

Chapter 1

Globalisation and the Politics of Education Reforms: History Education

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1.1 Globalisation and History Education

This chapter examines the nexus between globalisation and education reforms in history education around the world. Recent research on globalisation and education policy has indicated that forces of globalisation and dominant ideologies have affected the nature and the content of historical narratives and the social and political value of school textbooks (Han, 2007; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000; Pingel, 2006; Roord, 2009; Smith, 1998; Zajda, 2014a). The term ‘globalisation’ is a complex modern construct and a convenient euphemism concealing contested meanings and dominant ideologies, ranging from Wallerstein’s (1979, 1998) ambitious ‘world-systems’ model, Giddens’ (1990, 2000) notion of ‘time-space distanciation’, highlighting the ‘disembeddedness’ of social relations and their effective removal from the immediacies of local contexts, to a view of globalisation as a neoliberal and bourgeois hegemony, which legitimates an ‘exploitative system’ (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005; Ritzer, 2005; Zajda, 2013). I would like to define ‘globalisation’, from a social and cultural transformation perspective, as *a new dominant ideology of cultural convergence, which is accompanied by a rapid and corresponding economic, political, social, technological and educational transformation*. Addressing globalisation in history education means for many countries ‘finding security in the yearning for a safe national past’ (Roord, 2009, p. 75).

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1.1.1 Methodology

In this volume, we are using a historical-comparative research (HCR), as an overarching framework, grounded in globalisation discourses. We focus on the nexus between forces of globalisation (which is associated with the ongoing unequal distribution of power and other socially valued commodities), social change and hegemonies. We also examine how they affected the construction of historical narratives in school history textbooks nature and major debates surrounding the content of historical narratives.

The intersection between historical-comparative research and globalisation offers a new approach for addressing big questions: How did major societal change take place? What caused major conflicts in our societies? Why societies are evolving in a particular way (Neuman, 2006, pp. 419–420)?

Historical-comparative research can ‘strengthen conceptualization and theory building’. By examining critically historical events, within diverse cultural contexts, a researcher can generate ‘new concepts’ and new understandings. However, as Neuman (2006) notes, a difficulty in reading HCR studies is ‘that one needs knowledge of the past or other cultures to fully understand them’:

Readers limited to knowing about their own cultures or contemporary times alone may find it difficult to understand the H-C studies or classical theorists. For example, it is difficult to understand Karl Marx’s ‘The Communist Manifesto’ without a knowledge of the conditions of feudal Europe and the world in which Marx was writing. (Neuman, 2006, p. 420)

Generally, historical-comparative research can be organised along the following three dimensions:

1. The researcher may focus on what occurs in one nation or many nations.
2. The researcher may employ time or history, focusing on a single time period in the past or examining events across many years.
3. The researcher may rely on quantitative/qualitative data (adapted from Neuman, 2006, p. 421).

We are also using critical literacy, critical theory and discourse analysis perspectives to add more depth to our analysis. From a critical literacy perspective, teaching and explaining dominant historical narratives in classroom pedagogy means addressing both positive and negative aspects of historical events in a given culture. From a critical theory perspective, analysing the selection of historical narratives, which depict key events in school history textbooks, means at least three things:

1. Accepting that a dominant ideology or hegemony is the ‘adoption of the views that naturalize and legitimize the existence of social classes in capitalism. human liberation’ (Geuss, 1981), which results in alienation and false consciousness (people’s inability to understand that dimensions of inequality are due to processes caused by societal dominant ways in organising life and work).

2. Understanding that there exists a certain ‘ambivalence concerning the ultimate source or foundation of social domination’ (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002), based on unequal distribution of socially valued commodities such as power, wealth and income.
3. Changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional approaches to historical knowledge oriented only to understanding or explaining it.

From discourse analysis perspectives, one needs to critique and challenge the accepted hierarchical structuring of power and authority, concerning knowledge, and question the neutrality of knowledge and ideology. It asks questions about the historical and cultural conditions in which discourses emerged. Foucault’s genealogy and the uses of discourse, such as his analysis of how ‘knowledge’ is created in our societies and with what purpose or effect, illustrates a dialectical relationship between power, social actors and cultural reproduction (Foucault, 1977, 1980). Genealogical analysis seeks to analyse ‘the discredited, the neglected and a whole range of phenomena which have been denied a history’ (Sarup, 1993). Critical discourse analysis is likely to offer an in-depth critical analysis of how history teachers’ historical knowledge and epistemological beliefs inform their views about student learning in this discipline.

The chapter concludes that a methodology, based on historical-comparative research (HCR), as an overarching framework, which is grounded in globalisation discourses, and a blend of critical theory and discourse analysis, focusing on evidence, and sources, the role of power, and the state, *unbiased* interpretation of historical narratives, and the multiperspectivity, is very useful in critiquing the overall reforms in history curricula and the content of school history textbooks.

1.2 Ideology

The term *ideology* refers to a system of ideas and beliefs that is dominant within a group or society and which affects most if not every sphere of social interaction and organisation within it—political, economic, scientific, educational and cultural (Zajda, 2014a).

Due to the pace of economic, political and social change, when society is in flux, some individuals experience a sense of identity crisis, and they look for people or symbols that offer security, safety and a sense of belonging. In such cases, the ideology can offer such individuals a new sense of identity and belonging, as for former citizens of the USSR, when it collapsed in December 1991. In the Russian Federation (RF) under Putin, ideology as political, economic and cultural beliefs offers a universal set of core values that help to create a sense of consensus in the nation-building process and a sense of shared identity and of preferred way for the people—professing to be true and the only way. Such a perception of the function of ideology may well be applicable to Putin and his role in the Russian history textbooks debate between 2007 and 2014 (see Zajda, 2014b).

In the global society, the first and defensive function of ideology, as the process of legitimation, and ‘meaning in the service of power’ and the ‘ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination’, is to legitimate, justify and consolidate the power of a dominant social group or class (Thompson, 1990, p. 5). Hence, ideology, as an ‘articulated sets of ideals, ends, and purposes, which help the members of the system to interpret the past, explain the present, and offer a vision for the future’ (Easton, 1965, p. 290), may offer individuals a sense of identity and belonging. This particular use of ideology is very useful in the analysis of historical narratives in history textbooks.

1.3 The Effects of Globalisation on Education and Society

Globalisation results in the intensification of worldwide social, economic and cultural relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring in other parts of the world. Today, economic rationalism and neo-conservatism have become dominant ideologies, or hegemonies, in which education is seen as a producer of goods and services that foster economic growth (Apple, 2004). Governments around the world, including the Russian Federation, in their quest for excellence, quality and accountability in education, increasingly turn to international and comparative education data analysis. All agree that a major goal of education is to enhance the individual’s social and economic prospects. It has been argued that the politics of education reforms surrounding national curricula, standards, excellence and quality as well as outcome-based curriculum reforms have ‘largely come from Northern, often World Bank, ideologies’.

Recent research on globalisation and education policy has indicated that forces of globalisation and accountability have affected the nature and the value of school textbooks in Russia and elsewhere (Baques, 2006; Crawford & Foster, 2006; Han, 2007; Pingel, 2006; Zajda, 2013). Since 2006, teaching ‘national history’ featured high on the agenda in many European countries. In Britain, after the events of 7 July 2005 (refers to the 7 July 2005 London bombings, as a series of coordinated suicide attacks in central London, which targeted civilians using the public transport system during the morning rush hour), ‘teaching *Britishness* through school history’ gained even more importance than it already had (Roord, 2009, p. 75). Gordon Brown (2006) in his speech ‘The future of Britishness’ referred to the importance of the national identity and the values of liberty and tolerance and the principle of fairness to all:

But today national identity has become far more important: it is not 46 % but 65 %—two thirds—who now identify Britishness as important, and recent surveys show that British people feel more patriotic about their country than almost other European country . . .

But when people are also asked what they admire about Britain, more usually says it is our values: — British tolerance, the British belief in liberty and the British sense of fair play. Even before America said in its constitution it was the land of liberty and erected the Statue of Liberty, I think Britain can lay claim to the idea of liberty . . .

Out of the necessity of finding a way to live together in a multinational state came the practice of tolerance, then the pursuit of liberty and the principle of fairness to all.

Indeed Britain is a country that not only prides itself in its fairness, tolerance and what George Orwell called decency but—as we have seen in recent debates like that over the Big Brother show—wants to be defined by it, defined by being a tolerant, fair and decent country. (Brown, 2006)

Globalisation and education reforms, targeting academic achievement, skills and standards, have resulted in a significant expansion of the monitoring of educational outcomes globally. Thus, the politics of education reforms in the RF reflect a new global emerging paradigm of standard-driven policy change (Zajda, 2012). Academic standards, performance and quality of schooling continue to dominate the reform agenda globally, especially the performance league tables. At the same time, there are also politically determined curricular reforms affecting the nature and the content of history school textbooks in the RF.

1.4 Globalisation and Reforms of School History Textbooks

Recent research on globalisation and education policy has indicated that forces of globalisation, standards and accountability have affected the nature and the value of school textbooks in the Russian Federation and elsewhere. Research findings concerning the revised content on new history textbooks demonstrate that the historiographies in the Russian Federation, engaging in nation-building process, continue to be essentially monolithic and intolerant to alternative views as those of their communist predecessors, merely “exchanging a communist ideological colouring for a national one” (Janmaat & Vickers, 2007; Zajda, 2012).

Since 1994, Zajda’s research dealing with education reforms and history textbooks in the RF has demonstrated that the Russian Ministry of Education and Science controls the process of commissioning and evaluation of all approved Russian history textbooks and other core textbooks in all school subjects. The new Russian history textbooks, which have the Ministry of Education seal of approval, have returned to traditional symbols of nation-building and patriotism (Zajda, 1994, 2000, 2014a, 2014b).

The political dimension of history textbooks was noted by Fuchs (2011) in his review of history textbook research globally and their historical narratives. He stressed ‘The highly explosive political nature of textbook and research pertaining to them’, resulting in ‘history wars’ both locally and globally (Fuchs, p. 19). He identifies ‘the formation of a national identity’ and the ‘construction of national identity’ as one of the key themes in history textbook research and national identity construction (p. 20). (see also Zajda and Whitehouse, 2009; Zajda and Zajda, 2012; Zajda and Smith, 2013).

Recent and continuing public and political debates in the USA, China, Japan, Korea, Russia and elsewhere, dealing with understandings of a nation-building and national identity, point out to parallels between the political significance of school history and the history debates globally (Nicholls, 2006; Smith, 1998, 2001;

Zajda, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). Due to these ongoing debates, history education has become both politically and pedagogically a high-profile topic of national and global significance. Consequently, the article's focus on school history textbooks, as medium for nation-building in Russia, is of geostrategic significance, for it helps to create a powerful form of global accountability of nations.

International research on school history has been done by the UN, the Council of Europe (Nicholls, 2006, p. 8). The Council of Europe has played a major role in funding projects to improve teaching history and history textbooks in Europe and especially in the Russian Federation between 1999 and 2003. One of the special goals of this 3-year project was to produce teaching resources for secondary schools which would encourage both teachers and students to approach historical events of the twentieth century from a critical and analytical perspective, using the same skills and assessment criteria as historians. Both reports emphasise that no single version of history should be considered as final or correct and encourage critical thinking and diverse approaches to learning and teaching history (Zajda, 2007, p. 292). The reports also stressed:

- The role of historical interpretation and memory in forming identity
- History dominated by prejudice and myth

1.4.1 The Council of Europe History Textbooks Projects

International research on textbook research has been done by the UN, the UNESCO and the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe has played a major role in funding projects to improve teaching history and history textbooks in Europe, particularly in the Russian Federation between 1999 and 2003. Its latest publication is *History Education in Europe: Ten Years of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe* (2006). The Council of Europe's major 3-year project (1999–2001) *Learning and Teaching about History of Europe in the 20th Century* (2001) culminated in the final report. Among its recommendations on the teaching history in the twenty-first-century Europe, we find the following principles:

- The need for stronger mutual understanding and confidence between peoples, particularly through a history
- Teaching syllabus intended to eliminate prejudice and emphasising positive mutual influence between different countries, religions and ideas in the historical development of Europe
- Reaffirming 'the educational and cultural dimensions of the major challenges in the Europe of tomorrow'
- Stressing that 'ideological falsification and manipulation of history are incompatible with the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe as defined in its Statute' (Council of Europe, 2001)

It warned against the ‘misuse of history’, declaring that history teaching should not be ‘an instrument of ideological manipulation, of propaganda or used for the promotion of intolerant and ultra-nationalistic, xenophobic, racist or anti-Semitic ideas’. The Council of Europe had offered specific recommendation for history textbooks’ content, to ensure that they reflected the spirit of pluralist democracy, human rights and promoting the values of freedom, peace and tolerance. Hence, the history syllabus content had to reflect the following goals:

- Awareness raising about the European dimension, taken into account when syllabuses are drawn up, so as to instil in pupils a ‘European awareness’ open to the rest of the world
- Development of students’ critical faculties, ability to think for themselves, objectivity and resistance to being manipulated
- The events and moments that have left their mark on the history of Europe as such, studied at local, national, European and global levels, approached through particularly significant periods and facts
- The study of every dimension of European history, not just political but also economic, social and cultural
- Development of curiosity and the spirit of enquiry, in particular through the use of discovery methods in the study of the heritage, an area which brings out intercultural influences
- The elimination of prejudice and stereotypes, through the highlighting in history syllabuses of positive mutual influences between different countries, religions and schools of thought over the period of Europe’s historical development
- Critical study of misuses of history, whether these stem from denials of historical facts, falsification, omission, ignorance or reappropriation to ideological ends
- Study of controversial issues through the taking into account of the different facts, opinions and viewpoints as well as through a search for the truth

As a result, there has been a degree of ‘Europeanisation’ of history textbooks in EU member states, since the 1990s (Han, 2007, p. 392). The new generation of Russian, French, German and the Ukrainian history textbooks contains a manifest European dimension, as well as increased emphasis on ‘wider European ideals’, such as democracy, human rights and social justice (Han, p. 393). A vivid example of this ‘Europeanisation’ is the case of Ukraine. From 1996 onwards, the Council of Europe, together with the Ministry of Education, held a series of seminars that aimed to reform the teaching of history, urging textbook writers to write textbooks that reflect the EU ideals of cultural diversity, social justice and inclusive pedagogy. The multiple perspective approach to historical narratives, advocated by the Council of Europe, resulted in the introduction of the new standard in teaching History of Ukraine in the restructured 12-year school system (Janmaat, 2007, p. 320). It mentions the cultivation of tolerance and respect for other nations and the importance of critical thinking. However, as Janmaat notes, there are signs that the rhetoric of the reform policy is not ‘filtering down’ in the textbooks. The 2005 new history curriculum for Year 5, as before, presents a strictly linear and chronological grand narrative of Ukrainian history, continuing mythmaking of past

historical events, which is at odds with critical thinking and pluralist discourses. A new textbook for Grade 10 on Ukrainian history, produced in cooperation with EUROCLIO and international organisation of history teachers, reflects Western models of innovative pedagogies grounded in pluralist discourses, multiculturalism and social justice.

EUROCLIO, founded in 1993, promotes and supports the development of an ‘innovative and inclusive approach to History and citizenship education’ (Roord, 2009, p. 80). It focuses on improving the quality of history education, where concepts such as ‘mutual inclusiveness, interpretation, evidence, multiperspectivity, complexity, objectivity, controversy, and civic responsibility’ are basic elements for good history education (Roord, p. 80). Teaching about the past means addressing both positive and negative aspects of historical narratives:

Teaching about the past means addressing positive issues like democracy, tolerance, respect for human rights, solidarity, courage . . . However, it also means dealing with, and reflecting upon, negative concepts such as stereotyping, prejudice, xenophobia, racism, violence and hate. (Roord, p. 80)

More importantly, EUROCLIO supports addressing a balanced variety of political, cultural, economic and social dimensions, offering school history at both local and global levels (glocal).

1.5 The Politics Surrounding Historical Narratives

Continuing public and political debates globally about the role of historical explanation and the development of historical consciousness in schools when dealing with popular understandings of a nation’s growth has given history a significant role in repositioning competing and ideologically driven discourses of historical narratives and processes (Janmaat, 2007; Nicholls, 2006; Zajda, 2013). In Russia, for instance, as in other countries undergoing a similar process of nation-building, the three most significant issues defining the repositioning of the politically correct historical narratives are preferred images of the past (reminiscent of Anderson’s ‘imagined community’), patriotism and national identity (Anderson, 1996; Smith, 1991).

Current debates, around the main issues in historiography and the role of historical narratives in nation-building process, echo similar controversies in the UK in the 1980s and in 2007 (Phillips, 1998; Brown, 2007) and in the USA during the 1990s (Nash et al., 2000), as well as recent polemics in history education globally. In the USA, for example, on January 18, 1995, the ‘History Wars’ erupted on the floors of the US Congress. In a debate on national history standards, Senator Slade Gordon asked the question ‘George Washington or Bart Simpson—which figure represented a more important part of our Nation’s history for our children to study?’ He attempted to define the national character of history teaching for future generations (Stearns, Seixas, & Wineburg, 2000, p. 1). School history texts, as instruments of ideological transformation and nation-building, are currently closely

monitored by the state, in countries like Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea and the Russian Federation, to name a few. In other countries, these processes are still present but in less formal and more ad hoc ways. In the Russian Federation, for example, it represents an ideologically driven nation-building process, and social and political transformation of society, which is overseen by the state.

Historical perspectives on school history textbooks include a rich diversity of ideological orientations, ranging from ultraconservative to neo-Marxist perspectives. The growth of recent nationalist and neo-nationalist, as well as socialist movements, especially in Europe and some parts of Latin America, influences, to a certain degree, the content and the role of history textbooks in schools. Debates over the content and the role of history textbooks, as Nicholls (2006) observes, have become ‘increasingly contentious’ (Nicholls, p. 43). Some scholars and educationalists suggest that school history textbooks play a significant role in political socialisation, promoting patriotism and the nation-building process (Baques, 2006; Han, 2007; Janmaat & Vickers, 2007; Pingel, 2006; and Zajda, 2013).

Some even argue that history textbooks are central to the ‘transmission of national values . . . in that they present an official story highlighting narratives that shape contemporary patriotism’ (Hein & Selden, 2000, pp. 3–4). If this is the case, history textbooks may well have acquired a new degree of political and moral dimensions in the twenty-first century. This in turn suggests the ideological dimension in education, embracing the curriculum, classroom pedagogy, assessment and educational outcomes. As Ginsburg and Lindsay (1995, p. 8) argue, teacher education involves ‘socialization for the political roles that teachers play’. Thus, teachers become agents of political socialisation, via disciplines they teach. Political socialisation deals with explanations of political events and refers to the ‘behaviour, knowledge, values, and beliefs’ of the citizens. Also, it is important to clarify that the political dimension is not limited to the discourses surrounding ‘the state, governments, parties, constitutions and voting’ (Ginsburg & Lindsay, p. 4). It extends to all aspects of society, and individuals, ranging from global trade policies to interpersonal dynamics and intercultural communication (Foucault, 1980; Zajda 2005, 2007).

In some countries, history textbooks have become a source of ongoing heated debates and controversies, due to their depiction or ‘airbrushing’ of specific historical events. Foster and Nicholls believe that Japanese history textbooks appear to be more controversial than those of other countries. This is largely due to the fact that the Japanese government directly monitors, supervises and censors textbook content (Nicholls, 2006, p. 44). Similar degree of the government’s control over the content of history textbooks can be observed in Japan, China and elsewhere. In Japan, for instance, some ultraconservative historians felt that history textbooks overemphasised Japanese imperialism and wartime atrocities (see Ogawa & Field, 2006, p. 52). They published their own textbooks—*History not Taught in Textbooks* and *The History of the Nation’s People*, justifying Japan’s role in World War II, as one of liberating Asia from Western imperialism. The books became best-selling books in Japan. The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform circulated its draft of the proposed history textbook for junior high schools.

Widespread protests had erupted in Japan, China and South Korea over the presentation of Japan's foundation myth as historical fact and its interpretation of Japan's role in wars to 'liberate Asia from the Western powers' (Masalski, 2001, p. 2) and not 'wars from expansionist motives' (Nicholls, 2006, p. 53). The Ministry of Education, following the publicity and controversy over the ultraconservative historical perspectives, its biases and omissions, criticised such textbooks for containing unbalanced accounts of certain historical narratives and requested that revised textbooks should reflect a more balanced content, a more sensitive use of language (e.g. 'military comfort women', etc.) and a more balanced and objective use of critical analysis and evaluation. However, the swing towards patriotism, nationalism and traditions, promoted by ultra-right-wing historians and policymakers, has gained momentum since 2001. A moral education reader *A Record of my Inner Development* designed to cultivate a 'love for the nation' and patriotism was published in April 2002 and distributed by the government to 12 million junior and senior high school students. In their school report cards, students are graded on a three-point scale as to their 'patriotic attitude' and 'awareness as Japanese' (Nicholls, p. 55).

1.6 Global Historical Perspectives on School History Textbooks

1.6.1 The Political Economy of History Textbook Publishing

History teachers in England, Australia, Canada, the USA, the Russian Federation, and elsewhere have long enjoyed freedom and independence in textbook selection. State-regulated or 'approved' textbooks 'never existed in England' (Crawford & Foster, 2006, p. 93). Forces of globalisation, marketisation and accountability have affected the nature and the value of school textbooks. Standard-driven education policy and curriculum reforms in Europe and elsewhere have impacted on publishers and publishing. A state-mandated National Curriculum in the UK (1988), the Core Curriculum in the Russian Federation (2014), National Curricula in France, and Japan, to name a few, supported by a rigid regime of examinations, accountability, standards quality and value-added schooling, have meant that education publishers were responding to the demands of state-controlled and examination-driven accountability-defined education system.

The emergence of national history curriculum, State/Federal Standards in History and increased emphasis on examinations in schools and higher education institutions has meant that education textbook publishers 'are now acutely aware of the demands of the examination boards' and produce prescribed textbooks for the state-defined and state-controlled curricula (Crawford & Foster, 2006, p. 94). Debates in the USA, England, France, Germany, Japan, the Russian Federation and China were particularly intense during the 1990s and after 2000, concerning how and what

history, particularly history narrative and ideological perspective, should be included in schools. In England, for instance, the debates surrounding the New English National Curriculum and the proposed school history curriculum in the late 1980s and early 1990s were ‘particularly acrimonious’:

Textbooks today are more than ever packaged and produced to respond to the demands of an increasingly state-controlled education system and an increasingly profit-driven textbook industry... the stakes were particularly high at this time because champions of both sides of the political divide understood that controlling access to the past had undoubted implications for how pupils perceived the present. (Crawford & Foster, 2006, p. 94)

Similarly, in France, due to its highly centralised education system, school history textbooks are published, according to prescribed history curricula and national examinations. In this sense, history in French schools has the status of a ‘compulsory discipline’, being placed ‘behind French and mathematics’ in the hierarchy of school disciplines (Baques, 2006, p. 105).

The Russian Federation is a vivid and unique example of ideological repositioning of historical narratives, blending certain Soviet and Russian historiography. According to President Vladimir Putin (2014), Russian history textbooks should reflect the ‘national ideology’ and the curriculum should focus on the formation of ‘common civic values, to consolidate the Russian nation’, and avoid, in his opinion, ‘biased interpretations’ of history:

We have to develop common approaches and views... especially in Russian history, and the history of the people of the Russian Federation... there should be no distortion of facts, and biased interpretations of the history of our country. (http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=5&topic_id=3&date=&sid=20188&ntype=nuke).

Furthermore, the notion of teaching patriotism is accentuated in the national history curriculum document, *Primernye programmy po uchebnym predmetam. Istoriia. 5–9 klassy* (2010). In the introduction, in the section *The goals and tasks for learning history in schools*, it is stated that one of the main goals of learning history is to cultivate in the students ‘patriotism, and respect to our Fatherland’ (*Primernye programmy po uchebnym predmetam. Istoriya. 5–9 klassy*, p. 5).

The Russian Federation introduced the National Curriculum in 1993 and standards. The latest generation of standards in history education and revised National curriculum were approved in January 2014. Since history deals with politically and socially controversial past events, history education has played, and continues to play, a contentious role in formulating overall curriculum policy and in creating national identity in each federation. On 2 June, President Putin directed his cabinet and the Ministry of Education to work together with the Russian Historical Society on revising and updating (by 15 August 2014) the national framework for new standardised textbooks of Russian history. Earlier, on January 2014, Putin, at the meeting with authors of a new framework for a school textbook on Russian history, said that there was a need to celebrate key events in Russian history, including the October 1917 Revolution and the Great Patriotic War (World War II), because they were of ‘great national significance’:

This year (2014) will mark 100 years since the beginning of World War I. Ahead of us are the 70th Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, 100 years of the February and October Revolutions [of 1917]. These dates are of great national significance, all of them, regardless of how we assess them. This is a fact, and we should consider together what events, and on what scale should be organised on a national level. I would like to hear your suggestions. (www.prlib.ru/en-us/News/pages/item.aspx?itemid=8063)

1.7 Conclusion

The above discussion demonstrates an existence of the nexus between ideology, the state and nation-building as depicted in historical narratives of the more recent school textbooks. New ideological biases and omissions have been detected in textbooks in Japan, the Russian Federation, Greece and elsewhere. The ‘Europeanisation’ of history textbooks in the EU is an example of Western-dominated grand narrative of pluralist democracy, multiculturalism and human rights, according to the canon of a particularly European dimension. Both the ‘Europeanisation’ of history textbooks and politically motivated reforms in history curricula and textbooks, as depicted above, demonstrate a new dimension of political socialisation and the nation-building process currently taking place in the global culture.

Recent and continuing public and political debates in countries around the world, dealing with understandings of a nation-building and national identity, point out to parallels between the political significance of school history and the history debates globally (Han, 2007; Janmaat, 2007; Nicholls, 2006; Pingel, 2006; and Zajda, 2014b). Due to these ongoing debates concerning the role of history teaching in schools, its content and delivery, history education has become a *high-profile* topic of national and global significance.

This chapter demonstrates that the issue of national identity and balanced representations of the past continues to dominate the debate surrounding the content of history textbooks. The existence of competing and contested discourses in historiography, together with diversity in interpretations of events, will make it problematic to reach consensus on the content of history textbooks. A trend towards a more analytical, pluralistic and critical approach to both the process and content of historical narratives in school textbooks offers new pedagogical challenges to both students and teachers alike, who have been exposed to traditional, linear, descriptive and authoritarian views of the politically correct historical narrative. These competing discourses in historiography and diverse ideologies will continue to define and shape the nature and significance of historical knowledge, dominant ideologies and the direction of values education in history textbooks.

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