



(RE)CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY DISCOURSE IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS: THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN



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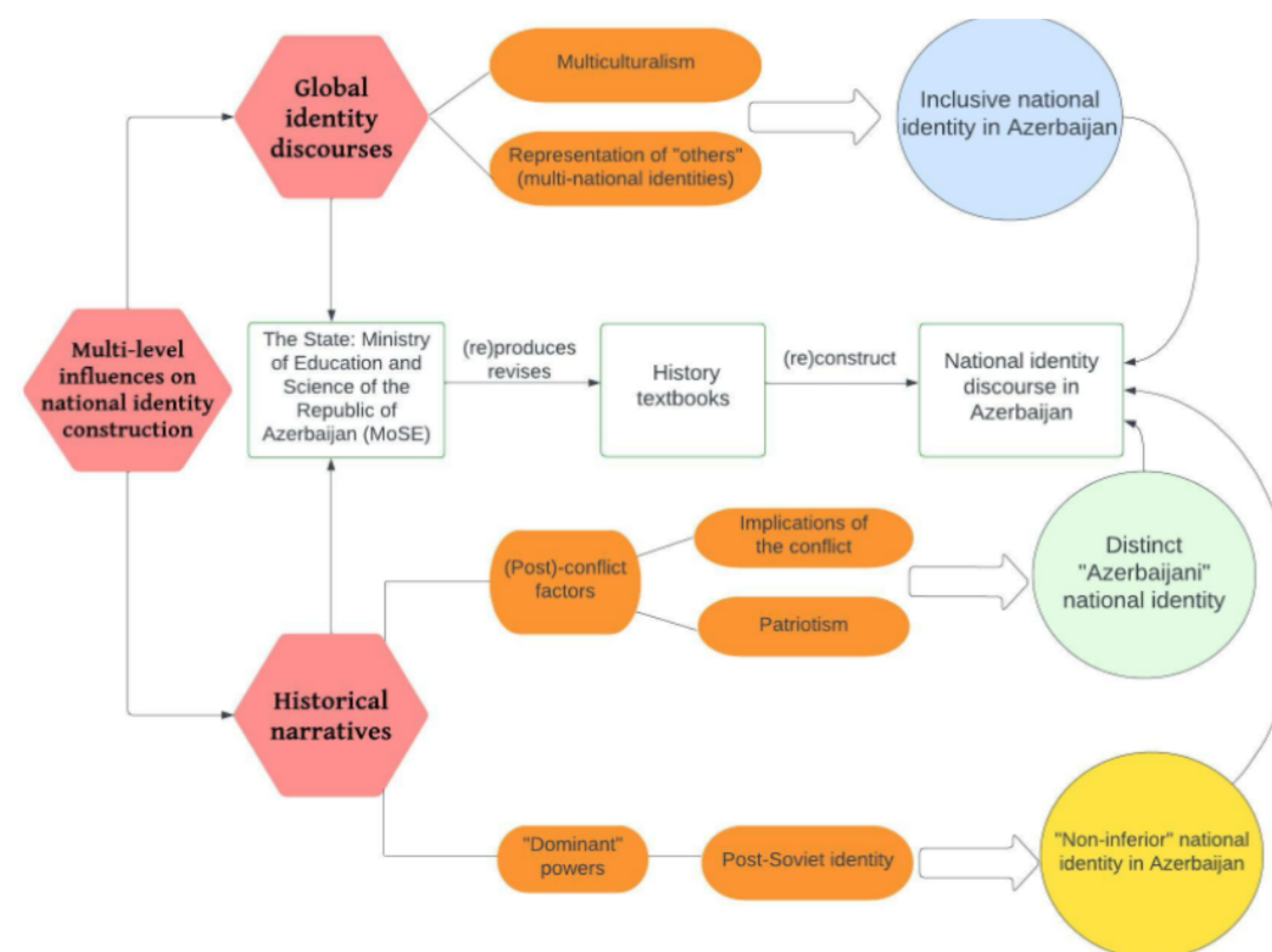
ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand how “state-produced” history textbooks currently (re)shape national identity discourse in the Republic of Azerbaijan through multi-level influences, including global identity discourses and national-historical narratives. Utilizing a qualitative document analysis of eight history textbooks for Grades 5-11, I reveal that the history textbooks in Azerbaijan construct a distinct “Azerbaijanism” (*Azərbaycançılıq*) on civic nationhood for the unification of Azerbaijanis with the inclusion of “others” and (post)-conflict sentiments constituting the core of national identity-making efforts. I similarly find that the depiction of national identity discourse in the history textbooks is predominantly pronounced in state policies. As the first of its kind study examining the most current editions of history textbooks in the Republic of Azerbaijan, this research raises potential opportunities and concerns beyond the textbooks.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How have global discourses and historical narratives (re)shaped the national identity construction in the latest editions of Grades 5-11 history textbooks in the Republic of Azerbaijan?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHODOLOGY

Qualitative document analysis: Eight history textbooks for Grades 5-11 (1432 pages in total) were examined. This is a comprehensive analysis of the current editions of “History of Azerbaijan” textbooks.

Segmenting & Coding (Saldana, 2015):

Codes: National identity, nation, nationalism, heroism, patriotism, liberation, enemy, conflict, Armenia, Soviet, global, and multiculturalism as **etic codes** and Azerbaijani, Turk(s), Turkism, Islam, language, religion, peace, citizen, and coexistence as **emic codes**

KEY FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Inclusion and Exclusion: Representation of “Others

The Republic of Azerbaijan reconstructs the national identity based on **distinct “Azerbaijanism”** (*Azərbaycançılıq*) as a state project for the unification of all people (Hobsbawm, 2012) with the inclusion of “others” constituting the core of national identity-making efforts.

Distinct “Azerbaijanism”: Azerbaijan as a territory, Azerbaijanis as the people of Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijani as a language; national and state identity-making efforts with a heavy focus on **civic nationhood and inclusiveness**.

Depiction of inclusion is similarly pronounced in the state policies through **multiculturalism and secularism**.

Superiority and Inferiority: The role of (Post)-Conflict

History textbooks in Azerbaijan revealed that the non-inferior national identity construction in the Republic of Azerbaijan placed a great emphasis on the (post)-conflict history.

Occupation of **Garabagh** rendered the unification efforts around “Azerbaijanism” incomplete not only in territorial but also in emotionally detached terms as it affiliated with its historical land and belonging.

Garabagh was regarded as the **alienable and integral part** of “Azerbaijanism” that ignited national awakening, patriotism, and pride in Azerbaijanis.

(Post)-conflict narrative similarly was the constituent factor to the formation of distinct “Azerbaijanism” in an independent Azerbaijan, further integrating the values of **patriotism, victory, and pride** into the national identity (re)construction.