires defining what national language is and highlighting how important it [the language] is in the history of the nation both in social life and in education. In that way, language “is governed, steered and even re-produced. Certain mechanics for everyone to speak this national language are applied.”⁴⁰⁷ However, considering the non-existence of one national language with each nation-state’s own structure, history and political necessities, it requires to create their own unique national language.

It has long been apparent that one of the first and highest obstacles that has to be overcome in establishing a national identity is the non-existence of a national language. The ‘nation-state myth’ – that basic view of the world as consisting naturally of nation-states – is bound up with an assumption that national languages are a primordial reality. Whatever difficulty we might have in determining the borderlines of who ‘the Germans’ are.⁴⁰⁸

While creating its own national identity, various regulations and exercises internal to a language such as how and which ways national language is used, determining its grammar rules, vocabulary, [and] deciding which words to be included in the language and which ones to be excluded are required. Various state institutions are re-shaped on the basis of this understanding and [they are] included in the exercises and policies about language. In this way, language is used as an indispensable element in creating the mutual identity “while on the other hand in the situations where this construct is out in political practice, as a main tool for transforming the population belonging to the nation-state.”⁴⁰⁹

The population that required to be transformed first is the population of the other ethnic minority groups who live in the country and have different languages. That is why; interventions to the language also become minority

⁴⁰⁶ Fichte, as cited in Joseph, 2004, p. 110.

⁴⁰⁷ Coşkun, Derince, and Uçarlar, 2010, p. 13.

⁴⁰⁸ Joseph, 2004, p. 98.

⁴⁰⁹ Coşkun et al., 2010, p. 14.

policies. According to the writers of the book *Civil Enculturation- Nation State, School and Ethnic Difference in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and France*, “mother tongues and national languages are linked to civil culture” simply because “language belongs to the field of minority policies.”⁴¹⁰ Secondly language refer culture. “It is the ‘ethnic markers’ by which ethnic groups may distinguish themselves or are distinguished by others.”⁴¹¹ Having a different first language in the nation-states causes exercising different identity politics on different ethnic groups. The right to speak, write, produce or use in different domains in their own first language “discourages or absolutely forbids among the minority groups from using their mother tongues in the public space.”⁴¹² Therefore, while nation-states suppresses the right of the other express themselves in their own language, assimilation policies toward homogenization inevitably lead to assimilation of other identities. Intervention to the language as the agent of culture creates significant problems for minority group in protecting their identities.

6.1.1 Nation-State, Minorities and Language Policies in Turkey

The Republic of Turkey as a nation-state created multiple policies about Turkish language in various eras. These language policies created intentionally are affected by how Turkey positions itself both in domestic and international politics and developments of political events. The reason for this is that the language policies are defined as “the total of principles, decisions and applications towards the rights of the languages used in one political unit, their

⁴¹⁰ Baumann, Kastoryano, Schiffauer, and Vertovec, 2004, p. 147.

⁴¹¹ Billig, 1995; Eriksen, 1993; Smith, 1981; Zolberg and Long, 1997; as cited in Baumann et al., 2004, p. 147.

⁴¹² Brubaker, as cited in Baumann et al., 2004, p. 147.

region and areas, their development and usage.”⁴¹³ The author who expresses the necessity to think language policies and language rights together in his work titled *Dil Yarası* argues that the both exists in interaction at national and international levels. Moreover, we cannot cover this situation which also affects the language behaviour of the individual only as [a matter of] legislation. Because although some rights of language are not in laws, they can exist in other ways in the practices about language.⁴¹⁴ States may try to affect the languages spoken by the people for the sake of creating a national identity and consolidating it [and] with the aim of gaining legitimacy. For instance, political choices like internationalization, going back to roots, isolation or modernization also affect language policies. Language policies shouldn't be limited to policies regarding only the minority languages. Topics like the relationship of the official language or the majority language with identity and foreign language education are also part of the language policies.⁴¹⁵

From the years when Turkish nationalism started to emerge, the significance attributed to Turkish language reached its peak point in the process of nation-building. The reason why such significance attributed to language in the process of Turkish identity construction as a nation-state is that language is the most important element that creates identity. The state was to be built on “Turkish” identity, and being a Turk depended on speaking “Turkish”. Turkish nationalism ensured its institutionalization after the Kemalist cadre came to power by putting Turkish language to the top of the elements taking part in creating Turkish identity.

According to Atatürk, Turkish nation is a pure and homogenous entity and language of this nation is one: Turkish that is the most beautiful, the richest and the easiest language of the world. “Turkish that is the heart and mind of the Turkish nation is a precious treasure preserving Turkish morality,

⁴¹³ Coşkun, Derince, and Uçarlar, 2010, p. 18.

⁴¹⁴ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *ibid.*

traditions, memories, interests, in short, everything that makes Turkish nation a nation.⁴¹⁶

What comes first in the policies which we can call the Turkification of language is adopting Turkish as the first language. While language policies like popularizing the public usage of Turkish or making speaking Turkish in these spaces mandatory are put into practice, on the other hand, multiple precautions were taken to limit the usage of languages other than Turkish. Precautions such as Turkifications of minority names help us comprehend the dominant understanding. However, the multi-ethnic structure and multiple languages spoken existing on the lands where Turkish Republic was founded for millennia “constituted a major obstacle before adopting Turkish identity as a collective bond”⁴¹⁷

Adopting Turkish as the official language in 1924 Constitution was to register Turkish as the main element of determining the socio-cultural content of the nation at the highest legal level. This was the base of the policies including the assimilation or exclusion of both minorities like Kurds who were of same religion but different ethnic origin speaking different language and non-Muslim minorities⁴¹⁸

With the Law of Unification of Education passed in March 1924, education institutions and education language were centralized. After the implementation of alphabet reform, during the 1930s, simplification of language road was taken. With the exercises for purification of Turkish language from “foreign” words, a new language that is completely pure Turkish was aimed. Sun-Language Theory officialised in III. Language Congress was built on two ideas: First, this theory made a connection with first voices and words and sun as the center of origin and focused on its [sun] meanings and derivations in Turkish. Second, this theory considered Turkish

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 70.

language and race as the source of European languages and civilizations and argued that all languages emerged from Turkish.⁴¹⁹

According to Rifat Bali, in an environment where a nation-state is in process of establishment, demands that everyone adopts and internalizes Turkish language, Turkishness ideal and Turkish culture willingly are “reasonable” and “understandable”. However these demands were to turn into an oppressive and harasser structure in time especially against the minorities. In the millet system of the Ottoman period, “Hoping that minorities who live in an introvert way and spoke Greek, Armenian and Jewish Spanish would forget their first language from one day to other and start talking Turkish in public places and among themselves is a bit too much of optimism.”⁴²⁰ Thus, after the establishment of the Republic, minorities did not start to talk Turkish among themselves as expected. This was unacceptable for the Kemalist leading cadre and nationalist youth and press. “The campaign “Citizen speak Turkish” started with the decision of Student Society of Dâr-ül-fünûn Law School [Dâr-ül-fünûn Hukuk Fakültesi Talebe Cemiyeti] in their annual general meeting in 13 January 1928.”⁴²¹ This decision demanded everyone to speak Turkish in public places.⁴²² This decision aiming the minorities fell off the radar with the start of the multi-party era in Turkey however after the 27 May revolution “university

⁴¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴²⁰ Bali, n.d..

⁴²¹ *ibid.*

⁴²² “What it was meant by public spaces was trolleys, Sirket-i Hayriye ferries which travels to Adalar in summer, recreational and entertainment venues like clubs, cafes, cinema, theater, streets, squares, avenues. Beyoglu, Galata, Eminonu, Balat, Haskoy where minorities predominantly lived and worked hence were visible and Adalar where they moved to spend their summer were places where tension and conflict happened the most. Newspapers were taken away from the people who read foreign language papers and ripped apart. As a result of the youth intervening constantly to those who don’t speak Turkish, there were frequently fights. Minorities who ripped apart the flames saying “citizen speak Turkish” hung in public places were taken into custody. It became impossible for two people to speak amongst themselves in any language they wish due to the threatening looks they get” (Bali, n.d.).

student societies” started a “Citizen speak Turkish” campaign targeting again the minorities. However this campaign did not last long.

With the 2471 Surname Act passed in 1934, the most visible and used form of ‘ethnic label’, the last names started to be Turkified. The first article of the Act says every Turk “*has to have a surname other than his own name*” and the third article says that “*last names...with foreign race and nation names*” cannot be used.⁴²³ The fact that ethnic identity can be understood only when the name is pronounced makes why the nation-state forbid the citizens to take a name other than Turkish understandable. While Turks were forced to take Turkish names “foreigners” were banned to use names originating in their languages.

In later eras, there was not much change in language policies of the Republican era. In 1956 during the Adalet Party era a “Name Changing Specialized Board” was established. In the period the board was in operation, approximately 75 thousand settlement unit names were studied and among them 28 thousand were changed.⁴²⁴

In the 1982 Constitution prepared after the 12 September Coup, Turkish was again adopted as official language. However, what is different from the other constitutions is that it was indicated that “this sentence cannot be changed or it cannot even be offered to be changed.”⁴²⁵

Article 26 of the Constitution which regulated freedom of thought and speech and Article 28 which regulated freedom of press included the phrase “*forbidden language*” and punished expression of thought in the forbidden languages. Article 42 of the Constitution, also, said “*Any language other than Turkish can be taught and studied in education institutions for Turkish*

⁴²³ Coşkun et al., 2010, p. 31.

⁴²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 33.

citizens”. Thus, usage of languages other than Turkish as the first language in education was made impossible.⁴²⁶

The articles of 1982 Constitution mentioned above show that the dominant understanding from the establishment of the Republic continues as they do not allow the existence of any language other Turkish in education institutions: National identity and the inseparable unity of the country are based on Turkish nation speaking Turkish language.

In the matter of international legislation about education, although Turkey is a party of “international human rights conventions regarding language and education rights”, it made reservations to certain articles. Turkey with its reservation to the article of protection of the minorities in the UN International Convention on Social and Political Rights limited “the minorities” living in Turkey to the non-Muslim minorities as accepted in the Lausanne Peace Treaty.⁴²⁷

Therefore, Turkey legislated “that first language of all citizens living in Turkey except the groups it considers as minorities is Turkish and that no one other than these groups can have education in their first languages.”⁴²⁸ Whereas, there are different ethnic groups who speak different ethnic languages living in Turkey. By disregarding these groups, the Republic of Turkey tries to create one nation from the dominant group. The understanding based on unifying everyone under the Turkishness umbrella tries to assimilate [different ethnic groups] by disregarding the mother tongues of the diversities.

Moreover, though being a party to the UN International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, by giving reservations to the article of the said convention regulating education rights, Turkey limited “freedom of individuals and institutions to establish and manage education institutions” from multiple perspectives. According to the Constitution, [Turkey] made it

⁴²⁶ *ibid.*

⁴²⁷ *ibid.*

⁴²⁸ Ceyhan and Koçbaş, 2009, p. 11.

impossible for minorities to establish education institutions to teach in other languages than their mother tongues, [a right] which was also adopted with Lausanne Treaty. Legislation is the Act of Private Education Institutions regulating principles for establishment of schools. In this Act, it was indicated that minority schools can be established by Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities.⁴²⁹ Considering the current condition of Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities, we see that they are in an effort not to close down the already existing schools, let alone establishing new ones. Although legislations regarding different ethnic groups other than the groups determined as minorities do not grant these rights, in fact as a result of the state policies enforced on minority education institutions in various domains minorities have no de facto position to establish new schools. According to Foreign Language Education and Teaching Act and Private Education Institutions Act, Turkish citizens have the right to establish institutions which teach different language and dialects other than what they traditionally use in their everyday lives. However, because authorization to establish schools, preparing curriculum and authority to inspect institutions belong to MEB [National Education Ministry]⁴³⁰, even though it is being applied to establish such institutions, MEB has the authority to decline the application. In fact, the right granted is only a right to apply for establishment of an institution. The right to establish institutions in different languages for Turkish citizens seems like an equal right for everyone. However, although it seems like a right protected by the law, in practice its nascence depends on the ministry. More so, even if the authorization to establish an institution was granted, regulation of the curriculum followed in this institution is also given to the Ministry. According to this law, certain classes cannot be taught in any languages other than Turkish: These are the History of Revolution of the Turkish Republic and Atatürkism, Turkish Language and Literature, History, Geography, Social

⁴²⁹ *ibid.*

⁴³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

Sciences, Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Morality. Moreover, the authority to decide which foreign languages are to be taught belongs to the Cabinet.⁴³¹

Second language speakers to lose their heritage language and native culture. As a consequence, they fail to develop both a strong sense of identity and the cognitive basis for future learning Sánchez (1999) Bucholtz and Hall (2004) characterize language as “the most flexible and pervasive symbolic resource that is at the center of the cultural reproduction of identity.”⁴³²

Considering the Republic’s language policies along with the enforcements on ethnic groups speaking different languages, we see that its effort to disregard and limit the languages of other ethnic groups for the sake of creating and maintaining national Turkish identity is also an effort to totalize the ethnic identities of these groups under the Turkish identity. As we see in thoughts or theories produced about language and identity, language is the most significant symbolic source for protecting an identity and feeling a belonging to an ethnic identity.

“As many authors have noted, patterns of language maintenance and shift are driven by both social and cultural factors.”⁴³³ We see that Turkish presented as the language of the dominant ethnic group in Turkey and Turkey’s language policies also control over social factor and the culture aspired to be created. “Minority languages do not serve only as a means of communication; they are important tools for expressing cultural heritage and ethnic identity.”⁴³⁴ That is why; it is undesirable for the sake of the existence of Turkish identity different ethnic groups to express themselves in their own languages.

⁴³¹ *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴³² Mercur, 2012, p. 18.

⁴³³ Dorian, 1989; Gal, 1979; Giles et al., 1977; as cited in Hatos, 2003, p. 71.

⁴³⁴ Auer, 1998; Crystal, 1997, 2000; Fishman, 1989, 1991, 1999; Spolsky, 1999; Padilla, 1999; Lanca et al., 1994; as cited in Hatos, 2003, p. 71.

“Various studies examining language alternation patterns have found that language can express group membership and solidarity.”⁴³⁵ To prevent the development of feelings of belonging and solidarity by speaking their own languages among the citizens who do not feel belonging to Turkish ethnic group and dedicate themselves to the Turkish national unity, the Republic followed a similar language policy from its establishment onwards. “As Fishman put it ‘at every stage, ethnicity is linked to language, whether indexically, implementationally or symbolically.’”⁴³⁶

“From the 1930s, the policy to assimilate the ethnic minorities which was enforced systematically was performed through language. This policy meant for ethnic minorities that “using your mother tongue raises the risk of exclusion and discrimination”⁴³⁷. Escape from the mother tongue brought also the escape from ethnic identity. In this geography which accommodated multiple ethnic languages for millennia, the practices of Turkey which enforces monolinguistical structure are the policies enforced only to maintain Turkish ethnic identity. Because the irreconcilable conflict of the characteristics of “Turkish identity” which is aspired to be created with the existence of non-Muslim minorities also constituted the justification for policies enforced.”⁴³⁸

6.2. Armenian Identity and Armenian Language

In the discussions about the main elements constituting Armenian identity, we see that language and religion elements mostly come first. However, because we can mention the existence of Armenian language before the adoption of

⁴³⁵ Giles and Johnson, as cited in Hatos, 2003, p. 71.

⁴³⁶ Fishman, as cited in Hatos, 2003, p. 71.

⁴³⁷ Alp and Taştan, 2011, p. 76.

⁴³⁸ *ibid.*

Christianity of the Armenians⁴³⁹, it is accepted that the main element is language.⁴⁴⁰ In this section, after generally covering what Armenian language means for Armenianness, why it is this significant and the relationship the Armenians had with Armenian language throughout the history, we will mention the role and significance of Armenian schools in teaching Armenian language.

6.2.1 The Importance of Armenian Language for Armenianness

Marieta Bazinyan in her article titled *Constructing a Nation: Identity Markers of Armenians: According to the Mshak Periodical Published during 1872-1892*⁴⁴¹ indicates that most of the articles in Mshak journal published between 1872-1892 seek the answer to the question “Which elements constitute the identity of the Armenian?”⁴⁴²

When Bazinyan starting to analyze the articles, she notice the articles which published before the mid-1880s argued that language was “the most important and in depth discussed element of Armenian identity” but the articles which are published after the mid-1880s discussed the interrelation of language and other identity markers .⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Armenians are the first to accept Christianity as a national religion. A.D. It was Surp Krikor Lusavoric, who had a very special meaning as the first gatogyos (priest) of the new religious church, adopted in 301, is a symbol of an important milestone in the history of the Armenians.

⁴⁴⁰ At this point we can give many examples of religion versus religion, but in this section we will only touch on the subject.

⁴⁴¹ Bazinyan, 2015, p. 73.

⁴⁴² It should be remembered that the Mshak magazine was also called Armenain Renesance at the same time and that many Armenians in this period went to Europe to study and began to discuss and develop their ideas.

⁴⁴³ *ibid.*

However, the result deriving from discussion including the other elements are the same. “Armenian language is one of the greatest marks of the Armenian identity”.⁴⁴⁴

Rafael İřhanyan in his work titled *The History of Armenians* highlights that for centuries the main unique characteristic of Armenians which is not of any other people is the mother tongue. İřhanyan indicates that from the beginning of their existence, Armenians have been speaking Armenian language and Armenian language is the tool of speech, thought and questioning only of this people. İřhanyan who argues that Armenian people differs “from all other peoples of the world, from their old and new neighbours by their language”, for this integrity indicated by the grand poet of Armenians Avedik İřahakyan by saying “Armenia means Armenian language”: “by saying “we should add to this “Armenian people means Armenian language”, he explains that Armenian language is the sole characteristic of the existence of Armenian people.⁴⁴⁵

The Armenian language is one of the oldest languages in the world. Linguistics, in light of “local Indo-European vocabulary, oldest borrowings and other evidences”, shows that Armenian language was spoken in the mid-3rd millennium BC in the geography of Grand Hayk and Armenian races lived [in this location].⁴⁴⁶

Armenian is unique in its writing system.⁴⁴⁷ Armenians established their own

Alphabet in the 5th century AD, with 38 total letters (36 originally with two added in the Middle Ages). An Armenian cleric named Mesrop Mashtots was the source of this development.⁴⁴⁸ The Armenians use their own alphabet

⁴⁴⁴ <http://100years100facts.com/facts/armenian-alphabet-created-405-ad>

⁴⁴⁵ İřhanyan, 2006, p. 20.

⁴⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁴⁷ <http://100years100facts.com/facts/armenian-alphabet-created-405-ad>

⁴⁴⁸ http://armenianlanguage.org/evolution/language_evolution.html

which was, by tradition, created following the studies and meditations of a monk, Mesrop Mashtots, in the 405 AD. Christianity had already been accepted as the national religion (301 AD) for a hundred years in Armenia, but the Bible was not yet available in the native language.⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand in Goriun's work, *Life of Mashdots*⁴⁵⁰, St. Mesrop Mashdots's main motivation is not only about the translating the Bible he also aware of Armenian people's "lacking a written language is absence of their full identity". Mashdots saw the lack of a written language of the Armenian as a "major deficiency in the creation of the Armenian identity". Even if they had their territorial, religious or political independence they did not guarantee the total creation of their full identity. St. Mesrop Mashdots knew that, as long as the Armenian people expressed themselves in the Syriac and Greek cultures, they could not firmly establish their identity. "With the invention of the Armenian alphabet, the course of the formation of the identity of the Armenian people was not only completed but it also became more crystallized and deeply rooted."⁴⁵¹ Because of this St. Mesrop Mashdots is seen as the creator of the Armenian identity. Mesrop Mashdots is also seen as a symbol of "collective consciousness of Armenian nation".⁴⁵²

In the period that followed the invention of the alphabet and up to the threshold of the modern era, *Krapar* (Classical Armenian) lived on.⁴⁵³ Armenians who lived in Greater Armenia and the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (11-14th centuries) tried to modernize Armenian language and as a result they added two more characters to the alphabet and bringing the total number

⁴⁴⁹ <http://100years100facts.com/facts/armenian-alphabet-created-405-ad>

⁴⁵⁰ Aram I., 2007, <http://www.westernprelacy.org/archived-news/press-releases/2007PressNews/ArmLanguageGontag.pdf>

⁴⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁵² *ibid.*

⁴⁵³ http://armenianlanguage.org/evolution/language_evolution.html

to 38.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, the modern Armenian language, with a total of 38 letters in alphabetical order, came up to date. The Armenians who migrated to Constantinopolis from traditional Armenain plato “crystallized the common elements of the regional dialects, paving the way to a style of writing that required a shorter and more flexible learning curve than Krapar.”⁴⁵⁵

Figure 2: Armenian Alphabet

Աա	Բբ	Գգ	Դդ	Եե	Զզ	Էէ	Ըը	Թթ	Ժժ
այբ	բեց	գիւ	դա	եչ	զա	է	ըթ	թոհ	ժե
a	p	k	t	e	z	ē	ë	t'	ž
[ɑ]	[p ^h]	[k ^h]	[t ^h]	[ɛ/jɛ]	[z]	[ɛ]	[ə]	[t']	[ʒ]
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Իի	Լլ	Խխ	Ծծ	Կկ	Հհ	Ձձ	Ղղ	Ճճ	Մմ
իցի	լուց	խե	ծա	կեց	հո	ձա	ղատ	ճե	մեց
i	l	x	ç	k	h	j	ǰ	č	m
[i]	[l]	[x]	[dz]	[g]	[h]	[ts]	[ʁ]	[čʒ]	[m]
20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	200
Յյ	Նն	Շշ	Ոո	Չչ	Պպ	Ջճ	Ռր	Սս	Վվ
հի	նու	շա	ո	չա	պե	ճե	րա	սե	վեվ
hi	now	ša	vo	ča	be	je	ra	se	vev
y	n	š	o	č	b	j	ř	s	v
[h/j]	[n]	[ʃ]	[o/vo]	[tʃ ^h]	[b]	[tʃ ^h]	[r]	[s]	[v]
300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	2000	3000
Տտ	Րր	Յյ	Բբ	Փփ	Բբ	Լլ	Օօ	Ֆֆ	
տյուց	րե	ցո	բիւց	փյուր	բե	լ	օ	ֆե	
tyown	re	c'o	hiwn	p'yowr	k'	jew	ò	fe	
t	r	c'	w	p'	k'	ew	ò	f	
[d]	[r]	[ts ^h]	[v]	[p ^h]	[k ^h]	[ev/jev]	[o]	[f]	
4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	-	10000	20000	

⁴⁵⁴ ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ http://armenianlanguage.org/evolution/language_evolution.html

Besides this variation, which was later referred to as the Western Armenian, the Krapar was also adapted to the east. The dialect of the Ararat plateau provided the primary elements of Eastern Armenian, similar to the Western Armenian variant, the Modern Eastern was in many ways more practical and accessible to the masses than Krapar. Both centers vigorously pursued the promotion of *Ashkharhapar*.⁴⁵⁶

According to Gontag, the Armenian language has been the “living means giving form and style, spirit and flight to the Armenian mind”. It is the main propellant of the creation and development of Armenian historiography, hagiography, literature and the press. Without the Armenian language, the Armenian culture, expression of our identity and solid pillars of our existence, will lose its particularity and vitality.⁴⁵⁷ If we are going to give an example of a few Armenian poets who believe that the Armenian language and the Armenian identity are inseparable whole and voiced it in their poems we saw that they have characterized Armenian language as “the anchor of the ship,” “the seal of identity,” “the ray of our hope” (K. Emin) and moreover “the ever-shining light” that “never became extinguished from foreign winds...” The other poet M. Ishkhan thinks that the Armenian language is the homeland: “the home of the Armenians in the four corners of the world.”⁴⁵⁸

In order to highlight the significance of Armenian language for the Armenians, İřhanyan in his book quotes the statements of “the well-known poet Hovhannes Tumanyan [saying] “the magical key to the Armenian people’s past is Armenian language.”⁴⁵⁹ He indicates that in order to understand the roots of the history of the Armenians we also need to look into the roots of Armenian language. The author highlights that the phrases “the roots of

⁴⁵⁶ http://armenianlanguage.org/evolution/language_evolution.html

⁴⁵⁷ Aram I., 2007, <http://www.westernprelacy.org/archived-news/press-releases/2007PressNews/ArmLanguageGontag.pdf>

⁴⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁹ İřhanyan, 2006, p. 14.

Armenians” and “the roots of Armenian language” are synonymous. The historian who indicates that when we investigate where the Armenian language was born we also investigate where those who spoke this language, who thought in this language were born shows that with the language Armenianness starts, also.⁴⁶⁰ “Armenian language is the eternal witness of Armenian history.”⁴⁶¹ While mentioning the effect of Armenian language on Armenian culture, İřhanyan exemplifies the Armenian art. İřhanyan says that Armenian music does not resemble the music of any other people and has disproportionately unique characteristics to itself, “The reason for that is that Armenian music derived from Armenian language, the musicality of Armenian language”. Moreover, İřhanyan argues that when investigate deeply it can be shown that the national characteristics of Armenian plastic arts and Armenian architecture are also related to Armenian language and thought. “Thus, it is also revealed that at the base of all Armenian characteristic lies the Armenian language.”⁴⁶²

The Armenian language remains the same for us 1600 years later. For a large part of the Armenian, without the Armenian language, “this living source of the Armenian identity, Armenian life will dry up in the national sense, losing its authentic Armenian image.”⁴⁶³

6.2.2 The Importance of Armenian Schools Learning Mother Tongue

Education and language issues are closely tied together. How and in which ways the language is transferred to next generations and how this transfer happens problematic also includes how the transfer of culture and identity

⁴⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴⁶² *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁶³ Aram I., 2007, <http://www.westernprelacy.org/archived-news/press-releases/2007PressNews/ArmLanguageGontag.pdf>

occurs. “Language very clearly is much more than just a means of communication: it is the basis of culture and identity.”⁴⁶⁴ Language is the experiences of the nations. Language is also the memory of the nation. Language is the history of a nation’s beginning. When language cannot transfer these experiences and memory through education, it loses its functionality. There are many theories about that this situation results in assimilation especially of minority students. Works of Cummins about minority students and their language education has still a significant place today. According to Cummins, the dominant language ideology of the dominant group has an expansionist effect on language choices of minority students: “The effects of language ideology on the cultural identity development of a second-language speaker forced to assimilate because of the norms of the dominant group.”⁴⁶⁵

That the Armenian language and identity intermixed and even interplacated each other also brings the topic of Armenian language education and protection of language. Recently, Gontag in his work on the acceptance of 2007 as the Armenian language year conveys how important the language is for the Armenian identity with the following words: “Without the Armenian language, our life will become emptied of Armenian values, traditions, and the genuine Armenian identity...our language also preserved us...strengthened our existence; it shaped our identity.”⁴⁶⁶ Because this topic that is still significant for the Armenians today has turned into that Armenian language teaching and learning as one of the main problematic for the protection of identity, it also resulted in grand missions given to Armenian schools as the last element in providing these opportunities. Armenian language education is *raison d'être* of Armenian schools. In the lives of the Armenians, the most significant mission of the school throughout its history is to teach Armenian language. Gontag in

⁴⁶⁴ Baumann et al., 2004, p. 36.

⁴⁶⁵ Cummins, as cited in Mercur, 2012, p. 24.

⁴⁶⁶ Aram I., 2007, <http://www.westernprelacy.org/archived-news/press-releases/2007PressNews/ArmLanguageGontag.pdf>

his article written as part of the celebration of the 1600 years of Armenian language in 2007 expresses this situation as such: “The Armenian language has a pivotal place and role in the Armenian school’s mission of building tomorrow’s Armenians. The proper teaching of the Armenian language is what makes the Armenian school an Armenian school.”⁴⁶⁷ The role and significance of the schools in teaching the mother tongue to new generations go way back in the education history of the Armenians. That the Armenian language is one of the oldest languages in the world is of course also a significant factor here.

After the family, the Armenian school plays a pivotal role in the constant use of the Armenian language. The Armenian school is the citadel of the defense of the Armenian language. It is the source of the perpetuation of the Armenian language, and the apostle of the spread of the Armenian language.⁴⁶⁸

Considering the parameters in both Armenian and Turkey histories, the intra-relationship of the combination of school-language-identity in Armenian schools in Turkey shows *sui generis* characteristics. When a study titled “Armenian identity, Armenian schools and Armenian education” conducted, when we think about Armenian schools in Diaspora and Armenian education and Armenian identity in Diaspora or schools in Armenia and Armenian education and Armenian identity, there is a situation which has the same title but needs to be covered completely differently. The relationship of the Armenians living on the geography on which the Republic of Turkey was established with Armenian identity and Armenian language, and hence, with Armenian schools and its social reflection needs to be covered with the relationship with Turkish identity, Turkish language and public schools.

With the Armenian population whose numbers drop gradually in Turkey, Armenian schools face multiple issues in protecting their mother tongue. When we look into the regulations about Armenian language education in Armenian schools as minority schools, we see that they aim at controlling over how the language will be taught and how it will be told. During the 1960,

⁴⁶⁷ <http://www.westernprelacy.org/archived-news/press-releases/2007PressNews/ArmlanguageGontag.pdf>

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid.*

many Armenian families sent their children to an Armenian school. Similar to today, Armenian schools were considered as the only tool for learning Armenian language and culture. Armenian and Turkish were used as communication language evenly. An interviewee who attended an Armenian school during the 1960s says that the school was really important in shaping the Armenian identity. According to the interviewee, in literature classes in which we learn our language and culture in Armenian schools [and] we can learn Armenian literature is really important for the protection of the identity.⁴⁶⁹

Language and identity are inseparably associated with each other. While language is the medium used by individuals to negotiate a sense of self in different contexts (Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000), identity construction is a social and cultural process which is accomplished through discursive practices.⁴⁷⁰

Armenian schools played a vital role in the same period for a generation who might had been lost to learn their own language and culture. Armenian families living in İstanbul in this period have the chance to send their children to Armenian school but same was not applicable for Armenians in Anatolia. In comparison to today, more Armenians resided in Anatolia till the 60s and 70s however Armenian schools in Anatolia closed down one by one. In those years, children who did not know their mother tongue of families who again did not know their mother tongue were migrating to İstanbul from Anatolia and were attending Armenian schools. That way, they became aware of their identities and learned their language. The generation before this generation who migrated in these years, however, could speak Armenian fluently. Because not all Armenian schools in Anatolia were shut down yet. However, the generation who survived 1915 chose not to speak their mother tongues and teach [the language] to their children.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ Kaya, 2013, p. 152.

⁴⁷⁰ Mercur, 2012, p. 17.

⁴⁷¹ Kaya, 2013, p. 152.

An interviewee of ours who was a student in Tibrevank High School in the academic year of 2016-2017 gives this example about her family. “At home my grandmothers knew (in Adıyaman) but they did not teach their children. In case they speak it outside, my mom and dad does not speak. Their Armenian is different. There is a difference of accent. Father of my grandmother could read and write. My grandmother could speak but couldn’t write.” The situation the student who came to İstanbul from Adıyaman in grade 9 to attend Armenian school is in fact almost a summary of the relationship of 4 generations after 1915 with Armenian language. Generation after 1915 paid attention not to speak Armenian because it was part of their survival struggle. The language they spoke was one of the most significant indications that would reveal their identity. They wanted their children to grow up unknowing of this and they spoke neither what happened in 1915 nor in Armenian. Children grew up not knowing Armenian language however their children started to learn Armenian as they pulled a bit away from the concerns of their grandmothers and grandfathers. The following generation was the generation who came to İstanbul from Anatolia to learn Armenian language. Vartan who came to İstanbul from Kastamonu in the 1960s to learn Armenian tells the events leading him/her to move as follows: “My aunt was a dishwasher in Kumkapı in Patriarchate. I was attending elementary school. She brought an Armenian book to Kastamonu. I fell in love with the book.” One of cohort of Vartan (Armenian language instructor in an Armenian school) tells how Vartan who started middle school in Üsküdar Surp Haç Armenian High School/Tibrevank without knowing Armenian caught up with his classmates from 5 years behind as follows: “He used to study day and night, He used to read, none of use read like he did. He caught up with us and then got in front of us.” In this period, Tibrevank is a boarding school except for the weekends. Students spent the weekends with their family or places appropriate for their conditions.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² Today, only the boarding students are not trained but the students are still students from the ancestral home, but those who cannot find a solution and have a problem of

Students who came to Armenian schools from Anatolia without speaking any Armenian lived the hardships of getting an education in a language they did not know with their teachers. Also today, the reason for students who attend Armenian schools to choose these schools is similar to those in past generations: Armenian schools are still considered the only tool for learning mother tongue and Armenian culture.⁴⁷³

We can observe that there are different effects on learning mother tongue between students who only attended Armenian school in elementary school but did not continue in middle and high schools and students who attended Armenian schools from elementary school to their senior year in high school. Today the only place that multiple activities towards the protection of Armenian is Armenian schools. It is observed that because there is not a place for socializing by speaking Armenian after school or a very few places require speaking Armenian children who left Armenian schools stopped using Armenian. Moreover, these children also do not speak Armenian at home either. That is why; language disappears in time as it is not used. A similar situation is not rare among students who continued Armenian school till the end of high school. The effect that the Armenian language classes are considered a waste of time in preparation for the university entrance exam especially in senior years is also high on this. A student who is in senior year of high school Hınazant complains about that they don't speak Armenian even if they are in Armenian school and that there isn't a space where she can use her language after graduation by saying,

We don't speak Armenian, we assimilate. You are a small community; you speak Turkish even amongst yourselves. You are in Hay (Armenian) school, but even here you speak Turkish. Our elders speak, we don't understand. Then it becomes too late. When you start working, you already speak Turkish. No matter how much you speak Armenian, it doesn't work. It isn't in your household either. My family is from Batman, they can speak Kurdish-Turkish there is no opportunity to speak at home either.

staying on weekends may have to return.

⁴⁷³ Kaya, 2013, p. 155.

According to Cummins, language teaching and learning not only issue for education it has socio-political context. Language is “central to our personal and collective identities how we define ourselves in relation to others.” When we communicate with language it is not only information but also “subtle aspects of our own identities.”⁴⁷⁴ Our culture is an important element of our identity. Culture influences people’s group identity that they inherently belong. Language is “the social function of communication of the group values, beliefs and customs, and fosters feelings of group identity.”⁴⁷⁵ With language we can preserve our culture and traditions. Disappearance of language means “the loss of culture and identity”⁴⁷⁶

No matter in what ways the political conjuncture in Turkey reflect in various periods in various ways on Armenian society, it has made Armenian a language that shouldn’t be spoken outside. Armenians have always been refrained from using their mother tongue or their names in their mother tongue or making it public that they are using it. Armenian names are names in a language that should be hidden and they are indication which would bring harm in business life, especially in commerce. Armenian language class you take in elementary school to learn Armenian language is just another class for the child and in fact it is a really hard one. If s/he has never met it before it becomes an even harder class. Because the child isn’t born into the Armenian language. “As Martinez (2006) explains, language use marked by the failure to recognize the importance of primary-language development at home and at school, and unequal opportunities to access education created a place of struggle for second-language speakers.”⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁴ Cummins, 2000, pp. 163-164.

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ Baker, as cited in Mercur, 2012, p. 14.

⁴⁷⁷ Mercur, 2012, p. 30.

6.3. Teaching and Learning Armenian Language in Armenian Schools

The most important reason why Armenians living in Turkey prefer their children to get education in an Armenian school is that they learn Armenian language. Armenian schools left in İstanbul are the only education institutions in Turkey where Armenian language can be learned in an advanced way. Families consider Armenian schools which they see as a really important social environment for their children as a safe space which teaches Armenian language, in which Armenian students can be in communication in Armenian with other students and teachers who are Armenian like themselves and in which they can socialize and hence protect their culture and identity.

6.3.1. Choosing Armenian Schools to Learn Armenian Language

As part of our study, in the in-depth interviews conducted in order to analyze how important the Armenian language education is as a reason for choosing Armenian schools, the question “what is the relationship between your choice or that you family deemed it appropriate for you to attempt Armenian school and being literate in Armenian language?” was posed. All interviewee groups consisting of students who are in senior year in high school during the academic year of 2016-2017 (first group), students who started an Armenian school but did not continue and transferred to a public school (3rd group), Armenian school graduates (fourth group), school principals (5th group) and teachers (6th group) answered the question positively and indicated that themselves or their parents chose Armenian schools as it is a space where they can learn Armenian language. In the evaluation, it was observed that each group gave similar answer among their own group. The thoughts of the interviewees about Armenian language and education, their time at school, their gained experiences, in which schools and in what years they attended the

schools or how different [their answers can be] affected due to their position were evaluated along with the answers to the questions.

A graduate interviewee Selin who attended Armenian elementary and middle school but transferred to vocational high school answered the question “what is the relationship between your choice, or that you family deemed it appropriate for you, to attend Armenian school and being literate in Armenian language?” as “it is really related. You learn writing and reading in both Turkish and in Armenian. Thus, then, in kindergarten, in first year in elementary you identity is tried to be created actually. That is why it is an important factor.” The interviewee with her answer [and] with her highlight how important it is to learn Armenian language in an early age on the Armenian identity formation also gives an example that language and identity cannot be thought separately.

One of the students who attended Armenian schools from elementary to high school and is in senior year Arat answered the question saying “highly related. Outside I wouldn’t learn it and I am sure I was not going to. In fact I received bursaries from private universities in high school, there was an opportunity I could leave with that” and said how they decided as a family for her/him to continue Armenian school instead of a public school as such: “My sister being a graduate here has also a great effect. My father admires our principal, she is an amazing person, my father wanted me to attend here and I first looked around, asked people around and thought I should attend here.” Student Arat is a senior year student on Getronagan High school. Getronogan has a relatively different structure than other Armenian schools with its principal-centered education understanding and its focus on Armenian language education more in comparison to other Armenian schools. Evaluating the interviews conducted, Getronogan was observed as an institution which was mentioned as special by many interviewees who have or have not been a student/teacher here due to its special approach to Armenian language education. Another senior year student who chose Getronogan High school

after middle school explains how it is related that Varujan chose to continue in Armenian school to learning Armenian language as such:

Directly related. If I didn't attend this school, if I attended any other, I don't think I would have any interaction with Armenian language. Because my family is exiled from Dersim, they can speak Kurdish and Turkish. They lost their language. Only my *ahparig* (my older brother) can speak. He attended Dadyan in elementary school than switched to Anatolian high school. Maybe I could go too. I gained that consciousness later. Because I attended here, I gained it. When I started attending here, I started to read Armenian. In Dadyan, it wasn't read or spoken this much.

While answering the question investigating his reason to attend Armenian school's relation to Armenian language education in general, interviewee started his answer saying "If I didn't attend this school" and later compared Getronagan High School to other school he attended for elementary and middle school education and highlighted that in other school Armenian language was not used this much, and indicated that his consciousness regarding the language was shaped in this school. Another reason why Getronogan is highlighted by many interviewees is that generally for students who prepare for university exam all schools give an education toward the exam. Especially in grade 11 and 12, classes are full of activities intensely toward raising exam success. Students do not want to spend an allocated time for Armenian language class. This issue which we will discuss in detail in later sections is a situation demanded both by students and parents. Contrary to a majority who prefers studies towards exam instead of focusing on Armenian language, Getronogan High School represents a minority.

In the interviews conducted, majority of the participants said similar things about that the consciousness for learning mother tongue did not form in early ages. The perception about learning Armenian language which was not noticed during elementary school however emerged in later age revealed itself in different ways with senior year in high school. That is why, for all of the interviewees which school they would attend when they were in elementary school was chosen by their families. Interviewees indicated that they did not have such awareness about Armenian language. In choosing high school, the

decision was not of only the family; students also had active participation in the decision-making mechanisms.

Interviewee Suzi who graduated from an Armenian school Sahakyan Nunyan School in 1998 explained that in elementary school his family made decision and later he did not see the necessity for changing schools with the following: “At first of course, I attended Armenian school with my family’s impact. Because I didn’t have the awareness, however in middle school-high school, when I was more aware, I didn’t consider attending Turkish school, but I didn’t see it necessary.”

Senior year student of Tibrevank High School Sevan: “100% related. They sent me for sure so that he realizes he is Hay (Armenian), he learns Armenian, it is a 100% I mean...” Regarding continuing or not to Armenian school after elementary school Sevan: “I was thinking of coming to Tibrevank since I was grade 4. Between 4 and 8 I always wanted to attend Tibrevank because my cousins are graduates of here. There are many really old graduate acquaintances. I used to come and go here in elementary school too. From the very start, I had it in my mind” and indicated that he wanted to attend Armenian school especially Tibrevank High School from an early age. It is seen that in the decision of the school the student was affected with the bond his close circle had with Tibrevank and he also developed a feeling of belonging, too. Senior year student of Tibrevank High School from Batman-Sasun Sevan told that there is not any Armenians left in Sasun, those who remained were Muslimified, a few Armenian villages including his family’s came to İstanbul in the 1980s.

My mother’s grandfather used to fast in secret, somehow protected his religion. My mom was even called “Armenian girl”. My mom never attended school, she is illiterate, so didn’t my father. My grandfather speaks Kurdish. For example my mother’s grandfather did not teach my mother Armenian language, thinking something bad would happen to her somewhere if she speaks Armenian. They (he means his family) registered me to Armenian school right after they arrived so that I can learn Armenian language.

Another interviewee Levon who says for his family learning Armenian had a great importance for choosing a school answered the question as such: “I think

language factor was great on my family... They wanted me to learn Armenian at one point. I think it is really important for most of the families. Because those who are Armenian but only attend Turkish schools cannot speak much Armenian.” This participant was accepted to a good private school in high school and did not continue to Armenian school.

Like other participants, interviewee who is in senior year in Tibrevank High School Hinazant indicated that her start in Armenian school was the choice of the family: “My family chose it, and my high school was chosen by my circle. The reason why I came to Armenian school, yes, there is Armenian language. Everything builds upon the base of language. You start with the language.” In high school, though, she says it was not about learning Armenian language and adds:

But I continued here for protection. Like an ugly duckling. You are black, they put you with black ones. Because I was told by my circles always, they told me if you go to Turkish school they would pick a fight with you. My family, my circles, I was raised with these words. That is why they put you in your space.

That the decision to continue Armenian school in high school was taken by her circles with the aim of keeping her in protection caused this student to feel further marginalized more so being raised with the advices like she would be “picked for a fight” if she continued in Turkish school due to her own ethnic identity also has a great impact in this. However, the same student answered the question “in comparison to other ethnic groups, do you feel more comfortable alongside with Armenians” with “alongside Armenians” and expressed that her ability to use Armenian words played a part in this with the following: “Even saying vardik (underwear) makes you feel more comfortable.”

Another interviewee who came to İstanbul from Adıyaman in high school to learn Armenian Lusin is really pleased that she is in an institution where she can learn Armenian: “I would attend if there was an Armenian school there (Adıyaman). With age, one becomes aware of certain things. When I was in high school, I said I don’t want to study here anymore. I came

here after grade 10 with my sibling.” Same participant also expresses her concerns about that she cannot be able to learn Armenian language which she did not have an opportunity to learn in elementary and middle school till his/her graduation from Tibrevank High School [and] not to catch up with: “Now I can speak Armenian, read it, somehow. I really wanted to learn it. Now I listen to oyrort (In Armenian schools, female teachers are called “oyrort”) at once. I am really scared that I will leave school with learning Armenian.” Student Lusin insisted on attending an Armenian school and with her sibling alongside, together they started their education in İstanbul as boarding students. Because there is no other institution she can learn Armenian in detail after graduation, she doesn’t want to graduate before learning Armenian language.

In answering the question “Is there an effect of Armenian schools on forming the Armenian identity, if so how?”, according to Oyrort Hermine who has worked as an Armenian language instructor for 20years in elementary, middle and high schools of Sahakyan Nunyan and who describes Armenian schools as an institution in which students not only go through teaching and learning but also learn their culture, the most important characteristic of Armenian schools is that they are the only space where they can learn the language which is the main element of their culture. That is why; she indicates that Armenian schools have a main mission in forming the Armenian identity: “In Armenian schools, you don’t only give education, you teach a lot of thing automatically as part of it. First of all they learn their language which is a significant element. There is a risk in today’s globalized world that all small societies face. In the larger society they live in, especially if they are small groups, communities, you face assimilation of the larger group unavoidably. There was also an extra effort for this in Turkey. For instance for a while, there were pressures like citizen speak Turkish. This pressures are ongoing, they prevent people to speak their language freely even in their homes.”

It is a fact that literacy practices are directly related with culture and history. However, children interpret different traditions in various personal ways and they create different identities. Moreover, when they hit puberty, the identity

they identify with change and this change can also not be toward dominant culture but the opposite.

The participant who graduated from Sahakyan Nunyan High School in 1999 Garin explained why her family chose Armenian school as such: “It is really related for me learning Armenian because my mom did not speak any Armenian. She said at least my daughter will speak Armenian. In the future, she could at least help her child if nothing else. I am glad she did, because I see it in our bride, she is having a really hard time.” The participant who said their bride whose child is Armenian school but because she cannot speak Armenian she is having a hard time but because the participant can speak Armenian her child doesn’t experience hardship highlighted that it happened like her mother said and at least she can help her child if nothing else. Here the family wanted their child to learn Armenian that they couldn’t, and even the thought of “at least she can help her child if nothing else” is an implicit form of the desire for this transfer to continue. The family thinks that she couldn’t do anything when she learned Armenian (meaning she wouldn’t use it) but even then it would at least suffice to transfer [the language] to her child. With this understanding, the participant who graduated from Armenian school and now whose child is in Armenian school had the opportunity to use her Armenian which she couldn’t use after graduation while helping her child. When the question “How important it is to speak Armenian for an Armenian in your opinion” posed to the same participant as such: “If you asked me this question three weeks ago I would say this; Aren (her child) also attend Armenian school, I can help him with his schoolwork. You can help your son, I would say. It is the only positive of Armenian language.” This answer is answer showing that Armenian is non-functional in the society it lives in and that there is space for her to use Armenian. Spaces where we can talk about freedom of speech cannot be limited to school. “The study of Martin-Jones and Bhatt on attitudes about language is highly illuminating. Researchers in their study on different literacies of those who speak Gujarati in the city of Leicester of England

highlight the importance of going beyond the class and school borders, while focusing on students' literacy attitudes and experiences.”⁴⁷⁸

Only positive aspect of speaking Armenian is to help your child in his Armenian classes. However as the participant indicated, this answer is an answer given “if asked three weeks ago”. Because the participant had a different experience in an event she recently participated. As being the only person speaking Armenian in the event made her notice that speaking Armenian is part of her living her own identity. She tells her experience as follows:

In the recent weeks, we went to this gathering. There was a vartabet (priest) from Beirut, he spoke Armenian. For the first time that day I was full of myself. There were Assyrians from Mardin and such among them, those girls of course do not speak Armenian. I did simultaneous translation there, and I told my partner Armenian language served a purpose, I had an overtone. But that day I said, still a language is a language. I was able to have nice conversations because I could speak Armenian. I was really impressed; it was a really good event. I lived my Armenianness that day; it was really joyous, really nice.

The participant had the chance to use her knowledge of Armenian language in her close circle and she was really impressed by it. As evident in the sentence “Armenian served a purpose”, having a conversation in Armenian which she didn't have a chance to use other than helping her children in schoolwork cause her to live “her real Armenianness that day”. Considering the relationship between “Speaking Armenian” and “being an Armenian” has been the most frequently discussed and opined by Armenians throughout the history, it would be surprising that the participant defines a day she could have conversation in Armenian as a day when “lived her Armenianness”. The experience of speaking Armenian after years of graduation from the school her family sent her to with the thought that (even though they knew it wouldn't serve a purpose) she can learn Armenian, as she indicated, is a sort of milestone. The participant highlighted at the very beginning of her talk that if the same question was asked before this experience she would have answered

⁴⁷⁸ Ceyhan and Koçbaşı, 2009, p. 16.

differently. Another participant who attended and graduated from Armenian school answered the question “How important it is to speak Armenian for an Armenian in your opinion” as such, “Speaking the basics is important. I mean if I am an Armenian I should be able to speak the basics. Maybe not the heavy things, they are unnecessary, I don’t need to write a book. But I think it is important for the daily conversations” and highlighted that if she is an Armenian at least she could speak the language. Principal of Getronagan High School Digin Sirun expressed that the question about how important it is for an Armenian to speak Armenian shouldn’t even be asked, [and] for Armenians speaking the mother tongue is already a necessity with the following:

I think it shouldn’t even be questioned...I mean not knowing the mother tongue is already, well, a discrepancy. Do we see a Turk who cannot speak Turkish around, or an English who cannot speak English... But those who cannot speak Armenian is 90%. There is that ratio. There is a discrepancy. Of course it should be spoken, but under the circumstances...the discrepancy stems from the historical realities. Like closing down the school in Anatolia, people living with more pressure and fear.

Digin Sirun defines that most of the Armenians cannot speak Armenians as a discrepancy. However this discrepancy is unavoidable considering the situations and historical realities Armenians living in. This discrepancy lived by a generation who had to hide that they could speak Armenian [and] who could not teach their children and grandchildren the language thinking it would cause trouble for them with the introversion due to the Republic’s language policies should be considered with the number of Armenian school which dropped from thousands to tens in years and the policies enforced on these schools. The participant who attended Armenian school in elementary and middle school and Turkish school in high school Levon answers the same question as such:

I think it is really important. Language is a really important part of culture, but I for instance forgot Armenian language a lot, my Armenian is pretty bad right now. I mean as an Armenian it is really important but it is not really important for me sometimes. For instance, I used to think when I faced discrimination as such, I was dreaming a world without discrimination. That is why ethnic differences weren’t a big factor for me here. That is why me being an Armenian wasn’t a big factor for me other at one point. Of course it was always in my mind, for instance I know it, I accept it, I say it, I have no

reservations about it, I have no brag about it either, but it wasn't that important for me. I wish I knew Armenian well. But I don't.

This participant who faced discrimination for being an Armenian a lot continued to Turkish high school by her choice and concluded with the experiences he had there that being discriminated for being a part of a different ethnic group is a really bad thing.: “When I was oppressed then, I said no one should feel what I feel”. That is why the participant concluded that similar to thinking being a Turk isn't important being an Armenian should be important either and he did not want to self-identify only with his ethnic identity or language. He was afraid of the possibility that he might make someone else feel the same way of he approaches his ethnic identity this way. However, he indicated at last that although it is not for his, generally for Armenians speaking Armenian is important and he wishes to speak Armenian better. Generally, there is a salient difference among the participants who transferred to Turkish schools in their attitude to their identity. We see that these people do not put their Armenianness up front and even in some cases they ignore it. Most of the participants of this situation felt the necessity to indicate that being an Armenian is not that important for them. None of the participants who have been among their own ethnic groups since elementary school make such a comment. The source of this situation which we can call a discrepancy is that they experience the heavy weight of being an Armenian in Turkey by “crashing” among a different group. On the contrary to the participant Levon, according to the student who attended elementary and middle school in Turkish school and Armenian school in high school Lusin the reason for this is that “you learn your own language”: “Similar to everyone else who speaks their languages, you speaking your language I think is a really good thing. Everyone should learn their own language.” The approach of this student carries a similarity in essence with Getronagan High School principal Sirun's indication that the importance of speaking the mother tongue is actually a thing that shouldn't be even questioned. This is an ordinary situation. Every should indeed speak their language. Selin who attended Armenian school in

elementary and middle school and transferred to Turkish school and graduated from there focused on the importance of speaking, protecting and transferring of the language:

It is important in the sense that the continuance of the language. I think it is really important that this language does not get lost. That is why Armenian should be spoken as much as possible and we should support those who can speak it. Because our many elders can speak, or some can speak barely but it is important for us to transfer this to the next generations.

Tibrevank High School senior year student Sevan who attended Armenian school till his senior year:

Language is the most important thing. I consider my mother, she would definitely want that if she had the chance, but she couldn't. But if she could she would. My perception of those who have the chance, who say 'I am hay' (I am Armenian) but do not learn the language. I would think about that. But I think it is important. If you say I am Armenian you need to speak Armenian.

Sahakyan Nunyan High School senior year student Belinda highlighted the easiness speaking Armenian gives in being in contact with Armenians living abroad by saying "If we go abroad, we can find an Armenian actually anywhere. We can have a shortcut for communication. Everyone is spread all around the globe." The student who is in senior year in Getronagan High School Arat answered the question by saying:

I think it is really important. If I lived in any other country it wouldn't be this important for me. But it is a disappearing language, a language of a disappearing nation, it is really important...(here he counts other Armenians living around the globe and adds) but Armenian we speak, Western Armenian, those who can speak is really rare. Learning it right now is a great treasure for me.

The student who is in senior year in the same school with student Arat gave a similar answer with his friend saying: "Armenian is really important, to be able to read your own history, to speak appropriate to your culture your way of life...For your own identity...I think mother tongue is really important. For speaking Armenian is highly important."

It is evident in these answers that the answers of the participants attending Getronagan High School differs a lot from graduate participants or from students who are in senior years of different high schools in terms of the awareness of Armenian language and identity. The participant who attended

Armenian school from elementary school to the end of high school and after graduating from university worked as a physics teacher in the same high school she graduated from. Nayat answers the same question:

Important, even if you don't speak it... I don't use it in everyday life. I mean it is what bonds Armenians together, Armenian language... Without Armenian, like everything would be different. Like, even when you are talking to a person you don't know, you feel closeness. It was in the thing, was it Vahe Berberyan? Him for instance... He says something like when you are abroad walking around and you hear something in Armenian and you feel at home... Like you have something in common with a person you don't even know. Actually it happens when you speak Turkish too.

The participant who tells when she asked something to her sibling when they were abroad, the cashier understood and answered in Turkish indicates that in a foreign space she feels home when she meets people she shares the language with [and] Armenian and Turkish both have the same effect on her by saying "Turkish also gives me the same impression, you feel at home". This situation in which where you are a foreigner you forget about your foreignness when you hear a familiar sound is related to the power of language bonding people together. It is an important aspect to think on that while mentioning the importance of Armenian, and indicating that the language is what bonds Armenians together and although she says "if Armenian language didn't exist" everything would be different, she argues that Turkish too creates the same feeling in her at the end of her talk. Considering the feeling of belonging for an Armenian who went through a bilingual education, who learned both Armenian and Turkish literacy at the same time and who uses Turkish in her everyday life, when she witnesses Turkish spoken other than her own mother tongue in a foreign place with the identity and the issue of Armenians in Diaspora and Armenia describe Armenians living in Turkey as "Turks" and do not see them as Armenians, we can evaluate the situation is yet another discrepancy. This situation which we will cover in detail in the last section under the title Armenian Identity and Armenian schools is only applicable in the world to Armenians living in Turkey. Principal of Tibrevank High School Digin Jaklin explained the importance of Armenian language for Armenians as follows:

If you own your identity culture, if you care for it, than speaking Armenian is a really good thing. If nothing else, you can read a book, you can follow the press, you can watch films, you can watch Armenian tv –although there is difference in accents- after all, you can get into that culture, into that identity. But it doesn't mean that...There are those people, due to the conditions they cannot speak Armenian but they are bond well to their cultures, their belonging.

Digin Jaklin who thinks speaking Armenian is a good thing for Armenians who care for their identity said that it is possible to get into the language through language but needed the necessity to indicate that those who developed a sense of belonging for Armenian ethnic identity even though they cannot speak Armenian due to circumstances in Turkey are also bond to their ethnic identity. This necessity is inside the debate of whether or not those who cannot speak Armenians can be described as Armenians in the general sense. The participant who has been working as an Armenian language instructor for many years Oyrort Hermine highlights that although she can say different things as an Armenian teacher, she is of the same thought from her personal perspective:

Of course I am an Armenian language teacher. I might have a really different approach but from my personal approaches too I know it. For an Armenian speaking Armenian is a way of proving his/her Armenian identity because wherever you go in the world you prove that you are Armenian with your language for starters, because there are very few places which teaches that and the language is the method of communication among themselves for Armenians. Armenian constitutes the cultural elements of the identity, thus it is really important to speak Armenian. For instance let me tell you a small anecdote, when my mama (my mother) came from Anatolia (Yozgat). Of course my grandfather could speak, but my mama didn't.

The participant sees being able to speak Armenian in anywhere in the world as a language Armenians can communicate with when they are together as the most important element for Armenians to prove their Armenianness. According to this perspective, when you cannot speak Armenian, you cannot also prove that you are an Armenian. It is an essential rule for being perceived as Armenian by other people to be able to speak Armenian. However, that her own mother could not speak Armenian stems from the historical realities of the period and geography they lived in. Thus, it is a special situation that Armenians who lived in Turkey after 1915 could not learn Armenians for a couple of generations. Moreover, we can indicate that if we say the following it

wouldn't be a stretch: the generations who couldn't learn and speak Armenian language couldn't learn and speak Armenian in Turkey exactly because they are Armenians. Oyrort Hermine continues on her anecdote about her mother:

Because they forced her to attend Turkish school, Armenian schools were polished up and turned into Turkish schools... They existed with force... They finished state's schools elementary schools. Of course in return they couldn't speak Armenian. When she comes here, my mother faces Armenian language. She used to tell this all the time, 'if I knew Armenian was this necessary, I would learn Armenian with you for sure. I wouldn't knit, I would learn it.' Because she recognizes how important it is when she goes to the church. That is why, I think knowing a language is important. First of all, it is the way of connecting with your community.

The source of the feeling of lack the mother of the participant who indicated Armenian is important also because it is "a way to reach the Armenian community" whenever she went to church is that another important element that bonds together the Armenian society together is the church. Armenian people organize sermons in Armenian in their churches for approximately 1600 years. They talk to their god in Armenian. In many Armenian churches in Turkey, people are warned to talk in Armenian when they enter the church. When families take their children to the church they raise them saying "we are in church now, do not speak Turkish here." As evident in the example the participant gave through her mother, the feeling of lack she felt was a reveal of a lack "she recognizes every time she goes to church" not somewhere else. Principal of Tibrevank High School Digin Jaklin explains this situation with that the importance of Armenian gradually decreases:

People think about it like, what if my kid fails in the exam, why would s/he see some classes in Armenian... Test books are all in Turkish, publications are in Turkish, and when this is the case, normally what do they do, well my son my daughter shall be successful in the exam... I think it is not about the exam at all. The loyalty of the parent to his/her culture [and] language is really important too.

In her answer to the question investigating the importance of Armenian language for an Armenian Digin Jaklin draw attention to that because exams are in Turkish learning Armenian doesn't have a value in students' eye. Although answering the question mentioning how important it is to speak the language, the senior year student in Tibrevank High School Liza concludes her

answer by highlighting that speaking Armenian has not much use: “Language is pretty important, and it is absolutely a difficult language. If we learn another language it would be more useful.” The participant thinks that it would be more useful if she spent the time learning a really difficult language to a language that would be more useful in the social life. However, the senior year student who transferred to Tibrevank High School after attending Turkish schools in Adana has a different perception of Armenian language which he was away till high school. In his answer to the question “When do you feel like an Armenian the most?” He indicated that he feels more Armenian now that he is learning the language. The participant Engin Can who indicated that when he was in Adana he had the feeling more, he had this feeling less when s/he came to İstanbul among other Armenians like himself than what he felt while he was in Adana now that he learns Armenian he feels like an Armenian in his school in İstanbul:

Actually it happened the most in Adana. Because here (meaning his high school in İstanbul) because everyone is an Armenian because I am close with Armenians, in Adana we are both a minority and there are three Armenian families in Adana. I used to feel more Armenian then for some reason. But now of course I feel like it. I am learning my language for instance, I didn't speak Armenian. I am learning it for two years, we have an older sister who graduated from here last year, Aslin Kuyrik (sister), she comes here, we study with her on Wednesdays.

In an environment where everyone is Armenian students do not experience the awareness of their identities fully. After school in university or when they start working meaning when they become a minority among others, when they feel different than others around or when they are made feel like different by others, their perception changes. Similarly, the student who came to a place predominantly Armenian from a place where he was a minority Engin Can experiences this from the opposite way. His awareness about Armenian identity had to form from an early age in an environment where he felt like a minority and when he is in the space where he is a majority, he pays more attention to learning Armenian with the consciousness this gave. Students who were born, raised and educated in Anatolia and switched to Tibrevank High School in their

high school and students who have been in Armenian schools since elementary school attend the same classes. Thus, their knowledge of Armenian is at a highly lower level in comparison to their classmates. Because they cannot take the same Armenian class, these students are given private Armenian classes weekly by the school. One of the students who is observed as more keen to learn Armenian because they are both from outside of İstanbul and they attended Turkish schools till high school Engin Can answered the question of “Does Armenian school have an impact on Armenian identity formation?” through the importance of learning Armenian language:

Sure like this, we live in Turkey and thus we have to speak Turkish outside. Language is the biggest agent of the culture, if we want to investigate a nation’s culture closely, we have to learn that nation’s language. That is why I think both in Armenian schools and by learning Armenian language we can do this better. Armenian schools are really important for this.

Engin Can related the most important role of Armenian schools in Armenian identity formation with their Armenian language education. Engin Can who mentioned the necessity to know a culture’s language in transferring and learning of that culture, at the same time thinks that s/he has to speak Turkish outside as s/he lives in Turkey. According to Engin Can, this obligation is an obligation that can be overcome with speaking Armenian in Armenian schools. Students who think there is no possibility of speaking Armenian outside can speak Armenian in schools although they can’t outside. Because of the policies the Turkish Republic enforced in the area of Turkification of the language and discriminatory attitude against the Armenians, today many Armenian citizens cannot speak easily among each other in Armenian. As in the example of the mother who warns her kid outside saying “don’t call me mama” remains as “mama” only in the limits of the house, Armenian has become a language that is limited to home or school. While speaking Armenian as a very significant element which gives away the Armenian identity which is thought to be hidden outside is possible in Armenian schools, the majority of the students speak Turkish among themselves at school too. In Armenian schools, there are many issues about how Armenian language class and how it is covered. In the

following section of our study, the sources of these problems will be evaluated through the perspectives on Armenian by first students, then teachers and parents.

6.3.2. Armenian Language: Just a Class

In the minority schools, curricula are approved by MEB. As part of the curriculum, it is mandatory to have Armenian (mother tongue) and Turkish class hours equally. In the colleges and foreign schools which are in private school status in Turkey, as part of the weekly curriculum, foreign language which is the language of education hours are way more than Turkish language class hours. This situation is an example of discrimination among schools of same status. The issue of lack of status experienced by Armenian schools reveals itself in this practice of class hours. Armenian schools are in both private school and minority school status, practices in class hours shows a striking difference relatively to other private schools or foreign schools. The table⁴⁷⁹ below exemplifies this:

Figure 3: Language of Education Hours

Schools	Turkish and Literature class	Language class in school's education language	Third language class
Üsküdar American Highschool (9.grade)	3 hours	8 hours (English)	3 hours
Armenian Schools (9.grade)	3 hours	3 hours (Armenian)	-

While 9th grade students in Üsküdar American High School which is in the category of Private and Foreign schools receive 8 hours of school's education

⁴⁷⁹ Alp and Taştan, 2011, p. 42.

language weekly, because in Armenian schools education language is defined as bilingual, Armenian language class hours and Turkish language class hours are given equally in Armenian schools however what is called Turkish and Turkish culture classes which cover social sciences, history, geography and Revolution History classes are mandatory to be taught in Turkish. Teachers of these classes are assigned by National Education Ministry. While till 2010 sociology teachers used to be assigned by National Education Ministry, this is not ongoing today.⁴⁸⁰ In Armenian schools, in elementary schools classes like science, math, art, music can be given in Armenian however if the teachers of these classes are Turkish classes are covered in Turkish. A similar situation applies to high schools. While classes like physics, chemistry, biology used to be covered in Armenian in the past, today even if the teacher is Armenian, s/he covers the class in Turkish.

In Armenian schools, the hours for Armenian classes weekly showed a difference gradually over the years. According to the Armenian Schools Curriculum Program approved by Culture Ministry Culture Board in 1937, Armenian language classes were taught 8 hours a week in the first two years of Armenian elementary schools, 6 hours a week in 3rd 4th and 5th grades, 5 hours a week throughout the middle school, 4 hours a week in 9th grade, 3 hours a week in 10th grade and 2 hours a week in 11th grade.

Although the usage of Armenian decreased with the decreasing population over the years, it is understood that Armenian schools are the most important tool in learning Armenian and after 2000s Armenian language class hours were raised. According to the weekly plan of 1999-2000 academic year, Armenian classes are given 12 hours a week in 1st and 3rd grades, 6 hours in 4th and 5th grades, 5 hours a week in 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Turkish classes taught in schools are also equal to Armenian class hours. Today, in first, second and third grades of Armenian elementary schools 10 hours of Armenian classes are taught. Also, all classes other than Turkish classes are taught in Armenian.

⁴⁸⁰ Kaya, 2013, p. 26.

Moreover, classes like music, art and physic can be given in Turkish due to issues finding teachers in these areas who can speak Armenian. In 4th and 5th grades classes which start to be taught in Turkish are math and science, however, sometimes teachers [of these classes] who can speak Armenian might teach certain topics in Armenian. In the middle school, all classes other than Armenian language classes are taught in Turkish. That the exam in the 8th grade is in Turkish has a significant role in this.⁴⁸¹ However these data differ from school to school and based on teacher's ability in Armenian. Whether the number of teachers who can speak Armenian well is in majority or not in the school is one of the most important reasons affecting this situation. In high schools, we see that Armenian classes reduce further gradually in some schools. Today some parts of society, especially parents and students, have a prejudice that multilingual education would overburden the child. However, graduates of multilingual schools have the opportunity to learn multiple languages better than others.⁴⁸²

Because of students and parents who think covering classes in Armenian would lead to no success and prefer not to weigh on Armenian language classes due to university entrance exam being in Turkish, this situation in which schools try to find a solution by reducing Armenian class hours or easing the contents of Armenian language classes also impacts on students' perception of their mother tongue. Armenian schools which are thought to fail producing solutions as such are being chosen less gradually. Number of students who chose schools which teach Turkish instead of Armenian and transfer to Turkish schools after high school increases while number of students who register for Armenian schools decreases. Attitudes about Armenian language classes differ from one school to another. As mentioned earlier, Getronagan High School as one of the five schools left in İstanbul argues that learning in Armenian is not related to success in the exam, on the

⁴⁸¹ Kaya, 2013, p. 24.

⁴⁸² *ibid.*, p. 27.

contrary, it impacts the student positively by not following an education policy which is towards the exam or focused on exam and without reducing Armenian language classes and by covering classes like math in Armenian.

The negative correlation created by students and parents between teaching Armenian language classes and university exam is nothing but a prejudice. There have been many studies about multilingualism being a positive force in child development. Examining the study Getronagan High School prepared in September 2013 with the title “Mother Tongue First”, we see that it has a content which argues that this settled understanding among parents and students is just a prejudice and which highlights that bilingualism has multiple benefits to the students. In a well-known example of approach of Cummins who has many works on students who had a multilingual education, thoughts of experts like Colin Baker, Carol Benson are also covered. The necessity of an Armenian school to prepare such study to prove that students in Armenian schools are advantageous in comparison to others with bilingual education can also be presented as an example how negatively the perspectives of parents and students about Armenian language classes affect the education in Armenian schools. The booklet is double-sided and the issue is told in both Armenian and Turkish. Because it uses scientific and academic data in telling why students should pay attention to their mother tongue first, its persuasiveness increases. Because today the source of the problems about Armenian language class is this prejudiced understanding and parents and students should raise their awareness. Principal of Getronagan High School Digin Sirun explains the necessity that classes other than the language ones should be covered in Armenian:

In an Armenian school, [they] should be covered in Armenian. In a French [or] English school this wouldn't again be questioned [so] in an Armenian school it should be in Armenian normally. However this becomes an inconvenient element to people. This is also a discrepancy. For parents, students, teachers, for all of them.

Digin Sirun who characterized the students' perspective on Armenian identity and mother tongue as “discrepancy” throughout the interview also underlines

that children are exposed to an unhealthy identity formation process in that sense. One of the main effects on this discrepancy is the language policies of the Turkish Republic. This process which started with the state adopting Turkish as the official language and that is full of limitations and pressures on speaking a language other than Turkish played a negative role in minority students' creation of cultural identities. "Schools have a crucial role in mediating the development of literacy, and the identity of minority-language speakers in that they have control over what they teach and how they teach it, including language choice."⁴⁸³ However this situation causes students to develop "borderline identity". The identity they develop is neither fully Armenian nor fully Turkish. "As Martinez (2006) explains, language use marked by the failure to recognize the importance of primary-language development at home and at school, and unequal opportunities to access education created a place of struggle for second-language speakers."⁴⁸⁴ As a result, that the students who attend Armenian schools are objected to an exam that is in fact Turkish is also a result of the language policies of the Turkish Republic in education and can be defined as discrimination.

Because exams are in Turkish, that certain classes are taught in Armenian in Armenian schools have been a dissuasive element for [students] to remain in Armenian schools. Moreover, students and parents who has a prejudice that the Armenian language which has no value in social and economic life will also put [the student] in a disadvantageous position in business life believe that being a graduate of a prestigious private school or college would provide more advantage in the future.⁴⁸⁵

The author in his work titled *Understanding the Interconnectedness between Language Choices, Cultural Identity Construction and School Practices in the Life of a Latina Educator* in which he looked into the

⁴⁸³ Mercur, 2012, p. 30.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Kaya, 2013, p. 163.

relationship between Language choices, school practices, and cultural identity indicates the results as following:

The findings show the pervasive impact of language ideology on language choices of minority students. The results represent the effects of language ideology on the cultural identity development of a second-language speaker forced to assimilate because of the norms of the dominant English group.⁴⁸⁶

The dominant group the author mentions in today's Turkey is the Turkish dominant group. "As Cummins (1996) notes, the unequal relation of power between dominant and minority languages can serve to constrain multiple identities that minority language speakers can negotiate at school and in society."⁴⁸⁷ The demands of the students for classes to be taught in Turkish, in fact, stems from the conflicts of the students who face an unequal relationship due to the pressure of the language used by the majority. We can interpret this situation as that the assimilation policies of Turkey succeeded. Families and students have come to prefer to get education in the language of the dominant ethnic group as they have been facing these policies over the years in different ways. The interviewee who chose to register in Turkish school in high school Levon,

When I was little I hated Armenian because it was a really hard language. And also if you spoke Armenian at work at home, which they know, I mean they know it better than me, I mean if they spoke Armenian at home and if I learned it from an early age, I wouldn't suffer that much. There were people like me in school but there were also people who spoke Armenian at home too. While they knew, I didn't and it was such a suffering for me, I learn the alphabet from scratch, it is not spoken at home, it was spoken really really rarely. And it was a torture to me, learning math etc like that [in Armenian] was torture. But I think it is really normal, if they do it they can teach Armenian to children better.

In this example, that the classes are taught in Armenian or taking Armenian language classes caused on the contrary for her to choose not to attend in Armenian schools. The choice of attending Armenian school, hence, taking Armenian language classes is not only of the families, children too can take the floor in the decision of the school they would attend. If the student was

⁴⁸⁶ Cummins, as cited in Mercur, 2012, p. 24.

⁴⁸⁷ Mercur, 2012, p. 17.

successful in the placement exams, mostly they choose private school or colleges. In this decision, again, the Armenian language education in Armenian school has an impact on however in a negative sense. Students want to prepare for the university exam not in Armenian but in institutions which give education in Turkish that is the language of the exam. Moreover, the belief that they got the basics of the Armenian education and it would suffice is a common belief among students. This situation which participant started to explain by saying he hated Armenian shows how strong the unhealthy bond the students have with their language is. The participant who is Armenian language instructor in Sahakyan Nunyan High School Hermine who was asked what she thought about classes other than the language being taught in Armenian:

Actually the fundamental curriculum in Armenian schools is like that. I mean teaching the language [only] as a language, [means] in fact the language is in the category of a foreign language. And we have been having this discussion for years. Frankly, in my time I took the English class in Armenian and I learned many words in those English class because classes other than the language ones helps you develop your vocabulary and I always fight for this. This is what is being told to me: Children will have hardship in university entrance exams that is why it is unnecessary. I don't believe that. I will never believe that. This actually makes your brain work more, makes you think in multiple angles. I think definitely other classes should be taught in Armenian... Families' pressure is also really effective in this. Family pressure starts in 8th grade with TEOG.

The ways of school in their struggle with the assimilation policies are different. The awareness of students of the schools which determines their education understanding with the awareness of this situation also develops to that end. In the interviews, participants of all groups between 1 to 6 (Except for 2nd group-those who only attended Turkish schools) was asked the question "what do you think about classes being taught in Armenian?" In their answers to this question too students reflected that they were affected by the approach of the schools they attend or they graduated from toward Armenian language classes.

Ararat who is in senior year in Sahakyan Nunyan High School says "we only cover Armenian class in Armenian. I think it is right that we don't cover other classes in Armenian. Because we would get hardship, we don't take the

exam in Armenian” and hints that Sahakyan Nunyan High School gives education in accordance with this opinion.

Nayat who graduated from Sahakyan Nunyan High School and later has been working as a teacher in the same school answer the question with

Of course classes aren't covered in Armenian any more. It was like that during my time also. I teach the classes in Turkish, too. I cannot teach in Armenian. Now with ÖSS issue and all, it is even less...there was no such thing for classes being taught in Turkish for university exams then (she talks about the generation before her). Everybody was attending university already...When we were in 19th grade, we used to translate the psychology book into Armenian. Because we translated that book into Armenian I drifted away from Armenian. In the 9th grade oyrort taught biology in Armenian⁴⁸⁸. But in 10th and 11th grades we used to study only for university exam. They used to teach in Turkish.

She indicated that they did not cover any classes other than language in Armenian, because they covered the psychology class in Armenian she drifted away from Armenian. The graduate- Nayat who continued saying “But in Getronagan High School they still teach some classes Hayeren (Armenian) not physics but chemistry and biology are taught in Hayeren-Armenian” heard about that in Getronagan High School classes other than Armenian are taught in Armenian similar to senior year student Hinazant: “Classes aren't taught in Armenian. All classes other than Armenian is in Turkish. I think I know it is only in Getronagan High School.”

About this situation most of the participants mention about certain classes other than language being taught in Armenian in Getronagan High School, senior year student of Getronagan Hinazant tells how she complained at first but how her attitude has changed later with the following:

I was really complaining in grade 9 and 10. I was saying why we are covering this in Armenian. There was this thought that we already have a hard time doing it, and they also cover it in Armenian. Later in grade 11 I started saying I am glad they are doing it. I said I wish they could cover it more in Armenian why don't they show it in Armenian? Why don't we solve these tests in

⁴⁸⁸ Oyrort is a word used to address Armenian female teachers in Armenian schools. In fact, in Western Armenia, 'oyrort' means 'married woman' and 'digin' means 'single woman'. However, the use of this word in the Armenian schools has been used as 'digin', for the 'principal', and 'oyrort' for the teacher. For male teachers and male school principals, the 'baron' word is used.

Armenian? I always asked this question to myself: when I see a question, when I am talking to myself, why do I think in Turkish but not in Armenian. I wish I learned Armenian more, I say.

Hinazant who is also a senior year student in Getronagan indicated that she has never considered classes being taught in Armenian as a problem like other, [and] many classes are taught in Armenian if there is a specialized teacher [in that subject] who can speak Armenian, if not, in Turkish. “This was a problem for many but not for me. Right now we cover math classes in Armenian. Because the rest is classes which are taught by non-Armenian teachers we cannot cover them in Armenian but in grade 9 physics chemistry biology they were all in Armenian. The other participant Selin: “It was in the middle school the last time covered in Armenian. It was math class. That is why I had some hardship in math. But it is important that these are covered in Armenian. It develops vocabulary and pronunciation. I think it should be but it is hard for the student that is true.” Sevan who indicated that in elementary and middle school they covered the classes other than Armenian in Turkish says that it is the same in Tibrevank [and] they don’t cover the classes in Armenian:

But if it was Armenian it would be nice. Because we are obligated to MEB. For instance, we take the university exam. You would have learned those concepts in Armenian, maybe you won’t be able to do [well] in the exam. You don’t know the Turkish words for those concepts for example...I guess Getronagan High School does it in Armenian but I am not sure. I wish it was like that.

Sevan indicates that although he think that they would have some difficulty in the exam he wants class to be taught in Armenian. Principal of Tibrevank High School Digin Jaklin explains why they don’t cover classes other than Armenian in Armenian in their school as such:

Because today the education system of this country is fixated with the exam because we are mingling with an education system that is dependent on the exam naturally some classes –although they are in Armenian in first two levels of the elementary school- because of this TEOG and in high school LGS, LYS exams only Armenian classes are taught in Armenian.

Evaluating the interviews conducted, it is observed that students attending Getronagan High School are content with their situation. Comparing the answers to the question “what do you think about classes being taught in Armenian?” we see that this contentedness is highlighted further. In Tibrevank

High School, because there are many students who came from Anatolia for boarding school after middle school, although their belonging to Armenian language is more intense, classes are taught in Turkish as their knowledge of Armenian is also inadequate. Moreover, now it is [the only] boarding school among Armenian schools only Tibrevank High School has students from Anatolia.

From the answers to the question “how do you comment on youth’s attitude toward Armenian?”, which we posed to Armenian teachers and school principals who have been working for a very long time, we see that the educators are in fact complainant of this issue although they organize activities towards the demands of students and parents who argue for the necessity of classes other than Armenian being taught in Turkish. According to our participant who is an Armenian language instructor Hermine, “the attitude” of the students “toward the Armenian language” is not “much different than their attitudes toward the life”. Students are as much fluent in their language as to tell what they have in mind:

They should be way better actually after such training but what I can see is that certain political approaches do not want people who think too much. We have become a small example among the big one. As a small example of Turkey, there is a youth growing up that is indifferent to certain things. When it is needed, they will learn it... They don’t see it as a necessity... This is an attitude towards the life... I have been struggling for years. Where is the place in which Armenian is spoken, is it Armenian, yes ok it is Eastern Armenian, still these kids need to see that Armenian environment.

Hermine who says student attitude toward Armenian language would change if they see the language in the space in which it used, indicates that this method too can be tried in schools as part of various campaigns with the help of funding in order to raise the value attributed to the language.

According to Getronagan principal Digin Sirun, “students seeing Armenian as an obstacle, a difficulty for the exams, either for teog or university entrance, as a barrier but definitely not seeing English the same way, considering it as a positive difference, meaning it is a thing about the Armenian identity. It is about the perception of Armenian identity.” Digin Sirun who sees

that parents feeling more like a Christian than an Armenian is one of the reasons for this identity perception indicates that families perform the marriage or religious ceremonies to protect the Armenian culture and consider these ceremonies as sufficient for the continuity of their identity. She highlights that their understanding for sending their children to Turkish schools is like,

s/he shall learn foreign language, s/he shall go to Turkish school, what will (Armenian) be good for, s/he shall learn foreign language it is better : “I always gives these examples, would a French say “what is French good for?” or an English or a Turk but we keep saying that. Here there is a sickness. I even say do we say “what is my arm good for?” “what is my eye good for?” The language is like that, the abstract side of it, the mental side of the issue; the other is physical...but we can say it. There is a question mark there.

“Language is the primary index or symbol or register of identity.”⁴⁸⁹

According to Hatoss, this symbolic value is a strong source of motivation for the retention of minority languages. A number of authors⁴⁹⁰ have examined the relationship between identity and minority language maintenance and shift. “Giles et al.’s concept of ethnolinguistic vitality theorises that the success of language maintenance in minority groups is highly dependent on the perception of the vitality that minority group members attach to their language.”⁴⁹¹ Based on the theories mentioned above, the value attributed by Armenians as a minority group in Turkey to Armenian language strengthen their bond with their mother tongue and leads to continuity of the language even if it is among the majority group. Principal of Getronagan High School Digin Sirun indicates that those who have the least issue about the attitudes toward Armenian language is actually the youth [and] once they are used to the Armenian education, their perspective on Armenian language changes.

For instance this is a school where Armenian is used, let’s say more intensely. It is not fully Armenian but relative to other schools, Armenian is more focused on. They find it odd at first, we even have students who do not attend

⁴⁸⁹ Crystal, as cited in Hatoss, Aniko, 2003, p. 71.

⁴⁹⁰ Giles, 1979; Giles and Johnson, 1987; Giles et al., 1977; Edwards, 1984, 1988; Edwards and Chisholm, 1987; Breitborde, 1998; Carbaugh, 1996; as cited in Hatoss, Aniko, 2003, p. 71.

⁴⁹¹ Hatoss, 2003, p. 71.

as they are scared of Armenian. But then they get used to it and they really like it. They say we were scared for nothing etc.

Getronagan High School has a great mission in maintaining the language continuance in transferring Armenian from one generation to another by organizing activities that would make students to attribute a meaning to their mother tongue more. Principal of Tibrevank High School Digin Jaklin on the other hand approaches to the issue from a different angle:

All in all, no matter which country we live in there is a reality, the language everyone speaks, the language of the tv becomes the mother tongue somehow. The active language is television language, so because in the country we live in the tv language is in Turkish Armenian can stand still on with struggle. The attention the family pays to it, the desire to speak it with the child...providing Armenian spoken in the environment of the home, they are provided by the families' resilience. I also believe this. Language doesn't work only in schools. Child also need to have it at home.

Regarding Digin Jaklin's comment on the issue being shaped at home, we can give the example that Arus Yumul in his work titled *Religion Community and Culture: Turkish Armenians*⁴⁹² determines that 60% of İstanbul Armenian community cannot speak Armenian. According to this study conducted in early 1990s which explains that those who can speak it also cannot speak it well, the decrease in the number of those who can speak Armenian is not specific to the recent years. The reason why this has come forward more is that even those who can speak Armenian doesn't use it at home. Many linguists in the book *Kaybolan Sesler, Dünya Dillerinin Yokoluş Süreci* highlights that the language pulsates among the youngest generation: "Languages are in danger once they are no longer transferred to children through natural ways by parents or others who are cared at home."⁴⁹³ Even if in the state policies the policies about protecting languages are improved "if a language became not transferred to the new generation at home, the efforts to raise its status in other spaces like school or church are mostly symbolic and ritual."⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² Yumul, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 308.

⁴⁹³ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 308.

⁴⁹⁴ Nettle and Romaine, as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009, p. 308.

According to the studies in the book *Türkiye’de Ermeniler: Cemaat Birey Yurttaş*, next generations are eager to learn Armenian language however pessimistic about continuance of the learning. The lack of functionality of Armenian and that the alphabet is different and difficult are rationally concrete reasons. The divide between “those who think speaking Armenian is necessary” and “what is Armenian good for” reveals the independence between the identity and Armenian language. This divide among Armenians, reveals their mental state as a group who integrates with the Turkish society and tries to guarantee their future while at the same time as a group which tries to protect and maintain their cultural identity. Armenians as “Armenian subjects’ experience this divide at different levels and dimensions. While they protect their identities that is left to private space, their backtrack against the dominance of the public space at the same time makes it hard for the formation of Armenian subject and cultural continuity. For this cultural maintenance which would not happen as is without an effort requires a conscious effort. That is why, families should send their children to Armenian schools first and foremost for learning Armenian.⁴⁹⁵

However students have different perceptions about Armenian class which they take from a really early age. The answer given to the question “How did you consider Armenian class: just as a class or as sharing a culture?” reveals how this perception among students differ and transform. Evaluating the interviews conducted, the awareness of learning the mother tongue of their ethnic identity is almost non-existent in the early ages when they just started to learn the language. Moreover, again the majority of the students indicated that they consider the mother tongue education which is the most significant part of their own culture just as a class.

The participant who graduated from high school in 1998 Suzi tells that she considered the Armenian language education as a class not as a sharing of a culture: “maybe in high school when there is more of authors etc involved in it

⁴⁹⁵ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 316-18.

maybe then you can feel it more. But I think there should be an Armenian history class in schools, maybe then you can feel like it. Right now it is just a class.” According to Suzi, Armenian history teachers would be effective in creating this consciousness. But as be known, Armenian history class is not taught in Armenian schools.

Students unite in their answers expressing that their perception was not fully developed yet in their early ages and thus [they considered it] not as an element of their culture but just as a class. They gave similar answers like Varujan “At first you see it as a class but later it takes time to get that consciousness.” Hınazant, “I considered Armenian classes as part of sharing culture but when I was little you don’t see it that way. But it changed later.” or Lusin, “in elementary school just as a class but here I was interested in literature I like learning about our authors I see it as a cultural development I like listening to that class.” Senior year student of Getronagan High School Sarkis said “I have been considering it just as a class till now. I see it as sharing the culture for the past couple of years.” And when asked the question “why last one or two years”. He answered:

As I meet other different cultures and when I think how precious I find Armenian and what I should do to protect it, I thought I should advance Armenian. My Armenian was really bad, I cannot say it is really good right now either. I try to speak to my friends [in Armenian] at least as much as possible. Even in Whatsapp there is Armenian keyboard, I research the culture. But it is something that has been happening in the past couple of years. Because I just started to realize it.

When asked if he follows Armenian publications, Sarkis answered “I follow Agos but not the Armenian edition⁴⁹⁶. My Armenian is not that fluent.” He indicated that to improve his Armenian he uses it in whatsapp too however “because it takes too long to type in Armenian keyboard”, he doesn’t know the places of the letters and because there is a high risk of grammar errors, he

⁴⁹⁶ The Agos newspaper was the most widely read newspaper in the Armenian community because it broadcasted both in Turkish and in Armenian. For this reason, the Agos Newspaper was an interpreter of the Armenians search for establishing an Armenian identity, without knowing the Armenian language, and thus created an important distinction (Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 311-12).

writes Armenian “with normal Latin alphabet”. To the question do you think Armenian schools affect Armenian identity formation if so how? Participant Nayat [gave an answer as such]:

It does of course, at least in terms of learning Armenian. Actually I only think on the basis of Armenian language. You can be closer to Armenian language and literature. I mean how closer it can be! (Sarcastically) we didn't do anything than memorizing poetry, we memorized them without knowing their meanings, in literature either we didn't learn much. I mean it wasn't a normal literature class, we used to cover grammar, spelling. We didn't learn much about literature. Even Turkish literature classes were more in full.

This participant mentioned the importance of Armenian schools in terms of Armenian identity formation as spaces of Armenian language learning. However, she evaluated her experiences in Armenian classes throughout her high school education in a negative way. The participant thinks that Armenian language and literature classes are more fruitless than Turkish literature classes. We see how the method of teaching of an Armenian teacher affects students' attention and love for Armenian. In classrooms dominated by the feeling of “what is Armenian good for?” and especially in high school classrooms this situation becomes more of an issue. Considering the fact that the awareness of student regarding Armenian identity and language reveals more with the maturity due to age, we can argue that those who see the Armenian learning just as a class is more than the awareness of learning the mother tongue in the last couple of years before their graduation from the only institution they can learn Armenian but teachers also have a role in this.

Similarly another participant Levon questions the necessity that this awareness can only be transferred in school especially by Armenian teachers: “For instance we can ask people why they teach Armenian without raising this awareness... because for example do they tell you are Armenian and you should speak Armenian because of that, I don't remember them telling it is a good thing to speak your own language...” Then, why isn't this awareness raised in Armenian elementary schools and students consider Armenian language class just as a class? The answer to this question should be sought in that the policies regarding Armenian language are in fact embedded in the

policies regarding Turkish language and Turkish identity. Although they attend Armenian schools, how are Armenian students exposed to Turkish identity policies that are aspired to be created in public schools especially through language and history? For example, similar to other schools in Armenian schools too “Our [national] Pledge” has been repeated throughout long years and everyone who lives in the country between age 7-12 and attend an elementary school started the school day with the pledge which includes sentences [like] “how happy is he who says I am a Turk” or “shall my existence be a gift to Turkish existence”.

All education policies enforced to develop the feeling of belonging to Turkish ethnic group in early ages in the Turkish nation-state building process have also been enforced in Armenian schools. The mental structure which cannot diversify between me and the other [and] cannot comprehend on what basis, how and why the differences like Turkish Greek Armenian are there lays the ground for problematic we mentioned throughout the chapter especially in terms of the perception of minority children for their ethnic identity and mother tongues. The participant who graduated from Sahakyan Nunyan in 1999 Garin also underlines that this awareness can be raised by the teachers somehow:

It wasn't like this back then. Teachers today are really sweet. We didn't get it then, I wish, I say, some things were told better, it was told that this is your culture. Maybe I would have been more receptive to it then. We were already taking it just as a class and I was shutting myself down I wasn't a bright student much...so I wish it was told us better so that I would have listened to it more.... For instance there was Bedros Turyan, I have been an admirer of him all my life.

She indicates that the experiences with the teachers at the time cause her to see Armenian language class just as a class [and] if it was told, she had interest in Armenian language and authors however this interest did not prevent her to take the class in the “just a class mood”. Senior year student in Getronagan High School Arat says that the biggest determinant of his/her attitude toward Armenian stems from that he is a student in Getronagan:

You take it in 9th and 10th grade only as a class. For the last two years especially this last year Armenian class is taught lightly as we study toward the exam in fact when they teach it lightly they tell us beautiful things. For

instance we cover the Armenian literature post 1923. They tell us the history of literature alongside with everything lived in that period. When you merge them with our culture, I am lucky to be here. How lucky I am to take these classes, I say. Other schools do not pay much attention to Armenian. If I attended any other school I was already lost. I was going to exist like a person who fixated on the exam but I am not like that right now. I think this is thanks to this school.

The decreases in number of those who are fluent in Armenian [and] that it is not spoken even at home are also undoubtedly related to state's language policies. It shouldn't be forgotten that Armenian families who migrated to İstanbul could not learn Armenian due to the lack of Armenian schools in Anatolia. Encouragement of speaking Armenian at home among Armenians is seen mostly in families of İstanbul origin. On the other hand, beside the lack of transfer of the language from the family, there are multiple issues in learning and speaking. The first one of these problems which emerges in various spaces is related to the process of socialization. The decrease in Armenian population in neighbourhoods like Yeşilköy, Bakırköy, Samatya or moving of Armenians from these neighbourhoods to those who have less Armenian population reduced the rate of children to hear or speak In Armenian in the social circles. Another reason is their refrain from speaking Armenian especially on the streets with the negative attitudes towards Armenians especially during the periods when the political debates are toward the Armenians. This causes further introversion and a division requiring being "different on the street, different at home". For instance, the child is advised not to call her mother *mama* when outside. Armenian which is hidden at home or in school becomes a less practical tool with the reduction in resources in the public sphere.⁴⁹⁷

When answering the question "is there anything that you see as a problem at school?" student Hinazant answers saying that "the main problem is that Armenian is not spoken. Actually Armenian should be spoken all the time" and expressed his/her complaint about this issue highlighting that Armenian not spoken even in schools is the main problem.

⁴⁹⁷ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 311-312.

Only instructors among the participants gave a positive response to the question “do you speak Armenian at home among family”. The majority of the students indicated that they don’t speak Armenian at home. Student who told that they are the only one who can speak the language or even if there is one, they don’t speak Armenian to this person showed the situations which they don’t want anyone else to know [and] as they define as secret as a reason why they speak Armenian with their friends outside. About this understating which approaches the language as a some sort of secret language, the graduate participant Levon [said] : “Unfortunately no. very rarely...For instance if in a space like this a secret thing will be uttered, like the hays of our day would do, then maybe. We will talk about some money or we will say something secret. Then only.” From the sentence “like the hays of our day would do”, we can conclude how common this is among the Armenians. Armenian that is forced to be hidden reveals from its hidden place when mentioning hidden/secret situations and gains its functionality back.

Under these circumstances, the most important institution in preserving and improving Armenian language becomes Armenian schools. However, there are three interrelated issues in Armenian schools about teaching Armenian and preserving the language and culture: first of all, Armenian is marginalized in the daily life or it changed functionally. Second, there are not enough teachers who can speak Armenian. Third, there are insufficiency in Armenian textbooks taught in the schools.⁴⁹⁸ After the anecdote we offered throughout the chapter about the marginalization of Armenian, we will touch upon the issues of training teachers and material in Armenian schools.

⁴⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 308.

6.3.3. The Reflection of the Problems of Training Armenian Class Teachers and Armenian Class Material in Schools

The problems about training Armenian class teachers and preparing Armenian class materials in Armenian schools have a great impact on how Armenian language is perceived by Armenian society, the reaction of students and families on classes covered in Armenian, education policies enforced to schools about Armenian language classes and classes covered in Armenian.

Armenian schools experience certain difficulties in Turkey due to the laws and practices about the supply of Armenian textbooks and secondary materials.

With the memo number 311-2941 circulated by The Ministry of National Education in 1966, the usage of text books, assisting books and journals which are not approved is banned in schools. It was demanded that all publication that does not comply with the conditions which are being approved by The Ministry of National Education and published in İstanbul to be collected and sent to MEB.⁴⁹⁹

Armenian schools were left alone in the supply of educational material as they were not supported in this either similar to that they are not supported by the state in any other issue. Although MEB distributes textbooks to public elementary schools since 2003, this practice was applied to minority schools since 2009-2010 academic year and MEB started to send textbooks only for Turkish class and classes taught in Turkish such as history geography and Revolutions history. Besides them, Armenian class and Armenian secondary textbooks are provided by *Turkish-Armenian Minority School Teachers Mutual Aid Association*. Despite the changes in education system, Armenian classes are covered with textbooks which were approved by Turkish education board in the 1930s. Moreover, secondary textbooks approved in the 1970s are used. Armenian translations that are used since the 1930s do not fit well with today's

⁴⁹⁹ Alp and Taştan, 2011, p. 48.

students. Books cannot be brought to Turkey from other places, like Armenia. Although brought in, because the Eastern dialect is used in Armenia these books are not comprehended in Armenian schools in Turkey which uses western Armenian.

Principal of Getronagan High School Digin Sirun mentions about the class material issue that people who are equipped in Western Armenian enough to prepare textbooks are not trained: Armenian Western dialect are definitely not taught especially in universities and higher education institutions. Without its higher education and that the group that would prepare the material is not trained...All of these are problems; that is why it cannot be renewed.

In 2010, The Ministry of National Education published math and life sciences classes textbooks in Armenian and distributed to Armenian schools. These books are the books used in other schools and their translations were done by Armenian foundations without a fee. This is an important development for Armenian schools however the translation of these books took a long time due to the lack of translators and till the translation is complete there were changes made in the resources. Armenian schools who cannot catch up with the changes in textbooks due to translation also demanded that the names used in such books should be in Armenian instead of Turkish. However, it was declined. Today the number of people who is equipped enough to prepare an Armenian educational material is really limited.⁵⁰⁰ Digin Jaklin:

The exercises in teachers association do not suffice and also because the resources in teaching and learning change so frequently that with the changes and developments in technology visuality becomes more involved. This naturally stems from the resources being frequently changed today you see class material class curriculum is changed every two years all of a sudden. Of course as many class materials is changed, our Armenian and classes related to Armenian becoming out-dated naturally causes a resources issue. There is of course this use too. It is also needed to review the sources abroad. After all there is the teacher in search of such things. It depends on the teacher's initiative. It shouldn't be all about teachers' foundation's conducting such studies. Back then it was unreachable. Now if you want, online or what can you do from the foreign visits, or they can ask from their acquaintances who visit abroad and say can you get me an appropriate book from somewhere selling Armenian books so that I can benefit from it. Back then it was harder to go abroad. Now you can go to the US etc, you can get inspiration from there.

⁵⁰⁰ Kaya, 2013, pp. 126-128.

The high price of renewal of textbooks especially Armenian books and publication costs brings a heavy financial burden on schools which do not get any support from the state and students. The necessity to send a notarized copy of each page of the prepared Armenian books after their translations to Turkish to National Education Directorate [and] Education Board for approval brings a serious financial burden to the minority schools. Thus, preparing many class material is done by teachers in school [and] Xeroxed and distributed to students.⁵⁰¹ A participant who worked as a deputy principal in an Armenian school says that they don't experience difficulty about Armenian class material. Participant's mention of MEB in Kaya's book as "ours" was highlighted separately.⁵⁰² Deputy Principal who uses "ours" works at an Armenian school by in fact with a division of you and us. Participant:

No, I mean there is no difficulty. Education Board takes care of it...For the Armenians too inspectors just approve them, I mean there is no difficulty in approved Armenian material. I believe there is no difficulty. For Turkish social class there are already state's books...Then they were [...] the Armenian books, it was happening with the inspector's approval, they were preparing it in a commission, then it was translated, inspected, approved. Then ours published it since last year. They used to adapt it from Turkish books, I mean they were adopting the life sciences. I said then, life sciences shall be taught in Turkish. Because it is the initial [step] for social sciences. Then, all hell broke loose. Whereas I had no other concern, social was the next step of life science.⁵⁰³

Armenian teacher Hermine tells a dialogue she had with an inspector who came to inspect the school in regards to the books used as such: "An inspector came, he said, what, he said, do you use? I said *Nor Tankaran*...He said *Nor Tarkaran*, is that the ageless treasure of yours, he said. I said, sir, we have been using it since 1938. Because it is an approved book. Content-wise, it is really beautiful. Maybe the topics are too old, but there are some topics in it, there is a reason why it was prepared. 8th grade curriculum was taken as a base in the preparation of that book and it has examples of literature studies. Of course, the

⁵⁰¹ Alp and Taştan, 2011, p. 41.

⁵⁰² Kaya, 2013, p. 105.

⁵⁰³ *ibid.*

poor man may not know it. Of course but if I go ahead and say to him, I have these books at hand, I am using these books for kids, we will go into a conflict. Because officially it is banned for us to do such thing and we cannot use such things so that the school won't get into trouble from such thing... To get approval, first you need to write the book, it needs to be translated into Turkish word y word, it should be sent to MEB and get approval after the approval it should come back and republished. The fastest process for this, if it is prepared fast, we know how hard it is, you must work really diligently, it takes at least 2-3 years. I don't know how many years it would take to get the approval. When you start publishing the book it becomes already old.”

In an interview for *Agos* with Mariam Drameryan who works as a second secretary for Armenians of Turkey Minority School Teachers Mutual Aid Foundation (TEAOV) which was founded in 1965, Drameryan indicates regarding the books the foundation publishes that they published many books and even gifted these books to the schools. She indicates that since 2013, they distribute all the books free of charge and they publish *Jbid* journal published for the elementary students for the past 25 years.⁵⁰⁴ Armenian language instructor (Hermine) who indicates that besides textbooks, now secondary sources can be used however for this teacher should be well-equipped:

What do we have now we had one advantage, that is, in language classes you can make some strengthening from secondary sources with photocopying in relation to your field. Of course here it is really important that the teacher is well-equipped. If teacher is a teacher who follows, well-equippedm they can benefit from all of these. That is our thing, it is not really pleasant, but we are doing some stuff.

The permit of MEB which did now allow secondary material to be used earlier to such materials now became a right that cannot be benefited from due to the lack of teachers who are equipped enough to prepare the material. Teachers' Association which is one of the most important institutions providing Armenian text book needs for Armenian schools also has multiple activities in training Armenian class teachers. In the foundation which organizes Armenian

⁵⁰⁴ Solakoğlu, 2006, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/14320/ogretmenler-vakfi-ilgisizlikten-sikayetci>

workshops toward teachers and teacher candidates, the interest to workshop is observed to be really low. Foundation secretary summarizes the situation of the teachers-to-be as such:

For instance, in an activity starting with 25 people, 5 people is left after a while. Actually they need to come constantly, because their Armenian is really inadequate. Two years ago in a meeting with principals, they told us that elementary students have the lack of terminology because new teachers do not know the concepts. Thus we organized a workshop but no one showed up. We send participants who maintain continuity and has adequacy to Venice for language school for the past three years. They want to be teachers but they don't join any cultural activity, they don't read any Armenian newspaper or book. This is a disgrace to the profession. They need to think the children who were entrusted to the, but they don't unfortunately.

Principal of Tibrevank Digin Jaklin observed this situation in the institutions she worked for and highlighted that the level of teacher's speaking Armenian gradually drops. Principal Digin Sirun about hiring teachers: "It is again an issue of being a minority. You have to choose from among a few. Not many apply to you. Digin Sirun expresses how hard it is to both make a choice from this few and find a well-trained teacher as such: "For instance, it is really hard to find people who are really fluent in the language now. When it is not there, when there is no language, how this culture will continue, I mean really problematic. There is the issue of language. Training people is similar, being few in number. Because we have to schooled from among the few..."

In Armenian schools, teachers of Armenian language classes are chosen by the schools. These teachers are called "contract teacher". For their start in the job, they also need an approval from MEB. People who are eligible to the criteria of being a higher education graduate and having pedagogical formation can work as Armenian teacher. As principal of Getronagan High School mentioned, there is no Western dialect Armenian language and literature in any education faculty in Turkey. Armenian Language and Literature department was established in Turkey in 2010-2011 academic year in Kayseri Erciyes University. Besides the department having hard time finding faculty, because many other conditions were not matured enough, it has not played a significant

role in training teachers yet.⁵⁰⁵ However, because Western Armenian is used in Armenian schools in Turkey those who are trained in this department are not eligible to work in Armenian schools. In summary, there is no faculty which trains Armenian teachers and in which Western Armenian is taught in Turkey. Moreover, even if there is such department, people who are advanced in western Armenian is almost non-existent and these people have no academic formation. Armenian teachers who start their work in Armenian schools who are in a gridlock from all sides in the issue of training Armenian teachers can have an internship for a semester and try to make up for their deficiencies. Majority of the teachers who are hired even though they don't speak advanced Armenian but because they are a graduate of any education faculty and have the pedagogical formation lack the internship opportunity due to financial reasons or due to the urgent need for a teacher and they start their job immediately.

The issue of finding teachers who can speak fluent Armenian for the Armenian classes which started with the changes in criteria for teachers in the 1970s and gradually increased also reflect on classes that can covered in Armenian. While anyone who is a graduate of any university can become a teacher before the 1970s, repealing this criteria put the Armenian schools in a disadvantage in procuring teacher. For instance, an Armenian student who works as a science teacher today doesn't have the capability of teaching it in Armenian and s/he teaches it in Turkish. However, many lawyer, doctor or engineer who improved themselves and can speak proficient Armenian could teach both Armenian language and literature and classes like chemistry, math in Armenian before the 1970s. This issue which exponentially grew till the present day caused both teacher and students to drift away from Armenian gradually. While many classes other than Armenian being taught in Armenian was a usual thing 20-25 years ago from, today it is considered an issue by parents and students.

⁵⁰⁵ Kaya, 2013, pp. 107-8.

Schools have a crucial role in mediating the development of literacy and identity of minority language speakers in that they have control over what they teach and how they teach it (including language choice). In other words, becoming literate entails knowing not only the processes but also the symbolic representations of the culture in which individuals are socialized.⁵⁰⁶

However, all of the aforementioned issues specific to Armenian school experienced in the school about procuring Armenian class teachers and class material, all in all, pushes students away from their language and Armenian language becomes a language that is less used gradually by teachers and students.

6.3.4 Is It Possible to be an Armenian Without Speaking Armenian?

Armenian has an essential importance for Armenians in Turkey, too. Armenians in the Ottoman period preserved mostly their lingual identity thanks to Education Institutions or media organs. Kanuni Esasi published in 1876 announced Turkish as the official language of the state and brought the requirement of speaking Turkish for government officials. However, this did not prevent the existence and preservation of Armenians. Today Armenians in Turkey attribute great importance to Armenian language to preserve their identity. However there are still two important sectors that is those who have good knowledge of the language and those who does not speak it.

Smolicz's (1999) theory of core values further supports the idea that those minority groups which attach a stronger value to their language as a core cultural value are more likely to maintain their language over generations. The complexity of the exploration of this intricate matrix stems from the very process of identity formation. While identity formation can be seen as a decision made by the individual members of an ethnolinguistic community, this decision does not happen in a vacuum, but is reflective of and influenced by various external factors.⁵⁰⁷

The reason of the decrease in number of those who can speak Armenian today is not only the state's assimilation policies. It is also the reasons stemming from

⁵⁰⁶ Mercur, 2012, p. 17.

⁵⁰⁷ Hatoss, 2003, p. 71.

Armenian community too.⁵⁰⁸ According to the survey conducted Yumul in the 1990s, 82.5 of those who can speak Armenian said they use Turkish or a language mix of Turkish-Armenian. 62.8 indicated that their language level is adequate, 16.8 indicated that can read Armenian easily, 14.9 indicated that they can write and read without error. Moreover, the command of the ethnic language among those who continued Armenian schools after elementary school is observed to be more intense. However, everyone who participated in the survey said that they can speak Turkish more easily. This who said the language they can speak the best is 18 percent.⁵⁰⁹

Speaking Armenian is sometimes an issue of prestige among Armenians. Those whose Armenian is not that well or cannot speak fluently can be pushed outside of Armenian identity. About this issue, in 21 September 1998 an article titled “call to reason” was published. This article published in Marmara newspaper discussed the issue of “speaking Armenian” and “being Armenian” which has been debated by many author for years in *Mshak* journal published in the 1850s.

In the article, two positions were determined as those who accept speaking Armenian as the essential condition of being an Armenian and “those who practice being Armenian even though they cannot speak the language”. In the article, Armenians were classified as “full Armenian”, half Armenian” and “quarter Armenian” on the basis of their level of Armenian language proficiency. Rober Haddecyan who was the editor-in-chief of Marmara newspaper at the time wrote another article after the initial one again in the same newspaper and expressed his support for this view. Later, *Agos* newspaper chief editor Hrant Dink answered this debate in his column titled “the rebellion of the quarters”. According to Dink, dividing up Armenians on the basis of their language proficiency [and] classifying them as full, half and

⁵⁰⁸ Karakaşlı et al., 2009, pp. 306-307.

⁵⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 308-309.

quarter is unconscionable. Dink in this column says that this division should be renounced.⁵¹⁰

The debate which went on for long years in the articles published in *Mshak* Journal in the 1880s about what is the main factor forming the Armenian identity resulted in the victory of the language. “*Mshak’s* liberalism considered language to not only be an essential part of the Armenian identity, without which an Armenian would never be “complete, perfect,” but they also declared that a nation which did not retain its native language yields to the power of natural evolution.”⁵¹¹ Considering the words “complete” and “perfect” used in the article, we understand that they considered Armenians incomplete/partial without speaking the language. *Mshak* regarded language as a “tool for the diffusion of education,” a civilizing tool that would develop the moral and intellectual peculiarities of national life.⁵¹² This *tool* should be used for adopting “European thoughts.”⁵¹³ They were considering national education in Armenian language the only *tool* for progress and adopting the elements of European enlightenment.⁵¹⁴

In the period Armenians published *Mshak* journal who were in the effort of being close to the European idea as they were indicating the importance of the usage of Armenian in education in Armenian schools, it is important to remind that they were going through what is called the Armenian Renaissance. Many Armenian youth tried to tell after their return to İstanbul after their education in Europe that education in mother tongue is the only element bringing the identity together, that schools are really important spaces in that sense, that Armenians should work towards Armenian education in

⁵¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 314-15.

⁵¹¹ Bazinyan, 2015, p. 29.

⁵¹² *ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵¹³ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 74.

Armenian schools first and foremost through different ways including press, through articles, through speeches.

Thus, with the article published in Marmara newspaper in 1998, we see how the issue of full/half/quarter was transferred to our day from the last century and on what axis Armenian identity debates intensify. The perception that without speaking Armenian one cannot be “perfect” or “a complete Armenian” was discussed the same way in an Armenian journal published in the 1880s.

In order to analyze how the participant perceive the relationship between speaking Armenian and Armenianness the question “do you feel more Armenian as you can speak Armenian” was posed in the interviews. Although I did not know the debate mentioned above in the period when the interview questions were being prepared, I noticed that I used “more” comparison in the question by the end of the thesis writing process. Although I wasn’t aware of it concretely, I noticed that this understanding of this issue of full/half/quarter Armenianness that I learned as a result of the readings or research in my thesis writing process also exists in me somehow. I noticed that with the “more” comparison I used in the question I posed my question on the basis of a basic presumption like there is such a thing to the people I interviewed with. This also means that I steered my participants on a sense while asking the question.

As an Armenian, this thesis which I tried to prepare about Armenian identity also changed my identity perception about my own Armenianness as I had the chance to do a lot of readings about the history of Armenians. From the period I started writing my thesis [and] I prepared my questions to this day, I noticed that my style of asking questions or how I handle a topic is not independent from my identity. That is why, I now have the opportunity to evaluate the answers to the question “do you feel more Armenian as you can speak Armenian” in a different manner. This evaluation will be done by keeping in mind that the question I posed has a comparison and I steered my participants with this comparison.

The answer participant Varujan gave has a characteristic of a good introduction in terms of how we cover the issue. Varujan: “I don’t know how to feel more or less Armenian”. Because there is no such comparison in the mind of senior year student of Getronagan High School Varujan in the answer given he did not even touch upon the issue of speaking Armenian and just said that he doesn’t know what it means to a more or less Armenian. Another participant Suzi mentioned that because he can speak Armenian he doesn’t know how it feels not to speak Armenian: “I don’t know, because I don’t know not knowing.” Senior year student in Tibrevank High school Hinazant answered as such “yes I feel more Armenian. I feel different. I feel special.” And highlighted she feels in different place than the others as s/he can speak Armenian. Her indication that she feels special also stems from that speaking Armenian is an issue of prestige among Armenians. Student indicated that the language has a really important place in Armenian identity with following: “I think to call one’s self an Armenian, that person need to speak Armenian.” When she was asked as a follow-up “Then you cannot be an Armenian without speaking Armenian?” by saying “I think you can’t. It wouldn’t happen. But now that we speak Turkish right now I don’t consider myself a Turk.” Actually reveals the conflict and identity confusion s/he experiences.

Senior year student in Getronagan High School Arat [said]:

Yes definitely when I see those who cannot speak I feel more. For instance my cousin went to French school, doesn’t speak Armenian at all, I really wished that he went to Armenian school. (here he keeps mentioning his cousin) he would be a person who can speak Armenian really well. Now he is in medical school. He would have been someone who can speak Armenian well and be a doctor as well.

The student feels sadness as someone really close to him cannot speak Armenian. We can interpret the desire to hear Armenian words coming out of his cousin’s mouth who study medicine as a some sort of taking pride in being Armenian. If we approach to the issue that someone who will perform the profession of medicine which is considered a high status also speaks Armenian, we can say that in the student’s mind he merges in a sense speaking Armenian and the prestige from being a doctor. If the students’ cousin weren’t studying

medicine, I think s/he would pay such attention to this and mind him/her not speaking Armenian this much. In my opinion, according to the student, a doctor who can speak Armenian and, say, a shopkeeper who can speak Armenian are not of the same value. In the statement of the student, it is as if Armenian gains value if prestigious people uses it or it fits to those people better. In any case, it is seen that in the way the student mentions this situation language proficiency and prestige complete each other. Evaluating from various angles, considering the answer the student give and his attitudes at the time of the answer, all in all these following are concluded: a- In the mind of the student, because Armenian is a special language it is worthy of people in prestigious professions, b- people with prestige attribute more prestige to Armenian by using it. c- The desire to see people in high status to speak Armenian is way higher in comparison to the professions which do not require much talent or intelligence. Considering the point the usage of Armenian is in Turkey today, student Arat as a minority wants to bring the dignity back of Armenian language which is in hardship in standing against Turkish.

Participant Selin who transferred to Turkish school from Armenian school in high school sees speaking Armenian as a high emotion: “Yes I mean a higher emotion, in comparison to someone who cannot speak Armenian, I can say I am Armenian more easily.” Who transferred to Armenian school from Turkish school expressed that he got closer to being Armenian when she learned Armenian as such: “yes it happens more, you take a step close. I said I am glad I came here. (Tıbrevank) you learn your own culture if I stayed there (Adıyaman) I would never know. They don’t teach it there anyways.”

Senior year student in Sahakyan, Ararat expressed that identity and language complement each other as such: “What does it mean to be an Armenian? Being able to read and write in Armenian. It means those who can speak Armenian, who can preserve their culture and traditions.” Later noticed that his Turkish friends had no knowledge of Armenian whatsoever when he started the prep school. “They were really surprised when I said we have an

alphabet.” The participant was surprised that those in the prep school were surprised to learn that there is an Armenian alphabet. The lack and inadequacy of knowledge which is full of prejudices among Turkish society regarding the Armenians which we had to mention multiple times throughout the thesis is faced by the students-especially students who attended Armenian schools from elementary school to the end of high school more intensely- when they leave the bubble of Armenian school and when they are to socialize in their social and daily lives due to multiple reasons (prep school university professional life etc).

To the question “do you feel more Armenian because you speak Armenian” graduate participant Garin gave an answer through her experience lived in a gathering in which she had to speak Armenian which she hasn’t in years: “if we go back to day again, I felt it that day really. I am glad, I said, I speak Armenian. No matter what, it is your mother tongue and speaking it, I said, I can speak Armenian and I am Armenian.” In realizing to belong to an ethnic identity as a feeling as an experience, especially in Turkey, Armenian as a language which you gradually stop using it with the reservations to use in public spaces is a good tool if you have to speak or listen to. “Norton (1999) claims that language doesn’t express identity directly, but indirectly through the use of a specific language by members of a particular group as they interact socially.”⁵¹⁵ The issue of language and identity which was described by the participant as “I can speak Armenian and I am an Armenian” includes a mechanism which excludes those who cannot speak Armenian from the Armenian identity.

Dr. Armen Ayvazian in his article *The Fundamentals of Armenian Identity or who is an Armenian* indicates that language is a significant factor however he doesn’t accept someone not to be considered as an Armenian as they do not speak Armenian “Hence, language is an important factor for the preservation of the Armenian identity. However, it would be ridiculous to

⁵¹⁵ Mercur, 2012, p. 29.

consider non-Armenian speaking Armenians as Armenian non-entities... using the Armenian language are important factors of identity but not absolute necessity.”⁵¹⁶

Considering the historical realities in Turkey, we gave many examples throughout the chapter that many Armenians do not speak it on purpose or they don't teach it their kids. Thus, in comparison to Armenians living in other countries speaking Armenian or not in the context of “being Armenian in Turkey” should be discussed differently. Western Armenian which is used by Armenians in Turkey and is taught in Armenian schools has made to the category of disappearing languages. If Western Armenian is among the disappearing languages, when this language is no longer in use, those who consider themselves Armenian even if they don't speak won't be considered Armenian anymore? Considering the language as a main identity characteristic of a nation, multiple identity issues are faced. Because language is one of the most important factors building the identity however it is not the only one.

In this chapter which we covered language identity relation, the inseparable bond between language and identity was evaluated with language policies in Turkey and attitudes of the state toward Armenian education. Evaluating the researches we conducted throughout our study in which we try to understand the processes Armenian schools go through in Turkey in regards to Armenian language education and how the problems in this process reflect on perspectives of parents, students and educators toward Armenian education, it is seen that Armenian society is still in a complicated place in the never ending debate of “speaking Armenian’ and “being Armenian”. It is concluded that while some parts of the society attributes an essential meaning to it, other parts do not consider speaking Armenian as the main factor making Armenianness.

Keeping in mind the theories and ideas debated around the world about the role of minority schools in regards to language and identity relation, despite

⁵¹⁶ Ayvazyan, 2008, www.ararat-center.org

all negative circumstances Armenians were exposed to in the geography of Turkey especially since the beginning of 20th century, it is possible to draw many conclusions that seem specific to Turkish society about the mission of Armenian school toward teaching Armenian and preserving the Armenian identity. Today, when we look into the policies practiced about minorities and the rights of minorities to learn their language and use it in the public life in many parts of the world, we see that many countries are now more sensitive in comparison to the past about these rights throughout the years. However we witness that in Turkey the attitude which does not tolerate any language other than Turkish since almost its establishment has never changed.

CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECTS OF THE ARMENIAN SCHOOLS ON ARMENIAN IDENTITY FORMATION IN TURKEY

Definition of an identity is a multi-layered and complicated issue and it has countless parameters. These parameters are not of the same value but they have resilience in different characteristics and different volumes. Identity descriptor of each character has a specific value. This might be religion, language, real or imaginary homeland, cultural values. All of these are some of the elements constituting an identity. Moreover, because the identity has a fluid characteristic, standards said to be specific can shift into different characteristics in different periods in defining the identities. For instance, if an Armenian who lived in the 1850 raised up from his grave, we can say that he wouldn't have believed that the people of the ethnic group describes as Armenians were Armenians. The changing of the elements constituting the Armenian identity along with historical and social parameters is also applicable to other identities. In this study, we discussed under what elements Armenians united themselves in Armenian history [and] how they defined Armenianness in previous chapters as the occasion raised. In this chapter, these are the problematic we will focus more on: How does one's identity feeling change, is identity a personal choice, what does it mean to describe one's self under an ethnic identity or what does it mean, say, to "feel Armenian"? What are the indicators of Armenian identity? What kind of changes occurred in the last century for Armenianness or Armenian identity for Armenians living in Turkey? Why and in which ways do the attitudes regarding the identity of Armenians living in Turkey differ from the rest of the Armenians in the world? What kind of impacts did the Turkish national identity characteristics constructed by the founding Kemalist cadres of Turkish Republic on identity formation? How does the Armenian community which continues to live in

Turkey try to preserve their identity? How does it identify the Armenian identity? How does the dominant Turkish national-identity politics reflect in Armenian schools which have a really significant place in preserving and maintaining Armenian culture and identity?

After trying to answer these questions in the first section of this chapter, in the second section, what kind of changes are witnessed in the perceptions of our participants regarding Armenian identity will be analysed in a comparative fashion. What constitutes the main frame of the study is the criterion for classification for choosing our participants to interview with. In this last section of the study, the answer of the participants which we divided up into six different groups to the questions prepared to understand the participants' perception on school and identity will be covered comparatively in the light of their education process and school experiences. For that, first what it means to be an Armenian will be discussed, the parameters of identity formation of Armenians of Turkey and lastly, keeping in mind to what direction the Turkish identity that the nation-state aspired to create through education policies affected Armenian identity, identity perceptions of the participants in the defined framework will be discussed.

7.1. What is to be an Armenian?

Armen Ayvazyan, in his article titled *The Fundamentals of Armenian Identity or Who is an Armenian* mentions that it is almost impossible to answer the question "who is an Armenian" completely. This question is an opening statement of a sensitive issue which brings along question clusters and answers that are different from each other. Regarding this issue which Ayvazyan discusses in the axis of comparing the questions "who is an Armenian?" and in what way is he differentiated from an Armenian by birth⁵¹⁷, he argued the following: "One is an Armenian if he considers "Armenia his/her homeland

⁵¹⁷ Ayvazyan, 2008, hetq.am/eng/print/31813

within two dimensions of time and territory”⁵¹⁸. This definition includes both present and historical boundaries of a person. The Armenians who live outside of Armenia scattered various places in the world and everyone in Armenia continues to consider Armenia as the homeland. Secondly, these people have “strong psychological attachments to his homeland – its territory, people, language and culture. Be it living in the US, France or Turkey, an Armenian feels a strong bond to their language, culture, people. According to the author, another characteristic of an Armenian who embraces their homeland and culture is that s/he is or strives to be the maintainer and agent of Armenian language: “One is an Armenian if he “strives to maintain his offspring’s Armenian, including by means of passing on to them the knowledge of the Armenian language.”⁵¹⁹ Armenians in Diaspora and Turkey have to put more effort for this in comparison to Armenians in Armenia. With the political structure that is unique to each country that is immigrated to have significant intentional or unintentional impacts on living or preserving the Armenian language and culture. In his many novels and stories, William Saroyan tells how the second post genocide generation living in the States started to drift away from Armenian language and culture due to multiple elements they face in their everyday lives along with the American culture. While there are examples of those who try to adapt to Americanness which is an upper-culture in America [and] Americanize their names willingly, for example in Turkey, 2. Post 1915 generation had completely different experiences and try to stand against the assimilation policies in order to maintain their language and culture. According to Ayvazyan, “The real identity of an individual is defined by his personal involvement in and contribution to the life processes of the relevant nation.” Starting from Ayvazyan’s article that we exemplified his views on what the essential characteristics of Armenian identity might be the question whether it is possible to talk about a single Armenian identity arises. Many

⁵¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ *ibid.*

views would answer this question by shallowly saying no. However, the condition that the parameters defining the identity have a monochromic existence is not obligatory for all. It could suffice to have just some essential characteristics to be the same. Even if the common grounds of all sections of Armenian people or the bonds bonding them together are weak, other than the legislations which regulate identity issues of all peoples, Armenian people have a unique stamp as a result of the Events of 1915. The discussions about Armenian identity are accompanied by a completely different attitude after 1915. Here, for Armenian community a principle of self-defence is applicable and it hangs the said people to life intuitively. Events of 1915 produced a strong imprint in the Armenian consciousness. Events of 1915 is a really significant turning point for Armenian identity because Armenians in this date were accused of nothing they did; they died only because they belonged to a different ethnicity. The majority in numbers of people of Armenian ethnicity is an element that was defined as a problem against the Turks in the minority majority population politics of the time.

The places of residency of people belonging to Armenian ethnic identity were determined one by one. The Relocation Law passed in 1915 was only for Armenians. The events of 1915 Armenians faced due to their ethnic identities caused a great loss of value regarding their identities because Armenians saw that the values they have meant nothing either for the perpetrators or in the eye of the international community. All their belongingness which turned into a worthless value was hurt. “What it took the Armenian identity five millenniums to build, the Ottomans needed a few months to destroy.”⁵²⁰ After 1915, Armenians lost their identities; their value was diminished into mortality statistics. Thus, after 1915, the worry of those who remained in Turkey was to find ways to live without revealing their identities. Hiding identity required to stay away from the main indicators of the identity. Post-1915 survivors did not speak Armenian among each other or

⁵²⁰ Basaraba and Miha, 2014, p. 73.

outside or they didn't name their children in Armenian. Today, especially Armenians in Turkey still utilize certain methods to be able to hide their identities in many occasions. However, on the other hand, this situation put Armenian identity after 1915 into a reconstruction process. "They stepped in with a mentality of survivors... They were much stronger, keen on living and on proving their value by rebuilding their identity."⁵²¹

In the interviews, we asked the participants the question "do you self-identify as Armenians?" 99 percent of the participants indicated that they do.⁵²² Although the question "What does it mean to be an Armenian" was answered generally as "an identity just like other ethnic identities", "a cultural identity, a difference, a beautiful difference", "all the same, whatever it means to belong to another nation", "I could have been Kurdish, Circassian or Arab. I mean there are cultural differences. I am a human being, so they are." According to many participants being Armenian is defined with concepts like "pain", "hardship", "longing". While another participant responded the question "what does it mean to be Armenian" with Kundera's words saying "Where the power hurts you [the most], it becomes your identity", some participants touched upon the prideful aspects of being an Armenian.

According to Hermine, our Armenian language teacher participant, being an Armenian is "being a world citizen. An Armenian is not different than anyone else. It means having a great historical inheritance. It means knowing to carry your cultural richness. And it means being chosen among 12 and half million nations." Hermine indicates that she also highlights that Armenians have a great and ancient history in her daily life [and] in this world where many nations disappeared, they are still a nation of 10 million: "I am a member of a nation which existed since the days of Noah. I am proud."

⁵²¹ *ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵²² Only Tibrevank senior year student Liza responded to this question other than an answer "yes I do." At the end of the chapter, the situation specific to this student will be discussed in the framework of identity and school.

Senior year student Nayiri responded the question “what does it mean to be an Armenian” by saying “those who can read, write in Armenian. Those who can transfer their culture. It won’t work without speaking the language”. Nayiri agrees on this matter with those who argue that language and culture are the main points defining being an Armenian. After responding to the question “do you self-identify as Armenian” with saying yes, Nayiri also indicated that she is proud of being an Armenian although they are kept in the background. Nayiri who said that they are minorities [and] they cannot get their voice heard continue her words: “We have a grim future and a past that we don’t know much about. We just keep working away. Due to Events of 1915, there is a pain that all Armenian feel. But I am proud of being an Armenian”. Although they have a history they are not much familiar with as in schools it is not told, Nayiri has the consciousness of the collective history built after 1915. The pain Armenian feels and the resilience against this pain creates a sense of pride in her. Same participant exemplifies this resilience with her answer to the question “is there anything that you shy away from doing just because you are Armenian?”: “No. definitely not. I might even do it just because I am Hay (Armenian) from pure spite.” Although her experience of pain causes her to think negatively about the future, as an Armenian she is in desire to exist out of spite.

Tibrevank senior year student Hinazant sees Armenianness as a missing piece that cannot be completed: “For me being an Armenian is being a triangle. I think we are one side of the triangle that cannot be completed. Everyone fits into a piece, we can’t. Being excluded.”

For Armenians, similar to all communities which showed an existence for millennia and continually, identity is a more complex concept. Identity definition at the same time becomes a really complicated concept when it comes to Armenians due to being a community that lived through 1915. Moreover, identity description for peoples like Armenian who scattered around the globe is even more difficult [due to] the fluidity of Armenian identity, who

is an Armenian is no longer clear. With Armenians, Christians or not, it is impossible to say that 20 years ago. Armenian identity has become multilayered. Armenians cannot deal with this fluidity. Armenian reality today consists of Armenian's more or less big population of Armenians, colourful and scattered Armenian communities in diaspora and Armenian community who still continue to live in Turkey and each one of these have unique characteristics. American Armenians are different than European Armenians. Armenians in Eurasian countries are different than those in Middle East. Each one of them are different than those living in homeland. It is inevitable to have this diversity in the Armenian reality. However, where does being Turkish Armenian stand in this diversity? What are the unique characteristics of it? Answer to these questions will be sought under the title "What is to be a Turkish Armenian".

7.2. What is to be a Turkish Armenian

No person or institution can decide on someone else's identity. However, the laws do not listen to personal choices at this point. In our country, the history of how Turkish identity was created is also the history of how Armenian identity is re-created on this land. In the Republic of Turkey, who is an Armenian or Turkish, who is a citizen of this country, who has what rights are determined in line with the laws. The regulations in the political and social lives of Armenians who are described as part of the non-Muslim minority group in Turkey are limited to the minority rights framework determined in Lausanne.

During the process of Turkish national-state's construction, "the identity" is created "both expanding and reducing directions in the geographical platform"⁵²³ by the Republican rule. Because; the most dominant elements of Turkish identity are Turkish ethnicity and the religion of Islam.

⁵²³ Copeaux, 1998, p. 183.

“Because ethnicity by definition excludes all choices; Turkish national identity excludes everyone who would demand a belonging to the Turkish Republic without self-identifying as Turkish from citizenship.”⁵²⁴ According to the laws of the Turkish Republic, Armenians who are considered both minority and citizen has experienced many problems till the day due to these ambivalent definitions.

In the preface section to the work of Taner Akçam “Turkish National Identity and Armenian Issue”, Laçiner indicates that it is an inescapable situation that the founding cadre has a historiography which shows what they did in the building process of nation-states are legitimate. The dominant ideology which shapes events and facts to that direction is strict about that the truth is perceived as it desires throughout this process. However, after decades, with an understanding that also stems from a self-confidence, nation-states pull away from their sensitivities and fears in the establishment process. In Turkish Republic, however, there is no such development since its establishment. According to Laçiner, making a remark that would fall opposite to official ideology still requires a punitive process.⁵²⁵

Because “Turkishness” is built by assimilating all other ethnic cultural groups existing in Anatolia into Turkishness; Turkish identity is a made-up identity which the founding cadre of Turkish Republic assigned itself. To make this identity internalized, many groups were forced including Turkish groups. The state use considerable force to fit everything from music to language, to traditions into Turkish identity assigned by the founding cadre.⁵²⁶

The thesis at the end of 19th century that the state “is based on a majority nation whose ethnic aspect is brought forward”⁵²⁷ was also adopted by

⁵²⁴ *ibid.*

⁵²⁵ Akçam, 1992, pp. 9-13.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁷ Akçam, 1992, p. 16.

the founding cadres of Turkish Republic. However, Turks are not based on “a majority nation” as indicated in the thesis on the lands they want to build a country. They did not have the numerical superiority. That is why; Armenian relocation, similar to other examples we see in many other policies regarding population, is a some sort of precaution which we can also define as “rarefaction operation”.

That is why; Armenian relocation is one of population policies which we can define as “rarefaction operation”⁵²⁸ of the founding cadre. The founding cadre which also got popular support in application of these policies was also supported by the local communities which benefited from Armenian relocation directly or indirectly. In that sense, merging the interests of the local people who would create the rural bourgeoisie in the following years with the interests of the founding cadre led them to take part in the creation process of the Turkish national state. The reason why Turkish national-state could not pull away from the feeling of fear and sensitivity, which other nation-states did after the establishment processes stems from the fact that the Turkish Republic has never had a proof to justify what it did in the creation process. That is why; neither the state nor the bourgeoisie have ever had the feeling of trust and stability.⁵²⁹ This feeling of distrust is also injected into mental world of the society along with official ideology. Thus, Turkish identity is built on a feeling of distrust. The discourse which feeds into the feeling of distrust in society has always been the discourse which supports unity and togetherness against domestic and foreign enemies desiring to dismantle the integrity of the nation-state. That is why; it tried to re-define and shape other ethnic identities which it deemed as other and enemy around its own Turkish identity. In the mythologized and sacralised narrative of Turkish identity, other identities are humiliated and trivialized as much. The identity that created the Turkish nation-state built “its personality and state on the basis of annihilation of those

⁵²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 16-9.

who are not included in itself.”⁵³⁰ Among these “other” identities Armenians was hurt the most. The elements of Turkish identity in the nation-state are built on the elements of Armenian identity. The formation and development of identities are shaped around the assimilation policies of the dominant identity. Thus, it is inevitable to evaluate the identity issues of Armenian community who still reside in Turkey today in this context.

Taner Akçam [in his work] titled *Türk Ulusal Kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu* tries to understand the psychological state of Turkish national identity. According to Akçam, the reason why this effort is at the center of the study is that a good portion of the reasons leading to Armenian massacre is in the conditions of the emergence of Turkish national identity and the character of this identity.⁵³¹ The characteristics of Turkish national identity have also shaped the policies regarding Armenians in Turkey. All groups who have been tried to be Turkified by Kemalist cadre were tried to be merged under the title Turkishness. Those who were Turkified are not only the other non-Turkish identities; Turks were also Turkified by the Kemalist cadre. This new “Turk” is the Turk who was re-born with the republic. His connection with the past is completely detached by different means. Turkish history and language institutions write the history of new Turk and new Turkey. This history sought a Turkishness to itself which can be built from earlier periods skipping the 600 years of Turkish history (Ottoman Empire is referred to). Because it had a unique relationship with Armenians due to the Events of 1915, Armenians living in Turkey were directly affected by every phase in which Turkish national identity was tried to be created. Moreover, according to Akçam, Events of 1915 also played a role in shaping the Turkish national identity. All of the tools utilized while forming the Turkish identity (nationalizing history, Turkifying education, be it Turkifying language or Turkifying economy, all of it) at the same time caused the loss of history of Armenians, intervention to

⁵³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵³¹ *ibid.*, p. 29.

Armenian education system, disappearance of Armenian language [and] the loss of a space for Armenians to maintain their material and cultural existence. Similar to how Kemalist cadre defined a Turkish identity, it also made an Armenian identity description. With these definitions, to make Turkish identity exist is made possible through standing this identity against the Armenian identity.

Whether to include Armenians living in Turkey in Armenian identity or Armenianness in the world works in two ways. First, Armenians in Turkey are Turkified in comparison to Armenians in Armenia or Diaspora. They are not “fully Armenian”. Second, Armenians in Turkey are “fully Armenian” in the eyes of dominant and other ethnic groups living in Turkey. They are foreign Armenians, they are enemy Armenians, they do not belong to these lands, and they put forward false claims about their massacre, whereas the real murderer, the real traitor is Armenians. Turkish identity doesn’t trust the Armenian. That is why it always feels the urge to control the Armenian. They need to be under control. They can live their identities as much as they are allowed. They live under the control of dominant Turkish ethnicity. The spaces where they can live their identity are being gradually constricted with various government policies. They have difficulty in maintaining their existence even in this constricted space due to interventions. Whereas, according to Armenians in Diaspora or in Armenia, they are Turks. That is why; similar to the commentary made by Hrant Dink once upon a time, Armenians in Turkey “are a group belonging neither to motherland nor to Diaspora” [they are] Turkish, Turkified.

According to Taylor⁵³² how others recognize us is central to the formation of our identity. How we are seen or recognized by others becomes negatively or positively, a part of our identity. Taylor explains;

Our identity is partly shaped by recognitions or its absence, often by misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real

⁵³² Taylor, as cited in Jenlink and Townes, 2009, p. 2.

damage, real distortion, if the people or society mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.⁵³³ Building on Taylor's argument, due to their ethnic identities which is perceived differently in the eyes of both Turks and other Armenians, how do Armenians in Turkey live their Armenianness? In which ways are their Armenian identities hurt? The identity that faces humiliation by the Turks is also disregarded by other Armenians. How do Armenians living in Turkey who are also marginalized by the people of same ethnic identity feel around Armenians in Armenia or Armenians living in the US?

An incident in the US told by one of our participants who was born and raised in İstanbul, got education in Armenian schools from elementary to end of high school, moved to Los Angeles after university after getting married to an Armenian living in the US presents an important example in explaining this situation. The participant sees a friend from their high school s/he graduated from at a park. An Armenian from Armenia who witnessed them speaking in Turkish with each other judged them according to the participant by saying "Why do you speak in Turkish? Aren't you Armenian, especially in the month of April, why do you speak Turkish?"

I haven't respond to her, I just avoided saying it is just a habit, but I got really angry. I say I am an Armenian from İstanbul. I maintained my Armenianness in İstanbul around Turks, I spoke Armenian I spoke Turkish, it is none of your business, I mean those in Armenia do not know what it mean to maintain Armenianness in Turkey, they speak nonsense. Armenians in the US also calls Armenians in İstanbul Turkish. Another Armenian in American school called my daughter Turkish, the kid was little, didn't get it, but it means that the family teaches that. His idiot family, his Armenian family. At the end, we are Armenians from İstanbul. My mother tongue is unfortunately Turkish. Turkish, I cannot change that. I am happy to speak Turkish. I like Turks, too/ I have Turkish friends, too but finally I am Armenian, I teach my kids Armenian too, in the school my older daughter attends to Armenian classes are taught in the evening, after school I send my younger daughter to Armenian school, too. As evident in this example, an Armenian from İstanbul is Turkish according to an Armenian from Armenia. She teaches that to her children, too. However, this situation makes the person who told this story angry and upset. She tries to tell how she maintained her identity despite living in Turkey. We mentioned

⁵³³ Jenlink and Townes, 2009, p. 2.

that how the other perceives you by calling you an Armenian are an element forming the identity. We can say that Armenians in Turkey is in an in-between space regarding their identities. Because as evident in this example, the participant tells that her mother tongue is Turkish. The highlight on “Armenian family” in the sentence where she expressed her anger by saying “idiot family, Armenian family” is some sorts of ironic criticism to the Armenian’s of this family which described their child as Turkish and rejected that they are Armenians.

Senior year student participant, Sevan, also touched upon the same issue while responding to the question “What do you think to be an Armenian living in Turkey?” However, the angry response of other participants turned into an embarrassment for Sevan: “Being an Armenian living in Turkey means *to be embarrassed* to Armenian living in another country. I have been to the US twice. Telling an Armenian from Turkey when asked where you are from means I am a Turk for the world. We become a minority all around the world actually.” Being an Armenian living in Turkey is “to live the life in fear” according to Sevan, it means “not to speak Armenian on the phone” when outside. Being Armenian means “not to respond when asked”. “For instance, if there is a civil war right now, the first properties to be plundered are our properties, our schools. There is a bit of a fear. We have a disadvantage. We are seen as through we are not the owners of these lands.” “Turkish Armenians” who are seen as Turks by the whole world are in fact not owners of these lands according to the Turks. According to Sevan, when there is a situation like a war, Armenians are the first group that they would attack.

According to the participant, Hermine, being an Armenian living in Turkey creates a situation requiring double-identities: “You live in Turkey. You are Armenian in Turkey. You are Turkish abroad. And you need to fit your identity so well that you need to know where you are. I mean, I feel this especially when I am abroad. If I go abroad for any reason, visiting relatives, a visit somewhere, they qualify me as Turkish looking at my passport. But

beyond that, I have an Armenian identity. I am Armenian from Turkey. I present my behaviour there [abroad] without forgetting this identity of mine.”

Armenians living in Turkey who are considered Turkish by Armenians in diaspora and Armenia live this awareness of double-identity created by this situation through not being considered Armenian despite they have more hardship maintaining their identities in Turkey. Being considered Turkish despite they are the ones who face the most suppression regarding their identities and they are the ones who still fight for maintaining their Armenian identity among other Armenians living across the world [and] the way of living the identity for this group who belongs to neither Turks nor Armenians bring along an important identity crisis.

However, according to senior year student Tamar, living as an Armenian in Turkey is still a luckier situation in comparison to Armenians living in other places. Tamar who describes the land they live on as motherland and who says that all of her ancestors came from Anatolia, feels lucky for not being in Armenia or Argentina, Canada, the US because she can go and visit the village her mother was born. According to Tamar, the biggest issue in Turkey is prejudice: “Although they are great, there are people who are disregarded just because they are Armenians. I know people who face suppression just because they are Armenians.” Senior year student Nayiri, on the other hand, highlights that as an Armenian living in Turkey but not somewhere else in Turkey is the hardest thing: “Others are comfortable, they can express their ideas there. There is a reservation in Turkey due to the conditions, it is harder I mean.” One of the teachers of Getronogan High School, Selina :

A hard question. In terms of emotions, I mean as an Armenian my feelings for Turkey is positive. I cannot think of living somewhere else till I am unable to live here. But it is hard to live in Turkey as an Armenian. Today, the nationalist sentiments are on rise. For example, I have never felt the way I feel in the past year. I am having a problem of feeling of safety, I don't feel safe. You know the tings coming from the past, the discourse about Armenians are again marginalizing and discriminatory. If you know your place and don't live your

identity, there is no problem. But if you have a demand for equal citizenship, when you demand rights, there are so many problems.

Senior year student in Tibrevank High School, Hinazant, attended only Armenian schools from elementary to high school senior year. Because she always have been in the Hay (Armenian) community, she never had a “dacik” (meaning Turkish / Muslim) friend. In his elementary and middle school, he was a boarding student in Kalfayan and she says that for 8 years she never left [the school] except visiting her family in the weekends. She didn’t have a chance to make friends from outside, from the street. Her attendance to Tibrevank in high school happened with the logic between “Go to Hay school, it is better” and “go wherever is closer”. Hinazant who indicates that they couldn’t take the exam in his senior year in middle school and came to Tibrevanka directly said that she wanted to assess herself in the exam [and] she wasn’t aware at the time. The participant who complained about being in a bubble all the time and raised with same mindset “For instance, I want to choose gastronomy but there is a logic that you will be among daciks. Be a teacher, work at a hay school, they say. I don’t want to live the same thing gim gim.” Hinazant who indicates that she is happy that the school forms the identity but he is not happy with the country we live in, [and] that the people look at them as second class citizens: by saying “I want to take part in this society. God willing I attended the prep schools; I think I got out of the bubble a bit. There are different characters, different mindsets” she highlights that it is a good thing to get out of Armenian community:

We five people, for instance, went to prep school this year. I look and everyone gives the same answer to everything. We were in the same class. A kid there is in a different mindset. One of them is Kemalist, one of them is MHP supporter, there are different things. Are these nice, yes of course it is nice. But then, a person gets more curious. She wants to go [talk] to them. Where was I while all these things happened where was I. It doesn’t work *topik topik* all the time.

7.3. Turkish and Armenian Identity in Armenian Schools as a Space of Identity-Formation

As discussed, the situation of Turkish Armenians among Armenians living scattered around the world caused them to have a different and unique position than all other Armeniannesses. In the previous chapters, we tried to understand how Turkish identity is tried to be internalized through education and schools. Turkish National Education with its curriculum followed in public schools, text books it allowed to be published and their contents, [and] especially with its language and history policies aims at bringing students together around Turkish national identity with mutualised interests and feeling of belonging. Armenians schools which are considered a minority school are responsible to teach the narrative determined by Turkish identity to the students. Thus, Armenians schools try to survive as a resource institution from which students can be supported with Armenian identity and culture, while at the same time they are forced to follow a curriculum in which Turkish identity and Turkish culture is dominant.

Considering this duality with the discussions on ethnic minority education and ethnic identity formation in many countries in the world today, it is evident that states' education policies which are shaped under the dominance of dominant ethnic group are applied both similarly and in very different ways. For instance, the education form and understanding Palestinian Arab minority in Israel faces in public schools shows many similarities with the conditions of Armenian minority in Turkey.⁵³⁴ In some articles covering the situation in schools in Ireland which is not shaped around a nationalist ideology, the situation is the opposite. In these studies, why Irish youth is being raised with a curriculum which is not based on Irish nationalism and Irish identity is questioned and criticized.

⁵³⁴ cf. Abu-Saad, "State-Controlled Education and Identity Formation Among the Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel", 2006.

These questionings which were made in many countries today in various ways started here [in Turkey] at the end of 1800s with the debates on how Turkish Muslim youth education should be and an education understanding shaped around Turkish nationalism started to be applied with the establishment of the Turkish Republic. In many articles written at the end of the 1800s in which education situation of Muslim students are questioned by comparison by highlighting the education quality of Armenian schools which are told to be hundreds of thousands in numbers [at the time] why Muslims lacked such education is discussed. If it is wanted to win against other nations, the first place to start is the reforms in regulations for education activities. With the Armenian population that was reduced to a larger extent due to many policies applied since the early 1900s and with shutting down of Armenian schools in places where this population reside, the number of Armenian schools gradually decreased in the last century and they almost faced the threat of shut down [completely].

The nationalist understanding which increased with the establishment of the Turkish Republic revealed itself the most in education institutions. In Armenian schools which are part of the Turkish national education system, ethnic identities of Armenian students, too, were tried to be assimilated under the unifying Turkish identity with curriculum and various government policies.

“The belief that students’ sense of identity is developed during the college years is widely accepted; what has not received as much attention is the influence of race, ethnicity, other social categories, or the interrelationship of multiple identities on that development during the college years. Pascarella and Torenzini noted the “absence of studies dealing with identity development among Black (or other minority) students”⁵³⁵

The lack of studies on these issues highlighted by Pascarella and Torenzini also shows itself in our country. Till the day in our country, there is no study on in which ways the ethnic identities of Armenian students living in

⁵³⁵ Pascarella and Torenzini, as cited in Cooper, Hamilton, and Torres, 2003, p. 3.

Turkey are formed and develop. Whereas, to understand the ethnic identity development of those who are considered minority, it is important to understand how societal and cultural issues are intertwined with the feelings, thoughts, and fears of racial, ethnic, or other social subordinate groups. The discovery process of who you are and who you are not is shaped double-sided for students in Armenian schools in Turkey. Value judgements about identity such as being proud of a Turk [or] Turkishness as a prideful value are made sure to be internalized in students' minds starting from elementary schools in Turkey –with many methods, applications and policies which we have been covering throughout the study-. It is also applicable to students attending to Armenian schools.

Awareness of the sources of self is central to understanding the shaping of identity and the struggles often experienced in forming an identity having one's identity defined by others. It is in understanding the sources of self that we begin to understand the relation that exists between recognition and identity: how one's identity is constructed within social and cultural contexts, as an individual and as a member of different cultural groups.⁵³⁶

In the early years of their education, students cannot reach a conscious awareness level about their ethnic identity. The perception of the student about Turkishness or Armenianness is blurred at this stage, it is not clear. The students reads the poetry [and] epics s/he is forced to memorize telling the heroism of Turks with great passion and experiences certain feelings by characterizing herself with the victories and successes in these texts. Or, she sings along the marches sung together in the ceremonies for national holidays with great enthusiasm. Still, an Armenian student senses that she is different than the majority somehow; however she lacks the conceptual level to explain this fully. For example, she starts noticing the school she is attending is different when she starts saying the name of the schools in her environment outside of the school. Her name, her school's name, Armenian language taught in school, all of these strengthens the perception of the child that she is different than the others.

⁵³⁶ Jenlink and Townes, 2009, p. xi.

In middle school and later high school, the student is now mature enough to differentiate these -this maturity stems from being experiencing the difficulties of living as an “other” from early childhood- however the student cannot tear away herself fully from the values aimed to be internalized through curriculum through the elementary education. During such activities, the voice of Armenian students has always to be the loudest and with more enthusiasm. The practices applied in all schools such as the ceremonies organized at schools for national holidays, Our [National] Pledge repeated every morning for long years or national anthem ceremonies repeated in every Monday and Friday are applied in Armenian schools with such strict discipline. School principal can make [students] repeat the anthem over and over again if he thinks that it is not sung with enough enthusiasm.

The source of this situation, [as we covered] in the third chapter of our study, is the result of the suppression ongoing for almost 80 years [at the hands of] Turkish chief deputy principals and Turkish and Turkish culture classes teachers with their mission in Armenian schools and their sense of duty and the fear from this suppression. “Persons from oppressed cultures tend to live in a world that does not value them, marginalizes their efforts, erases their history, and silences their voices.”⁵³⁷ Armenians got silenced in their schools instead of singing enthusiastically the songs telling their own identities. How do the Armenian students who knows the glorious Turkish history by heart while being unaware of the history of their own ethnic identities, who can express themselves in Turkish language very well while having difficulty in Armenian language classes, who have been starting the day every day in schools for years by saying “I am Turkish, I am truthful, I am hardworking” and who “gifts his existence to Turkish existence” live their Armenianness? The middle ground for Armenian students living in Turkey be it attending to Turkish or Armenian schools is that similar to how Turkish identity is spread all over the country as the dominant element, it is also spread to every corner of schools.

⁵³⁷ Cooper et al., 2003, pp. 92-3.

7.4. Comparative evaluation of the effects of different education experiences of the participants in Armenian schools on their identity formation

In our study, we determined whom the student participants would consist of and on which standards we will classify them considering that we can evaluate the relationship between Armenian identity formation and Armenian school best through the comparison of Armenian students who have not attended an Armenian school ever, or attended Armenian schools for a while and Turkish schools for another. In this chapter in which we will evaluate comparatively the students divided up in five groups, students who had the criteria determining the first four groups and students who do not have any of these criteria as the fifth group are organized as such:

1. The first group consists of students who were in Armenian school from primary school up to high school and who are currently in their last year of high school.
2. Second group consists of students who started their elementary or middle school education in Turkish schools and transferred to Armenian schools later on.
3. Third group consists of students who started their elementary or middle school education in Armenian schools and transferred to Turkish schools later on.
4. The fourth group consists of students who have graduated from Armenian schools. The interviews with people in this group were conducted to get an impression of what kind of awareness they experienced about their identity as a result of their encounters with being the "other" at work or college or another institution after graduating from school.
5. The fifth group consists of Armenian students who have unique characteristics and thus cannot be evaluated under the first four groups.

7.4.1. Armenian identity perception and Armenian schools perception of participants who were in Armenian school from primary school up to high school and who are currently in their last year of high school:

There are five Armenian schools which teach at high school level in İstanbul. Students we interviewed for our study are senior year students in 2016-2017 Academic year in Private Sahakyan Nunyan Armenian High School, Private Getronagan Armenian High School and Private Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School.

All of the senior year students we interviewed with responded the question “do you identify yourself as Armenian” saying yes and did not see the need to present [further] explanation. Only Arat among these students felt the need to explain and said:

Yes I do. Because we are a different ethnic identity living in Turkey, mostly when I am asked about my name, when I say Arat, there is a feeling of strangeness. They ask what are you, I become obliged to say Armenian. I say I am Armenian. I don't feel bad. I [self] identify in accordance with the land I was born in, with the traditions of my family. Actually, I don't have desire to adapt myself to an ethnic identity much. But because I am a suppressed minority in Turkey, it tips the scale for now.

The student started to respond the question about whether he self-identifies as Armenian or not by exemplifying with his name causing strange feelings. That his name as a fundamental character of his Armenian identity creating strange feelings among other people brings along the inevitable question next: What are you? Being obliged to say he is an Armenian after questions like who are you, where are you from does not bother him as an Armenian, what bothers him is that right after he says his name he has to face other question and indicate his ethnic identity.

At an interpersonal level ethnic differences can be marked in a number of ways including a person's name (first names and surnames) ...young children first come to develop an awareness of these ethnic markers and consequently, they begin to identify themselves with one community.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ Paul Connolly, 2003, p. 170.

To this situation experienced constantly by the majority of Armenians living in Turkey, some respond with saying I am Armenian, some reacts with trying to ignore the question in order to hide their identities and some reacts by lying. A comment on where the forms of these different reactions stem from is possible of course with evaluating multiple elements in various aspects. However, what is common is that Armenians living in Turkey are labeled as “foreigner”, “not Turkish” in the social mind when they say their names. Children who are marginalized the minute they say their names reach the awareness of their ethnic identity and difference and then they recognize that they experience similar things in different characteristics in other situations. Then, in which situations the students recognize their Armenian identities more?

Students gave various answers to the question “When do you feel an Armenian the most?” which we asked to understand what type of experiences caused students to feel like an Armenian. However, the common ground for students is that they feel like Armenian when they are able to live Armenian language, religion and culture:

Participant Belinda who is from Mardin Derik feels like an Armenian the most in choirs, schools activities and holidays. By saying “Also, our weddings are exactly haygagan (Belonging to Armenian) weddings” she indicated that she feels like an Armenian in weddings as she comes from an origin which still maintains Armenian culture in weddings. The characteristic of the majority weddings of Armenian living in İstanbul today is not “haygagan” and weddings occur with celebrations away from the Armenian traditions, adapt to the day, in the form determined by the majority. In Derik weddings in which Armenian songs are sung and dances are performed, on the other hand, the enthusiasm stemming from the mutual language and music reminds the student that she is “hay”.

By saying when I am at the church or in community dinners, another senior year student Ararat, similar to other students in this group, indicated that he feels more Armenian in spaces where there are Armenians. Ararat also felt

the same way in the 50th anniversary celebrations of his high school. “The other day there was the activities for Sahakyan’s 50th year, there also, for instance, was a more feeling of belonging.” Another participant Hınazant feels himself like an Armenian when he is around Armenians. “The feeling of calling underpants ‘vardik’ gives a really nice feeling to a person. For instance, my family is from Diyarbakir, they don’t speak much Armenian. They don’t know what ‘vardik’ means but I feel comfortable when I am using the word at home around them. I feel comfortable in the Hay community too.”

Participant Sevan feels most “an Armenian when 24 April is approaching or passed”.

But I have been feeling more in the past couple of years, I think due to the pressure on us, willingly or not, my Armenian identity revealed more. My worldview has also changed a bit too of course. Reading news, books. Last couple of years, we grew up more. We could look at the events more differently. By looking into the pressures on me, I could see the history [and] what is happening today better.

Sevan experiences the awareness about his ethnic identity directly due to the pressures on Armenian identity. Whether he wants it or not, his Armenianness is being reminded to him. As he grows older, the opportunity to experience and understand the results of being an Armenian in society aroused. This pressure, according to Sevan, is felt constantly.

For instance, living in our country as a non-Muslim and Armenian is not that easy. Hearing insults on social media 24/7, besides while there are insults on you when you are not talking, this pressure is being felt. Not being able to call your father dad mama kuyrik outside, when feeling the pressure like that, I feel more that I am an Armenian.

Actually, ethnic label is not just about the names. Speaking in Armenian language is also an ethnic label. Even calling your sister “kuyrik”, referring to them in Armenian language is a cause of reservation. Getronogan High School senior year student Arat indicated that he feels like an Armenian most in 19 January and 24 Aprils. According to Arat the murder of Hrant Dink has become a turning point for Armenians.

Because Hrant is a turning point, because the reason I talk here and the reason I can talk here is Hrant, I self-identify as Armenian most in Hrant demonstrations and when 19 January approaches. For instance, I was self-

identifying as Armenian when I was resisting at Hrant's camp (Camp Armen Resistance).

What kind of a transformation the Hrant Dink assassination created in the identity of Armenian youth can be a topic of a whole different thesis. However what needs to be highlighted here is that there is an awakening among Armenians living in Turkey regarding the Armenian identity in the last decade. The political awakening among Armenian youth since the murder of Hrant Dink also led to a cultural and identity-based awakening. A political ethnicity has become evident after the Hrant Dink murder. The youth has come out of their invisibility, politicize their identity and started to adopt a new position. This of course has reflected on student in schools, especially in high schools. In Arat's narrative from which we can conclude that he participated in demonstrations and Camp Armen resistance, we also witness a resistance regarding Armenian identity which has remained silent for years. Moreover, commemorating 19 January and 24 April together turned into a symbol showing that the massacre is ongoing since 1915 for Armenians in Turkey. In that sense, Sevan as an Armenian youth in senior year in high school represents the identity-based awakening, liberation and struggle in schools.

Senior year participants who attended Armenian schools from elementary school to high school answered [about] the relationship between schools they attended till almost age eighteen and Armenian identity in various ways. To the question "do you think attending Armenian schools have any effects on Armenian identity formation, if so, how?" the majority except for one student responded positively. For students who think that the schools had a major impact on Armenian identity, there are many reasons for that. According to senior year student of Sahakyan High School Belinda, schools have importance not only in Armenian identity formation but also socially and in terms of language. The common atmosphere at school, which she described as we have unity [and] togetherness, leads students to perceive each other as siblings. Moreover, social activities in schools are numerous and the youth get closer in church choirs. Besides the choir, Armenian schools as institutions in

which [students] come together in various activities [with students] from other schools affect students both in terms of identity and language and social aspects.

Armenian schools with its character bringing the youth together socially, too, create a feeling of fellowship and trust among students. This feeling is a feeling created by being alongside with other Armenian minority students. They trust each other, because they know that they are different than the majority. The number of people who would go to church with them is really low in Turkey and being together with the people from that minority, to get socialize [together] provides them to maintain their identity [and] live their identity not alone but together.

Ararat who indicates how important getting education in Armenian schools for Armenian identity by saying if I didn't attend Armenian school, I would have known my culture, myself, my history, highlights him grows up learning his history [and] culture: "Do not forget, do learn, do know what happened. I would not know Rober Haddecyan as an author if I didn't attend Armenian school for instance. You know your own culture. Armenian history is taught. One gets improved more."

According to Tibrevank High School senior year student Hınazant, the base of Armenian schools is Armenian identity already. "Simply saying", because it is a place where you can learn Armenian, the school is built on Armenian: "Everything is built on it; it is how the base is laid. Simply saying Armenian as a language, you start with the language."

According to Arat, schools give religious, cultural, traditional all types of education. This leads them to know more about Armenian identity: "You must have seen the Armenian feminists' photos on the walls, simply saying, everyone celebrates each other in the holidays, if I didn't come to this school, I wouldn't have known this tradition or it would be limited only to my family. But me being here, among ourselves, it is really important." Similar to other senior year students, Ararat, too, highlighted that being together has a great

importance in their experience of the identity. Spaces like churches and associations where they can socialize outside of school are already part of the schools. Also, according to Ararat reading Armenian authors in Armenian is another very important effect in identity formation: “For instance, I participated Taniel Varujan event. For instance, if I didn’t attend an Armenian school, I wouldn’t have had information about Taniel Varujan or because I wasn’t able to read Armenian, I wouldn’t be able to reach sources.”

According to Tamar, in the issue of identity-formation the most significant gain is language, to be able to learn the language. Moreover, you reach the sources of the culture with language, the school provides you the possibility to live in that culture and you learn [many thing] including the holidays. “Armenian culture, all of it is implanted in schools, I mean family has contributions too, [but] the majority is in school. The holidays. Without the schools, maybe I wouldn’t have known that there was such a holiday. It was told first in kindergarden. I learned it in elementary school.

What Tibrevank High School senior year student Sevan said is [more] striking relative to other students’ answers. According to Sevan, schools have no impact on the identity:

I don’t think it had an effect on identity-formation. I have acquaintances. I also know people who attend the school and distant to Armenian identity. It didn’t have a negative or positive effect on me. It only changed a worldview of mine. There are people among my acquaintances who regret attending Armenian school, too. On the opposite, there are also those who are really happy to attend Armenian school. It is not about forming an identity. They find it ridiculous to get education in Turkish curriculum in Armenian [language].

These last two sentences are really important. It shows the success of assimilationist politics in education field in Turkey. The student is one of two who said that the schools had no impact on identity formation. However, what the student doesn’t see and we need to highlight in our thesis is that Turkish national education system finds it appropriate to apply curriculum which is prepared with the aim to create Turkish identity. Armenian students who learn Turkish identity and culture, the Turk’s heroism and epics in Turkish language in Armenian schools which is one of the most important institutions where they

can live Armenian identity cannot learn Armenian identity and culture, Armenians' heroism or epics in Armenian language even if they are at an Armenian school. The curriculum does not allow this. We see that the student has a sensitivity toward the loss of identity caused by this situation when he talked about people who found learning Armenian in Turkish curriculum ridiculous. There is anger in this sentence because there is an insurgency to be forced to learn Armenian in Turkish curriculum. This is an unjust situation and this unjust situation does not allow Armenian schools to have an effect on identity formation any more. In fact, Sevan's commentary on schools [and] students is a commentary showing how great the effect of the schools on identity. Sevan's sentence [saying] "it only changed a worldview of mine" is a sentence telling that the base of what creates one's self is already his worldview.

When we pose the question "In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey?" to the participants who are high school senior year students, we see that the main axis in answers focuses on prejudices and negative sentiments of the majority of Turkish society regarding Armenians. According to the participants, Armenians as a minority group living in Turkey is a group have to hide their names [and] whose identities are turned into an insult. According to Getronagan High School senior year student Arat, Armenians in Turkey face oppression in many fields:

For example, when I go to prep school, when they see my cross necklace, they can mock me asking what it is. They make fun of your name. The moment you say you are an Armenian, there are those who try to exclude you immediately. Armenian is used as an insult. They define Armenians as dirty, foreigner, those who lie [about] the genocide.

Belinda says that it is so hard to be an Armenian in Turkey. Belinda who indicated they are being regarded as strangers despite their 3000 years long history on these lands tells that people continue to ask Armenians where they come from despite all this and when she attempt to explain they do not understand because they are ignorant and bigots: "When they ask where are you from, when I say, I am from Mardin, I am from Yozgat, you are Armenian

how come you are from here? You tell, they don't get it. The question you are Armenian but are you a Muslim drives [me] crazy." Keeping in mind that the mindset of Turkish society about Armenians is created in schools through text books, we can say that Turkish society is uninformed about the history of the geography they live on. This un-informedness which we tried to explain in appropriate sections in previous chapters is built on the conflicts of a fabricated history narrative created since the establishment process of the Republic of Turkey. The mindset which mentions the peoples living in Anatolia other than Turks only as enemies or traitors is a result of dehistoricization of Turkish society today.

According to Hınazant, Armenians in Turkey face discrimination due to the ignorance of the society. According to Hınazant who says he feels this the most when he is on social media, this situation will never change: "I think people are really ignorant. While reading those things they write, those prejudices, the things they do not know about, I get so sad that I am not able to understand how they do not know, this would never change I think."

The positions that ethnic minority pupils might choose are hence always embedded in structural power relations. They face ethnicized or culturalist images about themselves that depict them as representatives of otherness, and their personal performances tend to be assessed from such angles of collectively defined roles.⁵³⁹

The participant Belinda learned that Armenians in Turkey lack certain rights in a dialogue she entered when she was a child: "My father has a colonel friend, I was really little, I was 7 years old. He asked 'what do you want to be [when you grow up] I said I want to be a pilot. He turned to me and said "You are Armenians. You are forbidden to be pilots." I never forget that. Only thing I said was [I wish] I wasn't an Armenian. They even turn Simon the Architect into Sinan the Architect, we live in a country like that." This experience of our participant who learned that she cannot do everything that she wants because she is an Armenian when she was seven years old is the only feeling that created the feeling of "I wish I was not an Armenian" in her. She has a

⁵³⁹ Baumann et al., 2004, pp. 309-310.

profession that she really aspires to be, however it is forbidden because she is an Armenian. She indicates that she cannot forget this first day when she learned about the difficulties her identity brings along in her child mind because of that. Moreover, the example of Sinan the Architect she gave is an example that shows the opposite side of the ethnic label. The power this time intervenes in identity and the ethnic symbol of the identity by Turkifying the names of the people whom they want to include in Turkish identity [and] whom they find appropriate to be a Turk.⁵⁴⁰

According to Arat, their involvement in organizing in schools is [based] on their identities. He says that when they come to school first, they are bound to each other based on the school. “I felt alone when they mocked my Christianity in the prep school. I had an Armenian friend; he wasn’t in our class anyways. They were coming down on me; they tried to make me get grounding. They were trying to make the teacher to give me extra tests on Armenian gangs. I think being strong and engage in struggle if you have a

⁵⁴⁰ Here, the example of linguist Agop Dilaçar who is an important Turkish linguist and accomplished really significant work in Turkish Language Congress can be given. His last name was given to him by Atatürk. His real last name is Martayan. However, the label ‘yan’ which gives away his ethnic identity in his last name disappeared and the last name of this Armenian citizen who, ironically, played a key role in the development of Turkish language was Turkified. Another striking thing here is that in the works of Agop Martanyan in Turkey, his name is titles as “A. Dilaçar”. Agop is contrained into an “A”. The dot next to “A” determines its boundary. The rest after A is not allowed. Agop Martayan/ A. Dilaçar. What gets materialized in this name is that the difference between the usage form of the name and the old one has a summarizing character for the politics of the founding cadre who tried to create Turkish identity. Another characteristic of this name which includes multiple symbolic elements is that A. Dilaçar gave Mustafa Kemal the last name Atatürk. Dilaçar who started his workd on language at the end of 1920s published his earlier works in a journal publishing in Armenian at the time. In the periods where Turks had no work on Turkish language, the articles which started to be published in Armenian in an Armenian journal were recognized prior to Turkish Language Congress and were translated and presented to Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal who was really impressed by these articles invited the author to the first Turkish Language Congress. Martayan whose [involvement in the congress] was announced in the newspapers of the time with the headlines “Agop Martayan comes to Istanbul for language congress” and who was met with a great crowd filled with enthusiasm in a sense is an Armenian linguist who in a sense had a role in creating Turkish identity by contributing immensely to Turkification of the language (cf. Kaya, *A. Dilaçar*, 1982).

group alongside with you. If I am alone, I get lonely and upset, it turns into an internal courtroom again, it makes me angry.” According to Cockerham, “minority teenagers were the majority in their schools; self-esteem was higher than when they were in the minority (Cockerham, 1979).”⁵⁴¹ The end of schools of Armenian community which is an introvert society affects an Armenian student more than other majority students also due to this introvertness. Due to the unique structure of the minority schools, getting out of the protective walls [of the schools] can be likening to getting out of a mother’s womb. Because this turns into a re-birth. To be aware of your identity thanks to and through the other, you need to interact with the other. According to Arat, “The life starts after Armenian school. Here you are protected here from kindergarten to high school except from a couple of teachers. When outside, you face discrimination. For instance, some of friends who graduated last year went to public universities and they may face problems due to their faith.” The space an Armenian student meets his own other is the outside of the school. Thus, according to Arat, the life starts after Armenian school. This interaction does not occur inside the introvert Armenian school as much as outside. Where the first “outside” is for students who attended Armenian schools till high school is also really important. The first “outside” for students in this group is mostly the prep schools. After graduation, the first “outside” can be the place of work, university can be your first “outside”. Like the student indicated, many of his friends faced discrimination when they started the university. This first outside issue is a really differentiating experience for Armenian students who started their education in Turkish schools and later transferred to Armenian schools. These students who have been “outside” since elementary school experienced their interaction with their other in a really early age. Because one realized the results of their own ethnic identity when they interact with the other, the first meeting with the “outside” leads to the creation of different identity perceptions for them. Thus, the identity is re-

⁵⁴¹ Spencer and Adams, 1990, p. 300.

realized again and again every time with [interacting with] each ‘other’. Even though the identity’s flow differentiates with everyone’s experience of outside, at last all students unites in the same flow as they are always “outside” when they start their life. However, of course in what age, in which environment, and in which ways they experience the “outside” provide many hints about their identity perception.

7.4.2. The forms of Armenian identity perception and Armenian schools perception of participants who started their education in elementary of middle school in Turkish schools and later transferred to Armenian schools:

All of the students in this group responded positively to the question “Do you self-identify as Armenian?”. However, Talar among them presented a different approach about this issue. She indicated that it is hard to self-identify as Armenian without knowing Armenianness, identity, culture: “I mean I do. I try to learn things about Armenian culture. It is hard to self-identify without knowing. You don’t know what you are. I read books from Armenian literature. I have difficulty using Armenian as I know a little.”

The reasons why Talar who believes that to be able to self-identify as Armenian she should know the culture and language made such a comment is that she grew up distant from Armenian culture and language and he transferred to Armenian school after she got education in Turkish schools. She doesn’t see the right to self-identify as Armenian yet. Her comment on her difficulty in language stems from that she doesn’t people who cannot speak Armenian as Armenians. She cannot speak the language well yet; she is not yet “fully Armenian”. Because there are not Armenians in the city Talar grew up in, in her circles and in schools. People around her do not speak Armenian but another language. They do not know anything about Armenianness and in fact, according to Talar, she was not much different from those people for years. She

cannot speak Armenian till she transferred to Tibrevank, moreover, she doesn't much about Armenians. Only thing she knows is that she is an Armenian. She is a Christian. She is different. She can recognize that she is different religion-wise. But identity-wise, she is not any different than the majority. Talar who understood that she would lose her culture and identity; she would assimilate if she stayed in the circles she lived in migrated to İstanbul to be able to attend Armenian schools. She has relatives in the city she is from who converted to Islam and covered their hair. She doesn't want to be like them. Thus, Armenian schools are the only space where she can learn culture, identity and language, where she can exist safely, where she can take refuge, where people would accept her. The focus of Talar on the necessity to have the knowledge of culture and language which she considers as the determinants of self-identifying as Armenians or not can be seen in the answers given to the questions by all student who come to Armenian schools later on.

Moreover, another common characteristic from students in this group is that they perceive the school they transferred to as a familial environment. They are now with their siblings. They are not being excluded now. They are not humiliated. They find the Armenian identity which was made forgotten since the early years of their childhood. They feel like they belong to somewhere. They are not being insulted because they are Armenians. On the contrary, they are among people who take pride in it. Thus, there is bond among students who came to Armenian schools after their experiences in Turkish schools to Armenian identity which is more than the other students. Their feelings are intense. They are lucky that they can be a student of the schools.

For instance, Lusin from this group answered the question "When do you feel like an Armenian the most" saying "all the time": "There isn't the most or the least. When I was in Derik, at school, they called me foreigner foreigner all the time." For Lusin, there is no more or less of feeling like an

Armenian, being called foreigner constantly in her school in Mardin reminded her constantly that she is an Armenian.

Talar started his answer by saying “I get happy when I speak Armenian fluently”. Due to the importance he attributed to language proficiency, seeing he is able to make Armenian sounds creates happiness for him. Moreover, Talar did not know anything about the genocide before coming to the school. He never heard what the genocide was. He learned about it for the first time at school.

In the genocide anniversary, to be a few while [we used to be] many, it raises my nationalist feelings. These feelings increased after I started the school. My family used to go somewhere on genocide day, but I wouldn't know. It was done to us, but I didn't know what it was. They didn't tell me fully. Now we can talk [about it] as if I am of their same age.

Whereas, some of the students who attended Armenian schools from elementary to high school do not perceive Armenian schools and Armenian identity with such intense bond. Of course, they have a sense of belonging to their high school as the place in which their childhood and teen years have passed but this is not lived as in the case of the students who came to Tibrevank School later on. Engin Can tells that when he felt like an Armenian the most was the times when he was in Adana. “In Adana, I used to feel more because I was a minority. Here among Armenians I don't feel like a minority as much as Adana. In whole Adana, there were 3 families.” This participant of ours feels more of an Armenian when he faces the other. When he is outside of the school, this feeling elevates further. Other participants in this group, on the other hand, feel more of an Armenian when they are on spaces in which there are Armenians [and] Armenian language can be spoken. [The feeling of Engin Can] is a feeling which resulted from a personal factor that is being a part of one of three families remaining in Adana. Even though he was named a Turkish name, he felt more of an Armenian in Adana. His name being Turkish did not prevent him being considered a minority. Being a few quantitatively played a major role in creating [these] feelings.

When we pose the question “do you think attending Armenian schools have any effects on Armenian identity formation?” to the group consisting of participants who came to Armenian schools later, Lusin answered saying “of course it does” and continued as such: “I think it is a good thing. [One] loses their identity in normal schools. [One] forgets their own culture. [One] mixes in with the dominant culture.” These students think that they maintain their identities as they experienced that they were losing their identity in Turkish school and [thus] they came to Armenian school.

One of the students Talar indicates that they can be intertwined with the culture in school: “Because people around me are also Armenian I can say that now I become fully [Armenian].” In this sentence, too, we see that the understanding of fully Armenian partial Armenian still continues. Talar feels like “fully Armenian” among other Armenians in Armenian school. Engin Can, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of schools on identity formation because they are places where they can speak Armenian. The importance attributed to Armenian language in this group is revealed with this answer, too: “We have to speak Turkish outside. Because the language is the agent of the culture, speaking Armenian in Armenian schools can form identity. Celebrating holidays in schools is also a culture agent”

To the question “In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey?” Lusin responded saying that she was excluded in Adiyaman before coming to İstanbul. Moreover, according to Lusin when you attend to Turkish school, you start feeling like a Turk: “You get excluded. When you attend Turkish school, you start seeing yourself as a Turk. My cousins are there but I don’t want them to study there, one of them will come here next year, another one considers coming here, I draw them all here.” She wants her cousins to attend Armenian schools, too. The reason why she doesn’t want them to attend Turkish schools is that she believes that they will become Turkified if they stay there. Because this is how she felt in Turkish schools.

Talar answers this question, “There are people who insult and shout on the streets without knowing what Armenian is. It is hard, I feel weird and strange. What would she do I wonder if she knew I was an Armenian.” [and] she tells that being an Armenian in Turkey is hard and a weird experience. According to Talar people might hurt her if they know she is an Armenian. Because these people insult Armenians. However, Talar doesn’t want to hide herself. She wants to live his identity “overtly”. “I hide my cross on my neck. My mother warns me when I am going outside saying hide your cross. I want to walk around wearing my biggest cross. Just like Muslims who can say I am a Muslim loudly. Because I hide it so much, my feelings increased.” Being obligated to hide her identity increased her feelings year by year and she wants to live his identity at least now that she is in İstanbul.

Engin Can indicates that they are minority in Adana whereas the Anatolia is Armenian geography. Muslim people in Adana think that Armenians do not believe in God: “These are our lands. I am from Turkey but Anatolia is an Armenian geography. When I was in Adana, when I said I am Armenian, they used to tell me you don’t love God. I was trying to tell people that we believe in God.”

To the question what does it mean to be an Armenian, Lusin responded by saying “thank God I was born an Armenian”, Talar “It means the revival of a dead language. The language is disappearing. Schools are closing. In one class, four people including me and my sibling get education. We are dying.”, and Engin Can “Being Armenian included many things. I can think of pain and longing. We already see it in our songs in our culture. Being an Armenian is too long for your homeland.”

To the question “As an ethnic minority, do you think you face discrimination in the country you live in?” Lusin responded by saying “Yes. I get upset. I am always the only Armenian. Kurds used to call me Turkish when I said I am an Armenian.” We see here again the issue, which we frequently touched upon, of how the other’s identification of you affects your identity.

Lusin is included in this general finding however she also differentiates from others at the same time. Because this time she is considered Turkish by Kurds in the city of Adıyaman where Kurds predominantly reside. Because, Armenians living in Turkey are Armenian around Turks, Turkish around Kurds, Turks around Diaspora and Armenia Armenians and Armenians around Armenians living in Turkey.

For Armenian students attending to Turkish schools in Turkey, it is impossible to hide their names in classrooms or in their schools during their times at school. If the name on their identity cards is not a Turkish name, they get the attention and curiosity of the whole class and the teacher right in the first attendance. Before you try to hide it, your identity gets revealed with your name. The reaction that the students and the teachers give to your name gets into another level when they learn that you are an Armenian. Even if you manage to explain why your name is foreign without revealing that you are an Armenian, the label “foreigner” is put on, and when you cannot hide your Armenian identity, as evident in the interviews also, you either seclude yourself in school and don’t talk to anyone or if you have the chance to drop out, you do, and as we exemplified in our thesis, you transfer to Armenian schools.

One of our participants who continued to Turkish school in the elementary level in Izmir managed to hide her Armenian identity as her name is a name also used in Turkish. However, this constant hiding affected her in very different ways. This student who had to take the religion class was exposed in this class in which Islam is taught to the narrative that non-Muslims will go to the hell and even if other students didn’t know, she was affected by the narratives negatively as a Christian. This student who had psychological problems in early ages hid this situation from her family for a long time until when finally she talked to her father about it and moved to an Armenian school in Istanbul. This same situation in which the Armenian children avoid to talk to their parents about their experiences of mistrust and fears in Turkish schools is commonly observed in other cases as well. When another participant who

transferred to a Turkish school in high school level told about the discrimination she faced, although she knew that she could leave the school, because she chose to come to Turkish school, she had to hide the consequences of her Armenian identity this time. For all students we interviewed with, which schools they were attend to at the elementary level was determined by their parents. However, when they reach the age and status to decide, they were given the right to voice their opinion. The name takes a different turn for those who attended to Turkish schools first and transferred to an Armenian school later. It is also the case for students who transferred to Turkish schools after attending to an Armenian school. That they are marked as different and other through their names is an early experience for these students. That life starts after often graduation is not value at for them since their life can only start after they move to a Turkish school.

Similar to the majority of participant students, Talar mentioned the sadness she feels about the Turkish society having prejudices against the Armenians. “If it is language, religion, race that separates us from you, damns it. I am proud if that is what separates us. I feel sad that they think that way. I try to present myself well to change the prejudices.” What Talar says is a common situation among Armenians. Armenians feels the need to prove constantly that they are good in Turkey. It is the expression of discomfort as a result that Armenian is not trusted, they are perceived as enemies. The Armenian is bad already in Turkey, if they behave in a way that would feed into this prejudice, they would be both Armenian and bad. Meaning, they would be the worse of the worse. Every careless (!) behaviour they have would be attributed to all Armenians.

Another unique character of students transferring to Armenian schools later stems from that they live the boarding school experience. They are boarding students in Kalfayan if they arrived İstanbul in middle school, Tibrevank if they arrived in high school. They stay day and night with students who came from various places in Anatolia just like themselves and who had

similar experiences. This is another element that leads them to see the school as family and their friends as their siblings. Their school is a cozy home for the students to be able to take refuge.

Due to this and many other elements we mentioned above, the perceptions of identity, Turkishness, Armenianness among students who transferred to Armenian schools from Turkish schools are much more different than the students who transferred to Turkish schools after Armenian schools. The student who transferred to Armenian school after Turkish school realizes that she is an Armenian among the other since elementary school. However the [group] who grew up with Armenians and attended Armenian schools first experiences a deeper identity crisis when she switches to Turkish school. When she leaves the Armenian school which she sees as a bubble at high school level faces her first experience of discrimination, or say, the outside during her adolescence. The self-perception during adolescence which is a sensitive period in which their identities can be hurt the most faces exclusion instead of acceptance. On the other hand, students who transfer to Armenian school in high school, as they go through this stage earlier, enter a space where they can live their identity freely and the ethnic identity formation occurs with a more feeling of belonging. They are exposed more to double-identity when they are students in Armenian school in elementary school and they cannot recognize the difference of their identity. Whereas those who switched to Armenian schools later approach their own ethnic identities and Turkish identity knowing that they are under the oppression of a singular identity/Turkishness in elementary school. Levon who attended Armenian elementary and middle school: “I wasn’t able to differentiate the Turkish-Armenian difference till a certain age...There weren’t many Turks, I had some [people] my neighbours and such but I wasn’t able to recognize that it was what it was, I wasn’t able to comprehend what it meant I mean.” Whereas those who started the life in Turkish schools do recognize the Turkish-Armenian difference very well.

7.4.3. The forms of Armenian identity perception and Armenian schools perception of participants who started their education in elementary of Middle school in Armenian schools and later transferred to Turkish schools in high school

Due the low number of students in this group as part of our study, the interviews with the students will be evaluated differently. Although they are in the same group, because each student's experience is different from one another (like from which Armenian school to which Turkish school) the interviews with the students occurred more like interviews in which the answers brought in more questions. Thus, the evaluations will be mostly in the forms of dialogues.

The student who attended Sahakyan Nunyan Armenian High School in kindergarten and first and second grades in elementary school transferred to Levon Vartuhyan Armenian Elementary school after third grade. The student who attended Bezciyan Armenian School in middle school later transferred to a Turkish school, Bakırköy Female Vocational High School. The student changed four schools from elementary to the end of high school. Even the experience of attending three different Armenian schools till 8th grade in itself differentiates the evaluation about the student's identity perception and put it in a special place. We witness the identity crisis starting from the very first question we asked the student, "Do you self-identify as Armenian".⁵⁴²

+ Do you self-identify as Armenian?

- I feel in-between.

+ What kind of in-betweenness?

- I mean I am both Armenian and like I am not an Armenian. A different place I mean as an identity I cannot say I am fully Armenian but I cannot say I am Muslim at all. I am in such in-betweenness. Let me say that.

⁵⁴² Here and in later dialogues, '+' indicates the interviewer and '-' is the interviewee.

+ Well, in this in-betweenness, when do you feel like an Armenian the most?

- When there is a group which faces injustice, then I pull my Armenian identity.

+ An injustice against Armenians?

- Against Armenians, Alawites, Kurds... When there is injustice to any minority, my Armenian identity surfaces.

+ Do you think attending Armenian schools have any effects on Armenian identity formation, if so, how?

- I mean of course it does, I started drifting away from this identity slowly after I started high school. I mean I started to feel like I am not an Armenian. I was present in such an environment at a really early age, like I attended schools where Muslims did. I think it has advantages, the period between kindergarten to the day to high school is really nice but families isolate that environment a lot. I mean it also creates a contradiction to provide dialogue only with Armenian people when you go to another place.

+ So, you started not feeling like Armenian when you started high school?

- Yes.

+ Meaning, after Armenian schools were done?

- After, yes.

She developed an identity that was neither fully Turkish, nor fully Armenian. This borderline identity has prevented her from full participation in both Turkish and Armenian society. She cannot say completely what she is. Erikson defined identity as “the ability to experience one’s self as something that has continuity and sameness, and to act accordingly.”⁵⁴³ Conversely, Erikson also asserted that in addition to “gaining a sense of who we are, our identities are

⁵⁴³ Erikson, as cited in Cooper et al., 2003, p. 42.

formed by the process of discovering who we are not.”⁵⁴⁴ The student feel like both Armenian and non-Armenian. However, she is sure of what she is not, she is not a Muslim. Although being a Muslim is a religious identity, not being a Muslim could bring the student closer to the reality of being an Armenian. However, it seems like here religion lost its function against identity. “Erikson’s work(1964) is usually the theory mentioned at the onset of examining general bodies of research related to identity development.”⁵⁴⁵ “Although Erikson’s theory serves a foundation, some would argue, however, that his theory alone does not explain aspects of racial and ethnic development.”⁵⁴⁶

The student indicates that she started getting away slowly from her Armenian identity after she started high school. She identifies the reason of her getting away from the identity as getting distant from Armenian school. The student who defined the period after she started Turkish school with the words “I mean I started to feel as if I am not an Armenian” is exposed to a separation in her identity development process.

The “Who am I?” question takes on different orientations for those individuals in the nondominant culture. Many additional considerations must be explored and understood to fully appreciate the difficulty of developing an identity while experiencing oppression and prejudice in social, political, and educational structures of society.⁵⁴⁷

Her ethnic identity started to fade away when she started to be a student in a school where she was constantly around Turks and later drifted the student to a complicated identity situation. Let us remind that the student Lusin in the previous group indicated a similar situation. Lusin said that you start to feel like a Turk when you attend Turkish schools. However, Lusin said this when she was a student in Armenian school at high school level and she noticed that

⁵⁴⁴ Erikson, as cited in Cooper et al., 2003, p. 9, 42.

⁵⁴⁵ Cooper et al., 2003, p. 42.

⁵⁴⁶ Chestang, 1984; Foster and Perry, 1982; as cited in Cooper et al., 2003, p. 10.

⁵⁴⁷ Cooper et al., 2003, p. 16.

way before. Whereas Selin did not think that she would have such an experience while she was transferring to Turkish school for high school. She found herself in that experience with the transfer. And this expresses the lack of a space where she can live her identity in her own terms.

Looking at this from an expanded perspective, Turkish Republic, similar to its schools, is not a space where she can live her Armenian ethnic identity. We also see that in her answer to the question “what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey to you?” According to Selin, being an Armenian living in Turkey means “non-existent”. Turkey is a place where you cannot exist as an Armenian. “It means you are non-existent. Being an Armenian has always been reflected on me as a discrepancy, as a difference and we have always been marginalized I have never seen a positive side of it, on the contrary, I have always seen its disadvantages.” To the question “do you feel more comfortable around Armenian or non-Armenians”, the student [said]: “Of course I feel more comfortable, safer and together around Armenians. I feel unity even if it is family or not. I feel safe around the Alawites too.

To the question “do you think you face discrimination in the country you feel in as a minority”, Selin responded saying that they face discrimination all the time. Our participant who said she faced it more in the period she attended Turkish school thinks that families should also inform their children about what to do and how to react when faced discrimination. “We face it all the time. Especially in my high school period, I faced it a lot. I think it is a topic the family needs to teach. What kind of a reaction to give, what to do when faced discrimination. Should we feel that way or not? I experienced the pain of that in all meanings.”

Selin who transferred to Turkish school from Armenian schools at high school level thus had her first “outside” experience. She recognized her identity she did not so while she was in Armenian school in high school environment where it was considered as “the other”. However, she fell into a situation where she did not know how to react to whom and to what [and] how to feel. After the

discriminatory behaviours increased, Selin started to hide her identity in high school. Then, she had to go the extra mile not to be recognized in school:

- I started to think that I should hide it. To avoid discrimination, I have always taken a step back in my school life

+ In what ways?

- I tried not to stick out.

+ You didn't walk around much

- Yes, I tried not to stick out and continued in a normal, usual life. After graduating from school, I mean they were people I would never include in my life, my friends there, and I never did. People similar to them, the people of same mentality are still not in my life today. I couldn't get over these things after I got out of high school.

+ Haven't you ever considered dropping out, like I shall drop out, switch to Armenian school, why do I deal with this, what is the point; I can learn arts in other ways.

- I couldn't have, I had no courage. I couldn't tell that to my family either. I mean I couldn't tell my family about these problems. Which, I don't think they know any of these thing that I told here. I cannot sit and talk to them saying these are the things I am going through. I didn't talk. And they asked about it covertly, they guessed more or less but because I didn't raise the problem the issues, it didn't happen. Also, especially I got through the first year, there were more classes towards the specialization, and you used to study more individually. You used to be with workshop teachers, I didn't have an issue with workshop teachers, so even if I thought about that at least, I didn't do it.

The student could not tell her family about the exclusion she experienced throughout her life. She couldn't talk about school issues with her family as she couldn't know how to make sense of her experiences and how to tell it even if she thought of leaving the school. Because the school she attended was a vocational one, she shut herself up in school's workshop after second year. To

the question “Do you believe in the necessity of Armenian youth to get education in Armenian schools”, the participant responded saying “Of course I believe, but I don’t want them to live an isolated life either. We are all here in this world, everyone should know each other”. She wants the isolation of Armenian schools not to be obstacle to know people “outside”. Because she witnessed intensively for the first time how different types of people think and react when they learned she was an Armenian right after she left the school. Due to that, she experienced many difficulties.

To the question “if you did not attend Armenian school in elementary and middle schools, do you think you would have had a different perception about your Armenian identity”, she responded saying “It would have been only on the identification card. I wouldn’t have felt any belonging.” Selin who related her feeling of belonging to Armenian identity to being a student in Armenian schools indicated that Armenian schools are like family and they are closer to your identity and your family structure when she was asked about the difference between the two schools: “The teachers in our schools are ones of us, they are always like family, they are people who are also knowledgeable about our family structure. They are more prone in terms of intervention. A teacher in Muslim schools meaning Turkish school is not appropriate to your family structure. I don’t know about their family structure. You are already different from them culturally. So, I think they are insufficient about what to do [how to] intervene when such a problem arises.”

Due to the experiences in two different schools, with two different identities and with two different reactions, there are fractions in her own Armenian identity perception in our participant. Selin, who indicated that her ethnic identity surfaces more when faced injustice, said that she prefers to be non-identity when such things do not happen. Being obligated to hide her identity constantly in order to avoid the prejudicial and hostile reactions of Turkish identity against Armenian identity, her own identity also turned into a form of oppression on her. For that reason, she cannot feel like a fully

Armenian, in Selin's words, she remains "in between". However, Selin answers the question "what does it mean to be an Armenian for you?" as such: "Being an Armenian means being a human, it means culture, I mean, an identity, a really beautiful identity, just like other identities. It means to live happily together without marginalization." According to Selin, being an Armenian becomes an identity in which none marginalizes anyone. In fact, for Selin, Armenianness is to live happily together in a Turkey where Armenians are not marginalized.

Our other participant Levon who attended Armenian school in elementary and middle schools and transferred to Turkish school in high school like the participant Selin continued to Yeşilköy Armenian School till 8th grade and attended to a private Turkish school in high school. When we asked him for an evaluation of his transfer process from Armenian school to Turkish school, he answered as such:

My family asked me what do you want, you can go to Hay school, too. Because I hated Armenian language, I said I would die but go to hay school. I would die but go, i am sick and tired, I don't want to go to hay school. Of course, at one point I was sick and tired of hays too. It is a closed down bubble, so the views are also more closed. That is why I chose it myself.

With this answer, we see that Levon, too, touches upon a common point made by many students from other groups including the group Levon is part of. This issue is the issue that students of Armenian schools feels like they are in a closed bubble. Many Armenian families already want their children to attend Armenian schools as they are more protective to "outside". Families who think that Armenian students will be safer around people of their same ethnic identity predict that their children will face many disturbing behaviours like discrimination, marginalization outside the school. Thus, Levon, too, was tired of being in a continuous sameness and wanted to go "outside". In the previous example, Selin had many difficulties when transferred to high school as she couldn't estimate what she might have experienced and she didn't know how to respond. There are many students who want to get out of Armenian schools perceived as a bubble and find opportunities to know better different life

perceptions. Levon is one of them. However, there are also other reasons why Levon did not want to continue in Armenian school. He touched upon a situation which is unique to Levon and no other participant mentioned when he was responding to the question “can you compare your perception of your identity when you were in Armenian school and your perception during your time in Turkish school?”

I had an issue when I was in Armenian school. I used to say sometimes I feel ashamed that I am an Armenian when I was in Armenian school. I don't remember why I used to say that because then discrimination was not something I knew about much. I was uncomfortable with the tension etc in Yeşilköy, I didn't hear that this happens normally in other hay elementary-middle schools. Our hay teachers would come and whisper genocide. For instance, like, they wouldn't constantly talk about it. Something would happen, the conversation would reach there, like, they would say it in a low voice. There were Turkish teachers, I mean, so that they wouldn't hear it, god knows where are they, they are downstairs etc. But there was a fear and that made me uncomfortable.

Levon says that he was ashamed of being an Armenian but did not remember the source of it. Levon is aware of the existence of a tense atmosphere but as he said because he didn't have an experience regarding discrimination at that age he doesn't understand why hay teachers hide certain things from other Turkish teachers. It is a complicated situation for a child. Ultimately, he gets education in a school and he has teachers of two different identities. One group is hesitant of the other. They talk about things that other groups shouldn't hear. Even if he cannot make sense of all of this, he witnesses the feeling of fear which common to everyone. The reason why he wanted to leave Armenian school is the discomfort he feels for being in a space where people act in fear and hesitation. His identity perception got to a whole new level when he transferred to Turkish school. Because he was excluded in the early times by his circles in school and he faced discrimination in multiple ways:

In Turkish school, I became more aware of my identity perception, it was reminded. And I was thinking at first, if I was the same with them, then I could have discriminated against others. Thus, I felt happy that I was Armenian because I was able to recognize this discrimination but I said I don't want anyone to live what I am going through. I don't want to discriminate.

During the time he was a student in the school, his Armenian identity was reminded constantly. Thus, he became more aware what kind of an identity he has [and] what it means to be an Armenian. However, his experiences led him to understand what discrimination is and thus it made him happy to be an Armenian because he is not the one who discriminates but the one who faces it. According to Levon, those who discriminate are not aware of what they are doing and if Levon was one of them he was not to understand this. Being an Armenian is a good thing even just because of this. The feeling created by being excluded affected Levon's choices for university major. It encouraged him to study in a department where he can prevent people to live such things [and] where he can analyze these situations. While he always thought he would choose a science department, he found himself in sociology in university.

Levon's who said he felt like an Armenian the most when he was being discriminated thoughts on the effects of Armenian schools on Armenian identity formation are as such:

I think they do, first of all, we learn Armenian, we learn Hayeren, my family did not teach it, I learned it at school. Also, you feel like you are the same with people around. Like, things about Armenian culture [and] Armenian history are taught there. We study such thing in classes be it in Armenian or in religion. It is reminded, it is taught. And somehow you create yourself.

Levon thinks that learning things about Armenian identity while together with Armenians has a great impact on identity formation. On the one hand, you have your Armenian identity which you remember with the discrimination if Turkish school, on the other hand you have an identity that you memorize by learning, for instance, Armenian in Armenian schools. Levon comprehended the place of Armenianness in society among these two positions: "You know the spot you have in society too. You are minority, in the status of minority school, you are different from people, there, for instance, you have Turkish teachers for Turkish and social sciences, in front of them, for instance, you cannot say things like genocide. I think you become aware of that etc." In Armenian schools, who isn't Armenians is just some school employees and chief deputy principal and Turkish culture teachers. When you are a student in the school the

first people you face in terms of the other are actually these people. The majority of the school has Armenian names and for example the identity you cannot perceive much fully continues to form when you understand that names of some teachers are not of the same characteristics. Armenian identity in Turkey is an identity formed with the consciousness of being different. According to Levon, being an Armenian living in Turkey is “first and foremost is really hard and tense. It means facing discrimination. Even if you are not of the consciousness especially in elementary and middle school, this time your Armenian identity is something that your family reminds: “There is something the family gives; Don’t tell anyone outside that you are an Armenian or especially my mother used to tell me call me ‘anne’ outside, do not call me ‘mama’. Being an Armenian is something lived differently inside and outside. Armenianness creates inside and outside itself. If you are a child, how to protect yourself against the outside is taught by family first. More so, the person is not fully aware if this, he shouldn’t say mama outside. He should say ‘anne’ like everybody else when outside. He is being warned to do the same things like everyone else. This warning you get in an early age is to pass the awareness that you are different even if you cannot make sense of it.”

Levon got education in Yeşilköy School for ten years including the kindergarten. He has a circle which he defines as a “narrow closed box” because there are a number of Armenians living in Yeşilköy neighbourhood. Levon says he did not face much discrimination in these years because of that. “But the moment I transferred to high school, then I noticed, because be it being a Christian or Armenian, there was a discrimination on both sides, it was reminded all the time. So, it is hard to be an Armenian in Turkey because there is too much discrimination.” However, because the school he attended was a nationalist school, he witnessed such behaviours more. He was even warned about this before he started the school: “I knew about that before I started, that they were nationalist. Other people told me that, too, ‘look, you would face discrimination there’. For instance, like, if I went to a private school or

something, it would have been like that there, but especially because I went to a nationalist school it happened more.” Levon tells that he cannot answer back and remain silent when he was discriminated: “Since my childhood, there is this psychology, there is an approach [like] do not answer back, they kill you, they hurt you, you would stick up more, they label you, do not answer, bear with it and like it or not I remain silent and I cannot say anything.” To the question do you believe in the necessity of Armenian youth to attend Armenian schools, he responds as a person who experienced education in Turkish school in high school as such:

They should learn and know the culture. They should be sent so that they can learn Armenian because if the kid cannot differentiate his/her identity, if he faces discrimination etc he may not like that. They should be sent to Armenian school so that they can grow up in a more comfortable environment. For example, if I had a child I would send him to Armenian school.

7.4.4 Identity perception of those who attended Armenian schools throughout elementary, middle school and high school and graduated from these schools:

All of the participants in this group who attended Armenian schools from elementary to the end of high school and almost twenty years have passed after their graduation self-identifies as Armenian. The participants responded to the question “when do you feel like an Armenian the most?” generally saying when there aren’t Armenians or when there is something bad is uttered about Armenianness. Silva among graduates responded to this question saying “in a place where there aren’t Armenians. For example, when I say my name, when I utter my name around the people who are stranger to my name, I say there is something different”, whereas Suzi who graduated at the same time with her said “For instance, I feel more of an Armenian in situations where someone who is not an Armenian degrades Armenianness but I don’t know how much I live it. I don’t know how to explain this but when I hear negative things I feel more of an Armenian”. According to participant Hagop, when his name is

asked when he enters a new environment or when he is approached by asking where you from are you Armenian his Armenianness “is made felt in that moment”. All these three participants feel more of an Armenian where their ethnic labels are more visible. On the contrary to other participants, participant Garin feels more of an Armenian when she is in environments where there are Armenians: “I can get into that mood when I go to church”. In an event with a group consisting of catholic Armenians as her husband is catholic, [Garin said] “we entered this environment, there are 7-8 Armenian couples for instance, catholic. I felt so good there for example. I said, well, it is a good feeling to belong to somewhere.” Garin experiences a feeling of belonging when she is around Armenians like herself and how nice that feeling is. Garin who indicated that she was away from the church as she used live in Soğanlı neighbourhood while she was a student: “for example, because I was living in Soğanlı I was away from the church, when you go to the church, because you didn’t know anyone, you would sit at the back, light your candle and leave”. Although she was a student in an Armenian school, because she grew up somewhere Armenians did not exist and away from the school she was attending to, she couldn’t feel like belonging to somewhere. In neighborhoods where Armenian schools are located, Armenian population is higher. However because she used to live in İstanbul in a neighborhood like Soğanlı she feels less of belonging to Armenianness. After graduation, she didn’t participate in circles where Armenians are and she jumped into the business life. Thus, the feeling she got the day where there were many Armenian couples together turned into a special occasion for her: “I said it to my friend too, that day for the first time I experienced the beauty of belonging to somewhere. It was a really nice environment. Now we try to attend [to similar events] some evenings.”

Graduate participants are also different age-wise in comparison to other groups we covered in this chapter. Because they had more experiences with “outside” after their graduation, it was observed that they responded to the

question what it means to be an Armenian living in Turkey with a more detailed analysis and a high awareness. According to Silva, being an Armenian in Turkey is something that “makes a person face herself”:

A person also meets certain internal damages too, like even if it is not direct what she faces, the alienation she faces, even self-marginalization can damage psychologically but it also makes you question it. You are forced to live in a strange awareness. It is some sort of paranoia; it is something stemming from the experiences in the historical process.

Participant Hagop, too, brings attention to more or less similar points with Silva: “When you are really young, and also in your youth too, it affects more the formation of the character. It marginalizes in the classes. Armenians did this did that. The newspapers, the news. Some people go introvert, some can become more hung-up.” In Turkey, Armenians are exposed to negative characterizations in classes at school, in class contents, and in media outside schools. According to Hagop, Armenians have different reactions to this marginalization. Some can be more hung-up and some can be more introverts. “Some can go overboard and become paranoid. It would affect you one way or another all through your life. If one faces prejudices constantly, if he tries to break that in his/her social circles, it is something that takes away from energy, it would have negative effects.” The paranoia also mentioned by Silva stems from the distrust for Armenians and considering Armenianness as a bad thing. The prejudices you have to face everywhere can force Armenians “to be obliged to think deep about certain things more.” “Looking into thing differently might lead to research; it can also be a force forward for some people, too.” According to Suzi, being an Armenian living in Turkey “is not easy” “of course”. “If you live somewhere where only Armenians live, maybe your identity does not strengthen this much”. With this answer, Suzi makes an important observation about identity. In a country or environment where you are not the other, you are the majority, because you are not “different”, you don’t get a “different” perception about your identity. You embrace you Armenianness from different angles, too and express it. Whereas in Turkey you always have to be different because you have to remember what your ethnic

identity is in your daily life. According to one of graduate participants Garin it is “hard”, even if she says “I don’t feel difficulty”: “still, you know what I have in me, you know in that 15 July events, I was scared the most of what. I said God, what if people get worked up, I had in mind would they break into home on the one side too. Unfortunately I get fears like that in me.” The paranoia situation mentioned also by Silva which stems from the experiences from historicities can be seen here also. In a day where nationalist sentiments are on the rise, what comes to mind is that the houses would be broken into. Be it what happened in 1915, or 6-7 September events, the people who got agitated raided the houses. They plundered and killed. The history of lynch culture of this society is filled with such examples not only against Armenians but also against many other groups. The fear whether they would break in the houses is a fear created by the belief that “they would first plunder Armenians’ houses”.

According to one of our participants Silva being Armenian “is to have a different expression, language, musical background, to have a different perception, the way of love.” According to Silva, in times when she speaks Armenians, Armenian becomes “something that helps getting out of a chaotic process”: “When I start expressing myself in my own language not being obligated to use the language of the country I am in saves me from chaos.” She comes out of the chaos she experiences due to being an Armenian in a country where she has to speak Turkish in the moments where she can speak in the language of her own ethnic identity, in her mother tongue: “I feel like I am speaking a foreign language when I don’t speak Armenian. When I switch to Armenian, I can say there, my childhood is there, I have my childhood, it is not dead.”

For Suzi, being an Armenian is “maybe a good thing”. “Maybe I exaggerate it in my view or maybe we do, being an Armenian. If you ask someone else they would say they are praising their race, but for whom and for what,” According to Suzi, being an Armenian is something special. It is even to be able to think that you are exaggerating. However, Suzi thinks that if she says

something positive about Armenians in a county where Armenians are never praised but on the contrary humiliated the reaction of “she praises her own race” would come. Suzi thinks that being an Armenian is prideful character however she cannot live it. According to Garin, Armenian identity is an identity which shouldn’t be made really explicit: “I was going to hang a beautiful cross that my friend brought in my car. Then I said no, I said I shouldn’t make it si explicit for people. Then I took it and put it in the glove box.” Garin this time hid her Armenian identity in the glove box, she couldn’t hang it on the mirror in front of her, and she thought she wouldn’t feel comfortable if she did so. “I mean you say I am comfortable, in terms of the neighborhood you live in too, you say I am comfortable more, but then somehow you pull yourself back a bit all the time” The participants who gave examples from their experiences after their graduation in a society where you pull your identity meaning yourself back mostly responded positively to the question “do you think Armenian school have effects on Armenian identity formation”.

All of the graduates gave answers highlighting that they became more aware of their identity after they graduated from the school. According to Silva speaking the language is important: “Language is a tool of expression and we cover the formation stage thanks to the schools.” as she experienced being different more around other people after she graduated, she tells about her identity perception in her school years and her current perception as such: “I didn’t feel like an Armenian when I was in school. I was always with names which were phonetically similar. After I got out of the school, I sense that my Armenian identity developed on the base of the school.” We see a similar statement in Suzi’s answer: “When you are in Armenian school, because all of your friends then are all Armenians, it is like you live in a small world. It is like you are one a world filled with Armenians, I mean. But after you leave that world, you actually start seeing other things.” The behaviours you had freely in school start to cause disturbances when outside. “While you can speak about everything freely there, everyone around is Armenian. After you get out, you

cannot speak freely, you limit yourself.” When you see that you start limiting yourself for a behaviour that you considered normal in school you are in the process of comprehension that you have that comfort because you are with Armenians at school. However, because you are closed society, you can also meet differences that you never met when you get out of the school: “you learn about other culture, other information. You see other worlds, because you are a closed society, this time you start seeing things that you have never seen.”

According to Hagop, because students learn their language Armenian schools have a really important effect on identity formation. For students who do not speak Armenian among themselves even if they can due to the dominant Turkish culture, at least the existence of the schools slows the assimilation down: “Kids do not speak Armenian generally, there is assimilation. There are many reasons for that. But when they are at schools, at least they learn the language. They are told they are Armenians constantly. The effect of the school [is that] it provides a slower assimilation.”

In the answers of all graduates in which they exemplified after school names as an ethnic label is also highlighted a lot. Garin started to work after high school instead of going to university. Garin who keeps her identity in the glovebox was forced to hide her name in her workplace: “something like that happened in my second work place actually. There was the accountant Mr Aram, he knew me from my previous work, he called me over, the owner is Armenian too actually, but he said let’s not call your name as Garin, let’s call you Meltem.” Although the owner of the business where she worked was also an Armenian, he wanted Garin’s name to be changed. She was no longer called as Garin. She was to respond when she was called as Meltem: “I found it really strange; I have never hidden my name till that day. Everybody knew me as Meltem there for example.” Garin tells that the owner of the company repeated this behaviour for other employees and her cousin faced the same thing: “My cousin’s name was Hermine, he made it called Mine. Same again for X person. I don’t know if he, the owner, had some personal issue, if he didn’t want

himself to be known as Armenian.” Although Garin couldn’t make sense of this experience, she guesses that her boss had an issue for being an Armenian. If the person he is working with learns that he or his employees are Armenians, maybe they will not want to work with him anymore.

What Garin, one of graduate participants said exemplifies how the differences in perspectives of each Armenian school on education shape the perception of students about Armenian identity. The participant who indicated that when they were students, what defined the approach of their Armenian school to students was shaped around the prediction whether the student can succeed in the university exam or not indicates that he faced great injustice in that sense. According to graduate participant who said that he was really angry then with the discomfort he felt for some students being polished constantly, there was a discrimination among students in that sense and many students were “sacrificed” in that sense. The participant indicates that he was one of those who were sacrificed and he was treated as such, and moreover, a fight of a student who was expected to be really successful in the exam with school principal was silenced because during the time he was a student in the school, the dominant thought was that the school name would be heard more with students succeeding in the university exam. According to this participant who was a student at the end of the 1990s it was possible at that time to sense a district antipathy against Armenian schools and Armenian identity. According to this graduate [participant], there was nothing that his Armenian school contributed to his Armenian identity.

Another common situation seen in all graduates is their approach regarding that being an Armenian is to fulfill a responsibility. For example, according to Suzi, you feel that because they are minorities, “directly automatically they carry the responsibility of her own race”: “so you try to be careful with your actions more. A mistake I make, an atrocity can be attributed to my race and someone from another race who knows me can say that “so that’s who Armenians are’.” Suzi is being careful considering her actions might

be attributed to all Armenians. She tries to shape her actions with the responsibility of being an Armenian: “but if I can make a place with my positive aspects, like “I had such an Armenian neighbour, I had such an Armenian friend, she used to cook very well, she was so nice etc etc.” Suzi tells that she puts effort so that Armenians would be memorized well in a society which sees her own ethnic identity as bad. She even thinks that it is also the reason why Armenians are introvert: “With this responsibility, it is the reason of introvertness in minorities too. Closing yourself, the responsibility to hide yourself sometimes, it stems from that I think.”

Hagop “does not speak about everything everywhere so that they won’t say he talks like that because he is an Armenian”. Thus, he pacified himself in certain environments. This situation of Hagop fits into the observation made by Suzi too. [It] includes trying to keep yourself in the background, not revealing your identity much around, choosing to be hiding, and fearing that the smallest thing that you make would be attributed to all Armenians. According to Garin, “everyone can make a way out” but you start “with a disadvantage as you are an Armenian”.

After long years since graduation and after the experiences in the meantime in university or in workplaces, we observed that graduate participants developed a similar feeling of responsibility. Graduates feels the weight of Armenian identity more intensely as they have been carrying the burden of not to make them speak talk badly about Armenianness on their shoulders for longer years than rest of the participants.

7.4.5. Identity perception of Armenian students who had unique characteristics in their academic life and thus cannot be evaluated in the first four groups:

The first of two participants in the fifth group, Özgür, is a catholic Armenian and he has never attended an Armenian school in his life. Özgür who was born

and raised in a city where there was no Armenian school responded the question “do you self-identify as Armenian” saying yes however he mentioned that he couldn’t live his Armenianness: “We don’t live the Armenian culture and language fully. However, we have a feeling of belonging since childhood regarding that we are part of that culture. We have a consciousness that we are the other. In that sense, we consider and identify ourselves as Armenian.” For Özgür, identity is about feeling of belonging and an awareness of otherness. He self-identifies as Armenian as he feels belonging to Armenian culture although he cannot live it much. Özgür who responded to the question when do you feel like an Armenian the most saying that “We are a society which lives our culture and religion intertwined, for most of Hay Armenian even equals to Gregorian” also shows with this answer that he thinks that he won’t be considered an Armenian by Hays as he is a catholic. However, according to Özgür, “when we consider it from this angle, in a situation where Muslim identity is present, you constantly have to” remember yourself. “When you stand against a Muslim”, you are a Christian Armenian. Moreover, around “nationalists” “you see yourself different and remember your identity. Whoever is included in the definition of Armenian made by the majority, Özgür, too, is an Armenian included in that definition. Although he doesn’t feel like fully Armenian around other Armenians because he is not Gregorian, he feels more of an Armenian around Turkish society in which he is considered Armenian.

Özgür who thinks that getting education in Armenian schools definitely have a very important effect on Armenian identity formation indicates that he is aware of the importance of the schools even if he has never attended to one. He puts himself to a unique position in that sense: “My situation is unique; if you collect hays who has never attended to Armenian schools it would make 2-3.” According to Özgür, Armenian who has never attended to Armenian school among Armenians is rare case. According to Özgür who indicated that a person who cannot learn and speak Armenian because he didn’t attend to the schools would have difficulty in reaching to sources about his own culture “there is

knowing the works about literature by reading Turkish sources, there is learning from primary sources, which translation of a language is to get away from its own source. Even if you reach them like that, it doesn't mean that it is fully understood and learned." Not being able to read in Armenian language also means that not being able to live the feeling that language gives. According to Özgür, a person always feels the lack of it:

Especially today, even if books are about our own history is translated feeling the mother tongue is a different thing, because I didn't study and live in an Armenian school, this is just a presumption. The school is really important for creating your main identity, to be able to think and feel like an Armenian.

According to Özgür, being an Armenian living in Turkey means to be the last color that is alive, the last flower of a garden. "I can say very different but also very little remaining colors. Ultimately, we live on the ancient lands of Armenians. Whichever corner you go, it is about Armenian culture. Thus, it makes me feel really special to live embracing Armenian culture." The most important characteristic of an Armenian living in Turkey is that they still live on the lands on which Armenians have lived for millennia. "Because it does not present much importance in Armenia, Russia, Georgia but especially on these lands, to still exist as a member of a people who came out of here, to be able to live on my ancestors' land is important." According to Özgür, an Armenian in Turkey is to learn "not to get certain things only as presented by country/state". "You question. To live as the other teaches you to think. Under this identity roof, I shouldn't say against other identities, to live with other cultures also affects your awareness. Because you are an "other" and you look [at things] from a perspective that they don't." Armenians living in Turkey is more aware of their Armenianness precisely because they live in Turkey. Their skills of questioning, forms of thinking develop on the basis of their forms of living the otherness. Even in the case where he has never attended the Armenian school his identity this time is affected because he couldn't study in Armenian school and leads to another awareness about Armenian identity. Thus, we can say that not studying at Armenian school has the same importance on identity formation as much as studying at Armenian schools has on identity formation.

According to Özgür, Armenians all around the globe are people who went through great difficulties and pain. The perspective of those who know you from outside of Turkey presents you as the victim. Whereas, Armenians also gave really beautiful things to the world, too, to be able to express these without linking them back to genocide is important. “I don’t think myself as the individual who plays the role of the victim. Even the existence of my ancestors makes me feel good.” However, according to Özgür Armenians in Turkey does not face discrimination only at the hand of the power and the society: “Recently, those who are in Armenia used to consider you as different. Generally, Diaspora too, used to see you living under the Turkish Republic as different. Discrimination happens to you no matter what. In Armenia, they disregard you.” Özgür who indicated that when he faces discriminations on the land he lives on he gets really upset feels lonely when he has to go through such experiences: “I completely get wiped up, because there is no one whom you can go and share something with. You are locked in a cage. It is like prison, you feel like your vital functions are being taken away.” Exclusion and discrimination by both Turks and Armenians is a situation where most of Armenian in Turkey is aware and uncomfortable of. They are both Armenians and Turks at the same time and they are neither Armenian not Turks at the same time.

The last person whose ideas we will cover at the end of the chapter is Liza. As explained earlier, Liza is in a different position than other participant on multiple grounds. This student attended to Aramyan Armenian School till 5th grade in elementary school. In middle school, she continued to a private Turkish school, she attended to another Turkish school, a fine arts high school, in first two years of high school. In 11th and 12th grades of high school she attended Tibrevank. In the 2016-2017 academic year, meaning when we conducted our interview, she was a senior year student in Tibrevank.

To the question “Do you self-identify as Armenian?” Liza responded by saying “I don’t know, I mean yes, I mean sometimes I forget”. There is no clear

position in her response. First, she said “I don’t know” first and then she indicated that she “sometimes forgets” that she is an Armenian. On the contrary to that being Armenian is constantly reminded by others like the majority of our participants also highlighted, Liza sometimes forgets that she is an Armenian. To the question “when do you feel like an Armenian the most?” she said “I don’t feel much of an Armenian. I am Canadian citizen. I remember that I am an Armenian when I eat Armenian dolma and when my mom speaks Armenian.” Here is the dialogue we had with her following this question:

+ What do you mean when you said I don’t feel much like an Armenian?

- I don’t feel like I belong to somewhere. I was born here, but I am Armenian but I am also Canadian citizen.

+ Is your mom Armenian?

- Yes.

+ Is your father Armenian?

- Yes.

+ You are Armenian in terms of ethnic identity.

- Yes.

+ But you don’t feel like an Armenian

- Yes, I don’t.

Considering this dialogue on the basis of the approach “it is how it is for someone from that identity” which is frequently used in the debates of what is a determinant in the definition of belonging to an identity, the participant does not feel belonging to Armenian identity. In short, according to this approach in the identity debates Lisa “is not an Armenian”, however, she also is. The basic way to prove that you are an Armenian in school administrations is to be a child of an Armenian father and an Armenian mother. In short, Liza is of Armenian roots. She is Armenian origin. She also speaks Armenian which is another indicator of Armenian identity and she says that she might feel like an Armenian when her mother says something in Armenian, too. In fact, we see

that Liza is in conflict in her answers. This shows that she experiences a conflict in regards to her identity. This conflict also reflects on her personality.

Liza who was observed that she gave answers the questions hesitantly throughout the interview also felt the need to indicate that she is shy. To the question “do you think Armenian schools have effects on Armenian identity formation”, she responded saying “Before I came here, I totally forgot [that she was an Armenian], here I remembered again”. She says that she remembered her Armenianness again that she had forgotten since she has become a student in Tibrevank High School. When we explain Liza’s identity confusion in relation to her attendance to two different Turkish schools and at last Armenian school again in our study, we see how inseparably bounded the relationship of identity and school is. According to Liza who responded to the question “To you, what does it mean to be an Armenian” saying “I don’t know”, she feels more comfortable if she meets a Turk when she is in a foreign country in comparison when she meets an Armenian. Liza feels more comfortable around a Turk when she is in a country where neither Armenians nor Turks are majority. Even if she is a student in Armenian high school, she doesn’t feel belonged to the environment. By transferring from one school to another since her childhood, Liza’ perception and awareness of her ethnic identity has reached to a point where she doesn’t feel belonging fully to any sides. Liza who said she didn’t face discrimination or foul behaviour throughout her time in Turkish schools feels lucky in that sense however on the other hand she is also aware of the difficulties of living as an Armenian: “Let’s say there is a demonstration. If I am taken into custody, I might get bigger problems in comparison to others.” Liza thinks that she might get more problems in such situations which she guesses that she will have to face the state one on one.

Even if she is a senior year student in Tibrevank High School, Liza is different than other students in senior year because they have only studied at Armenian schools. Their first ideas about the outside were created when they attended prep school. Whereas Liza had that experience in middle school. Liza

is also different than her class mates who started their studies in Tibrevank High School coming from Turkish schools because they have never attended to an Armenian school before. Thus, they feel more belonging to school and Armenian and their identity. Whereas Liza has already attended to an Armenian school in elementary school. Thus, her transfer to Tibrevank did not have an effect on her in having a special feeling of belonging like others. The confusion Liza has in regards to her ethnic identity is in fact more similar to the situation mostly which the participant Selin who started *Hay* (Armenian) school then continued to Turkish school and who indicated she is in-between described. However, due to her being a Canadian citizen, too, she was exempt from many negative processes which an Armenian living in Turkey has to face. Liza developed an identity from among her exemptions.

Thus, Liza has become exempt to feeling a belonging to an identity, too.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In this study, the effect of Armenian schools in Turkey on Armenian identity formation, the relationship between nation-state, school and identity, and problematic identity of Armenians who reside in Turkey were tried to be analyzed *vis-a-vis* how Turkish identity has evolved in a historical process. Armenian schools, along with all other schools, which are included in Turkish national education system which has a fundamental place in identity formation, are analyzed on the basis of Armenian identity and nation-state structure in Turkey and characteristics of Turkish identity.

Armenian schools and all their components which have been categorized as minority schools since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 are shaped being exposed to multiple effects of the Turkish identity which has been tried to be created and which is determined in the framework of Kemalist ideology. In Turkey, students in Armenian schools which had the biggest role in maintaining and preserving the Armenian identity gained different perception about their Armenian identity through history classes and history text books determined in the framework of official history understanding and curriculum. In this framework, education language is designated as Turkish by Turkish National Education System, under the dominance of Turkish language which an indispensable element of Turkish identity.

Armenians in Turkey are marginalized in both Turkey and by Armenians. Armenians who try to prove their loyalty have to prove their Armenianness to Armenians as well. Throughout the last couple of decades in Turkey, socio-cultural symbols of Armenians acted through ethnic origins. Their ethnic origins have turned into an a insult especially in political and social life. In such a context, Armenians always have to prove their loyalty by

not using their rights of having equal rights as a minority. However, during the 1990s they recognized the other inside of them and since then Armenians who are considered as a non-Muslim minority in the Lausanne Treaty has turned the word non-Muslim into an identity politics. They have started to voice their complaints about the fact that their Lausanne rights and ethnic identities being ignored and violations of their rights due to their being consider as a religious minority. Counter-memory and rejection of official history narrative has surfaced more. Although they started to transform their ethnicity in the 1990s, for the Armenians of Turkey sustaining traditions has become an obligation. One generation used to transfer the language and culture to another; however, holistic identities have affected every part of the life and have replaced the traditional identities. Also with the identity awakening started with the murder of Hrant Dink in 2007, the traditional Armenian identity has re-transformed.

New discussions regarding language and religion which are considered to be the fundamental indicators of Armenian identity have emerged. While an Armenian who cannot speak Armenian or who is not Christian was absolutely impossible in the 19th century, today Muslim Armenian identity has surfaced. The people in this social group who neither can speak Armenian nor are Christian self-identify as Armenian. Especially after Hrant Dink assassination, many people who say that they learned that their origins were Armenian convert to Christianity and try to send their children to Armenian schools although they are stuck with the procedures regarding registration to schools since they lack the necessary documents of proof to the state which are required for school registration. Evidently, many Armenian identities which cannot be considered Armenians a century ago has emerged. When we ask what an Armenian is, what is being an Armenian, what are the components of Armenian culture, although Armenians share a collective identity, identity interacts with persons' ways of life and social structure and this can create fragmented Armenian identities.

Based on data I claim that Armenian students in Armenian schools are exposed to a double-sided identity. It is inevitable that these identities which sit on two poles apart pushing each other has a great impact on identity perception of students in these schools.

In schools, how Turkish and Armenian identities which work on opposite directions perceive each other also has a significant role in identity formation of the Armenian students. Perceiving Armenians as “foreigner and traitor” for long years is one of the most distinct characteristics of Turkish identity and society. In short, how the Turk defines the Armenian comprises a part of how he defines his own Turkishness. Perceiving Armenians as foreigners from outside has become a social acceptance. One of two reasons for thoughts regarding Armenians which are based on prejudices and misinformation is that Turkish society does not know Armenians. Similar to how Turkish nation-state chose and determine how to present Turkish identity in schools or textbooks in accordance with its aims, it also determine how to present Armenians. In this geography where the Turks have lived “strongly and heroically” for long years, Armenians are a minority, they are not the owners of this land, and their existence in Anatolia for millennia is not even up for discussion. What most of the participants stressed regarding discrimination or insults due to their Armenianness is that the society is “ignorant”. Many students complained about not being known with frequently repeated sentences like “I wish they knew”, “they don’t know a thing”, “they would understand how bad their behavior is if they knew us just a bit”. Misrecognition causes reactions among Armenians like proving one’s self, trying to be nice. In the society, the rate of those who think Armenians living in Turkey came to Turkey after the Soviet Union dissolved is thirty percent. Another thirty percent has no idea about where Armenians come from.⁵⁴⁸ Armenians always suffered from a negative image. That Armenians who have been living on these lands since 6

⁵⁴⁸ Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, 2011, pp. 28-29.

BC are perceived as “foreigners” by the Turkish society is a reflection of an ignorance created on purpose. Thus, an Armenian living in Turkey faces the question “where are you from?” when s/he meets someone new. Because Turks cannot explain the existence of Armenians on these lands, Armenians for them are also an “enigma”, a “puzzle”.⁵⁴⁹ At the same time, Armenians for Turks can also be seen as “extraordinary” or “exotic”.

According to all participants we interviewed with as part of the study, being an Armenian in Turkey is an experience which is “really hard”, “tense”, “painful” and “requires patience”. Armenian identity in Turkey is an identity that you need to hide. It is an identity in which everything that would reveal your identity must be either hidden or evades. It is an identity in which you cannot wear your cross necklace outside, speak Armenian and you are obliged to call your “mama” mother outside. It is an identity in which you must develop certain tactics to hide all your ethnic labels. It is an identity in which you must hide your name in many parts of life, especially in work life, by having Turkish nick names. Or, it is an identity in which before a nick name is required, right after birth you cannot name your child in Armenian so that s/he won’t be hurt in the future. “Name is an important element defining a person’s identity. Rejecting someone’s own name, being obliged to hide it, or that his/her family doesn’t name the child with an Armenian name out of the fear that the child can be exposed to racist behaviors or substituting the name with another name in fact have the meaning to give up an identity and involve in another, effect of assimilation.”

Turks sees an Armenian first and only as an Armenian by ignoring all other characteristics. All other qualities of a person are ignored under his identity of Armenianness. Another common experience is to they consider an Armenian as “the collective representative of Armenians in Turkey or even

⁵⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 129.

Armenianness.⁵⁵⁰ Any act or word of an Armenian whose individualism is ignored is perceived as an act or word of all Armenians. In the interviews, the source of the feeling of responsibility which is highlighted by almost all participants especially in the group consisting of graduates from Armenian schools approximately 20 years ago is this approach of Turks towards Armenians. According to Kılıçdağı and Özdoğan, Armenians accepted this understanding to some extent.⁵⁵¹ Armenians of Turkey live in a way that tries to refrain from many behaviors that would somehow bring the attention on them [or] feed into the prejudices about Armenians. Thus, an Armenian of Turkey “should be double-hardworking, double-honest, double-brave, double-peaceful.”⁵⁵² The graduate participants highlighted that they are being more cautious to what to say and how to act if they are minority in a space where Turks are the majority and thus they develop a different behavior corresponds to the evaluation that they somehow accepted this situation. The participants say that they feel like “as if they say something bad” that would blanket all Armenians and thus they act with the heavy burden and responsibility of this feeling similar to “oh they shall know Armenians in a good way, they shouldn’t talk bad from behind.”

Any of the students in other groups did not say anything about the collective responsibility of Armenians. This finding revealed in our study in which only graduates highlighted this is an interesting reflection of why graduates were included in the list of those to be interviewed. In the initial stage of the study, we see what kind of determinations the graduates who were thought to be included in the study on the assumption that identity awareness of graduates who attended only to Armenian schools might have a different shape through their experiences as Armenians in Turkey which accumulated by

⁵⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁵¹ *ibid.*, 2011, p. 30.

⁵⁵² *ibid.*, p. 33.

spending long years in public sphere after they graduated from Armenian schools since they live in spaces where they were majority.

This hostile perception about Armenians has been kept alive by many policies enforced since the establishment of the state. Armenians generally choose hiding their identity to avoid discrimination in front of a society which uses the word Armenian as an insult. Armenians of Turkey who chose the way of hiding in order to avoid possible problems and ill treatment can be a result of disclosure of Armenian identity and the development about various strategies for hiding. The origin of behaviors we exemplified multiple times throughout this study such as hiding their own names or names of their schools is due to the fear of being exposed as Armenians. Being exposed to exclusionary mechanisms constantly and experiences this fear continuously has a destructive effect on the self-perception of Armenians. As we mentioned in this study, the forms in which the Turkish identity perceives Armenian identity and the effect of characteristics of Turkish and Armenian identities on Armenian students take various shapes in accordance with how and in which ways Armenian identity is faced in the public sphere.

In such a structure, Armenian students may prefer striking together in relation to the way they are exposed to which identity. For instance, the first identity which students who transferred from Turkish schools to Armenian schools face is Turkish identity. This situation experienced throughout their elementary education coincides with a critical age in terms of identity formation. Then, what happens to these students instead of assimilation? While these students who are in Turkish schools they attend to try to hide their Armenian identity, and cannot live their language, culture and identities freely. Thus, the transfer of students in this group to an Armenian school by getting out of being a few in the majority leads them to perceive the schools as a space where they can live their identity freely. That they feel safer among those who are like themselves brings them closer to the Armenian identity. Students in this group love and have a concern for the Armenian language, Armenian

culture or Armenian history for them, Armenian schools are their home, family and nest, and other Armenian students in their school are perceived as their siblings. The students who moved to Armenian schools after attending to Turkish schools for elementary or elementary and middle school levels have a stranger feeling of belonging to Armenian identity. For these students, the first “outside” has been the Turkish schools. After experiencing being an “other” in an early age, they are included in an “inside” where they are considered “normal”. The students in this group identity had to learn the social reactions toward their ethnic identity at an early age, this experience provide them the opportunity to analyze the social structure at earlier. In no other group such a higher degree of belonging to Armenian identity stage and culture and hence these children feel pride who experience directly is perceived.

How does a student who only attended Armenian schools perceive “outside”? Students who were in their senior year in high school at the time of the interviews and who have never gone outside of Armenian schools are students who do not know much about “outside”, who has not much experience about how they are perceived “outside”, who had their first “outside” experience if they attended prep schools or who are still in this process. As a minority in a majority, they face for the first time the various mechanisms of exclusion which they just started to meet in the prep school. For the first time, the names they have sound strange to other students in a classroom. Thus, for the first-time students with names like Janet, Liza, Oksen study in prep school with Ahmets and Ayşes.

I gave many examples throughout the study that many participants consider Armenian schools as a “closed bubble”. The reasons why many senior year high school students we interviewed who had no other experience of attending any school other than the Armenian, where everyone and everything is considered similar and likely, where the other is considered interesting and where “outside” is wondered define Armenian schools as a “closed bubble” is not only that they live in a closed circle among themselves in Armenian

schools. Considering that Armenians have to hide in order to protect themselves from the majority and since there is no other Armenian institution which is predominantly Armenian in the society, we can understand why Armenian schools, too, live in a secluded environment similar to the Armenian community itself in Turkey. The fears of getting lynched and massacred which have always been present for Armenians in Turkey are being manifested in different ways in school structure. Armenian schools which are the only places where at least 100 Armenians can come together every day in today's Turkey have thus faced many attacks in periods when the relationships with Armenians was politically critical. Armenian schools, like Armenians of Turkey, must be "double-hardworking, double-peaceful, double-honest" and double-cautious.

As one of our participants who work as an Armenian teacher has stressed, children are being raised in a really secluded area with a protective approach both at home and in schools. However, this situation turns into, so to say, a "counter" reaction. Another participant who indicated that he sees schools as a closed bubbles was one of those who were moved to Turkish schools from Armenian schools at the high school level and he presents the tension created by this seclusion as one of the reasons for his later choice. Similar to our participant who moved to a Turkish school by saying "I was tired of Armenians", the group consisting of senior year high school students who do not step "outside" from Armenian schools, who continue to be among similar people feels this bubble more intensely. Actually, they have no idea about the life "outside". Because they are always among Armenians, their way of facing Armenian identity is also different. However, they are not aware that they have a separate Armenian identity which they can only recognize when they go "outside". For many of them, Armenian/Armenian language which is one of the most important indicators of Armenian identity is just another class which is hard to pass and has no use for university entrance exams. This perception of students regarding their schools and classes causes some of them to drop out in high school. Policies enforced on Armenian schools is result in

reducing the number of students in schools and most of them have been successful. That students and parents started to “dislike Armenian school”, that they deem learning Armenian as an issue cause many students to prefer attending private schools or colleges.

Students who decide to attend to Turkish schools for such reasons will experience their Armenian identity like “a punch in the face” the minute they step “outside” in their adolescence stage. Both because they go “outside” for the first time from an Armenian majority to which they are also a part of and because they are alone in the majority for the first time, when they are exposed to being despised, humiliated, discriminated and excluded, the self-perception of students in this group are also hurt in a way that it would be hard to repair. In the words of one participant “You become Turkish while you are in Turkish schools”. The experience of one of our participants who transferred to Armenian school from Turkish school is being experienced in the opposite way by those who switch to Turkish schools from Armenian schools. Students in this group, thus, have more difficulty in “finding themselves”. They can feel “neither Turkish nor Armenian”. Because of their own choice, they go through the toughest experiences in terms of identity problematic in a way that they don’t predict. The insecurity they feel in Turkish schools leads them to understand why the walls of Armenian schools which they thought closed are made like that. Whereas, after this experience of insecurity of students who transferred to Armenian school lead them to perceived school walls as a protective nest.

The closest the feeling of belonging to Armenianness, Armenian identity and culture and Armenian schools observed in the group consisting of students who transferred to Armenian schools after they attended to Turkish schools throughout the elementary or elementary and middle school levels develops the group in consisting of graduate participants. Moreover, although there are some differences, senior year students in Getronagan Armenian High School and Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School I interviewed also

developed unique sensitivities and belongings for their schools and identities. In this point, another situation we can discuss is revealed as a result of our interviews and findings throughout our study: Each Armenian School creates a different Armenian identity.

The situation of Armenian schools in Turkey is a ground, upon which the double-sided identities which are created by intertwining both Turkish and Armenian identities are placed, and everything about education on this ground, everything from their workers to students, from its curriculum to class contents, is identity-based. However, on this ground where still the Turkish identity is dominant with government policies Armenian identity is like a twitch. The more they try to clean, the more it spreads. Because Turkish identity also needs Armenian identity in order to sustain its own existence. Thus, Turkish national education system tries to create the Armenian identity which it needs for itself and to draw the limits of Armenian identity again itself. Turkish identity which is aimed to spread with suppression and fear also creates a new and different Armenian identity which it cannot regulate and limit. The formation of this identity is directly related to how it resists against Turkish identity. We can also say that even the ways of resistance have a central role in each Armenian school in creating its separate Armenian identities. The multiple identities created in each Armenian school in itself stem from varieties of the ways of resistance of each Armenian school against the dominant Turkish identity. Each school with their own traditions, close circles, approaches to students and teachers and perspectives on how the Armenian schools should be turns to be a unique *ecole*. If the perspective on how the education should be carries a sensitivity toward maintaining Armenian identity in it and if it organizes activities with this sensitivity to raise the awareness of identity in students, it can succeed to make students closer to Armenian language, culture, history, since such a way of resistance is Armenian identity-based, Armenian identity which develops in such schools is expected to be will be that much more “aware”. In that sense, education in an

Armenian school can present a contentious attitude in maintaining identity despite all suppression by the Turkish national education system or it can encourage students who think this way. Another Armenian school, on the other hand, can self-identify as a church school. It can shape the identity based on religious values, it can reflect more the unifying effect of the church and Christianity on Armenian community. Or another Armenian school can choose to provide education in line with the demands of the parents, develop an education policy toward ensuring students to get higher scores in exams, pay more attention to classes and exams and push language and culture aside. Another Armenian school can be turned into a space where students live day and night as it has a boarding school character and in this space, it can create a unique Armenian identity alongside with the school's tradition and equipment. By making itself a school where students would feel a sense of strong belonging, it can turn into a home where Armenian identity can be lived freely and brotherly.

Regardless whether they are a student/teacher in the Getronagan High School or somewhere else, most of the participants whose thoughts on how Armenian schools effect Armenian identity formation we tried to understand stressed that the educational approach of the Getronagan High School was identity-based. Why this school which was mentioned in many sections in the study was underlined that much? How does the Getronagan High School as one of the five remaining Armenian high schools in Istanbul present a way of resistance? As almost all senior year students of Getronagan High School indicated, what makes their school unique is its perspective on Armenian culture, Armenian identity and Armenian language and literature. When students talk to other students in other Armenian schools, they say that they recognize this situation more. Students and teachers interviewed in Getronagan High School consider themselves more advantageous than others from various angles. The attention attributed to the Armenian language and culture instead of

university exam is an indicator how the approach of students such as “in another school, this identity wouldn’t have been formed” is created.

Students of the Tibrevank High School and the ways of perception of these students about their schools and identities present some important clues about educational approach and traditional structure of the Tibrevank High School which also formed a separate Armenian identity in itself. The most important characteristic which differentiates the Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School whose many characteristics which again we told throughout our study from other Armenian schools is that it is a boarding school where since the 1950s students who migrated from Anatolia to Istanbul leaving their families behind to study in Armenian schools and learn Armenian language can live and study. Thus, an intense feeling of belonging for Armenian identity can be seen in both graduates of the schools and students who currently attend to the school. Based on the student numbers, although Tibrevank High school has the least number of students among Armenian High Schools, it can balance its budget thanks to the donations of its graduates whose feeling of belonging increases rather than decreases even if they had graduated years ago.

With the Armenian identity which schools create with their ways of resistance, students can have very different perspectives with varying degrees of awareness of their ethnic identities. However, still what unites all Armenian schools remaining in Turkey is that they are exposed to same government policies because in the eye of the system, they are just Armenian schools.

The regulation that the Turkish Republic government has passed years ago regarding that only those students who reside in a specific distance to Armenian schools can register is one of the policies enforced on the Armenian schools. This regulation is at the same time a population policy and the result of its practice is observed to have a significant impact on students’ ways of living and perceiving their identity. With this regulation, only the Armenian families who reside in the periphery of the Armenian schools can register their children to Armenian schools. With this regulation which is one of the practices

aiming to decrease the number of students eligible to register to the schools, on the other hand, Armenians living scattered in İstanbul are either prevented from sending their children to these schools or by making Armenians gather in certain centers, it was made easier to control them. Moreover, in the initial years of this practice, many Armenian schools were shut down due to lack of students.

In this thesis in which the relationship between Armenian identity and Armenian schools is evaluated, it is observed that whether the neighborhood or district the student reside in is close to Armenian school or the student attend to or not has a considerable importance on student's perception on school and identity. Armenian schools which continue their education only in Istanbul in Turkey are located mainly in 6 major district and neighborhoods. These district are Şişli (Kurtuluş, Feriköy), Beyoğlu, Üsküdar, Kadıköy, Bakırköy (Yeşilköy) and Fatih (Samatya, Topkapı). Moreover, these districts are where Armenians predominantly reside. If the student resides in a close district to school, he has a different relationship with the school, the church and the fraternity. Moreover, because there are other Armenians like him residing in his neighborhood, street or apartment building, he tends to socialize and make friendships with Armenian children or youth like himself outside of school time. For example, if a student residing in Bakırköy attended to Dadyan school in elementary and middle school levels, this means that, she is not far from Bakırköy where Armenians predominantly reside, and she has the opportunity to socialize with students from Bakırköy who also attend to Dadyan and remains in Armenian circles as well. Furthermore, she can access easily the activities in fraternities which are located really close to the schools. If it is a religious student, she can go to the Armenian church which is in walking distance to her home, light a candle and come back, her relationship with the school, being constantly around Armenians, his way of socializing, her way of perceiving and living Armenian identity, all of these, are affected considerably by the characteristics of the close environment she lives in. In a big and crowded city like Istanbul,

the distance between home and school being at a walking distance provides the student to form and develop her perception about Armenian identity from an early age. With the legislation that students can only register to schools close to their residence, many members of the Armenian community had to move to districts and neighborhoods where Armenian schools are to be able to accept their children. This is the reason why Armenians predominantly reside in these aforementioned neighborhoods. Today, this regulation determining the distance for registration is no longer valid. However, the migrations occurred during the time of its application it was in effect remained constant. That the Armenian students residing in neighborhoods like Yeşilköy, Samatya, Kurtuluş can live the Armenian identity more easily than other neighborhoods causes the opposite effects for Armenian students who do not reside in these districts or neighborhoods.

With the last remaining Armenian families in Anatolia migrating to Istanbul after 1980, Armenian families who started to live in Istanbul, especially if their financial situation was not good could not reside in neighborhoods like Bakırköy, Yeşilköy, Şişli. Families who migrated after 1980 moved into more affordable neighborhoods such as Şirinevler, Bahçelievler, Küçükçekmece, Avcılar, Soğanlı. The relationship of Armenian students who live away from their schools and neighborhoods where Armenians predominantly reside with their school is disconnected. The belonging they feel to their school decreases in parallel with the distance of their homes to their school. These students were not only living at distant places where Armenians were members concentrated, but they were also living the formation of their identities as distant from the Armenian identity as it was forming within the community life.

However, for students who only attended Armenian schools since elementary level, life starts when they go to prep school or when they graduate. These students are those who do not consider getting education in any other school throughout their education at life and the majority of these students are

observed to continue the same school if there was a high school section of the elementary school they were already attending. Students in this group experience very little of how their name, meaning their identity, will be reacted throughout their school life. That the majority has “foreign” names like yours does not provide yet to create a consciousness of being a minority, however awareness of these students who do not experience how the other perceives you at the school starts to increase after they start attending to prep school or after their graduation. That you are an Armenian, or at least you are not Turkish being revealed the moment you tell your name starts to burden you with a new responsibility in the moment of a meeting another person. You don’t need to carry the responsibility of your name which indicates who you are and what you are in the class rooms of the Armenian schools as an ethnic minority. However, after this awareness is built, an Armenian student has to carry her name like a burden on his shoulders throughout his life.

Armenian identity in Turkey is an identity in which you have to give the fight to stand and exist in Turkish society in every aspect of your life. It is an identity which survives despite many assimilation policies, discriminations, insults, pressures. How do these exclusionary mechanisms which cut through the common grounds of the Armenian identity in Turkey reflect on Armenian schools and Armenian students, what do the students think about their identity which is excluded and which they need to hide?

I tried to understand and evaluate how students, teachers, school principals and graduates whom we classified in our study on the basis of the relationship types with Armenian schools perceive the Armenian identity, how they define Armenianness, what they think about problems in Armenian schools or policies enforced on these schools, what kind of experiences they have in terms of school/identity relationship, how these experiences impacted on their own Armenian identities and their ways of reflecting these impacts.

That Western Armenian which is used by the Armenians in Turkey is one of the languages disappearing also brings the issue that loss of language is

also loss of identity. Although the current understanding about the Armenian language and Armenian identity is different than the understanding prevalent a century ago, still, Armenian language has a very important place in forming Armenian identity as well as the difficulties of sustaining and maintaining it. Armenian has always been perceived by Armenians as a form of protector shell of Armenian identity. Besides, since an Armenian living in Turkey cannot speak Armenian in public sphere freely or she cannot call her mother in her own language, because even carrying an Armenian name brings along many discriminatory behaviors, the reservations of Armenians to use Armenian language in Turkey resulted in the fact that Armenian is almost never used by the Armenians themselves. From the finding of this study we learn that Armenian is used often in situation where the Armenians are willing to hide the content of their conversation from the others presents, thus as a means to ensure secrecy and privacy. A strange situation in which strategy of invisibility works in the direction of making visible what is wanted to be kept invisible. A great majority of participants highlighted the importance of speaking Armenian language while they talk about Armenian identity. Despite many negativities occurring today, Armenian is still the main indicator of what determines the identity. That is why the first thing the participants thought of when they were asked about identity is Armenian. Other than students whose main reason to attend to an Armenian schools is to learn Armenian, one participant who has been working as an Armenian teacher for long indicated that the majority of the Armenians prevented to speak their own language freely due to pressures like “citizens should speak Turkish.” However, according to her if the Armenian identity can even be protected Armenian child must definitely attend to Armenian schools in elementary and middle levels to learn their language an an indispensable component of that identity.

In this study in which we discussed the approaches to Armenian in Armenian schools and the ways of students to perceive and live their mother tongue on the basis of historical character of the relationship between

Armenian identity and Armenian language, it is also observed that that Armenian students in Armenian schools learn Armenian and get accustomed to their culture does not suffice in terms of formation of a strong Armenian identity. The effect of the lack of Armenian history class in Armenian schools creates in Armenian identity formation of students is evaluated along with the significance attributed to the history courses and history education by the Turkish nation-state for building a national identity. The main objective of history education is to create a national identity and Armenian students in Turkey, too, are exposed to the narrative in those history textbooks written against their historical identity as part of the national history class in the curriculum without knowing anything about their 3000-year long history. Because they are not considered as a part of the historical process depicted in the history textbooks and more so because they are presented as the foreigner/enemy of this process, Armenian students experience a dilemma about where they should develop a belonging to. The sections reserved for Armenians in the Turkish history narrative cause the Armenian students to feel a discomfort during these classes. Confronted with a historical narrative towards which they cannot build a sympathy, they develop a deepen feeling of lack in relation to the history consciousness of their own ethnic identities, and are lost in between the mechanisms of Turkish and Armenian identities working in opposite ways.

The relationship between education and identity discussed throughout the study is covered and evaluated with many discriminatory government policies enforced on the schools. Armenian students who start the day reciting Our Pledge are reminded that they are not Turkish in Turkey with many policies enforced on them regardless of them shouting out that they are Turkish. Armenian schools have always been institutions which required to be inspected by the state and to which they are approached with distrust. In this study, many policies from the practice of assigning a Turkish chief deputy principal to schools to making someone prove their identity in order to be able

to register to Armenian schools, from the duality among the teachers in schools created by that Turkish and Turkish culture teachers who are assigned and paid by the state to lack of a status and other to financial difficulties and the problems these policies cause are evaluated on the basis of the problematic of how freely the students in Armenian schools can live their Armenian identity.

This and similar practices which are still present today cause the decrease in the number of the student in Armenian schools which also create serious financial difficulties for the schools. The financial issues in Armenian schools stemming from many reasons such as not getting a share from state budget because Armenian schools have the status a private school, the increase in number of students who do not choose to attend to Armenian schools and continue their education in other schools, and hence the decrease in the overall number of students, or the decrease of the community support with the decline in financial support of parents who register [their children to Armenian schools] bring the schools to the point of collapse.

As evident on the statistical data in which the number for those who register to Armenian schools on a yearly basis is reported every year in Agos Newspaper, as long as the decline in student numbers year by year and the budget deficits in Armenian schools continue, the future of Armenian schools in Turkey does not seem to be really bright. Digin Sirun, one of the principals we interviewed with, indicates that every difficulty in education doubles the burden for the Armenian schools double: “Because you are fewer, your human power to deal with these issues is less sufficient. I mean every issue we face reflect on us multiplies.”

In the geography of Turkey where Armenians have to live everything double, Armenian schools, have to cope with each problem with an effort requiring double energy. However, as Digin Sirun indicated, Armenians who have to be double in everything also decreases in double speed considering their population which has practically disappeared in the century. Armenian schools which are the most important institutions for the Armenians who

continue to maintain and sustain Armenian language, culture and identity also try to sustain their existence today even if they are tired double in their fight for existence of the Armenian identity.

What happens if Armenian schools disappear after the light of their diminishing number? Can we still talk about an existence of an Armenian identity or even if we can, what kind of an Armenian identity it will be? Like Hrant Dink once indicated, Armenian identity in Turkey will always remain as an “other”:

In Turkey, you face so many attacks against the Armenian identity that you find yourself in a defensive position whether you want it or not. My identity was always *other*, and often belittled. I saw again and again that I was *different*. Many people who were like me were leaving this country, but I didn't want to leave – I wanted to stay and fight for what I thought was right.⁵⁵³

The tragic element in the above lines in which we read the approach of an Armenian, Hrant Dink, who preferred to stand in this very geography as an “other”, an Armenian, refusing to leave it is not the sad fact that he really fell victim to assassination, but rather that the same attitude that led to this assassination still continues unaffected to be the predominant attitude against the Armenians in Turkey.

Kılıçdağı's expression, “Even if there is not one Armenian left in the world, no doubt the Turkishness will create one” can be understood in this context as Turkish identity will forever require an “other” to be able to form itself. In that sense, in the geography of Turkey, Armenian or “other”, but always an “other” will exist as long as Turkishness does.

Maybe there are many things to tell about being a sociology student as an “other”. Being an Armenian “other” in a Turkey inevitably means to have the intuitions and sensitivities which a sociologist should have naturally. Being born as an Armenian means to be in a grave need analyze all reflections of the society you live regarding your identity. Because as your identity is reminded in intense and violent ways, it leads you to live a more intense awareness about

⁵⁵³ Dink, 2006, https://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-turkey/dink_3246.jsp

that identity. The Armenian identity in Turkey is an identity which forms with the consciousness that you are different, and you are “other”. Sociology, too, in that sense, is a science of the other/the other science which gives the opportunity to fight for what “the other” believes in.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The first group will consist of students who were in Armenian school from primary school up to high school and who are currently in their last year of high school.

Identity

- Do you self-identify as Armenian? (Explanations in detail)
- When do you feel like Armenian the most?
- Do you think attending Armenian schools has an impact on Armenian identity, if so how?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- Where do you feel more comfortable among Armenians or other nations than Armenians or can you see a difference?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian?

Minority

- Do you consider yourself an ethnic minority?
- Do you feel that you face discrimination in the country where you live like an ethnic minority?
- Are there things they you refrain from just because you are an Armenian?

Religion

- What are your religious thoughts?
- If you consider yourself a Christian, to what extend do you fulfill the requirements of this religion?

- Do you see a connection between your Armenian identity and your religious thoughts?

Learning mother tongue

- In your opinion, how important is to speak Armenian?
- What do you think about classes being taught in Armenian?
- How related is your choice of attending Armenian schools or that your family considered it appropriate to being literate in Armenian?
- Do you feel more “Armenian” as you can speak Armenian?
- Do you consider Armenian language class as a class or as sharing a culture?

Social Network

- How frequently do you meet with your Armenian friends outside of school and what kind of activities do you engage?
- Are you active in school associations?
- In your opinion, do cultural activities in associations suffice in order to preserve Armenian identity and in terms bringing together the Armenian youth?

Education

- Are there things that you consider as problems at school regarding education? Or in your opinion, what kind of problems are there in education system of Armenian schools?
- Did you choose to attend Armenian school by yourself?
- If you did not attend Armenian school, do you think would you have a different perception about Armenian identity?

Teachers

- Do you see a difference between your Armenian and Turkish teachers?
- Do you think it is possible to mention an equality among Armenian and Turkish teachers at school?

- Would you like to have Armenian teachers for all your classes? Or in your opinion what meanings does certain classes being taught by Turkish and Culture class teachers carry?

Parents

- Do you speak Armenian at home among family members?
- Who can speak Armenian in the family? Among those who can, who can write and read?
- What are the education level of your parents? (Explanations in detail)
- If you have any, what is the education level of your sibling?
- How are the relationship of family members with Armenian community (in terms of socializing) ?

The second group will consist of Armenian students who have been educated in Turkish (dıcık) schools since primary school. We will investigate what it means to be an Armenian student in public schools as an "other" without learning, speaking or writing Armenian, and how this influenced their formation of identity.

Identity

- Do you self-identify as Armenian? (Explanations in detail)
- When do you feel like Armenian the most?
- Do you think attending Armenian schools has an impact on Armenian identity, if so how?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- Where do you feel more comfortable among Armenians or other nations than Armenians or can you see a difference?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian?

Minority

- Do you consider yourself an ethnic minority?
- Do you feel that you face discrimination in the country where you live like an ethnic minority?
- Are there things they you refrain from just because you are an Armenian?

Religion

- What are your religious thoughts?
- If you consider yourself a Christian, to what extend do you fulfill the requirements of this religion?
- Do you see a connection between your Armenian identity and your religious thoughts?

School practices

- In which schools did you get your elementary, middle and high school education?
- Did you choose to attend Turkish school?
- Why didn't you attend an Armenian school?
- Have you ever considered going to Armenian school, why?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian student in Turkish schools?
- Did you feel the need to hide Armenian identity at school?
- Have you ever experienced discrimination at school due to your Armenian identity? If so, by whom?

Parents

- Do you speak Armenian at home among family members?
- Who can speak Armenian in the family? Among those who can, who can write and read?
- What are the education level of your parents? (Explanations in detail)

- If you have any, what is the education level of your sibling?
- How are the relationship of family members with Armenian community (in terms of socializing) ?
- How frequently do you meet with your Armenian friends outside of school and what kind of activities do you engage?
- Are you active in school associations?

Social Network

- How frequently do you meet with your Armenian friends outside of school and what kind of activities do you engage?
- Are you active in school associations?
- In your opinion, do cultural activities in associations suffice in order to preserve Armenian identity and in terms bringing together the Armenian youth?
- Because you didn't attend Armenian schools, do you think you have a different perception about Armenian identity?

3. The third group will consist of students who have gone to both Turkish and Armenian schools. The aim will be to investigate how these students were impacted as a result of having different identities in the two schools and to get an impression of the identity perception of this group through questions that will reflect being an insider when outside and an outsider and inside.

Identity

- Do you self-identify as Armenian? (Explanations in detail)
- When do you feel like Armenian the most?
- Do you think attending Armenian schools has an impact on Armenian identity, if so how?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

- Where do you feel more comfortable among Armenians or other nations than Armenians or can you see a difference?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian?

Minority

- Do you consider yourself an ethnic minority?
- Do you feel that you face discrimination in the country where you live like an ethnic minority?
- Are there things they you refrain from just because you are an Armenian?

Religion

- What are your religious thoughts?
- If you consider yourself a Christian, to what extent do you fulfill the requirements of this religion?
- Do you see a connection between your Armenian identity and your religious thoughts?

Learning mother tongue

- In your opinion, how important is to speak Armenian?
- During the period you attended Armenian schools, what did you think about classes being taught in Armenian?
- How related is your choice of attending Armenian schools or that your family considered it appropriate to being literate in Armenian?
- Do you feel more “Armenian” as you can speak Armenian?
- During the period you attended Armenian schools, did you consider Armenian language class as a class or as sharing a culture?

Social Network

- How frequently do you meet with your Armenian friends outside of school and what kind of activities do you engage?

- Are you active in school associations?
- In your opinion, do cultural activities in associations suffice in order to preserve Armenian identity and in terms bringing together the Armenian youth?

Education

- How was your process of transferring from Armenian/Turkish school to Armenian/Turkish school? Did you choose to transfer by yourself?
- Can you compare your perception about your identity when you were a student in Armenian school and in Turkish school?
- Have you faced discrimination during the time you were a student in Turkish school? How?
- If you compare the two schools in terms of education, what can you say?
- Do you think it is necessary for Armenian youth to attend Armenian schools? Why?
- If you didnot attend Armenian school, do you think would you have a different perception about Armenian identity?
- Do you see a difference between your Armenian and Turkish teachers?

Parents

- Do you speak Armenian at home among family members?
- Who can speak Armenian in the family? Among those who can, who can write and read?
- What are the education level of your parents? (Explanations in detail)
- If you have any, what is the education level of your sibling?
- How are the relationship of family members with Armenian community (in terms of socializing) ?
- What are the effect of your family on your transfer?

4. The fourth group will consist of students who have graduated from Armenian schools. The interviews with people in this group will be done to

get an impression of what kind of awareness they experienced about their identity as a result of their encounters with being the "other" at work or college or another institution after graduating from school.

Identity

- Do you self-identify as Armenian? (Explanations in detail)
- When do you feel like Armenian the most?
- Do you think attending Armenian schools has an impact on Armenian identity, if so how?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- Where do you feel more comfortable among Armenians or other nations than Armenians or can you see a difference?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian?

Minority

- Do you consider yourself an ethnic minority?
- Do you feel that you face discrimination in the country where you live like an ethnic minority?
- Are there things they you refrain from just because you are an Armenian?

Religion

- What are your religious thoughts?
- If you consider yourself a Christian, to what extend do you fulfill the requirements of this religion?
- Do you see a connection between your Armenian identity and your religious thoughts?

Learning mother tongue

- In your opinion, how important is to speak Armenian?

- How related is your choice of attending Armenian schools or that your family considered it appropriate to being literate in Armenian?
- Do you feel more “Armenian” as you can speak Armenian?
- Do you consider Armenian language class as a class or as sharing a culture?

Social Network

- Are you active in school associations?
- Do you participate community activities?
- In your opinion, do cultural activities in associations suffice in order to preserve Armenian identity (or in terms bringing together the Armenian youth)?
 - Did you stay in contact with your Armenian friends after your graduation?

Education

- Did you choose to attend Armenian school by yourself?
- If you did not attend Armenian school, do you think would you have a different perception about Armenian identity?
- After your graduation, while you were in different institutions, such as during your university education or in your workplace, did you feel different because you are an Armenian? Why?
- Do you see a difference in the conditions of the school between the times you were a student and now, in your opinion what has changed?
- Have you ever regretted attending Armenian school?
- In your opinion, what kind of problems were there in schools during the times you were a student? Or what kinds of things you were not pleased with while you were a student?

Parents

- Do you speak Armenian at home among family members?

- Who can speak Armenian in the family? Among those who can, who can write and read?
- What are the education level of your parents? (Explanations in detail)
- If you have any, what is the education level of your sibling?
- How are the relationship of family members with Armenian community (in terms of socializing) ?
- Do you have children? If so and if s/he is a student in Armenian school right now: Why did you send your child to Armenian school? Do you consider transferring your child to another school? Why?

5. in-depth interviews with past and present headmasters of Armenian schools will contain questions to investigate the education and its problems, as well as the extent to which Armenian schools are influencing the students' Armenian identity.

Identity

- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian?
- In your opinion, does attending Armenian school affect in forming Armenian identity, if so, how?

Mother tongue

- In your opinion, how important is to speak Armenian for an Armenian? (how important should it be)
- What do you think about classes being taught in Armenian?
- How do you consider the attitude of the youth toward Armenian language?

School practices

- Are there things that you consider as problems at school regarding education? Or in your opinion, what kind of problems are there in education system of Armenian schools?
- Are you active in school associations? Do you encourage students to be active?
- In your opinion, do cultural activities in associations suffice in order to preserve Armenian identity (or in terms bringing together the Armenian youth)?
- Do you see a difference between your Armenian and Turkish teachers?
- Do you think it is possible to mention an equality among Armenian and Turkish teachers at school?
- Would you like to have Armenian teachers for all your classes? Or in your opinion what meanings does certain classes being taught by Turkish teachers carry?
- What kind of activities are organized in Armenian schools in order to create a consciousness of being Armenian among the youth?
- What do you think about that Armenian history cannot be taught in Armenian schools?
- How long have you been working? Comparing to previous years, what kind of changes (positive/negative) happened in conditions of the schools?
- Comparing your school to other schools, what are the differences which come forward in your opinion?
- What do you think about that the students continue their education in Turkish schools in recent years especially after 4+4 system?
- Have you ever worked in a Turkish school? If so, when you compare them to Armenian schools, can you tell what kind of characteristics are prominent?

Parents

- Do you speak Armenian at home among family members?

- Who can speak Armenian in the family? Among those who can, who can write and read?
- What are the education level of your parents? (Explanations in detail)
- If you have any, what is the education level of your sibling?
- How are the relationship of family members with Armenian community (in terms of socializing) ?
- Do you have children? If so and if s/he is a student in Armenian school right now: Why did you send your child to Armenian school? Do you consider transferring your child to another school? Why? If not why?

Education System

- What are the effects of minority schools being subjected to private schools regulations (the issue of non-status)?
- What kind of problems does it create that chief deputy principals are register supervisor of only teachers teaching Turkish and culture classes?
- What are the problems you face in training and hiring teachers?
- What kind of problems does it create that Turkish, Social sciences, Turkish language and literature, History, Geography, Revolution history and sociology classes teachers are being assigned by MEB and Armenian teachers cannot teach these classes (they cannot be hired)?
- What kind of problems do you face in preparing and acquiring Armenian educational materials?
- What kind of problems does the obligation of being a member to the same minority while registering Armenian schools create in student admission processes?
- In your opinion, what kind of problem does it create that minority schools do not receive funding from state budget in education?
- What are the problems you face in organizing activities in their own minority language in minority schools?

- What are your thoughts on the decrease in student numbers in Armenian schools?
- In your opinion, how is the communication of Armenian schools with other schools, what can be done to strengthen this communication?
- Some of the difficulties faced in Armenian schools are experienced in all schools in Turkey. How do these mutual problems caused by education system affect minority schools?

6. In this group, interviews with both Armenian and Turkish teachers who oversee Armenian schools will be carried out. In addition, language-identity relationship will be explored and will be discussed with past and present Armenian teachers.

Identity

- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian living in Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be an Armenian?
- In your opinion, does attending Armenian school affect in forming Armenian identity, if so, how?

Mother tongue

- In your opinion, how important is to speak Armenian for an Armenian? (how important should it be)
- What do you think about classes being taught in Armenian?
- How do you consider the attitude of the youth toward Armenian language?

School practices

- Are there things that you consider as problems at school regarding education? Or in your opinion, what kind of problems are there in education system of Armenian schools?

- Are you active in school associations? Do you encourage students to be active?
- In your opinion, do cultural activities in associations suffice in order to preserve Armenian identity (or in terms bringing together the Armenian youth)?
- Do you see a difference between your Armenian and Turkish teachers?
- Do you think it is possible to mention an equality among Armenian and Turkish teachers at school?
- Would you like to have Armenian teachers for all your classes? Or in your opinion what meanings does certain classes being taught by Turkish teachers carry?
- What kind of activities are organized in Armenian schools in order to create a consciousness of being Armenian among the youth?
- What do you think about that Armenian history cannot be taught in Armenian schools?
- How long have you been working? Comparing to previous years, what kind of changes (positive/negative) happened in conditions of the schools?
- Comparing your school to other schools, what are the differences which come forward in your opinion?
- What do you think about that the students continue their education in Turkish schools in recent years especially after 4+4 system?
- Have you ever worked in a Turkish school? If so, when you compare them to Armenian schools, can you tell what kind of characteristics are prominent?

Parents

- Do you speak Armenian at home among family members?
- Who can speak Armenian in the family? Among those who can, who can write and read?
- What are the education level of your parents? (Explanations in detail)
- If you have any, what is the education level of your sibling?

- How are the relationship of family members with Armenian community (in terms of socializing) ?
- Do you have children? If so and if s/he is a student in Armenian school right now: Why did you send your child to Armenian school? Do you consider transferring your child to another school? Why? If not why?

Education System⁵⁵⁴

- What are the effects of minority schools being subjected to private schools regulations (the issue of non-status)?
- What kind of problems does it create that chief deputy principals are register supervisor of only teachers teaching Turkish and culture classes?
- What are the problems you face in training and hiring teachers?
- What kind of problems does it create that Turkish, Social sciences, Turkish language and literature, History, Geography, Revolution history and sociology classes teachers are being assigned by MEB and Armenian teachers cannot teach these classes (they cannot be hired)?
- What kind of problems do you face in preparing and acquiring Armenian educational materials?
- What kind of problems does the obligation of being a member to the same minority while registering Armenian schools create in student admission processes?
- In your opinion, what kind of problem does it create that minority schools do not receive funding from state budget in education?
- What are the problems you face in organizing activities in their own minority language in minority schools?
- What are your thoughts on the decrease in student numbers in Armenian schools?
- In your opinion, how is the communication of Armenian schools with other schools, what can be done to strengthen this communication?

⁵⁵⁴ Kaya, 2013, p. 12-24

- Some of the difficulties faced in Armenian schools are experienced in all schools in Turkey. How do these mutual problems caused by education system affect minority schools?

APPENDIX B: PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 4: An Armenian School in Ankara before 1915



Figure 5: Mesropyan Armenian School, 1947



Figure 6: An Armenian School in Antep



Figure 7: An Armenian School in Diyarbakır

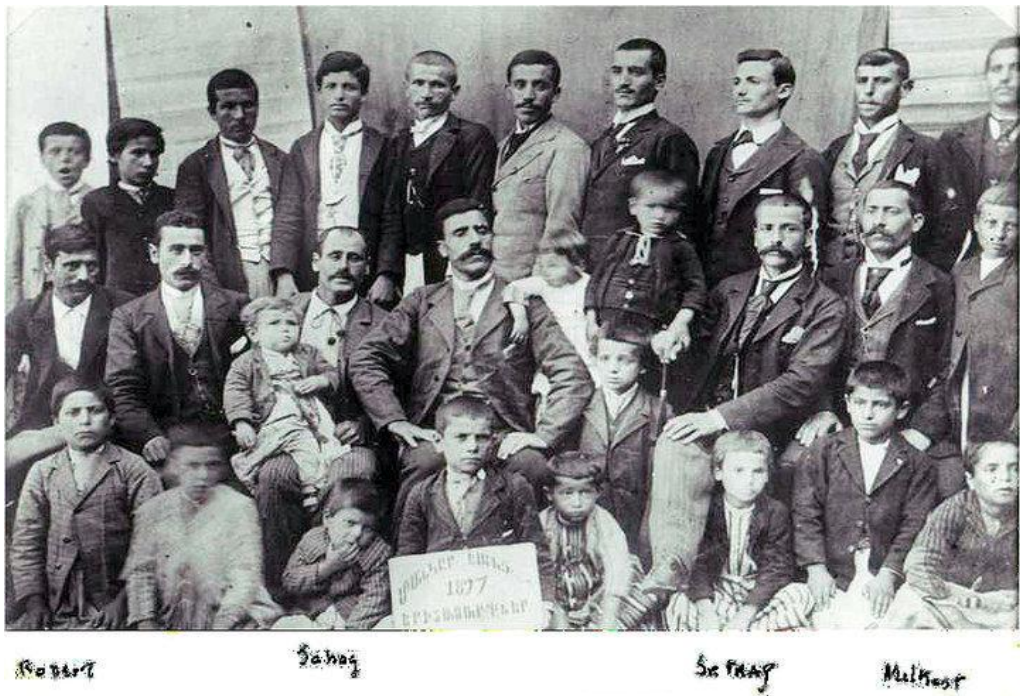


Figure 8: Getronagan Mixed Armenian School, İstanbul, 1951



Figure 9: Sahakyan Nunyan Armenian School



Figure 10: Levon Vartuhyan Armenian School, İstanbul, 1987



Figure 11: Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian School



APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Barış, Linda
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date of Birth: 16 February 1981
Place of Birth: Kastamonu
Marital Status: Single
Phone: 0530 346 32 67
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Sociology Department	2008
BS	Istanbul University Philosophy Department	2002
High School	Özel Sahakyan Nunyan Ermeni Lisesi	1998

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2010-2017	METU Department of Sociology	Research Assistant
2008-2009	Özel Sahakyan Nunyan Ermeni Lisesi	Guidance Counselor
2005-2006	Özel Surp Haç Tıbrevank Ermeni Lisesi	Guidance Counselor

2003-2005	Kadıköy Güzel Sanatlar Lisesi	Philosophy Teacher
1999-2001	Agos Newspaper	Correspondent

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Fluent English, Fluent Armenian

HOBBIES

Writing, Painting, Swimming, Walking

APPENDIX D: TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ERMENİ OKULLARININ ERMENİ ÖĞRENCİLERİN ETNİK KİMLİK OLUŞUMUNA ETKİSİ

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'deki Ermeni okullarının Ermeni kimliğinin oluşumundaki etkisi, ulus-devlet ve okul/kimlik ilişkisi, Türkiye'de halen yaşamakta olan Ermenilerin kimlik sorunsalları, Türk kimliğinin nasıl bir tarihsel süreçte evrildiği ve bu sürecin Ermeni okullarını, Ermeni okulu öğrencilerini, Ermenileri ve Ermeni kimliğini nasıl etkilediği üzerinden değerlendirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Türkiye'deki tüm okullarda ve dolayısıyla da Ermeni okullarında, Türk milli eğitim sistemi anlayışı çerçevesinde, müfredat, dersler, derslerin içerikleri ve ders kitapları gibi çeşitli araçlar yoluyla inşa edilmeye çalışılan Türk kimliği ile Ermeni kimliğinin karşılaşması sonucunda ortaya çıkan kimliğin nasıl bir kimlik olduğunun anlaşılmasına çalışıldığı bu çalışmada ayrıca Ermeni öğrencilerin bu iki kimliğin etkisine de maruz kaldıkları Ermeni okullarında kendi etnik kimliklerini nasıl algıladıkları da değerlendirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Ermeni Okulları üzerinde doğrudan etki yaratan eğitim alanındaki Türkleştirme politikaları Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin kuruluşundan bu yana çeşitli iktidarlar tarafından farklı tarihsel süreçlerde uygulanmış olsa da özünde aynı zihniyetin ürünüdürler. Türk kimliğinin birleştiriciliği etrafında şekillenen bu politikaların okullara ve öğrencilere nasıl yansımış olduğu da bu çalışmanın temel bileşenlerinden biridir.

Okulların kimlik oluşturmadaki etkisi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda Türk milli eğitim sisteminin oluşturmak istediği Türk kimliğinin temel özellikleri nelerdir? Bu kimlik kimleri kapsamakta, kimleri dışarıda bırakmaktadır. Türkiye'de Ermeni kimliğinin oluşumu ile ilgili bir çalışma yaptığınızda ister istemez Türk kimliğinin oluşumundan da bahsetmek durumundasınızdır. Bu iki kimliğin oluşum süreçleri niçin birbirleriyle bu denli iç içe geçmiş bulunmaktadır? Ermeni okullarında Ermeni ve Türk kimlikleri

birbirleriyle nasıl karşılaşmaktadırlar. Ermeni öğrenciler bu çift yönlü işleyen kimlik oluşum süreçlerini ne şekilde içselleştirmektedirler? Bu kimliklerin temsili ne şekilde gerçekleşmektedir?

Türkiye’de Ermeni kimliği ve Ermeni okullarının kimlik oluşumuna etkisi, literatürde yer alan, okulların kimlik üzerindeki etkisi ile ilgili yazılmış teoriler üzerinden değerlendirilmeye çalışılsa da fazlasıyla kendine has durumlar yaratan bir karşılaşma biçimidir. Kendine has durumlar olarak tanımladığımız özellikler Türklerin ve Ermenilerin Türk-ulus devleti kuruluş ve gelişim aşamalarında birbirleriyle olan ilişkisinin tarihsellik bağlamında komplike bir durum yaratmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Yaptığımız çalışma, ancak bu komplike durumun çözümlenmesinin ardından, Ermeni okulları ve Ermeni kimliği üzerine yapacağımız değerlendirmelerin sağlıklı ve nitelikli sonuçlar vereceğini varsaymaktadır. Bu nedenle çalışmamızda, okul /kimlik ilişkisi, ulus-devlet ve ulusal kimlik inşası ilişkisi üzerinden ele alınmıştır. Çalışmadaki her bir bölüm, ulus-devletlerin genel bir özelliğinden hareketle, Türklerin ulus-devletleşme sürecini ve bu süreçte Türk kimliğinin oluşumunu, aynı zamanda, ulus-devletin azınlıklarına yönelik politikalarıyla birlikte değerlendirilmiştir.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümüne, 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren Osmanlıdaki anayasa ve eğitim konularındaki modernleşme çabalarının Ermeni cemaati üzerinde oluşan doğrudan etkisinin Ermenilerin modernleşme çabalarına nasıl yansımış olduğunun analizi ile başlanmıştır. Bu dönemde Avrupa’da eğitim görmeye başlayan İstanbul Ermeni burjuvazisine mensup gençler dönüşlerinde bir “uyanış” hareketini de beraberinde getirmişlerdir, Bu hareket kendisini özellikle eğitim alanında göstermiştir. Okullaşmanın yanı sıra, okul sayısındaki artış ve çeşitlenmenin arttığı bu dönemde Anadolu’daki Ermeni okullarının sayısı 1830’lu yıllarda yüzerli basamaklarla ifade edilmeye başlamıştır. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Ermenilerin eğitimde atılım yaptıkları döneminin başlangıcı olarak 1840 yılı kabul edilmektedir. Ermeni cemaati açısından eğitimin modernleşmesi yönündeki çabaların yoğunlaştığı bu

dönem eğitimin niteliğini yükseltme gerekliliğinin Ermeni aydınlar tarafından tartışıldığı bir dönem olmuştur. Bu dönemde açılmaya başlayan yeni Ermeni okulları eğitimde ilerlemenin temel etmenlerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu nedendir ki bu okullardaki eğitim ve öğretim ücrete tabi tutulmamıştır. Abdülhamid rejiminin baskıcı döneminde ise gayrimüslimlere özellikle de Ermenilere olan güvensizlik Osmanlı'nın eğitim politikalarına açıkça yansımıştır. Bu dönemde kurulan maarif müdürlüklerinin amacı Ermeni okullarını denetlemektir.

1913-1914 öğretim yılı için patrikhane tarafından yapılan bir sayıma göre o yıllarda İstanbul'da 64, İmparatorluk genelinde 1932 Ermeni öğretim kurumu bulunmaktadır. Devletin 1915 yılında çıkardığı Mekatib-i Hususiye Talimatnamesi (yönetmelik) ile cemaat okullarını devlet daha yakından denetleme imkânı bulmuştur. Talimatnameye göre artık Ermeni cemaati ancak kendi mahallelerinde ve köylerinde okul açabileceklerdir ve Türkçe dışında bir lisanla eğitim yapan okullarda ise Türkçe, Türk Tarih ve Coğrafyası dersleri Türk öğretmenlerince Türkçe olarak okutulacaktır. Yönetmelikte devlet denetiminde oldukları yazılan okulların bu durumu günümüz Türkiye'sinde çeşitli farklılıklarla da olsa temelde aynı zihniyetle hala devam etmektedir. Böylelikle ilk defa Lozan'dan sonra da varlığını "milli tarih", "milli coğrafya" adlarıyla sürdüreceği "Türk tarih ve coğrafya" dersleri ile Türkçe dersleri Türk öğretmenler tarafından okutulmaya başlanmıştır. Daha sonra her gayrimüslim okulda okul müdürünün yanında bir Türk Müdür Başyardımcısı'nın da bulunma zorunluluğunun getirilmesiyle bu öğretmenler (devlet tarafından gayrimüslim okulları özellikle de Ermeni okullarını denetleme ve onlar hakkında her türlü bilgiye sahip olabilme amacıyla görevlendirilen ancak ikincil görevi eğitmen olan) birer ajan öğretmen olarak algılanmışlardır. Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde, tarihsel süreç içerisinde bu öğretmenlerin varlığının Ermeni eğitim kurumlarına ne şekilde yansıdığı, okuldaki diğer öğretmen ve öğrencileri hangi yönden ne şekilde etkilediği, günümüzde ne şekilde algılandığına dair değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır. 1915 yılında çıkan bu

yönetmelik Ermeni okullarında günümüzde hala devam eden sorunların bir çeşit kaynağı olarak yorumlandığında, ilk kez yasalaşması açısından önemlidir. Türkiye cumhuriyetinin kurulduğu 1923 yılından bu yana azınlık okulları kategorisinde yer alan Ermeni okulları ve tüm bileşenleri, Türk-ulus devletinin kuruluş ve gelişim aşamalarından bugüne dek, Kemalist ideoloji çerçevesinde belirlenen ve oluşturulmak istenen Türk kimliğinin çeşitli etkilerine maruz kalarak şekillenmiştir. Türkiye cumhuriyetinin ulus devletleşme sürecinin ilk yıllarından itibaren hükümet azınlık ve Ermeni okullarına yönelik tavrını belirlemiş ve eğitim alanında bu minvalde politikalar üretmiştir.

Türkiye’de, Ermeni kimliğinin korunması ve sürdürülmesinde en büyük payın düştüğü Ermeni okullarındaki öğrenciler, Türk kimliğinin vazgeçilmez unsuru Türk dili egemenliğinde Türk Mili Eğitim Sistemi tarafından eğitim dili Türkçe olarak belirlenen müfredat ve resmi tarih anlayışı çerçevesinde oluşturulmuş olan tarih dersi, tarih ders kitapları ve Ermeni okullarına yönelik uygulanan politikaların da okullara ve dolayısıyla da kendi etnik kimliklerine yansıyan yönlerini çeşitli şekillerde deneyimleyerek Ermeni kimliklerine yönelik farklı kavrayışlara sahip olmuşlardır.

Türkiye Ermenilerinin kimliklerini korumasındaki en önemli faktörlerden birisi de Ermeni okullarıdır. Lozan Antlaşmasından sonra varlıklarını sürdürmeye çalışan Ermeni okulları özellikle Ermeni dili açısından, okulların dernekleri ve organizasyonlarıyla birlikte kültürel kimliği koruma anlamında çok önemli bir konuma sahiptir.

Ulus-devletlerin kuruluş aşamalarında bir ulusal kimlik ve bilinç yaratabilmek adına en çok başvurdukları ve en etkili araçları eğitimidir. Eğitim, gücünü, toplumda belli bir yaşa gelmiş her kesimden insanın yine belirlenen bir yaşa kadar her gün mevcut bulunmak zorunda olduğu okullardan alır. Öğrencilere dilediği yönde biçim verebileceği okullar aracılığıyla müdahale alanının sınırları belirlenir. Maruz kalınan müfredat, ders kitapları ve içerikleri, dersliklerin düzenleniş biçimi, ders süreleri, hangi dersin, ne şekilde, kim

tarafından nasıl verileceğinin tanımları Türk milli eğitim sistemi tarafından belirlenir. Tüm bu tanımlar Türk kimliğinin özellikleri etrafında şekillenmiştir. Türkiye cumhuriyetinde azınlık statüsünde olan Ermeni okulları da aynı eğitim sistemine bağlı kurumlar oldukları için tabii oldukları müfredat da işledikleri ders kitapları (Ermenice işlenen dersler dışında) da aynıdır. Bu yüzden çalışmanın özellikle ikinci, üçüncü dördüncü ve beşinci bölümlerinde Türk kimliğinin devlet okullarında nasıl şekillendiği bölümler boyunca ele alınan başlıklar çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır.

Ermeni okullarının Ermeni öğrencilerin Ermeni kimliğinin oluşumundaki etkisinin araştırıldığı bu çalışmada niceliksel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmış ve veri toplama ve veri analizleri süreci metin analizleri ile desteklenmiştir. Derinlemesine mülakatlarda kullanılacak sorular; Ermeni kimliğini oluşturan temel etmenler ve bu etmenlerin algılanış biçimlerinin, Ermeni okullarında hangi hükümet politikalarıyla dönüştürüldüğünü anlayabilmek ve bu durumun öğrencilere, okullara, mezunlarına ve öğretmenlere olan kimliksel yansımaları analiz edebilmek amacıyla, kimlik, azınlık, din, anadil, sosyal ağlar, aile, eğitim sistemi gibi başlıklar altında gruplandırılmışlardır. Her soru grubu görüşme yapılan kişinin özellikleri dikkate alınarak hazırlanmış ve mülakat sürecinde alınan yanıtlarla da şekillenme süreçleri devam etmiştir. Bu çalışmada, Ermeni okullarının Ermeni kimliğine olan etkisini daha iyi analiz edebilmek için birbirinden farklı özelliklere sahip kişilerden seçilmiştir. Burada farklı özelliklerden kasıt, görüşmecilerin Ermeni okulları ile olan ilişkilene biçim ve sürelerindeki farklılaşmaları kapsamaktadır.

Tüm gruptaki sorular ve yanıtları okul ve kimlik oluşumu ilişkisi kapsamında bir metin analizi yapılarak değerlendirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda kimlerle görüşme yapılması gerektiğinin, görüşmecilerin kimlerden oluşacağını tespiti ve görüşmeci grupların sınıflandırmaları, Ermeni okullarında hiç eğitim görmemiş veya Ermeni okullarındaki eğitimini yarıda bırakarak, ilkokul, ortaokul veya lisede Türk okullarına geçiş yapmış yahut

Türk okullarında eğitim gördükten sonra Ermeni okullarına geçiş yapmış öğrencilerin ve yalnızca Ermeni okullarına devam etmiş öğrencilerin ve mezunlarının birbirleriyle karşılaştırılması esasına dayanmaktadır. Ermeni öğrencilerin kimlik algısında, Ermeni okullarının etkisini anlayabilmemizin en temel yolu, Ermeni okullarının yokluğunda öğrencinin Ermeni kimliğine neler olduğunu saptamaktan geçmektedir. Ayrıca Ermeni okullarında görev yapan müdürlerin ve Ermeni öğretmenlerin okulların kimlik üzerindeki etkisine dair yaklaşımlarının da karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alınması gerekliliğinden hareketle, görüşme yapılan kişiler temel olarak altı farklı gruba ayrılmıştır.

Birinci gruptaki görüşmeciler 2016-2017 eğitim öğretim yılında son sınıf öğrencisi olan öğrenciler arasından seçilmiştir. İstanbul'da lise eğitimi de veren toplam beş adet Ermeni okulu bulunmaktadır. Görüşme yapılan öğrenciler, Özel Sahakyan Nunyan Ermeni Lisesi, Özel Getronagan Ermeni Lisesi, Özel Surp Haç Tıbrevank Ermeni Lisesi öğrencileridir.

İkinci gruptaki görüşmeciler yalnızca Türk okullarında eğitim görmüş olan kişilerden oluşmaktadır. Üçüncü gruptaki görüşmeciler kendi içlerinde iki gruba ayrılmaktadır: Ermeni okullarında eğitime başlayıp sonrasında Türk okullarına gidenler ve öğrenimine Türk okullarında başlayıp sonrasında Ermeni okullarına geçiş yapan öğrenciler. Bu ayrımın nedeni, çalışmamızda Ermeni bir öğrencinin ilk eğitim gördüğü okulun Türk okulu mu yoksa Ermeni okulu mu olduğunun kimlik oluşumu açısından büyük önem arz etmesidir. Ermeni öğrenci eğer ilk önce bir Türk okulunda eğitim gördüyse, Ermeni okuluna geçtiğinde, ötekilik deneyimini küçük yaşta edinmiş olmaktadır. Ötekileşme bilincinin ardından Ermeni okuluna geçiş bu öğrencilerin kimliklerine ve okullarına farklı tarzda bir aidiyet duymalarına yol açabileceği düşüncesiyle bu çalışmada geçişlerin zamanlamalarına dikkat edilerek değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır. Öte yandan, Ermeni okullarına uygulanan politikaların bir sorun olarak Ermeni okullarına yansıdığı alanların, Ermeni okullarında eğitim görmeye başlayan Ermeni öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisi, bu öğrencilerin sonrasında Türk okullarına devam etmeyi tercih edişinin nedenlerinde saklıdır.

Bu yüzden bu gruptaki öğrencilerin görüşlerine özellikle Ermeni okullarında yaşanan problemlerin ele alındığı kısımlarda yer verilmiştir.

Dördüncü gruptaki mezun görüşmecilerin ise yalnızca Ermeni okullarında eğitim gördüğü yaklaşık 12 yıl boyunca çoğunluğun Ermenilerden olduğu bir alanda bulunması, kendi farklılığının bilincini de farklı bir biçimde oluşturmasına yol açmaktadır. Türkiye’de Ermeni olma deneyimi, Ermeni okullarından mezun olduktan sonra başlamaktadır. Mezuniyetin üzerinden ne kadar zaman geçtiği ve bu zaman diliminde ne tür deneyimler yaşadığın da Ermeni kimliği algısı üzerinde önemli etkilerde bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada, mezunların oluşturduğu gruptaki görüşmecilerin birbirine çok yakın dönemlerde mezun olmuş kişilerden oluşmasına dikkat edilmiştir.

Beşinci gruptaki görüşmeciler, Ermeni okullarında müdürlük yapmış ve yapmakta olan kişilerden oluşmaktadır. Milli eğitim sistemi kapsamında Ermeni okullarının okul müdürlerinin Ermeni ancak müdür yardımcılarının Türk olması zorunluluğunun uygulamaya konması ve Ermeni okullarında müdürlük görevinin yetki ve sınırları ile müdür yardımcılarının yetki ve sınırlarının neler olduğunun belirlenmesi, eğitimde Türkleştirme politikaları uygulamalarının somut bir örneğidir. Bu nedenle bu gruptaki görüşmecilere yöneltilen sorular, bu uygulamaların okullara nasıl yansıdığı ve ne gibi sorunlara yol açtığı değerlendirilmesi amacıyla ayrıca düzenlenmiştir. Okul müdürlerinin Ermeni okullarındaki eğitimin nasıl olması gerektiği yönündeki bakış açısının ve eğitim anlayışının müdürlük görevlerini yerine getirdikleri Ermeni okullarının eğitim politikaları üzerinde, büyük oranda belirleyici bir etkiye sahiptir. Bu nedenle bu gruptaki görüşmecilerin eğitim anlayışları okullarındaki öğrencilerin okulları ve Ermeni kimlikleri ile ilgili algıyı da etkilemektedir. Her Ermeni okulunun, geleneksel yapısı ve kendine has özelliklerinin yanı sıra eğitim anlayışıyla da, birbirleriyle karşılaştırıldığında farklı Ermeni kimlikleri oluşturduğu varsayımından hareketle, öğrencilerin kimlik algıları, okul müdürlerinin bu minvalde verdikleri yanıtlar birlikte değerlendirilmiştir.

Altıncı grup ise Ermeni okullarında görev yapmış veya yapmakta olan Ermeni öğretmenlerden oluşmaktadır. Türkçe ve Türkçe kültür dersi öğretmenleri arasında işe alınma ve görevlendirme açısından önemli farkların mevcut olduğu Ermeni öğretmenler, Türkçe kültür dersi öğretmenleri gibi MEB tarafından atanan devlet memurları değildirler ve maaşlarını devletten değil Ermeni okulları yönetiminden almaktadırlar. Ancak genel olarak Ermeni okullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin görevlerine uzun süreler devam ettikleri, birçoğunun da emekliye ayrılana dek görevlerini yine çoğunlukla aynı Ermeni okulunda sürdürdükleri gözlemlenmektedir. Okulların ve öğrenci sayılarının azlığı da bu durumu oluşturan etmenlerin başında gelmektedir. Diğer bir etmen ise özellikle Ermenice dersi verebilecek veya sınıf öğretmeni olabilecek öğretmen bulma konusunda yaşanan sıkıntılardır. Öğretmen yetiştirmede ve uygun öğretmen bulabilmede yaşanan zorlukların nedeni ise hükümetin bu alanda uyguladığı bir çok politikanın sonucudur. Bu nedenle görüşme yaptığımız Ermeni öğretmenlerin çoğu Ermeni okullarında uzun yıllar öğretmenlik yapmış kişilerden oluşmaktadır.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde Türk kimliğini oluşturan temel özelliklerinin neler olduğu ve bu kimliğin azınlıkları, nasıl tanımladığının yanı sıra, “Türkleştirme politikalarının tarihi aynı zamanda Türkiye’deki azınlıkların tarihidir” temellendirmesi üzerinden ele alacağımız, Türkiye’de yaşayan azınlıklara ve Ermenilere yönelik uygulanan bu politikaların eğitim alanındaki yansımaları nasıldır, sorusunun yanıtı araştırılmıştır.

Türk eğitim sistemini şekillendiren politikalar iki yönde işlemektedir. Hükümet, uyguladığı politikaları bir yandan okul müfredatının içine yedirerek işletmekte diğer yandan örneğin Ermeni okullarını statüsüzlük sorunuyla baş başa bırakacak yahut Ermeni okullarına öğretmen alımını zorlaştıracak yasalar çıkararak uygulamaktadır. Politikaların uygulanma biçimlerinden ilki, Türk ulusal kimliğinin milli eğitim bakanlığınca onaylanan müfredat ve ders kitapları aracılığıyla Ermeni okulları dâhil tüm okullara benimsetilmeye çalışılmasıdır. İkincisi ise yalnızca azınlık veya Ermeni okullarına yönelik

hazırlanılan yasaların uygulanmaya konulma biçimi ve şeklini içermektedir. Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde ele alınacak olan bu politikalar aynı zamanda Ermeni okullarında günümüzde hala devam eden birçok soruna zemin hazırlamıştır. Örneğin hem azınlık hem de özel okul statüsüne sahip olan Ermeni okullarının devlet bütçesinden statüsüzlük sorunu nedeniyle bütçe alamaması okullarda büyük maddi sıkıntılar doğurmaktadır. Bu maddi sıkıntılarla baş etmeye çalışırken yaşanan sıkıntılar öğrencilere ve velilere yansımakta bu kez de öğrenciler artık Ermeni okullarını tercih etmeyip, özel okullara gitmek istemektedirler. Bu şekilde azalan öğrenci kayıtları, Ermeni okullarını maddi olarak daha da zora sokmaktadır. Ermeni okullarının, öğrenci velilerinin kayıt sırasında yaptığı bağışlarla, gönüllülük esasına dayanarak kazanç sağladığı düşünüldüğünde, maddi anlamda yaşanan kısır döngü daha da iyi anlaşılacaktır. Ermeni okullarının yüz yüze kaldığı sorunları bu açıdan değerlendirdiğimizde, yaşanan problemlerin, aynı anda hem neden hem de sonucu oluşturduğu ve birbirinin içine geçerek, giderek karmaşıklaşan ve içinden çıkılmaz bir hale geldikleri gözlemlenmektedir.

Çalışmanın dördüncü bölümünde ise Ermeni öğrencilerin Ermeni kimlikleri ile ilgili olan algılarının müfredat ve ders kitapları aracılığıyla ne yönde şekillendiği ele alınmıştır. Eğitim müfredat yoluyla düzenlenen anlayışın bir yansımasıdır. Bu anlayış kendisini en çok ders kitapları aracılığıyla yaygınlaştırır. Türkiye’de tüm ders kitaplarının giriş bölümünde Türk ulusal mücadelesini sürdürebilecek millete sadık bir neslin portresi çizilmektedir. Özellikle milli olarak nitelendirilen derslerin kitaplarında ise verilmek istenen ulusal kimlik bilinci yalnızca giriş kısımlarında değil bu kitapların içeriklerindeki zihniyette ve anlatım tarzında da açığa çıkmaktadır. Milli tarih, milli coğrafya gibi dersler ve bu derslerin kitapları, öğrencilere, ulusal tarih bilincini ve yurtseverliği aşılama çalışmaktadır. Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarından itibaren Ermeni okullarında bu dersleri veren öğretmenlerin “milli kimlik duygusuna haiz kişilerden” oluşmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Türkçe ve Türkçe Kültür Derslerinin içerikleri ise Milli Eğitim Bakanlığınca belirlenen müfredat

çerçevesinde oluşturulur. Ayrıca bu dersleri Ermeni öğretmenlerin vermesi de yasaktır. Bu da Ermeni okullarında öğrenim gören öğrencilerin Türk kimliği ile ilgili algısını şekillendirmeye yaradığı düşünülen başka bir unsurdur.

Bu haliyle müfredat okul sıralarından itibaren başlayarak aslında kişinin tüm hayatı boyunca taşıyacağı kimliğin ne yönde şekilleneceğinin belirli bir program halinde düzenlenmiş olmasıdır. Bu düzenleme kişinin kendi kimlik oluşumunu büyük ölçüde etkilediği gibi, kişinin yaşadığı toplumu ve toplumu oluşturan diğer bireyleri nasıl algılayacağını da etkilemektedir. Böylelikle, öğrencinin müfredatın belirleyiciliğinde deneyimlediği okul yaşantısı da öğrencilerin kimlik oluşumunda en temel yerlerden birini işgal etmiş olmaktadır. Müfredatın içeriğinin ve amaçlarının hangi yönde ve hangi amaçla oluşturulduğunun yanıtları aynı zamanda öğrencilerin ve ileride yer alacakları toplumun kolektif kimliğinin hangi şekilde tanımlanacağını da içermektedir.

Ulus-devletlerin milliyetçi anlayışları doğrultusunda oluşturmak istedikleri milli kimliğin sınırları, ulus devletin eğitim politikaları sonucunda belirlenip çerçevesinin çizildiği müfredat, müfredatın kaynakları ve araçları tarafından çizilmiştir. Baskın olan ulusal/etnik kimlik doğrultusunda düzenlenen müfredat nedeniyle farklı etnik kimliklere sahip birçok nesil de baskın kimlik ve kültürün egemenliğinde benzer bir anlayış içerisinde eğitim görmüştür. Müfredat kaynakları ve araçlarının hiç bir şekilde objektif ve nesnel olmaması sebebiyle, müfredatın neyi içerip neyi içermeyeceği, neyi dışarıda bırakacağı, her zaman baskın grupların çıkarları doğrultusunda şekillenmiştir. Bu nedenle müfredatın kullandığı araçlar politik bir sürecin de parçası olmaktadır. Ayrıca müfredat öğrencilere belli bir çerçevede sunmuş olduğu imgelemeler yoluyla ulus-devletin siyasal ideolojisini desteklemekte ve sürdürülmelerine olanak sağlamaktadır.

Türkiye’de de ders kitapları “meşru bilgi”nin sınırlarını belirlemesi sebebiyle her zaman müfredatın en önemli araçlarından biri olmuştur. Ders kitapları, kapaklarında kullanılan görsellerden itibaren, içerikleri ve kullanmış olduğu dil aracılığıyla, ele aldığı ya da almayı uygun bulmadığı konularla

öğrencilere temel bir mesaj verme gayesiyle hazırlanmaktadırlar. Hangi konular hakkında konuşulabileceğini, hangi konuların ise tabu olduğunu belirleyerek hakim söylemin kodlarını normalleştirilen kaynaklar olarak ders kitapları, Türkiye’de “resmi söylemi” yansıtan en temel unsurlardan biridir.

Müfredat milli kimliğe dâhil olanların ne gibi özelliklere sahip olması gerektiği ve neyi temsil ettiklerini, milli derslerin milli ders kitapları aracılığıyla küçük yaştan itibaren öğrencilere aşılır. Aynı müfredat, milli kimliğe dâhil olmayanların yani farklı etnik kimliklere sahip olanların da ne gibi özelliklere sahip olduğunu yine ders kitapları aracılığıyla öğrencilere belletir. Türkiye’de okullarda okutulan ders kitaplarında Türk milli kimliğine dâhil olmayan gayrimüslim azınlıklara dair bir çok ayrımcı ifade yer almaktadır. Müfredat farklı etnik grupların ne şekilde temsil edileceğini belirlemede anahtar bir role sahiptir. Sınıflarda öğrencilere aktarılacak olan bilgilerin düzenlenmesinde, hangisinin kabul edilebilir ve öğrencilere verilmeye değer olduğunu, hangisinin milli kimlik yaratmada uygunsuz olduğunu ve hangi olası bilginin gizlenmesi yahut söz edilmemesi gereken bilgiler olduğunu kendi ulus-devlet nosyonu çerçevesinde belirler.

Türk kültürü ve kimliğinin dışında hiçbir kimliğe ve kültüre yer verilmeyen, vermiş olsa bile yine kendi ulus-devlet anlayışının uygun gördüğü bir çerçeve içerisinde sunan müfredat ve ders kitaplarının ‘öteki’ne yönelik bakış açısı, öğrencilerin farklı kültür ve kimliklere dair önyargılar oluşturmalarına ve bu kültürleri yanlış tanınmasına neden olmuştur. Tarihsel bir bağlama oturtulan Türk devleti ve toplumuna karşı öğrencilerde ortak bir aidiyet hissi yaratmayı amaçlayan, müfredat, bu yolla ‘biz’ anlayışını da yaratmış olur. Yıldan yıla bazı değişikliklere tabi olarak değişen müfredat ve ders kitaplarında değişmeden günümüze kadar gelen şey ise Türk milletine ve Türk devletine bağlı, bu değerler etrafında birleşen, ortak bir kimlik oluşturma çabasıdır.

Ermenilerin, Ermenilerle ilgili meselelerin ve Türk-Ermeni ilişkilerinin nasıl ele alınmış olduğu, nasıl öğretildiği, ne şekilde işlenmekte olduğu veya

konu aktarılırken nasıl bir dil kullanıldığına baktığımızda, Ermenilerin, ders kitaplarında yer alan diğer azınlık gruplar veya farklı etnik dinsel grupların ele alınış biçiminden farklı bir yerde durduğunu görmekteyiz. 1915’de yaşanan olayların günümüzde hala güncelliğini koruması sebebiyle ders kitaplarında Ermenilerden sıkça bahsedilmektedir.

Okullarda, çift yönlü ve zıt kutuplu işleyen Türk ve Ermeni kimliğinin birbirlerini nasıl algıladığı da Türkiye’deki Ermeni öğrencilerin kimlik oluşumunda önemli bir role sahiptir. Ulus-devlet yapısının istediği yönde şekillendirdiği Türk kimliği ile kendini Türk olarak tanımlayanların oluşturduğu zihniyet ve yapı, kendisini tanımlarken Ermenilere ve Ermeni kimliğine atfettiği anlamla da birlikte var olur. Ermenilerin uzun yıllardan beri “yabancı ve hain” bir düşman olarak görülmeleri, Türk kimliğinin ve toplumunun en belirgin özelliklerinden biridir. Kısacası Türk’ün Ermeni’yi tanımlama biçimi, kendi Türklüğünü de tanımlama biçiminin bir parçasını oluşturur.

Görüşmecilerin çoğunun Ermeni olmalarından kaynaklı yaşadıkları ayrımcılık veya hakaretlerle ilgili olarak vurguladıkları şey toplumun “cahil” olmasıdır. Birçok öğrenci yapılan görüşmelerde sık sık tekrarladıkları, “keşke bilselerdi”, “hiç bilmiyorlar ki”, “birazcık tanısalar yaptıkları hakaretlerin ne kadar kötü olduğunu anlardı” türünden cümlelerle ne kadar yanlış tanındıklarına dair sitemde bulunmuşlardır. Yanlış tanıma ise Ermenilerde kendini kanıtlama, iyi olmaya çalışma gibi tepkilere yol açmaktadır.

Ermenilerin dışarıdan yabancı bir unsur olarak görülmeleri toplumsal bir kabule dönüşmüştür. Önyargılar ve yanlış tanıma sonucu oluşan Ermenilere yönelik kanıların iki önemli nedeninden birisi, Türk toplumunun Ermenileri tanımamasından ileri gelmektedir. Türk ulus-Devlet, okullarında veya ders kitaplarında, Türk kimliğini kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda, nasıl tanıtacağını seçip belirlemişse, Ermenilerin de nasıl tanıtılacağını belirlemiştir. M.Ö. 6. Yüzyıldan bu yana bu topraklarda yaşayan Ermenilerin Türk toplumu

tarafından “yabancı” olarak görülmesi, bilinçli yaratılan bir cehaletin yansımalarıdır.

Ermeni okullarında tarih dersleri ve tarih ders kitapları ile ilgili durumlar ise çalışmanın beşinci bölümünde temel olarak iki yönlü olarak ele alınmıştır. Bunlardan ilki Türk milli kimliği anlatısının yer aldığı tarih kitaplarının Ermenileri ne şekilde aktardığı ile ilgilidir. Ayrıca tarih derslerinde Ermenilerden bahsedilen kısımlarda tarih öğretmeni ile öğrencilerin yaşadıkları deneyimler de bu kapsamda ele alınacaktır. Burada bahsedilen durum Türkleştirme politikaları ekseninde düşünebileceğimiz, yani paralel giden bir durumdur. Nasıl ki azınlıkların tarihi bu ülkede Türkleştirme politikalarının da tarihidir. Tarih ders kitapları aracılığıyla yaratılan resmi tarih anlatımında kendisine yer bulan Türklük de, resmi tarih içinde azınlıklara karşı / ötekilere karşı var olan yaklaşımın da kendisidir. Türklerin ulusal bilinci ötekine karşı yaratılan bilinçle oluşturulmuştur. Bu Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde her zaman hâkim olan zihniyetin tarih ders kitaplarında somutlaşmış biçimlerinden biridir. Tarih öğretmenlerinin Ermeni okullarında bu kısımlar işlenirken takındığı tavır da öğrencilerin kendi kimlikleri hakkında öğretmenlerinin ne düşündüğünü, Ermenileri ne şekilde tanımladığını da yansıtan bir ayna işlevi görmektedir. Bu duruma ayrıca Türk okullarında eğitim görmekte olan Ermeni öğrencilerin gözünden de yer verilmeye çalışılmıştır. Devlet veya özel okullarda öğrenim gören Ermeni öğrencilerin tarih derslerinde maruz kaldığı ayrımcı davranışlar ve Türk toplumunun bu anlayışla yazılmış olan tarih ders kitaplarıyla şekillenen zihniyet, Ermenilere karşı sergilenen ayrımcı ve dışlayıcı mekanizmaların kaynaklarından belki de en önemlisidir. Türklerin Ermenileri ne şekilde görüp algıladığının zemini okul sıralarında oluşturulmakta ve yine bu okullarda Ermeni öğrencilere çeşitli şekillerde yansımaktadır.

Milli kimliğin oluşumu ve bu kimliğin korunması bilinci öğrencilerde tarih bilinci oluşturmadan kavratılamayacak bir unsurdur. Ayrıca, milli birlik ve beraberliğin önemi de öğrencilerin, “geçmiş ve bugün arasında bağlantı” kurabilmesiyle mümkündür. Öğrencinin tarih dersi kapsam ve amacı sayesinde

edinmesi hedeflenen özellikleri tarih dersi öğretiminin yokluğu durumunda ise tersi yönde işleyebilmektedir. Ermeni öğrencilerin Ermeni tarihi hakkında bilgi sahibi olamaması, onlarda tarih dersleriyle hedeflenen duygu ve davranışlara kendi Ermeni kimlikleri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda ulaşamayacaklarını göstermektedir. Çalışmanın beşinci bölümünde Ermeni okullarında Ermeni tarihini anlatan bir dersin bulunmayışı ve bu durumun yarattığı sonuçlar, görüşmecilerin yorumları ile birlikte ele alınıp değerlendirilmiş ve Ermeni okullarında yaşanan bu yönde bir eksikliğin ne tür etkinliklerle giderilmeye çalışıldığı ve bu etkinliklerin öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisi anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Tarih gibi dil de kimliği oluşturan en temel belirteçlerden biridir. Dilin bireyin ve milletin kimliğinin biçimlenmesinde temel referans noktalarından biri oluşu, milliyetçilik hareketlerinin yaygınlaşmasıyla da birlikte ulus-devletlerin dili siyasetlerinin çok önemli bir parçası olarak kullanmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Ayrıca dil milliyetçi ideoloji çerçevesinde “biz” i oluşturan nüfus üzerinde farklılıkları azaltma hatta yok etmede de bir araçtır. Ulus-devletlerde standart bir dil ve onun aracılığıyla da kültür üretimi sağlanırken farklı dillerin varlığı görmezden gelinir, yok sayılır yahut yasalar aracılığıyla çeşitli şekillerde kullanılması (eğitim, medya, kamusal hayat v.b.) engellenir. Aynı dili konuşuyor olmanın, insanları görünmez bir bağla birleştiriyor olması aynı zamanda farklı dilde konuşanlarla aralarında da bir sınır da oluşturmaktadır. Böylelikle ulus-devletler öteki'nin kendi dilinde kendisini ifade etme hakkını baskı altında tutarken, homojenleştirmeye yönelik asimilasyon politikaları öteki kimliklerin de asimilasyonunu kaçınılmaz olarak beraberinde getirir. Kültürün taşıyıcısı olarak dile müdahale azınlık grupların kimliklerini korumalarında önemli sorunlar meydana getirir.

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin dil politikalarını farklı dilde konuşan etnik gruplar üzerindeki yaptırımlarla birlikte düşündüğümüzde ulusal Türk kimliğinin oluşturulması ve sürdürülebilmesi adına diğer etnik grupların dillerini yok saymaya ve kısıtlamaya çalışması bu grupların etnik kimliklerini

de Türk kimliği altında toplamaya çalışması olduğunu görürüz. Dil ve kimlik üzerine üretilen fikirlerde veyahut teorilerde de gördüğümüz gibi kimliği koruyabilmenin ve kendini bir etnik kimliğe ait hissedebilmenin en önemli sembolik kaynağı dildir.

Ermeni okullarının Türkiye Ermenileri için taşıdığı önemi belirleyen en önemli misyonu, Ermeni dilini öğreten, günümüzde Türkiye’de kalan yegâne kurumlar olmalarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ermenice dili eğitimi ermeni okullarının varoluş nedenidir. Ermenilerin hayatlarında tarihleri boyunca okulun en önemli misyonu Ermenice öğretimidir. Ermeniler için dili kaybetmek kimliği kaybetmekle eşdeğer anlam taşımaktadır. Bu yüzden tarih boyunca kimliklerinin korunmasında ve sürdürülmesinde Ermeni dili Ermeniler için en önemli etmen olagelmiştir.

Çalışmanın altıncı bölümünde öncelikle Ermeni dilinin Ermeniler ve Ermeni kimliği için taşıdığı önem tarihsel süreç içerisinde nasıl şekillendiği ve günümüzde nasıl bir noktaya evrilmiş olduğu ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca bu bölümde, Türk kimliğinin inşasındaki en önemli yapı taşlarından biri olan Türk dili ve Türk dili merkezli eğitim sisteminin Milli Eğitim’e bağlı tüm okullarda ve dolayısıyla da Ermeni okullarında uygulanış biçimi sorgulanmış ve çift dilli eğitimin verildiği Ermeni okullarında, Ermenice dersi ile ilgili uygulanan politikaların Ermeni dili eğitimi nasıl etkilediği değerlendirilmiştir. Okul-dil-kimlik bileşiminin Türkiye’deki ermeni okullarında birbirleriyle ilişkilene biçimi, hem ermeni hem de Türkiye tarihindeki parametreler göz önüne alındığında, nev-i şahsına münhasır özellikler göstermektedir. Türkiye cumhuriyetinin kurulmuş olduğu coğrafyada yaşayan Ermenilerin, Ermeni kimliği ve Ermeni dili ve dolayısıyla Ermeni okullarıyla kurduğu bağ ve toplumsal yansıması; Türk kimliği, Türk dili ve devlet okulları arasında kurulan ilişkiyle birlikte ele alınmak zorundadır.

Ermeni dilinin ortaya çıkışından bu yana Ermeniler için Ermeni Dili ve Ermeni kimliği ayrılmaz bir bütün olmuştur. Günümüzde Ermeni okullarındaki Ermeni öğrencilerin kendi anadillerine/Ermeniceye ve Ermenice derslerine

yaklaşımlarına baktığımızda pek çok Ermeni öğrenci için Ermeni dilinde eğitim görmek kendilerini zorlayan bir sürece dönüşmüştür. Eğitimlerinde Ermenice gibi zor ve işlevsiz bir dersin yer alması, öğrencilerde, diğer alanlarda eksikliklere yol açtığı fikrini oluşturmuştur. Öğrenciler için anadillerini öğrenmeye harcadıkları vakit, boşa geçen zorlu bir zaman olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Ayrıca bu durum pek çok öğrencinin Ermenice dersinde zorlandıkları gerekçesiyle, tercihlerini Türk okullarına geçiş yapma şeklinde kullanmalarına yol açmıştır. Böylelikle Ermeni kimliğini oluşturan en temel unsurlardan birinden, Ermeni dilinden kaçış, Ermeni okullarında eğitim görmekten kaçınma davranışına da yol açmıştır. Öğrenciler ve aileler, okullara ve Ermeniceye iki zıt şekilde yaklaşmaktadırlar. Aileler/öğrenciler ya Ermenice öğrenmeleri/öğrenmek için Ermeni okullarına göndermektedirler/gönderilmektedirler ya da Ermenice eğitim yüzünden okullar tercih edilmemektedir.

Türkiye'deki siyasal konjonktür çeşitli dönemlerde çeşitli şekillerde Ermeni toplumuna ne şekilde yansımış olursa olsun Ermeniceyi dışarıda konuşulmaması gereken bir dil haline getirmiştir. Ermeniler anadillerini yahut anadillerinde olan isimlerini kullanmaya veya kullandıklarını belli etmeye her zaman çekinmişlerdir. Ermenice isimler gizlenmesi gereken bir dilde isimlerdir ve iş hayatında özellikle ticaretle kullanılmasının zarar getireceği işaretlerdir. Ermenice dilini öğrenmek için ilkokulda aldığı Ermenice dersi çocuk için diğer derslerden yalnızca biridir üstelik de çok zordur. Daha önce hiç tanışmadıysa daha da zorlandığı bir derse dönüşmektedir. Çünkü çocuk Ermeni dilinin içine doğmamaktadır.

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin dilin Türkleştirilmesi alanında uyguladığı politikalar ve Ermenilere karşı var olan ayrımcı tutum nedeniyle günümüzde birçok Ermeni vatandaş dışarıda kendi arasında rahatça Ermenice iletişim kuramamaktadır. Dışarı çıktıklarında, “mama diyerek hitap etme” diyerek çocuğunu uyaran annenin, yalnızca ev sınırları içerisinde “mama” olarak kalması örneğinde olduğu gibi Ermenice eve yahut okula kapanan bir dile

dönüştür. Dışarıda saklanması gerektiği düşünülen ermeni kimliğini ele veren çok önemli bir unsur olarak Ermenice konuşmak, Ermeni okullarında mümkün iken, öğrencilerin büyük bir çoğunluğu, okulda da kendi aralarında Türkçe konuşmaktadır. Ancak okullarda yaşanan, Ermenice dersi öğretmen temini ve ders materyali ile ilgili bahsettiğimiz Türkiye’deki Ermeni okullarına özgü olan sorunların tümü, sonuç olarak öğrencileri anadillerinden uzaklaştırmakta ve Ermeni dili öğretmenler ve öğrenciler tarafından giderek daha az kullanılan bir dile dönüşmektedir.

Çalışmanın bu bölümünde ayrıca 1998 yılında Marmara gazetesinde yayımlanan ve tam/yarım/çeyrek ermeni meselesinin işlendiği makale de göz önünde bulundurularak, Ermenice bilmek ile Ermeni olmak arasındaki ilişkinin bir önceki yüzyıldan, günümüze nasıl aktarıldığı ve ermeni kimliği tartışmalarının hangi eksenlerde yoğunlaştığı da tartışılmıştır. Ermenice bilmeden “tam” yahut “tamamlanmış bir ermeni olunamaz” algısı 1880lerde yayımlanan *Mışag* adlı Ermenice dergide de benzer şekillerde sorgulanmıştır. Marmara gazetesinde yayımlanan makalede Ermeniceyi bilmeyi gerçek Ermeniliğin vazgeçilmez koşulu olarak kabul edenler ve “Ermenice bilme de Ermeniliği uygulayanlar” olmak üzere iki pozisyon benimsenmiştir. Makalede Ermeniler, Ermenice dilini iyi kullanma düzeyleri üzerinden “tam Ermeni”, “yarım Ermeni” ve “çeyrek Ermeni” olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Ermeni Rönesansı’nın yaşandığı yıllarda yayımlanan *Mışag* dergisinde yayımlanan yazılar dizisinde de Ermeniliği oluşturan en temel etmenin dil mi yoksa din mi olduğu tartışılmış ve uzun yıllar süren bu tartışmaların sonucunda Ermeni Dili, Ermeni kimliğinin en önemli unsuru olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Görüldüğü gibi yüzyıl öncesine kadar Ermeni sayılamayacak olan birçok unsur günümüzde ortaya çıkan yeni Ermeni kimlikleri ile birlikte yeniden sorgulanmaya başlanmıştır. Ermeni nedir, Ermeni olmak nedir, Ermeni kültürünün bileşenleri nelerdir, diye sorduğumuzda her ne kadar Ermeniler toplu bir kimliği paylaşırsa da, kimlik, kişilerin yaşam tarzıyla ve toplumsal

yapıyla etkileşime girmekte ve bu da bölünmüş Ermeni kimlikler yaratabilmektedir.

Çalışma süresince elde edilen veriler ve deneyimler sonucunda analiz edilmeye çalışılan bu ilişkiselliklere baktığımızda Ermeni okullarındaki Ermeni öğrencilerin çift yönlü bir kimliğe maruz kaldıkları görülmüştür. Birbirini iten bu zıt kutuplu kimliklerin, okullardaki öğrencilerin kimlik algıları üzerinde çok büyük bir etkiye yol açması kaçınılmazdır. Ermeniler için, binlerce yıllık ve sürekli bir varlık gösteren tüm topluluklarda olduğu gibi, kimlik çok daha karmaşık bir kavramdır. Kimlik tanımı aynı zamanda 1915’i yaşayan bir topluluk olması nedeniyle de Ermeniler söz konusu olduğunda daha da karmaşık bir kavrama dönüşmektedir. Ayrıca, Ermeniler gibi tüm dünyaya yayılmış halkların kimlik tanımının yapılabilmesi durumu daha da içinden çıkılmaz tartışmalara götürmektedir.

Ermeni kimliğinin akışkanlığı nedeniyle kimin Ermeni olduğu artık çok net belli değildir. Hangi Ermeniler Hıristiyan olanlar mı olmayanlar mı, ikiyüz sene önce bunu söylemek imkânsızdır. Ermeni kimliği artık çok katmanlı bir hale gelmiştir. Ermenilerin bu akışkanlıkla nasıl baş ettiklerine Türkiye’deki Ermeniler özelinde ve Türkiye’deki Ermeni okulları ve kimlik ilişkisi üzerinden değerlendirdiğimizde Türkiye’deki Ermeni gerçekliğinin kendine özgü özelliklere sahip olduğunu görmekteyiz.

Türkiye’de Ermenilere yönelik olan düşmanca algı devletin kuruluşundan bu yana uyguladığı pek çok politikayla birlikte sürekli canlı tutulmuştur. Ermeni sözcüğünün her daim bir hakaret olarak kullanan toplumsal yapının karşısında ise Ermeniler genel olarak ayrımcılıktan sakınmak için gizlenme yolunu seçmektedirler. Ermeni kimliğinin ifşasıyla ortaya çıkabilecek olası problemlerden ve kötü muamelelerden kaçınmak amacıyla kimliğini gizleme yolunu seçen Türkiyeli Ermeniler gizlenme amacıyla çeşitli stratejiler benimsemek durumunda kalmışlardır. Bu çalışma boyunca pek çok örneğini verdiğimiz isimlerini yahut okullarının adını gizleme türünden davranışların kökeni Ermeniliklerinin açığa çıkmasından duyulan

korkudur. Sürekli dışlanma ve korku Ermenilerin kendi kimlik algılarını da zedeleyecek niteliktedir. Bu çalışmada bahsettiğimiz Türk kimliğinin Ermeni kimliğini algılayış biçimleri ve Türk kimliği ile Ermeni kimliğinin sahip oldukları özelliklerin Ermeni öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisi okullarla nasıl ve ne şekilde ilişki kurulduğuna ve kamusal alanda Ermeni kimliği ile hangi şekillerde yüzleşildiğine göre çeşitli biçimler almıştır. Ermeni kelimesini bir hakaret olarak kullananlarla Ermenilerin karşılaşılma biçimleri, gizlenme ihtiyaçlarını yaratan koşullar ve gizlenme biçimleri yahut Ermenilerle ilgili oluşmuş olan önyargılara karşı sorumluluk alma biçimleri gibi pek çok faktör Ermeni öğrencilerin özelinde yeniden ele alınmış ve değerlendirilmiştir.

Çalışma kapsamında görüşme yaptığımız tüm katılımcılara göre, Türkiye’de Ermeni olmak, “çok zor”, “gergin”, “acılı”, ve “sabır gerektiren” bir deneyimdir. Türkiye’de Ermenilik, Diasporadaki veya Ermenistan’daki Ermenilerden tutun da Türkiye’deki Türklere kadar her yönden yok sayıldığın, kabul görmediğin bir deneyimdir. Türkiye’de Ermeni kimliği, gizlemek zorunda kaldığın bir kimliktir. Kimliğini ele verecek her şeyin gizlenmek yahut yok olmak zorunda olduğu bir kimliktir. Dışarıda haçlı kolye takmadığın, Ermenice konuşmadığın, dışarıda “mama”na anne demek zorunda bırakıldığın bir kimliktir. Tüm etnik etiketlerini saklamaya çalışmak için çeşitli taktikler geliştirmek zorunda kaldığın bir kimliktir. İsmi yaşamın birçok alanında, Türkçe takma isimler takarak gizlemek durumunda bırakıldığın bir kimliktir. Yahut henüz takma isme gerek bile duyulmadan doğulur doğulmaz ileride bir zarar görmeyesin diye isminin Ermenice verilemediği bir kimliktir.

Türkiye’deki Ermeni kimliğini Ermeni okulları üzerinden düşündüğümüzde, Türk kimliğinin ekseninde belirlenmiş olan anlatının Ermeni okullarında Ermeni öğrencilere öğretilmesiyle yükümlü olduğunu görmekteyiz. Böylelikle Ermeni okulları bir yandan Ermeni kimliği ve kültürü ile ilgili öğrencilerine beslenebilecekleri önemli bir kaynak kurum olarak var olmaya çalışmakta diğer yandan Türk kimliği ve Türk kültürünün baskın olduğu bir müfredatı uygulamak durumunda kalmaktadır.

Ermeni okullarının ve bu okullara uygulanan politikaların, Türk milli eğitim sistemi içerisinde benimsetilmeye çalışılan Türk kimliğinin ve bu kimliğin Ermeniliği algılama biçimlerinin; Türkiye’deki Ermeni öğrencilerin kimlik algılarını, Ermeni kimliğini yaşama biçimlerini nasıl oluşturduğunu açıklamaya çalıştığımız bu çalışmanın son bölümünde, Ermeni öğrencilerin okullar ile kurdukları ilişkilenebilecek biçimlerindeki zamansal ve mekânsal geçişlerin ve farklılaşmaların oluşturduğu Ermeni kimlikleri, karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alınmıştır. Kimliklere dair yaşanan deneyimler tüm çalışma boyunca çeşitli şekillerde ayrıntılı biçimde değerlendirilmeye çalışılan kimlik ve okul ilişkisi üzerine yaptığımız tespitler göz önünde bulundurularak analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Öğreniminin ilk yıllarında etnik kimliklerine yönelik olarak öğrenciler bilinçli bir farkındalık düzeyine ulaşamazlar. Öğrencinin Türklük veya Ermenilik ile ilgili algılayışları özellikle bu evrede fludur, net değildir. Öğrenci kendisine ezberlettirilen Türklerin kahramanlıklarını anlatan şiirleri, destanları bir “Türk”ten hiç farkı yokmuşçasına heyecanla okur ve bu metinlerdeki zaferlerle, başarılarla kendisini özdeşleştirerek çeşitli duygulanımlar yaşar. Yahut milli bayramlarda tüm öğrencilerin yer aldığı törenlerde hep birlikte söylenen marşlara büyük bir coşkuyla eşlik eder. Yine de Ermeni bir öğrenci bir şekilde kendisinin çoğunluktan farklı olduğunu da sezer, ancak bunu tam olarak açıklayabileceği kavramsal düzeyden yoksundur. Örneğin, okul dışındaki çevresinde, gittiği okulun diğer okullardan farklı olduğunu, okulun adını söylemeye başladığında fark etmeye de başlar. Kendi ismi, okulunun ismi, okulda öğretilen Ermeni dili, bunların hepsi çocukta yavaş yavaş diğerlerinden farklı olduğu izlenimini güçlendirir.

Ortaokul ve akabinde lise döneminde artık bunların ayırdına varacak olgunluktadır - ki bu olgunluk da bir öteki olarak yaşamının getirdiği zorlukları çocukluktan itibaren deneyimliyor olmaktan kaynaklanmaktadır - ancak öğrenci aslında ilköğrenimi boyunca müfredat yoluyla benimsetilmesi hedeflenen değerlerden kendisini büsbütün koparamaz da. Bu tip etkinliklerin

yapıldığı sıralarda Ermeni öğrencilerin sesi her zaman daha yüksek daha coşkulu çıkmak zorundadır. Okullarda milli bayramlarda yapılan törenler, uzun yıllar boyunca her sabah tekrarlanan andımız, veya pazartesi ve cuma günleri tekrarlanan istiklal marşı töreni gibi tüm okullarda zorunlu tutulan uygulamalar, Ermeni okullarında daha katı bir disiplin eşliğinde uygulanmak durumunda kalmıştır. Okul müdürü yeterince coşkulu söylenmediğini düşündüğü marşı yeniden yeniden tekrar ettirebilir. Bu durumun kökeni çalışmamızın üçüncü bölümünde ele aldığımız Türk müdür başyardımcıları ve Türkçe ve Türkçe kültür dersleri öğretmenlerinin Ermeni okullarındaki misyonu ve görevlerini yerine getirme bilinciyle neredeyse 100 yıl boyunca devam eden bir baskının ve bu baskıdan duyulan korkunun sonuçlarıdır.

Çalışmanın son bölümünde öğrencilerin en çok hangi zamanlarda kendilerini Ermeni gibi hissettikleri, Türkiye’de Ermeni olmayı ve Ermeniliği nasıl tanımladıkları, hangi Ermeni okulunda öğrenim gördüklerinin kimlik oluşumlarında ne gibi sonuçlar doğurduğunu, yaşadıkları ayrımcılığı farklı okullarda farklı yaş dilimlerinde nasıl deneyimledikleri, mülakatlarda sorulan sorular ve yanıtlar ışığında analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Öğrencilerin eğitim süreçlerinin ne kadarını Ermeni okullarında, ne kadarını Türk okullarında geçirmiş olduklarının karşılaştırılması bu analizlerin dayanağını oluşturmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırma, özellikle, hem Ermeni hem Türk okuluna gitmiş olan öğrencilerin okul geçişliliklerinde ilk geçişin ne yönde olduğunun öğrencinin kimlik ve bir gruba aidiyet hissini nasıl etkilediği üzerinden yapılacaktır. Ermeni okullarında geçirilen zaman yahut mezuniyetin ardından geçen zamanın sadece Ermeni okulunda eğitim görmüş öğrencilerin ve mezunlarının, okulları ve kimliklerini değerlendirme biçimlerinde ne gibi etkisi olduğu da, karşılaştırmaların yönünü belirleyen önemli unsurlardan biridir. Çünkü bir okuldan diğerine geçişler veya geçişsizlikler, bir kimlikten diğerine geçişleri veya geçişsizlikleri belirlemektedir.

Böyle bir yapı içerisinde de Ermeni öğrenciler hangi kimliğe ne şekilde maruz kalıyorlarsa, o şekilde bir arada kalma durumu yaşamaktadırlar. Örneğin

Türk okullarından Ermeni okullarına geçiş yapan öğrencilerin okullarda karşılaştıkları ilk kimlik Türk kimliğidir. İlkokul öğrenimleri boyunca tecrübe edilen bu durum kimlik oluşumu açısından da kritik yaşlara tekabül etmektedir. Peki asimile olacaklarına bu gruptaki Ermeni öğrencilere ne olur? Öğrenim gördükleri Türk okullarında, Ermeni kimlikleriyle bulunan bu öğrenciler, bir yandan kimliklerini gizleyip, saklamaya çalışırken diğer yandan kendi dillerini, kültürlerini ve kimliklerini özgürce yaşayamamaktadırlar. Bu nedenle görüşme yaptığımız, bu gruptaki öğrencilerin, çoğunluğun içinde az olmaktan dışarı çıkıp, Ermeni okullarına gelişleri, okulları, kendi kimliklerini özgürce yaşayabilecekleri bir alan olarak algılamalarına yol açmaktadır. Kendisi gibi olanların yanında kendilerini daha güvende hissettiği, onları Ermeni kimliğine daha da yakınlaştırmaktadır. Ermeni diline, Ermeni kültürüne veya Ermeni tarihine daha fazla ilgi ve sevgi duymakta olan bu gruptaki öğrenciler için Ermeni okulları onların evidir, ailesidir, yuvasıdır, etraflarında bu kadar çok Ermeni'yi bir arada gördükleri tek yer olan okullarındaki diğer Ermeni öğrenciler de kardeşleridir. İlk veya ilk ve orta okul boyunca Türk okullarında eğitim gördükten sonra Ermeni okullarına gelen öğrencilerin kendilerini Ermeni kimliğine ait hissetmeleri diğer gruptaki bir çok görüşmeciden çok daha farklı bir yoğunluktadır. Bu öğrencilerin, ilk “dışarı”ları Türk ilkokulları olmuştur. Ötekilik deneyimini küçük yaşlarda, “dışarıda” yaşamalarının ardından “normal” sayıldıkları bir “içeriye”ye dâhil olmuşlardır. Bu gruptaki öğrencilerin etnik kimliklerinden kaynaklı oluşan toplumsal tepkileri küçük yaşta öğrenme durumunda kalmaları, toplumsal yapıyı erken yaşlarda analiz edebilmelerine olanak sağlamaktadır. Türkiye’de Ermenilerin bahsetmiş olduğumuz şekillerde algılanmaları ve bunun toplumsalda yarattığı sonuçlarla direkt olarak karşılaşan bu çocuklar kadar Ermeni kimliğine ve kültürüne dair aidiyet ve bundan kaynaklı gurur hissi diğer hiçbir gruptaki öğrencide gözlemlenmemiştir.

Sadece Ermeni okullarında eğitim görmüş olan bir öğrenci peki, “dışarı”yı nasıl algılar? Görüşme yaptığımız dönemde lise son sınıf öğrencisi

olan ve çocukluğundan bu yana Ermeni okullarından dışarıya çıkmamış olan öğrenciler, “dışarı”yı pek bilmeyen, “dışarı”da nasıl algılandıklarına dair çok fazla deneyimi olmayan, ilk “dışarı” deneyimini dershaneye gitmişse yaşayan ve hala o sürecin içinde olan öğrencilerdir. Dershanede yeni yeni görmeye başladıkları çeşitli dışlama mekanizmalarıyla, ilk defa çoğunluğun içinde bir azınlık olarak karşı karşıya gelmektedirler. İlk defa, bir sınıfta, sahip oldukları isimler, diğer öğrencilere yabancı gelmektedir.

Türkiye’de, Türk okullarında öğrenim gören Ermeni öğrencilerin ise, okulda geçirdikleri zaman içerisinde sınıflarında ya da okullarında ismini saklayabilme olanakları yoktur. Kimlikteki isimleri eğer Türkçe bir isim değilse daha ilk yoklamada tüm sınıfın ve öğretmenin ilgisini ve merakını üzerine çekmektedirler. Sen daha gizlemeye çalışmadan kimliğin isminle ifşa olur. Öğretmenin ve diğer öğrencilerin ismine verdikleri tepki, Ermeni olduğunu öğrendiklerinde çok daha farklı bir boyuta taşınır. Eğer isminin niçin yabancı olduğunu Ermeni olduğunu belli etmeden açıklamayı başarsan bile “gavur” damgası yenilir, Ermeni kimliğini saklayamadığında ise yapılan görüşmelerden de anlaşılacağı üzere okulda ya kabuğuna çekilir, kimseyle iletişim kurmazsın ya da eğer okulu bırakabilme şansın varsa bırakır ve bu çalışmada örneklerini de gördüğümüz üzere, Ermeni okullarına geçiş yaparsın.

Ancak, ilköğretimden bu yana yalnızca Ermeni okullarında eğitim gören öğrenciler için ise hayat dershaneye gittiklerinde ya da mezun olduklarında başlamaktadır. Bu öğrenciler, öğrenim hayatları boyunca başka bir okulda öğrenim görmeyi düşünmeyen öğrencilerdir ve bu öğrencilerin çoğunluğunun eğer gittikleri ilkokulun lise kısmı da bulunmaktaysa, aynı okula devam ettikleri görülmektedir. Bu gruptaki öğrenciler, isimlerinin yani kimliklerinin nasıl bir tepki göreceğini okul hayatları boyunca çok az deneyimlerler. Çoğunluğun senin ismine benzer “yabancı” isimler taşıyor olması, azınlık olma bilincinin oluşumuna henüz olanak sağlamamaktadır. Ötekinin seni nasıl algıladığını okul sıralarında deneyimlemeyen bu öğrencilerin mezun olduktan sonra ya da dershaneye gitmeye başladıktan sonra

kimlikleri ile ilgili farkındalıkları artmaya başlamaktadır. Ermeni olduğun ya da bu anlaşılmasa bile Türk olmayışının daha ismini söyler söylemez kendisini belli ediyor oluşu, bir tanışma yaşandığı anda sana bir sorumluluk yüklemeye başlamaktadır. Kim olduğunu, ne olduğunu belli eden isminin sorumluluğunu etnik bir azınlık olarak Ermeni okullarındaki sıralarda taşıman gerekmemektedir. Ancak, bu farkındalık oluşuktan sonra Ermeni bir öğrenci, hayatı boyunca ismini bir yük gibi sırtında taşımak zorunda kalmaktadır.

Mezuniyetin ardından uzun yıllar geçmiş olması ve bu süre zarfında üniversitede veya iş yerlerinde yaşadıkları deneyimlerin ardından mezun görüşmecilerin Ermenilere dair geliştirdiği sorumluluk duygusu diğer gruptaki görüşmecilere nazaran daha yoğundur. Omuzlarında Ermeniliğe kötü söz söyletmemeye yükünü diğer görüşmecilere göre daha uzun yıllar taşımaları nedeniyle Ermeni okullarından mezun görüşmeciler, Ermeni kimliğinin verdiği ağırlığı daha yoğun hissetmektedirler.

Bu ve yukarıda bahsettiğimiz birçok başka etmenden dolayı, Türk okulundan Ermeni okuluna gelen öğrencilerde, kimlik, Türklük, Ermenilik ile ilgili algılar Ermeni okulundan Türk okullarına geçen öğrencilerden çok farklıdır. Türk okulundan Ermeni okuluna gelen öğrenci, ilkokuldan itibaren ötekinin içinde yer alan bir Ermeni olduğunu anlıyor. Ancak Ermenilerle birlikte büyüyen Ermeni okuluna ilk önce giden taraf lisede Türk okuluna gittiğinde daha derin bir kimlik kargaşası yaşıyor. Lise çağında fanus olarak gördüğü Ermeni okulundan çıktığında ayrımcılıkla veya dışarıyla diyelim ilk deneyimini ergenlik döneminde yaşıyor. Kimliklerinin en çok yara alabileceği hassas bir dönem olan ergenlikte olgunlaşan ben algısı kabul görmek yerine dışlanmakla karşılaşılıyor. Lisede Ermeni okuluna gelen öğrenciler ise bu evreyi erken yaşta atlattıklarından lisede kimliklerini özgürce yaşayabildikleri bir ortama karışmış oluyor ve etnik kimlik oluşumu kimliğe daha çok aidiyet duymakla gerçekleşiyor. İlkokulda Ermeni okulunda öğrenci iken çifte kimliğe daha çok maruz kalıyor ve kimliklerin ayırtına çok da varamıyor. Oysa sonradan Ermeni okullarına gelenler, kendi etnik kimliklerine ve Türk

kimliğine, ilkokulda tek bir kimliğin/Türklüğün baskısı altında olduklarını bilerek yaklaşmaktadırlar. Türk okullarında hayata başlayanlar Türk /Ermeni ayrımını çok iyi idrak etmektedirler.

İlk veya ilk ve ortaokul boyunca Türk okullarında eğitim gördükten sonra Ermeni okullarına gelen öğrencilerin oluşturduğu grupta görülen, Ermeniliğe, Ermeni kimliği ile kültürüne ve Ermeni okullarına duyulan bağlılık hissinin görüldüğü, bu gruba en yakın grup mezunlar grubunda yer alan görüşmecilerdir. Ayrıca birçok yönden farklılıklar bulunsa da görüşme yaptığımız Özel Getronagan Ermeni Lisesi ve Özel Surp Haç Tıbrevank Ermeni Lisesi son sınıf öğrencileri de okullarına ve kimliklerine karşı kendilerine özgü hassasiyetler ve aidiyetlikler geliştirmişlerdir. Bu noktada, çalışmamız boyunca yapılan mülakatlar ve değerlendirmeler sonucunda söz edebileceğimiz, Ermeni okulları ile ilgili bir başka durum daha ortaya çıkmaktadır: Her Ermeni okulu ayrı bir Ermeni kimliği yaratmaktadır.

Türkiye'deki Ermeni okullarının durumu hem Türk hem Ermeni kimliğinin birbirinin içine geçerek oluştuğu çift yönlü kimliklerin konumlandıkları bir düzlemde. Ve bu düzlem üzerindeki eğitimle alakalı her şey, çalışanlarından, öğrencilerine, müfredatından, ders içeriklerine kadar her şey, kimlik eksenlidir hatta kimlik eksenli olmak zorundadır. Ancak hükümet politikalarıyla Türk kimliğinin baskın olduğu bu düzlemde Ermeni kimliği ayrı otu gibidir. Ne kadar ayıklamaya çalışsalar o kadar çoğalmaktadır. Çünkü Türk kimliği kendi varlığı ve varlığının sürdürülmesi adına aslında Ermeni kimliklerine ihtiyaç da duymaktadır. Böylelikle Türk milli eğitim sistemi, ihtiyaç duyduğu Ermeni kimliğini kendisi yaratmaya ve bu Ermeni kimliğinin sınırlarını da yine kendisi çizmeye çalışacaktır. Baskı ve korku yoluyla yayılması hedeflenen Türk kimliği bir diğer yandan karşısında denetleyemediği, sınırlayamadığı, yeni ve farklı başka türden bir Ermeni kimliği de yaratmaktadır. Bu kimliğin oluşumu, Türk kimliğine karşı nasıl direnç gösterdiği ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. Hatta direnme biçimlerinin, her Ermeni okulunun kendi içinde kendi ayrı Ermeni kimliğini de oluşturmada

merkezi bir yerde durduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Her Ermeni okulunun kendi içinde yarattığı farklı Ermeni kimlikleri, bu çoklu kimlikler, Ermeni okullarının, baskın olan Türk kimliğine karşı direnme biçimlerinin birbirinden farklılaşmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Her okul; geleneğiyle, yakın çevresiyle, öğrenciye, öğretmene yaklaşımıyla ve Ermeni okullarındaki eğitimin nasıl olması gerektiğine dair bakış açısıyla ayrı bir ekoldür. Eğitimin nasıl olması gerektiğine dair bakış açısı, kendisinde Ermeni kimliğini korumaya yönelik bir hassasiyet taşıyorsa ve bu hassasiyetle, öğrencilerde kimlikle ilgili farkındalığı arttırmaya yönelik etkinliklerde bulunuyorsa, dile, kültüre, tarihe öğrencileri ne kadar yakınlaştırmayı başarabiliyorsa, direnme biçimi Ermeni kimliği eksenli olduğundan bu tip okullarda oluşturduğu gözlemlenen Ermeni kimliği de o denli “farkında” olacaktır. Dolayısıyla oluşan Ermeni kimliği de, kimliği daha sahiplenici, kimliği yaşamakta daha özgür ve mücadeleci olacaktır. Okullarda dayatılan Türk kimliğine direnme biçimlerini, dil kimlik ve kültür üzerinden kurmayan Ermeni okullarında ise öğrencilerin kimlik algısı da bu minvalde oluşacak ve öğrencilerin Ermeniliğe yaklaşımı da bu yönde şekillenecektir.

Okulların direnme biçimlerinin yarattığı Ermeni kimliğiyle öğrenciler etnik kimliklerinin farkındalığı ile birbirinden çok farklı bakış açlarına sahip olabilirler. Ancak yine de Türkiye’de kalan Ermeni okullarını birleştiren en önemli şey hepsinin aynı hükümet politikalarına maruz kalmasıdır çünkü sistemin gözünde hepsi sadece diğer Ermeni okulları gibi bir Ermeni okuludur.

Tez boyunca sorgulanan eğitim ve kimlik ilişkisi Ermeni okullarına uygulanan pek çok ayrımcı hükümet politikalarıyla da birlikte sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Okullarda her gün andımızı söyleyerek güne başlayan Ermeni öğrenciler her ne kadar Türk olduklarını haykırsalar da Türkiye’de kendilerinin Türk olmadığı uygulanan birçok politika ile birlikte kendilerine hatırlatılmıştır. Ermeni okulları devlet tarafından her zaman denetlenmesi gereken, kendilerine güvensizlikle yaklaşılan kurumlar olmuşlardır. Günümüzde hala devam eden bu ve benzeri uygulamalar, Ermeni okullarında

öğrencilerin sayısının azalmasına ve maddi zorluklar yaşanmasına neden olmaktadır. Bu sorunlar, okulları kapanma eşiğine getirmektedir.

Öteki olma bilinci, azınlık olma bilinci, yaşanan toplumda çoğunluğun sizin azınlık olmanıza verdiği anlamla birlikte oluşur. Sizi çoğunluktan ayıran özellikleriniz nelerdir? Öteki, bu ayrımların sürekli farkında olmak durumunda kalandır. Ötekilik bilinci bu farkındalığa nasıl tepki verdiğinizi, kendinizi toplumda nasıl konumlandıracağınızı da içermektedir. Türkiye’de Ermenilere yönelik ötekileştirme ve ayrımcılık, Ermenilerin/ötekilerin kendi farklılıklarını toplumsal yapının yansımasında kristalize etmelerine neden olmaktadır. Ötekinin kendine dair yaşadığı her türden farkındalık, yaşadığı toplumun özelliklerini daha hızlı, daha erken ve daha yoğun olarak sindirmesine ve yapıyı daha iyi analiz etmesine neden olur. Biz ve öteki ayrımı üzerine kurulan Türkiye cumhuriyetinde, ötekinin, topluma ve toplum bilimine yaklaşma biçimi çok daha sert karşılaşmaların sonucunda oluşacaktır. Öteki, hayatta kalabilmek için, kendisinin nasıl bir toplum tarafından dışlandığını bilmek zorundadır. Bu toplumun nasıl bir toplum olduğuyla yüzleşmemesi kaçınılmazdır. Öteki, kendisini bir küfür bir aşağılama nesnesi olarak gören toplumda, kendi öznesini, içinde yaşadığı toplumun kendisini değersizleştirerek nesneleştiren yapısı üzerinde kurmak zorunda kalır. Kısacası öteki, toplumun kolektif öznesinin gözünden kendi değersiz nesnesine bakarak özneleşir. Çünkü ötekinin değersizleştirilen farklılıkları, toplumda çoğunluğun bu farklılıkların neler olduğunu belirleme biçimlerindeki ortaklaşmalar sonucunda oluşturulur. Çoğunluk, farklılığı tanımlama ve tepki verme biçimleriyle birlik ve beraberlik içinde kalır. Birliğin içinde yer almayan, öteki olan kimdir? Bu sorunun yanıtı egemen ideolojinin etkisiyle kolektif zihinlerde oluşturulmuş olan öteki tanımıdır. Kendisinin nereden farklılaştığını bilmek baskın çoğunluğun toplumsal yapısını da bilmeyi gerektirmektedir. Bu yüzden ötekinin yapacağı sosyolojik analizler onun için gerçek anlamıyla bir “savunma sporu”na dönüşür. Bu çalışma, kendi özneliğimi nesnelleştirmeye çalışmam nedeniyle de, kendi Ermeni kimliğimle ilgili olan algımı değiştirip

dönüştürmüştür. Bu yüzden bu tez aynı zamanda ötekinin bir mücadele alanıdır.

APPENDIX E: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü
- Enformatik Enstitüsü
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

- Soyadı : Barış
- Adı : Linda
- Bölümü : Sosyoloji

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce): The Effects Of The Armenian Schools On The Ethnic Identity Formation Of The Armenian Students In Turkey

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: