



12th International LAB Meeting - Summer Session 2008
14th International Summer School

European Ph.D. on
Social Representations and Communication
At the Multimedia LAB & Research Center, Rome-Italy

Social Representations in Action and Construction
in Media and Society

"Social Representations, Collective Memory and Socially
Shared Emotions: narrative and experimental approaches"

From 26th July to 3rd August 2008
http://www.europhd.eu/html/_onda02/07/14.00.00.00.shtml

Participants Presentations

European Ph.D

on Social Representations and Communication

International Lab Meeting Series 2005-2008

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Representations of the In-Group's Conflictual Past: The Effect
of Turkish Identification on Construal of Turkish-Armenian
Massacres.

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▶ Collective memories of violence may serve to:

- justify current violence

- refuel new violence

- ▶ Social scientists have investigated the shared part of collective memories
- ▶ Collective memories perceived as unified, homogeneous entity
- ▶ **HOWEVER**, group members show clear differences in interpretations of past violence

Outline

- ▶ How group members construe events characterized by severe intergroup violence
- ▶ The effect of variation in ingroup identification on construal of the past violence
- ▶ The effect of modes of identification: identity centrality and glorification

How can we understand memories and construal of historical events related to group conflict ?

- ▶ Who started it?
- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ What were the intentions?
- ▶ Who inflicted the harm?
- ▶ How much harm was inflicted?
- ▶ Who should be held responsible?

Sources of differences in interpretations of a violent past:

- ▶ Selective remembering
 - ▶ Fabrication of events
 - ▶ Blaming the enemy
 - ▶ Blaming the circumstances
 - ▶ Minimization of harm
 - ▶ Exaggeration
- Recollections
- Attributions of responsibility
- Severity of harm
-
- The diagram consists of a list of six items on the left, each preceded by a green right-pointing triangle. To the right of the list are three curly braces, each grouping a subset of items. The top brace groups 'Selective remembering' and 'Fabrication of events', with the label 'Recollections' to its right. The middle brace groups 'Blaming the enemy' and 'Blaming the circumstances', with the label 'Attributions of responsibility' to its right. The bottom brace groups 'Minimization of harm' and 'Exaggeration', with the label 'Severity of harm' to its right.

(Baumeister & Hastings, 1997)

Study 1

Participants: 100 Turks -- international students studying in the United States

- ▶ **Survey:** Turkish-Armenian intergroup violence in the period between 1880-1920.

IV: Turkish identification (6 items, $\alpha = .90$):

Identity centrality [e.g., Being Turkish is an important part of how I see myself.]

Positive evaluation of one's group membership [e.g. I am glad I am a Turk.]

(see Leach et al., 2008)

DV:

- 1) Denial/Acceptance of massacres [Dichotomous measures]
- 2) Who harmed whom [Multiple choice question]

Measures (continued)

3) Perceptions of severity of harm inflicted on the ingroup and the outgroup

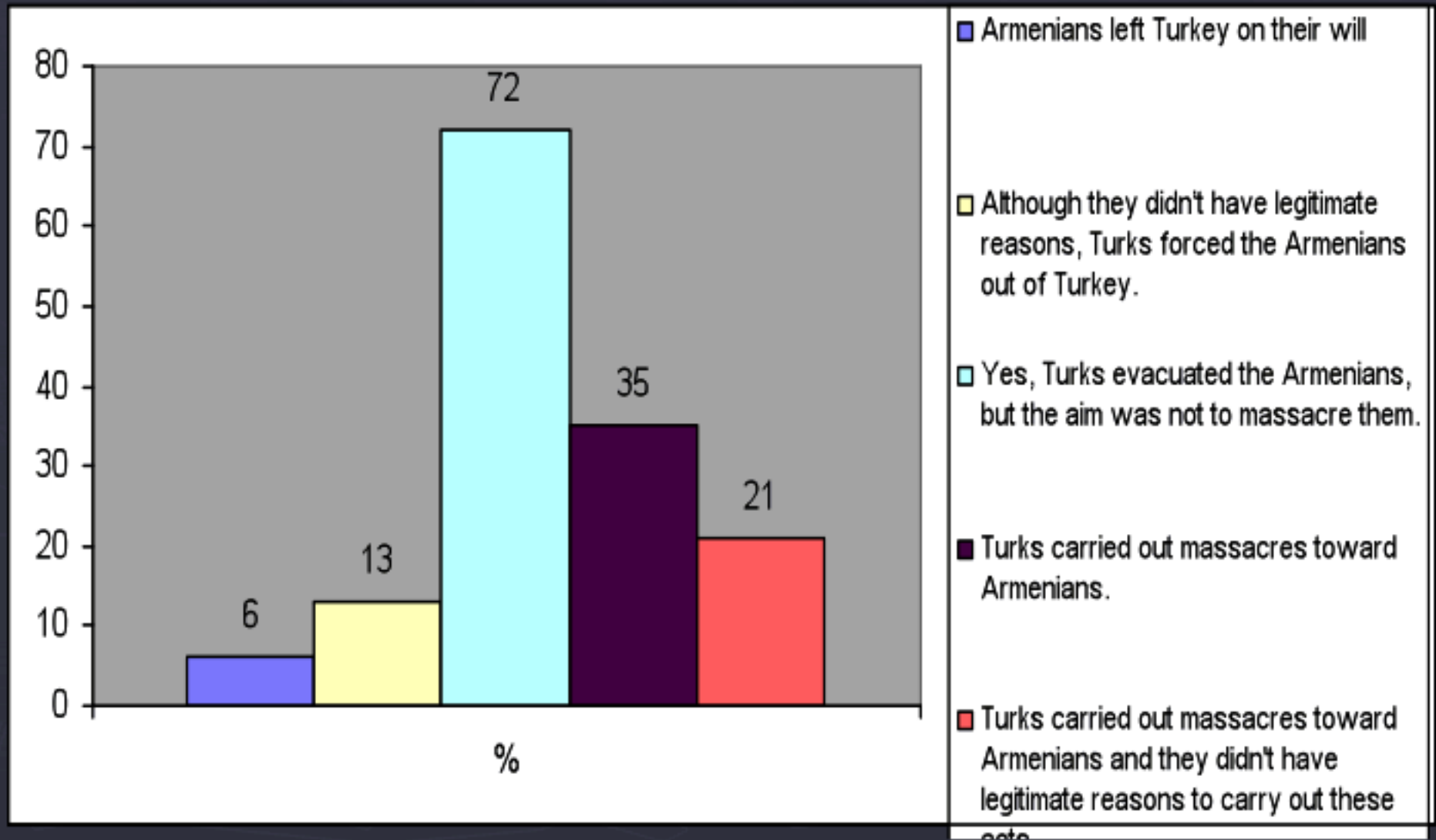
- Number of casualties (killed by the outgroup): open- and close-ended measures
- Number of displaced people
- Extent of economic harm due to the conflict
- Overall harm inflicted on each group in this conflict

4) Attributions of responsibility of ingroup, outgroup, and other factors (other countries and situational factors) for

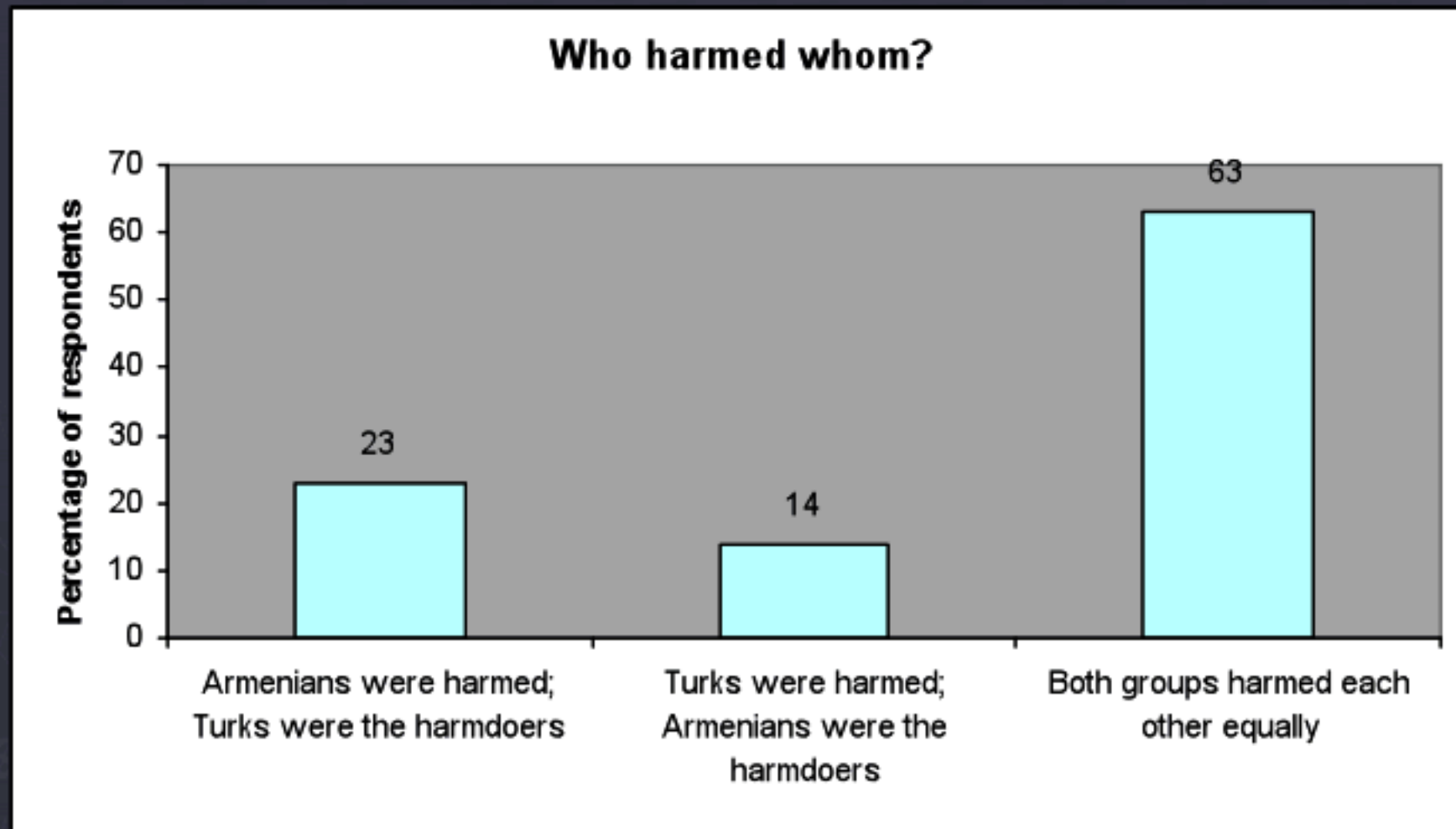
- a) instigating the events
- b) the consequences of the events

What happened?

(Denial/Acceptance of massacres)

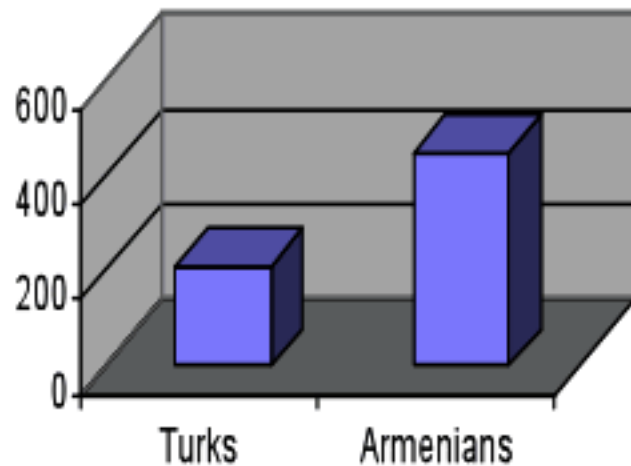


Who harmed whom?

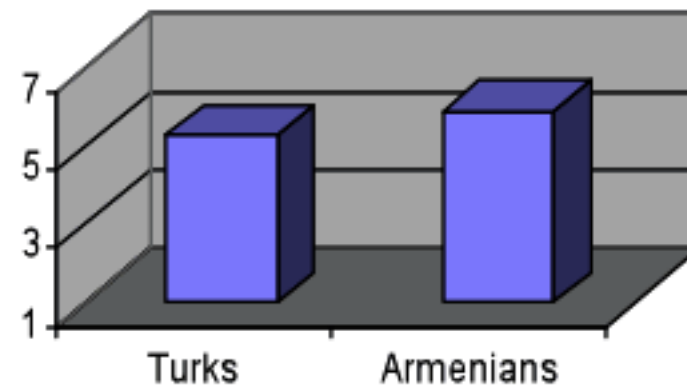


Perceptions of severity of harm on Turks and on Armenians due to the conflict between the two parties in 1915

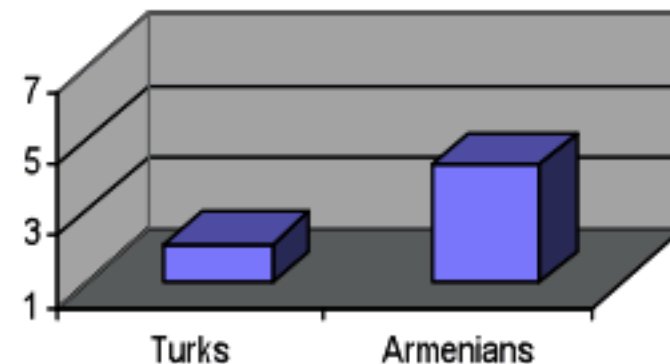
Number of Casualties (open ended)



Economic harm

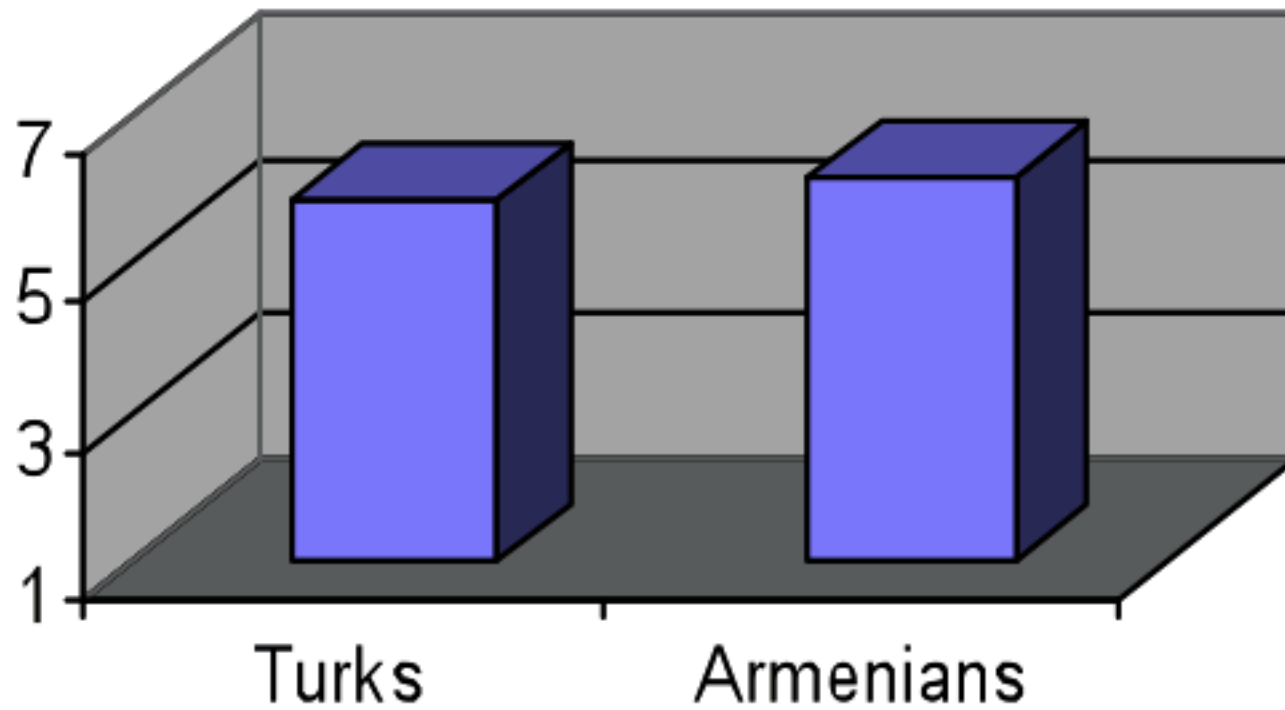


Displaced

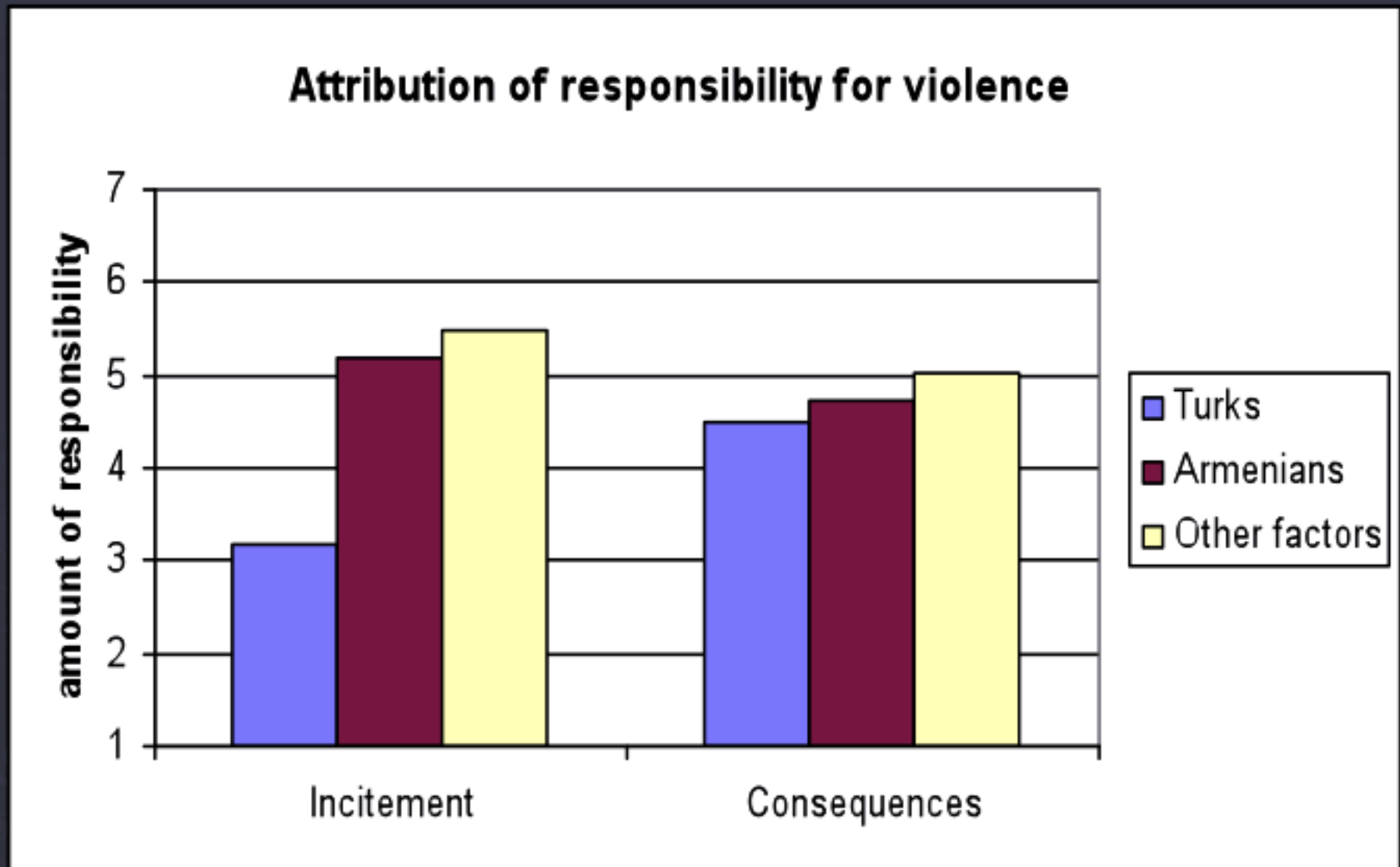


Overall, estimate the harm inflicted on Turks and Armenians in this conflict

Overall harm

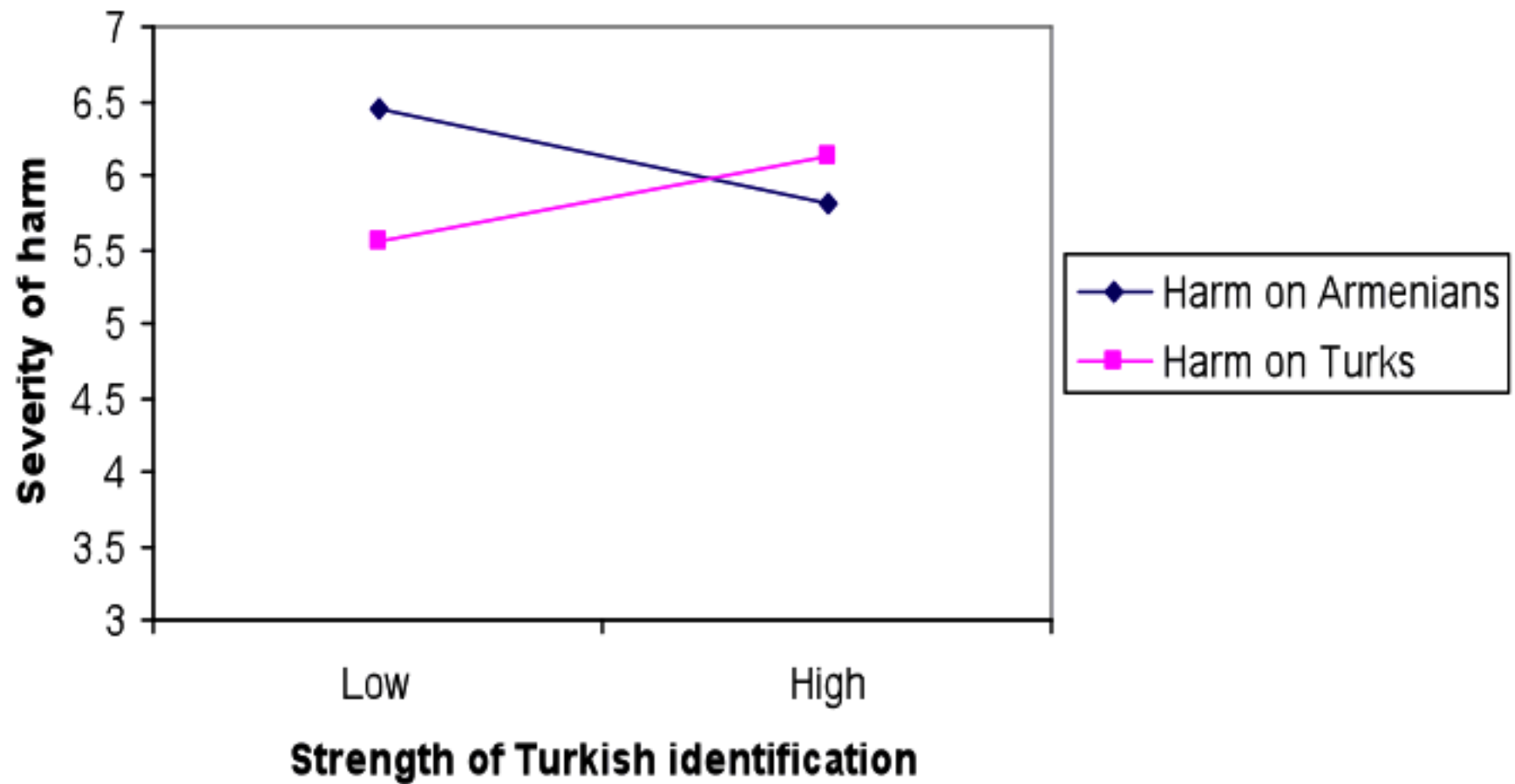


Perceptions of attributions of responsibility for the events on Turks, Armenians and other factors (third parties or situational factors)

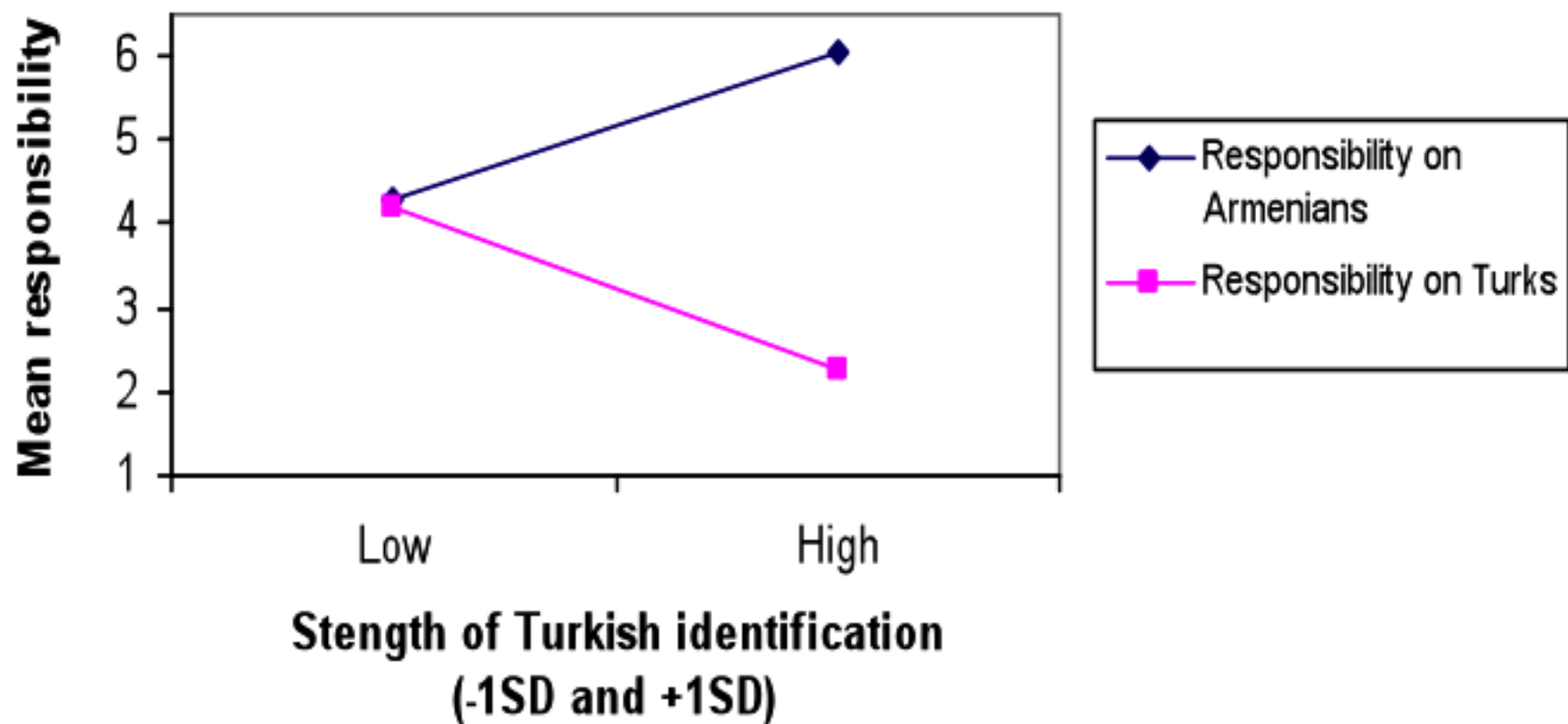


Relationship with ingroup identification

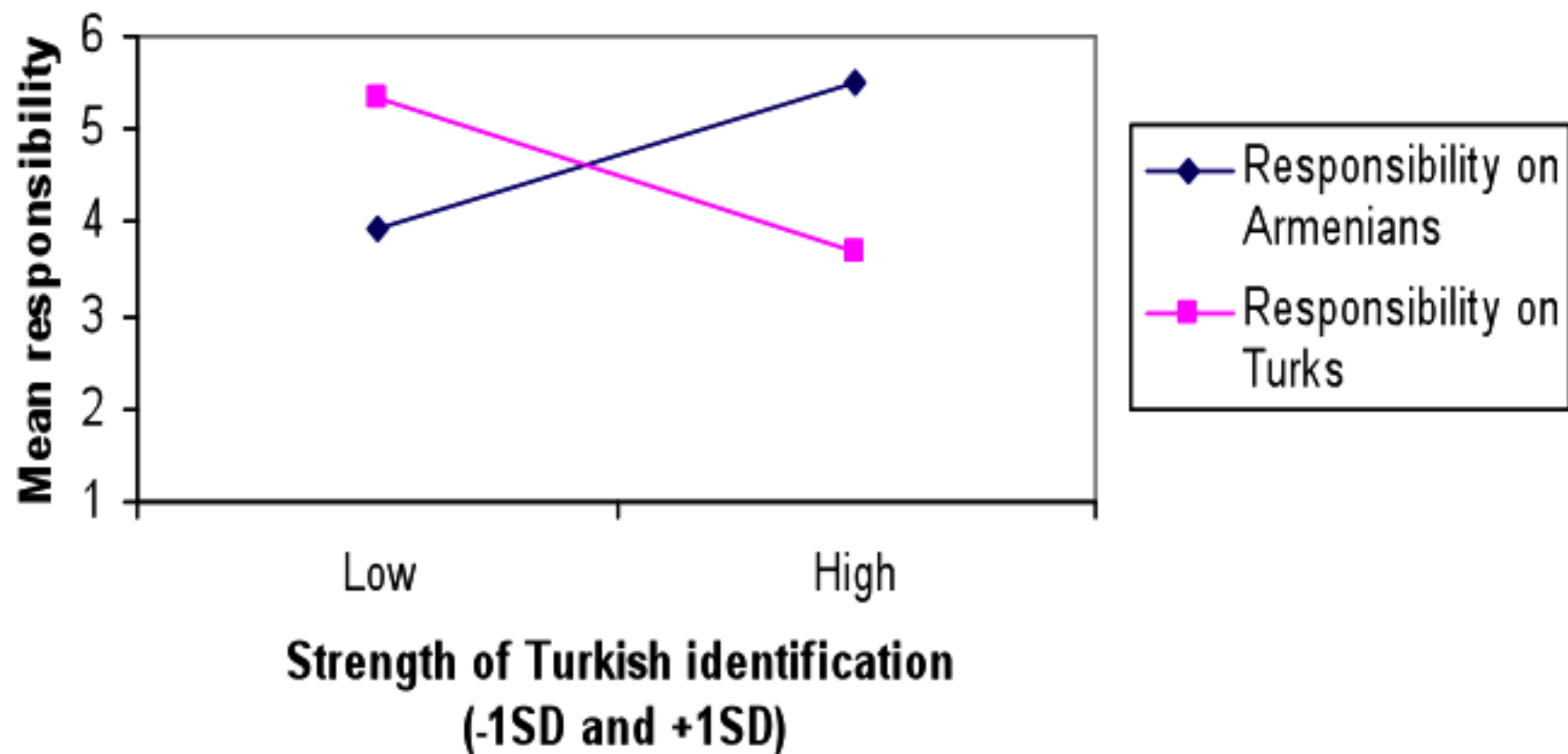
Perceptions of severity of harm on Armenians and Turks



Relationship between strength of identification and attributions (incitement)



Attributions of responsibility for consequences of the events (consequences)



On the structure of national identification

National identification as in-group identification

Patriotism vs. Nationalism (e.g., Li & Brewer, 2004;).

Blind versus Constructive Patriotism (e.g. Rothi, Lyons, & Chrysochou, 2004; Schatz & Staub, etc.)

Measures

Identity centrality

The fact that I am an "member of my group" is an important part of my identity.
Being "a member of my group" is an important part of my self-image

Positive evaluation of the ingroup membership

I am glad to be "a member of my group" .
It is pleasant to be "a member of my group" .

Positive evaluation of the group

I feel that "members of my group" have made valuable contributions to the world
I think that "members of my group" have a lot to be proud of.

Glorification and nationalistic attachment

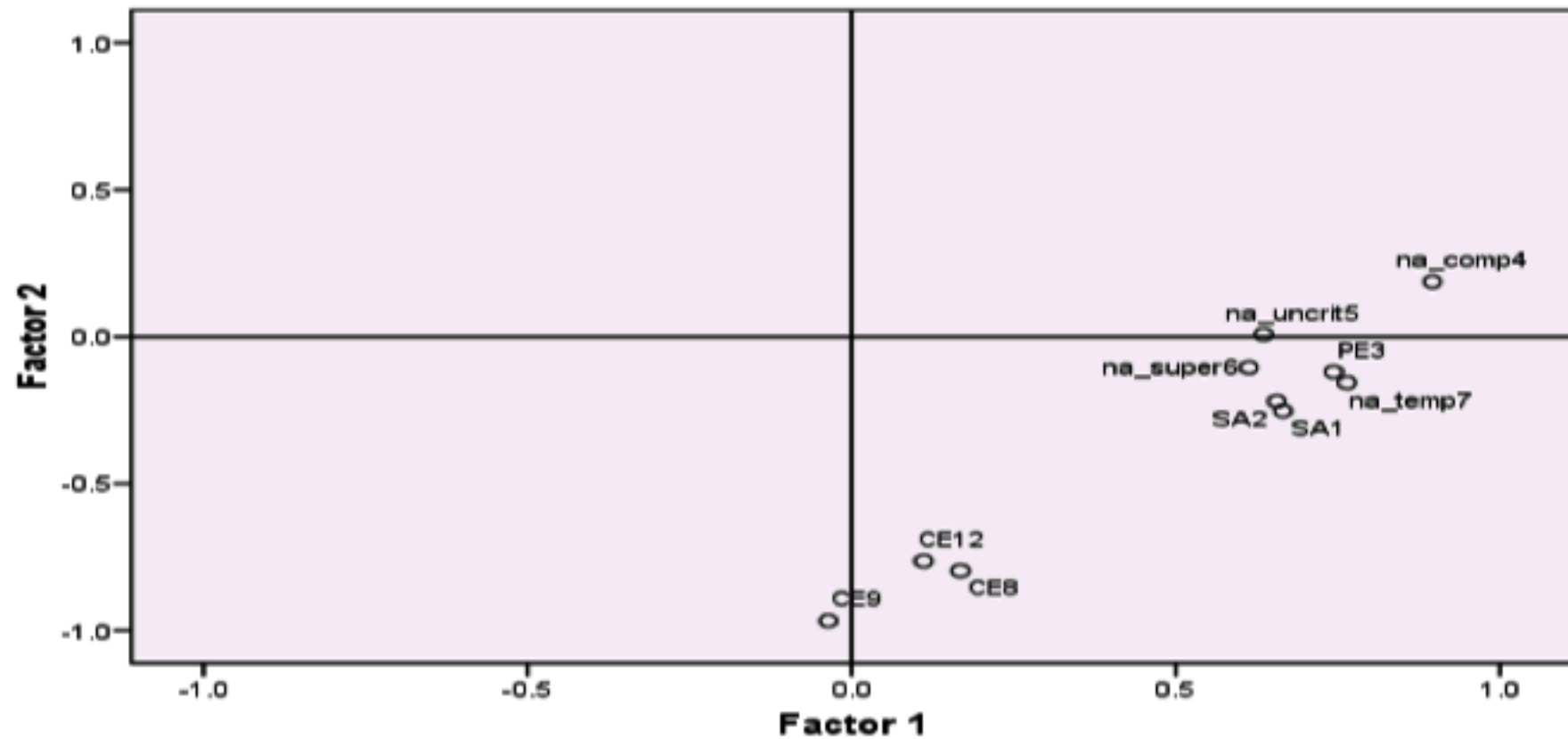
Relative to other nations we are a very moral nation.
Our nation is better than other nations in most aspects.

Identity centrality

Positive evaluation of group membership

Positive evaluation and glorification of the group – nationalistic pride

Factor Plot in Rotated Factor Space



Attributions	Centrality		Glorification	
	\underline{r}	\underline{r}^*	\underline{r}	\underline{r}^*
<i>Attributions of responsibility</i>				
Attr on Turks	-.46***	-.19+	.56***	-.33***
Attr on Armenians	.33**	-.01	.56***	.39***
Attr on others	.29**	.04	.43***	.22*
<i>Severity of harm</i>				
To the Ingroup:				
Displaced Turks	.30*	.21	.21	.01
Turks' economic harm	.28*	.18	.21+	.02
To the Outgroup:				
Displaced Armenians	-.30*	.02	-.42***	-.33**
Armenians' economic harm	-.23*	.05	-.37***	-.37**

Conclusion

- ▶ Importance of construal of the past violence
- ▶ Individual variation in construal of “memories” of group violence
- ▶ Ingroup identification as an explanatory variable
- ▶ The role of modes of identification