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### Normativity in Russian History Education: Political Patterns and National History Textbooks

My current research concerns the politics of Russian history education. In this paper, I discuss some of the issues raised by the study of national history textbooks. I analyze the normative implications of sentences and statements about the past and try to define contrary ideological assumptions. How do the authors construct the aim of historical education? In what kind of activities do the typical patterns of textbook questions and instructions try to engage pupils? How do the different textbooks construct the political subject? The article aims to explore the media construction of political actions in Russian school history textbooks.

#### Keywords:

Politics of history, history textbooks, conservatism, ideology, Russia, history education

#### 1 Introduction

In this paper, I consider the problem of normativity in three different dimensions: a) with respect to “storytelling” and explanation of the facts, how do the textbooks represent the subjects of political action /interaction with all repertoire of motivations, goals, causality, ideas about good and right and so on, based on explicit and implicit normative theorizing, or how is power made visible and represented in historical narration; b) with respect to didactic and legitimate modes of communication with readers, how do the textbooks try to construct the interactions with pupils engaged in study of history? what about building learners’ communicative competence about required, “normal response” and similar context used as a conceptual framework to interpret the ‘normative narratives’ with its conceptions of power; c) with respect to the discipline, as a way to determine how “to practice history” and how it might construct itself through the school textbooks. Thus, this paper is about the rhetoric of power, teaching patterns and disciplinary foundations of history. This view draws on poststructuralist notions of power embedded in and enacted through ideologies, discourses and institutional practices.

I would consider textbook as a channel or recourse for the promotion of political ideas. Teun van Dijk

argues that textbooks allows for the expression of prejudice and generalization in a normative situation in which the expression of prejudices is officially prohibited (van Dijk, 2001). Within this framework, history textbooks are considered in this paper as instruments of ideologies.

#### 2 The state of art in the field

The content of curriculum and school textbooks has been at the focus of political scientists’ analysis since the end of the Cold War and attendant global transformations in world politics. Geoff Whitty mentions that this initial interest, via the analysis of school textbooks and instructional materials, “stemmed from a political concern about their overt censorship during the Cold War era” (Witty, 1985, p. 40). Studies focus upon the patterns of discrimination within school texts, the incidence of stereotyping and the distortion of reality or the ‘absence of realism’. The perspective becomes progressively more complicated and theoretically skilled due to the dialog with critical educational studies. Michael Apple and Jean Anyon in their classical works reveal the detailed field of education, economics, race and class converge and discovered many social problems of school education. They start to not only analyze and criticize the textbooks but took it into different contexts to examine how these textbooks were used and read; Apple and Anyon analyze interactions in the school environment, the culture and micro politics in school classes. Such analysis was based on participant observations and interviews; they attended classes and interviewed students, parents, teachers and administrators (Anyon, 1979; Apple, 1991). In these contexts, texts allow multiple interpretations, though there are always preferred readings and clear ideological messages. The critical educational writers are concerned not only with the ideology itself but with the politics in the classroom, with all its ideological, cultural, economic, and other factors, and were highly politically engaged, as they try to develop a broad program of educational reform. Professors Apple and Anyon were the pioneers of Neo-Marxist thought in critical education studies, inspired by perspectives imported from the new sociology of education in Britain. However, in their works on education policy, they also consider power as knowledge, and the ability to control society by constructing reality; the data analysis is set within a

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framework of dialogue between the theories of Marx, Foucault and Bourdieu (Anyon, 1997; Apple, 2000).

Geoff Witty takes a macro-political perspective of political theorizing and practice of educational program in Britain; he investigates how different educational practices are articulated during discussions between the Labour and Tory parties on governmental policies in school education and how such developments are entangled with the wider economic, political and ideological climate (Whitty, 1985). He investigates how aspects of education are represented in the debate between government and opposition in the press and intra-party discussion, and analyzes the arguments, contradictions and implicit ideology in ministers' speeches, parliament protocols and newspaper articles. Another question is how all these discussions were developed into ministerial documents and were consistent to the school curriculum and textbooks. He also discusses how the developments in education have created concern amongst the teaching profession and local authorities, how they have implied a change in the division of responsibilities between the parties, and tries to determine different kinds of economic, social and ideological pressures that could generate policy initiatives. Witty's research sought to understand the effects of changes in official policy discourse on educational practices. Witty considers English secondary school curricula and textbooks as the product of an ongoing series of compromises between different groups "engaged in political and ideological work in and around the educational arena".

The school historiography is still an actual field for political studies. The trend is to analyze not only ideological implications of narration in textbooks, but also its didactic and other communicative aspects, and especially--in many papers presented at the Annual ISHD Conferences (International Society of History Didactic)--how these textbooks were used and read in different discursive contexts. As Maria Repoussi and Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon mentioned, any textbook is set simultaneously in educational projects and practices, in scholarly and school-related epistemological contexts, under institutional constraints, political and ideological demands, social requirements and representations (recently developed by memory agencies), and it is of course an economic product with an enormous and often captive market (Repoussi, 2010, p. 157). This allows us to examine the textbook from different points of view.

In contrast to research on history textbooks in the United States and United Kingdom, Russia is often spoken about as an example of total state control over education and ideology. Vera Kaplan describes post-Soviet Russian educational reforms, the period of reaction at the end of 1990s and the main changes in history politics in early 2000s. She defines two main trends in post-Soviet educational policy: attempts to include national history education into the multi-cultural perspective and to liberate history from

ideology (Kaplan, 2005, p. 253). Kaplan focuses on political discussion and analyzes ministry circulars and State Standards in History, the articles published in the professional journals affiliated with the Russian Academy of Education and the Ministry of Education, and compares contradictory ideas about the aims, priorities, and methods of history teaching. Like Witty for Britain, Kaplan analyzes the Russian case to understand the effects of changes in official discourse on the curriculum and textbooks. She tries to argue how the new concept of history education was linked to the "formation of the ideological doctrine of Russia". She supposes that government actions under Putin returned the reform of history teaching to its starting point of the stagnation era. She traces the arguments and basic ideas of political discussions, and analyzes the political concepts implied in history textbooks and curriculum. A close reading of textbooks is done for the same project by Alexander Shevyrev. He analyzes the historical narrative in the post-Soviet Russian school and focuses on the representations of some cases in prerevolutionary history of Russia such as the Tatar yoke, oprichnina, and Russian absolutism, which represented the peculiarity of Russia and non-European models of Russian power (Shevyrev, 2005, p. 274). He concludes, "Political changes which took place in Russia at the end of the last millennium have seriously influenced the very process of development of historical narrative"; after Putin historical education turned to the ideas of patriotism and national exceptionalism. He does not describe and analyze other different political ideas implied in the representation of past events. In his own work, Joseph Zajda provides an insight into understanding how the nexus between ideology, the state and nation-building have been depicted in history textbooks. He also underlines ideas of patriotism and nation exceptionalism widespread in Russian history textbooks, and writes of the politicization of increasingly state-controlled history curricula and textbooks by comparing the Russian case to Japan and Greece (Zajda, 2009).

Victor Voronkov and Oksana Karpenko make an analysis of modern Russian nationalist discourse. Taking a Foucauldian perspective, they are concerned with the discursive representations of "people" and "native land" as a part of knowledge, a power which forces a person to discharge an obligation. Patriotic discourse forms strong power relations. Voronkov and Karpenko discover nationalistic roots in the foundation of state patriotic ideology and argue how Soviet discourse has recently become more nationalistic. The propagation of patriotic discourse is opposed to the values of a law-based state, human rights and civil society (Voronkov and Karpenko, 2007). Karpenko traces how by way of the identification in official discourse of the concept of patriotism with the concept of "love", the idea of a citizen subjected to his nation and strong models of power obtained an illusion of humanized justification (Karpenko, 2010,

pp. 81-83). Voronkov and Karpenko consider the textbooks as a state representation of social knowledge. Thus, the textbooks could transform social moods in keeping with the dominant official view. The textbooks represent government attempts to manage social knowledge.

Sergey Soloviev discusses the ideological myths in Russian history textbooks of the 2000s. He analyzes the stereotype patterns in textbook narratives on the twentieth century. Soloviev tries to problematize "social lie" in school socializing. He focuses on crucial falsification of historical facts in new textbooks' representations of wars, revolution, repressions, class struggle, state collapse and other traumatic events and social conflicts (Soloviev, 2009). In Althusserian terms, he considers the education system as part of ideological state apparatus and writes of the impossibility of de-ideologization of history teaching. In Barthes' terms, he considers myths as a way to allay traumatic tension and recreate stability of the social world. He traces how the monarch-nationalist version of the past became dominant in textbooks of the 2000s. Soloviev suggests that the state conservative ideological project and the ideas of state and social consolidation were the result not only of state power but also corresponded to Russian public opinion. Many authors demonstrated their Soviet subjectivities to change ideological tone in accordance to the government's "general line". Not only explicit or implicit state orders, but also the social stereotypes shaped the textbooks' contents. For instance, the theory of totalitarianism was broken down by the strong social mythology that opposed the Soviet to fascist. Soloviev considers the social mythology that turned the trauma of the post-Soviet 1990s into a story of national humiliation to be a factor of imperial revival. The Kremlin's political technologists took into consideration social memory, while textbook authors took into consideration recent government moods. Soloviev presents textbooks of the 2000s to be a product of negotiation between the Kremlin's political technologists and society. Soloviev accentuates different variations, deviations and contradictions to the state's "general line". He mentions how patriotism got along together with patriotism, or how liberal or neoliberal ideological implications were contaminated in the 2000s textbooks with nationalistic discourse.

Philip Tcharkovsky redirects the discussion of Russian history textbooks. Following John Apple, Tcharkovsky proceeds from the assumption that teaching practices and the practices of articulations could transform the ideological implications and political effects of the historical narration and change the understanding of textbook content. A non-democratic discourse could be threatened by democratic practices. Tcharkovsky questions the efficiency of recent ideological communication between the power elites and "ordinary" people. The same radical gap between state ideology and subjective perception of reality existed in the stagnation era of 1970s.

Tcharkovsky's exploration of "history textbook consumption" is based on a number of interviews with pupils, the representations of past in which he compared with textbooks' contents. He argues that the school is a site of resistance and the ideas contained in the textbooks can be transformed through pedagogical practices. Also, in these years the school is far from the only agent of socialization, given the importance of the internet, social media, and local communities. Different discursive fields create different moral reference points and ideological resources for undermining the state "patriotic" interpretation of the past. (Tcharkovsky, 2011)

This perspective seems to me practical and sensible. It should be the theme for further research on how the political ideas presented in the textbooks are accentuated in different discursive situations and internalized by pupils. In this paper, I focus only on the representations. The study sample consisted of ministry-approved textbooks published in 2013. It represents current standards for Russian history education. Here I don't touch upon the issue of textbooks efficiency and don't work with the contexts of learning procedures. The practices involving the textbook in classrooms and the teachers' and students' reception of the textbooks remain beyond the scope of this study. However, government attempts to modify or adjust the normative interpretation of the past could be considered as a symptom of deviation in the articulations of ideological presuppositions. Today history education has moved to the fore of public discussion in different countries. The question of methodology stands at the center; that is, how history should be taught assumes the problem of normativity.

## 2 National frames of educational politics

The teaching of national history in the Soviet Union was under the control of central power since the times of Joseph Stalin (Banerji, 2008). The criticism of such a totalitarian regime became crucial for post-Soviet national ideology. But in the late 1990s the Russian government once again, as in Soviet times, drew attention to historical education and took new steps toward history policy. The Provisional Compulsory Minimum of the Content of Education for Basic Schools was confirmed by the Ministry of Education in 1998: "in the wake of this decision, the structure of the federal list (komplekt) of textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education was divided into two parts, the first included those texts which 'fulfilled the Compulsory Minimum', the second part listed textbooks which, for various reasons, diverged from" it (Kaplan, 2005, pp. 261-262). From year to year the government restricted the list of approved textbooks, increasing the number of textbooks removed from the market. The main attention of the Russian government was focused on the representations of current policy and the post-Soviet years in the textbooks. Announcing the competition for the writing of new



textbooks, Ministry of Education officials emphasized that textbooks should represent Russia as a multi-ethnic democratic state, and tolerate different conceptions of the past to consolidate society, accentuate local identities and prevent racism. But also the new textbooks should “bringing back patriotism, civic and national virtues and historical optimism”. Once again the task of forming the exemplary citizen and patriotic subjectivity was entrusted to history education. President Putin at a meeting with history teachers in November 2003 made the statement: “Modern textbooks, especially textbooks for schools and institutions of higher education, should not become a platform for a new political and ideological struggle. These textbooks should... inspire, especially among young people, a feeling of pride for their own history and for their country” (Smith, 2008, pp. 1-2). Since 2004 the Russian Ministry of Education has controlled the process of evaluation of all approved history textbooks. Such intentions as strong discipline of mind and paternalism appeared in officials’ claims. Only the government-approved history textbooks could be used in schools. Moreover, officials referred to “teachers’ requests” that there should be only one “single” textbook with a strong “true” interpretation of the past (Kravtsova 2013).

In September 2007, deputy minister of education Isaak Kalina announced that history textbooks should be one of the means to form the Russian citizen. The Russian government initiated the process, which continued to be essentially monolithic and intolerant to alternative views and ideological coloring (Zajda, 2009). The Kremlin’s plan to create a unified series of school history textbooks to replace the existing rival curricula was met with criticism by professional historians (Asmolov et al., 2013) and public discussion protesting the “brainwashing of the nation last seen in Russia in the Soviet era” (Eremenko, 2013). The criticism of these measures from the teaching community and oppositional political circles was quite severe and since this moment the process of rewriting was suspended.

This is an old controversy in public discussion about the history education, whether the school should give pupils so called “factual knowledge” formally presented to them in the historical narration or it should teach them how to construct the facts and explorations by critical work with “sources analysis” and theoretical frames (Ferguson, 2011). The conceptions associated with each of the attitudes could be derived from political agendas. From the position of conservatives, history narration should “give people the chance to be proud of our past”. But such “traditional” instruction seems to train students to passively assimilate knowledge, or, to invoke Foucault, to achieve the “subjectification” of the will to power. The opposition proclaims that such instruction could “mould our pupils into the compliant citizens that the government desires, that instruction should “go

beyond simply glorifying our past, so that students can critically engage with the past and understand how it affects them as individuals in the present. The emphasis on studying history should not be placed on a particular narrative that has merely a political agenda” (Vasagar, 2011). “There is a well-described critical balance between urging students to develop as much as possible into free independent individuals with a strong capacity to form their own opinion and at the same time aiming to promote and secure specific values from a privileged normative standpoint” (Jacobsen, 2007)

My research question is what kinds of competing political patterns are captured by the recent school history textbooks through the representation of the past and through the construction of communicative models with the reader.

### 3 “Doing history”: Disciplinary frames of history textbooks

In the Russian educational system, history is a “subject” similar not only to such “Arts” (by Common European Research classification) as literature, language, social studies or “art & science” as geography and biology but also with “science” as physics, chemistry, computer science. But in fact contemporary historical education in Russia deprives the normative rules of scientific (research) practices or art criticism. It approaches the art of fiction, media arts, national mythology or even everyday talks. Russian history textbooks promote the normativity of common prejudice as a basis for explanations and justification of political, social or economic realities.

The subject and frame of the discipline are extremely fuzzy. First, history is presented in the textbooks as lessons in patriotism. It is cast as an act of civic solidarity (Izmozik, 2013, p. 3). For example, the textbook edited by Pchelov declares: “*we are all a little part of our Great Motherland*”, of which we should take loving care. They attempt to elicit empathy from the reader and approach to subjectivation: “*We should know our history for a better understanding of our life*”. It should be like an act of interiorisation: history is about of “*our family, our entity and our origins; we should take pride and not repeat any mistakes*” (Pchelov, 2013, p. 3). “*It is about our present and future*” because “*our life in the present is connected with our past*”, just as psychoanalysts suggests. So “*when we know our history, we know what we should do to be a good responsible citizen*” (Danilevsky, 2012, pp. 3-7) And also we should to increase historical achievements of Russian people (Kiselev, 2013, p. 3). At the same time there are no references to everyday human life in the textbooks. As media discourse the textbooks narrate macro-policy. The states and super-heroes (political leaders) are the actors of this drama. In spite of the Marxist heritage, Russian history is not about the people, who are invisible and implicitly passive victims (the super-hero should save somebody in his battle

with the anti-hero) or as recipients of charity (the super-hero should take care of somebody by way of his reforms). And certainly it is not so easy to think about the "Motherland" and "Love" when the textbook narrates, for example, about the trends, forces, system, and so on in physics-like terms. But the textbooks recommend that students participate in special activities. Some of them appeal to family memory and oral stories to accumulate ordinary emotions and ask the students to talk with their relatives (grandparents and parents) about the tragedy of war (Shestakov, 2013, p. 141; Danilov, 2013, pp. 79, 187). But the most popular practice is to ask students to narrate a fictional story from the point of view of a fictional character about his everyday experience as if they were eyewitnesses of "historical events" (Tchernikova, 2008, p. 102; Sakharov, 2012, p. 108; Shestakov, 2013, pp. 42, 81; Danilov, 2013, pp. 31, 156, 164-165, 192, 223; Pchelov, 2013, pp. 24, 146, 206; Danilov, 2013, pp. 79, 93, 14, 228, 255, 260, 315). They create an effect of theatricality by appealing to the imagination: the students are asked to try on another persona – a citizen of ancient republic, or a peasant in times of Stolypin reform, or woman who took part in a protest march, or a congress delegate etc. – and to experience something through his or her point of view. This way the reader connects to the subject represented therein. It seems important that this exercise does not assume to compare and discuss opposing points of views. It should be in keeping with the main ideas of textbook. The role of every historical event is clearly evaluated. It is presumed, for example, that the victory in war elicits only joy, not taking into consideration any probable post-traumatic stress disorder or memory; all the "motivations and fills" are strong in a narratively predictable way. This activity is just an act of interiorisation (subjectivation). The pupils should learn by heart the causality and be able to imagine the inner motivations and feelings of historical personalities, "*imagined ordinary people of the past*". (Tchubarian, 2011, p.16) This practice presumes on control over personal emotional habits and experience.

History in school is posited as tied up with another civic activity. The textbooks invite pupils "*to reflect on the fortunes of Russia*". The textbook authors take this "citizens' duty very seriously: they assert that 'it is natural that every adult citizen reflect on the fortunes of Russia and on the Russian place in world history'" (Sakharov, 2012, p.1). A strong technology is provided for this activity. It is a matter of the "imagined community" (in terms of Benedict Anderson). The native, as the textbook explains, is the land "*where you are born, or live, or just suggest your own*" (Tchernikova, 2008, p. 3). Textbooks suggest that one use the maps of contemporary Russia to imagine "the boundless space of our ancient state" (Danilov, 2013, p. 22; Pchelov 2013, pp. 28, 50, 61, 99, 104, 147). "The nation" depicted by maps has its boundaries and location. It seems predictable that some years ago

Ukraine and Crimea, the Caucasus and even Lithuania were mentioned as "our territory". "*We must know history to have a deliberate and conscious position in the present*" Tchernikova, 2008). As Clifford Geertz ironically mentioned, "almost universally now the familiar paradigm applies: "*I have a social philosophy; you have political opinions; he has an ideology.*" This rule very much corresponds to the case of Russian history textbooks. The editors try to legitimate the ideology by reference to the authority of adults, historians, teachers and parents, or on the contrary try to discredit these groups as bearers of "false consciousness" and affirm their own ideas as clearly "neutral". It is significant that President Putin tries to do the same. In February 2013, Putin called on historians to produce a single history free "*from internal contradictions and ambiguities,*" suggesting that current textbooks offered too many opposing views (The Telegraph, 2013). The study of history has become a political struggle. Each of the sides in public discussion of history textbooks tries to construct an authoritarian political model. This discourse makes it impossible to open history to interpretative practice. In recent years, most Russian history textbooks represent history as the site for training in "policy making". In the Russian common understanding, this means to watch televised political debates and to vote (and to vote for the "good" political leader, the personification of "Russian national interests" and the "common good"). The textbooks' narration is similar to on modern media discourse about politics. And the editors often ask students, who seems to be a good leader? It appears to be training for "correct" vote decision. The students are being cultivated into a good electorate: relying on the information in the textbooks, they should be able to choose a "good" political program. (Tchernikova, 2008, pp. 45, 28, 34, 186; Danilevsky, 2013, p. 56; Volobuev, 2013, p. 29; 275; Pchelov, 2013, p. 50; Kiselev, 2013)

In striking contrast, the textbooks of the 1990s tried to prepare children to be political leaders, to make decisions and defend their positions and actions (Burin, 1996, p. 251; Vedjushkin & Burin, 2000, pp. 46-53). They focused not only on the actions of political elites but on everyday political work and decision making by management, officials and the bureaucracy. But at the same time the textbooks of the 1990s also promoted "common sense" as a basis for decision making and valued the ability to negotiate and come to an agreement other than "political radicalism" (Kuriev, 1998, pp. 28-30).

The newer textbooks occasionally ask students to work with statistics on trade turnover, to estimate income and expenditure, and interpret the structure of GDP. It also invites them to write a legislative project or government statement, and make a discussion (Tchubarian & Revjakin, 2012; Volobuev, 2013, p. 19; Danilov, 2013, pp. 58-59, 172, 315). But as opposed to civic activity training, in the case of

analytical tasks the textbooks do not address methodology or how to do this work.

The textbooks ask students to feel inspired by historical paintings and myths to produce the subjectivity reconstructions and fake histories. Critical methods are replaced by a false sense of history. Only three textbooks (Danilevsky, 2012; Pchelov, 2013; Tchernikova, 2008) give students an introduction to historical criticism and teach them how to work with historical sources, to compare different documents and try to determine their date, creators, addressee and purpose, to evaluate the authenticity and credibility of historical sources and to compare the different argumentation of historians who interpreted these sources. This activity assumes an independent investigation; pupils cannot find the "right answer" in the textbook. But in the case of professional rules, it could turn out to be a misunderstanding of methodology. Critical thinking requires the intellectual discipline based on its own norms.

#### 4 Communicative frames of history textbooks

If we compare late Soviet with early post-Soviet textbooks, a very notable difference is the means of communication with the reader. Stalin-era textbooks were extremely didactic and didn't provide dialog or interaction with children; they substituted knowledge of history with learning the textbook by heart. Under Brezhnev, it was explicated in tasks and questions to control the memory and attention of young "sub-alterns". In contrast, the textbooks of 1990s offered the new models of communication. This was not a universal trend; many authors and editors continued to practice old didactic and narrative forms. But some delegated to the children the role of equal partner who could discover meaning, interpret the historical materials without outside assistance and could argue one's independent point of view. These textbooks not only told stories of political "democratization" and "liberalization" but also practiced it.

The difference between Russian textbooks and European ones or even some Russian textbooks of the 1990s is not only in the way they are controlled by the authorities, but also in their inner discursive power over pupils. For example, the British textbooks required students not to "remember" (*"No specific answer is looked for"*) but to argue, *"identify, explain and assess"* the reasons of past events, and be able to discuss the main factors of events (*"They don't provided the possibility of direct answer"*) or assess *"to what extent the available evidence support the view that"*. At the next stage of school education, students should be able to compare arguments related to past events by contemporary historians (to compare two aspects and two contrary points of view on each case). At this second stage of education, the textbooks present different interpretations of leading historians to the students and ask them to *"assess the view"*. *"Candidates are not expected to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the specification content but*

*are expected to know the main developments and turning points relevant to the theme"*. On contrary most recent Russian textbooks represent the events of war as a chain of victories, focused on the place, date, name, numbers, and position of main characters, cause-and-effect relation, and the author's assessments. And these textbooks ask students to *"learn them by heart"* as in the Soviet era (Sakharov, 2012; Tchernikova, 2008). The textbooks cite only the texts which don't contradict the author's views. They ask students to agree with proposed assessments and to accept "true" understanding. History education basically turns into simple memory training: the pupils should choose a right answer from a list (Sakharov, 2012; Danilov, 2013).

#### 5 Representations of political models

The main paradox inherent to the history education in Soviet Russia was the consideration of protest. How could one glorify the revolution but not endorse protest? The subjectivity of future Soviet citizens should be based on the idea of succession to the revolution. History was structured by the chain of such events as protest movements and revolts against discrimination and exploitation. But since the Stalin era the idea of party discipline displaced the objectification of cultures of protest, dissent and resistance. History textbooks were filled with Marxist critique of oppression and alienation but kept silent about generative, self-organizing or mobilization through the property of social structures and protest cultures. In this formulation, any protest should be organized by the "center". The history of the revolution was transformed into a narrative about subordination to the party and subjection to the mythological "majority". The main actor in this story became the party-like organization, or strong centralized authority (by the familiar model of the old monarchy). As under the old regime, students should learn by heart the narrative of the textbook of strong subordination under and subjection to the authority of the text. After the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991, communist values were replaced in mass media by liberal and democratic discourses that promoted particular values such as freedom and individuality. "European" parliamentarism has been seen as an idealized embodiment of democratic values, as a model that guarantees individual needs by free discussion without strong subordination to centralized impersonal will and without protest disturbances. The idea of impersonal equality was replaced by individual entertainment as a key to the common good. The revolution has been seen as a deconstructive act, in contrast to private enterprise, now cast as *"real constructive labor"*. As Mark Beissinger mentioned, the collapse of Soviet ideology in the late 1980-1990s was also frequently entangled with the revival of nationalist and traditionalist, so-called "patriotic" discourses (Beissinger, 2009, p. 331). In that nationalist perspective, revolution and any forms of

public protest were considered to be alien acts pursued under the pressure of the “other”? *“Who were the revolutionaries by nationality? If the revolution was an attempt to break with traditions could it really be good for Russian culture.”* In general, the political imagination of Soviet and post-Soviet textbooks was not very creative and implied pure repertoire of political action. Most of these actions go back to the political theory of the nineteenth century (or history textbooks of the so-called Old Regime).

The new textbooks represent two main ideological positions – conservative and liberal - both of which consider the revolution as crisis, disorder, violence and the destructive result of war. Alexander Tchubarian is a propagator of global civil society and such concepts as “liberal state”, market economy, parliamentarism and so on. He denounces government involvement in the economy, authoritarianism, colonialism, militarism and suggests that civic consensus, opportune reforms and international organizations could prevent conflicts like revolutions and wars. But he emphasizes that during the October Revolution (which he treats as military coup d'état) the majority of population remained apathetic. The main effects of this “revolution” were, according to Tchubarian’s textbook, industrial stagnation, repressive government and populism (Tchubarian, 2011). Another textbook, edited by Rafael Ganelin and Vladlen Izmozik, promotes the model of democracy as a “normal way of political progress”. In Russia, autocracy oppressed society and rejected the claim of the nation to discuss “the main political questions” (the textbook avoids additional specifics; all the textbooks present the schematic and simplified political models). In Ganelin’s textbook, the revolution is treated as a result of oppression and unrest which gave way to populism. Bolshevik leaders promised to “solve difficult vitally important problems for the benefit of the majority”, but from the revolution came only dictatorship, civil war and a much more oppressive regime. The textbook edited by Oleg Volobuev also promoted globalization, industrial society, human rights and liberal values (such as social mobility and integration, private property, liberal economy, reformism, democracy and social consensus). It proceeds from the liberal critique of conservatism and even Marxist criticism of capitalism, imperialism and militarism but is based on Lenin’s idea of strong central authority (it is impossible, according to the textbook, to change technologies, labor laws and modes of production without competent politics, and it presents the taking of state power in a Leninist key as necessary for the benefit of majority). The textbook propagates a centralized state. But only democracy and social consensus could legitimize the new order. The revolution is identical to repression; the revolution led the state to national catastrophe, disintegration, war, criminality and so on (Volobuev, 2013)

Another conservative trend in Russian history textbooks presents the ideal of strong, centralized

state (Pchelov, 2013). It denounces parliamentarism as empty intrigue. Only the competent, experienced and religious tsar (or political leader with full authority) could discipline society and hence serve the common good. Scandalous quotations from the textbook on Russian history of XX century some years ago spread all over the world: *“Stalin was an effective manager”* (Danilov, 2013; Kiselev, 2013). These textbooks propagate such policies as regulatory economics, counter-terrorism and social paternalism. Russian textbooks approved by the conservative government basically deal with the problem of national security and foreign threat (especially from Europe and the United States). These textbooks are premised on the idea that a country’s territory and resources ensure the “power” of state. The political system and structure of administration is considered irrelevant by this model. Political or business elites fight for new territory and “redivision of the world”. This model is based on the Marxist thesis about the power of capital (Zagladin and Simonia, 2013, pp. 290-293). The conservative idea posits that only a strong, centralized state could protect Russia from “American hegemony”. School history textbooks mix the simple ideologies with simple phobias. The relicts of Marxist criticism of state regimes, exploitation, religious propaganda and imperialism are entangled in conservative textbooks with the ideals of a strong centralized state and glorification of empire and Orthodoxy. (Sakharov, 2012; Tchernikova, 2008; Shestakov, 2012; Danilevsky, 2012). They promote the promises of slavery: forced labor is more productive and more beneficial to society.

All of the textbooks (both based on liberal or conservative ideology) concluded with mention of the social and political successes of Putin’s government. It is extremely significant that the public discussion around school history education turns into a struggle for the moral evaluation of a political leader such as Putin, Stalin, or Lenin, and for listing the persons, achievements and events “deserving national pride”. Stephen Greenblatt calls such discursive action “transition”: a display of subjectivation (the opposition is subjectivized by the same power; they demonstrate the same discursive competence in this discussion as officials).

## 6 Conclusions

Recent history school education in Russia is directed against critical thinking skills and is focused on the techniques to further interiorisation of the official position. The above examples clearly illustrate how the story is constructed. I have shown that these rhetorical features tend to represent readers as politically desubjectivated. “Ordinary people” are constructed as victims calling for care and as passive objects. They are denied active political engagement and rendered incompetent for critical activity; they are placed within the field of passive consumption of official discourse. Public discussion about school

history education demonstrates that such a vision seems “natural” for the propagator of different ideological positions. Most of the participants treat history as a set of “true” facts and “right” rules, as a result but not as an open process of investigation. They dispute and even struggle over the ideas of what is really “true” or “right”, what history students should learn by heart. This discursive position could be attributed to political subjectivity: it is paradoxical that political opponents of authoritative power represent the same vision and do not facilitate an open society (or in this context, deny the student’s right to gain access to the skills and critical thinking and thus become an active and competent political subject).

Russian history textbooks reject parliamentary norms of discussion by strong narration, reducing the opportunity to discuss their statements and do nothing to develop critical thinking skills. The textbooks instruct students to be subordinate to tradition and authority, to rely on official media and support official statements. Foucault presents resistance as the element within power relations. “We can find resistance in struggles over the validity of experience and in struggles over definition, interpretation, and classification. Foucault identifies resistance at work in the transgression and contestation of societal norms; in the disruption of metanarratives...; in the frustration and disruption of power; in the “re-appearance” of ‘local popular,’ ‘disqualified,’ and ‘subjugated knowledge’” (Kulynych, 1997; Pickett, 1996). In our case, there could be resistance against the representations of order, for example, or resistance against school “history” as disciplinary practice. The negation of the logical order and system of school history could be seen in the statistics of Federal Education and Science Supervision Service (Rosobrnadzor): only 23,4% of school students choose history for their final elective exam.

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