



TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

IDENTIFYING HISTORY IN SERVITUDE

A Comparative Study on the Teaching of
Critical Historical Thinking in Finland,
the United States, and China

Olli Suominen



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To my family and friends

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Faculty of Education

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Educational Sciences

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ABSTRACT

This study examines senior secondary level History education in three countries—Finland, the United States and China—from the vantage point of critical thinking skills. Critical historical thinking skills are a vast and ambiguous concept encompassing different kinds of factual knowledge and skills. For this reason, the focus of the study is on the teaching of the concept of history politics. History politics can be defined as the intentional “twisting and turning” —i.e. misinterpretation—of past events in order to further political ambitions. This kind of behavior can be understood as a central part of a larger toolbox of critical historical thinking skills. In particular, the work seeks to examine how and why education seeks to highlight the possibility of using history in this manner.

When examining these choices made in the field of educational policy, the work sets off with the so-called political curriculum theories, which suggest, that the curriculum not only mirrors, but also constructs societal values and ambitions. When it comes to these ambitions, the focus of my work in particular is on the conflict between the so-called qualificative and integrative functions of education. This juxtaposition has been seen as the central question in the sociology of education. In other words, this study seeks to answer, whether the manner in which the concept of history politics is being taught offers students factual knowledge and skills, which allow them to survive in life (qualificative functions) or if the purpose of education is to further societal cohesion (integrative functions). This question is examined at different levels of the curriculum. In addition to comparisons made between geographical/cultural units and educational regimes, this study examines also temporal changes in educational policy when it examines whether there has been changes in these policies over time, and whether a global convergence is identifiable. Curriculum documents and school textbooks, as well as teacher interviews in the cases of Finland and the United States have been used as research materials. The temporal comparisons have been carried out by comparing textbooks from the mid-1980s and mid-2010s. The research material has been approached in an abductive manner by utilizing qualitative content analysis.

The study reveals how the concept of history politics can be taught in numerous ways. On the one hand, a marked difference can be identified in whether the talk is

clearly about history politics or in a much more ambiguous way about ideas, concepts and behavior, which are only tentatively linked to the concept of history politics. On the other hand, there were clear differences identifiable in the research material in terms of whether the concept is being taught at a theoretical/abstract level, or alternatively through concrete examples. Additionally, one can identify different kinds of concrete examples of the use of history politics, which are being highlighted. The different emphases between these approaches can be interpreted as furthering either the qualificative or integrative functions of education.

In Finland the concept of history politics has been taught in senior secondary education rather extensively already in the 1980s, although by the 2010s even more viewpoints were covered. It is noticeable that closer to our time the concept of history politics is taught as part of the mandatory studies in particular, whereas the elective courses emphasize the issue much less. In the case of the United States it is worth noticing that already in the 1980s the concept of history politics has been covered in education to a degree, but no temporal change is identifiable. In addition, the study uncovered how the more demanding Advanced Placement courses, which are being offered to students, do not examine the concept any more thoroughly compared to the standard courses. In the cases of Finland and the United States the teacher interviews suggest, that at least when it comes to the teaching of the concept of history politics, the teachers have a quite a bit room for maneuverability, which they also gladly also use. For this reason, at the grassroots level education can further very different kinds of ambitions depending on the preferences of individual teachers. In China the concept of history politics has not been taught much previously, and arguably the goal of education was much more that of preserving societal cohesion rather than the cultivation of individual thinking skills. However, by the 2010s, the Chinese educational system had clearly taken steps towards emphasizing historical thinking skills. It is noticeable, however, that teaching about the concept of history politics in modern China is part of the elective, rather than the mandatory courses in senior secondary education. Additionally, the lack of teacher interviews in the case of China means that it is not possible to comprehensively assess how the ambitions laid out in curriculum documents and textbooks is actually put into action at the grassroots level.

The culturally, politically and historically very different kinds of societies aim—at least when examined from the perspective of teaching the concept of history politics—at the cultivation of thinking skills rather than at the preservation of societal cohesion. However, different cultures, countries and educational regimes do not emphasize these qualificative functions of education equally strongly, and the temporal comparisons do not lend support to the notion about the global convergence of educational policy.

KEYWORDS: Comparative education, Curriculum studies, History education, History politics, Finland, United States, China

TURUN YLIOPISTO

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuksessa vertaillaan kolmen maan – Suomen, Yhdysvaltojen sekä Kiinan – lukiotasoisista historianopetusta kriittisten ajattelutaitojen opettamisen perspektiivistä. Kriittiset historian ajattelutaidot ovat erittäin laaja ja monitulkintainen kokonaisuus erilaisia tietoja ja taitoja. Tutkimuksen fokus on näin ollen rajattu niin kutsutun historiapolitiikan käsitteen opettamiseen. Historiapolitiikka voidaan määritellä toiminnaksi, jossa historian tapahtumia tarkoitushakuisesti ”käännetään ja väännetään” – siis väärintulkitaan – poliittisten intressien edistämiseksi. Kuvatun kaltaisen toiminnan ymmärtäminen voidaan nähdä keskeisenä osana laajempaa historian kriittisten ajattelutaitojen työkalupakkia. Nimenomaisesti työ hakee selvyyttä siihen, miten ja miksi koulutuksessa tuodaan esiin idea historian käytön mahdollisuudesta edellä kuvattuun tapaan.

Näitä koulutuspoliittisia valintoja tutkiessaan työ lähtee teoreettisesti liikkeelle niin kutsutusta poliittisesta opetussuunnitelmateoriasta joka esittää, että opetussuunnitelma paitsi heijastelee, mutta myös rakentaa yhteiskunnallisia arvoja sekä tavoitteita. Näiden tavoitteiden osalta työni keskittyy erityisesti koulutuksen nk. kvalifikaatio- ja integraatiotehtävien väliseen ristiriitaan, joka on perinteisesti nähty koulutussosiologian keskeisimpänä kysymyksenä. Toisin sanoen työ hakee vastauksia kysymykseen, pyrkiikö tapa, jolla historiapolitiikan käsitettä opetetaan, tarjoamaan oppilaille erilaisia tietoja ja taitoja pärjätä elämässä (kvalifikaatiot), vai onko valitun lähestymistavan ensisijainen tarkoitus edistää yhteiskunnallista koheesiota (integraatio). Tätä problematiikkaa lähestytään opetussuunnitelman eri tasoilla. Maantieteellis-kulttuurillisen ja opetusjärjestelmäkohtaisen vertailun ohella työ tarkastelee myös koulutuspolitiikan ajallisia muutoksia tarkastellessaan kysymystä siitä, onko koulutuspolitiikan tavoitteissa havaittavissa ajan myötä tapahtunutta globaalia yhdenmukaistumista – konvergenssia. Analyysiaineistona työssä on käytetty opetussuunnitelmadokumentteja ja oppikirjoja, sekä Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen tapauksessa lisäksi myös opettajahaastatteluita. Ajallinen vertailu on toteutettu 1980- sekä 2010-lukujen puolivälien oppikirjoja vertailemalla. Aineistoa on analysoitu laadullisen sisällönanalyysin keinoin, abduktiivisella tutkimusotteella.

Tutkimuksesta käy ilmi, miten historiapolitiikan käsitettä voidaan opettaa hyvin erilaisilla tavoilla. Selviä jakolinjoja on nähtävissä yhtäältä siinä, puhutaanko

opetuksessa selvästi historiapolitiittisesta toiminnasta vaiko ympäröivästä ajatuksesta, käsitteistä ja toiminnasta, joiden yhteys nimenomaisesti historiapolitiittiseen toimintaan ei ole täysin selvä. Toisaalta tutkimusmaterialin valossa on havaittavissa selviä eroja myös siinä, opetetaanko käsitettä teoreettisella tai abstraktilla tasolla, vai vaihtoehtoisesti konkreettisten esimerkkien kautta. Lisäksi eroja on havaittavissa siinä, millaisia konkreettisia esimerkkejä historiapolitiikan käytöstä nostetaan esiin. Näiden eri lähestymistapojen välisten painotusten voidaan tulkita tähtäävän joko koulutuksen kvalifikaatio- tai integrointitehtävien edistämiseen.

Suomessa historiapolitiikan käsitettä on opetettu lukioissa jo 1980-luvun puolivälissä melko monipuolisesti, joskin 2010-luvulle tultaessa aiheen käsittely on monipuolistunut entisestään. Huomattavaa on kuitenkin se, että lähempänä omaa aikaamme historiapolitiikan käsitettä opetetaan erityisesti osana pakollisia historian opintoja, kun taas valinnaisten kurssien yhteydessä käsitteen opetus painuu selvästi enemmän taka-alalle. Yhdysvaltojen tapauksessa huomionarvoista puolestaan on se, että historiapolitiikkaa on käsitelty ja käsitellään opetuksessa jonkin verran, mutta mitään ajallista muutosta ei aineistossa ole havaittavissa. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa selvisi, että vaikka oppilaille on nykyään tarjolla vaativampia Advanced Placement -kursseja, ei niiden opetustarjontaa pureudu historiapolitiikan käsitteen opettamisessa perusmuotoisia kursseja syvemmillä. Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen tapauksessa opettajahaastattelut muodostavat kuitenkin sen kuvan, että ainakin niiltä osin, mitä tulee historiapolitiikan käsitteen opettamiseen, on opettajilla aiheesta varsin mittavasti liikkumavaraa, jota he myös käyttävät. Näin ollen ruohonjuuritasolla käytännön opetus voi edistää hyvin erilaisia tavoitteita opettajan omista preferensseistä riippuen. Kiinassa ei historiapolitiikan käsitettä aiemmin juuri opetettu, ja voidaankin nähdä, että koulutuksen tehtävänä oli ennemminkin yhteiskunnallisen koheesion vaalinta kuin yksilön ajattelutaitojen kultivointi. 2010-luvulle tultaessa kiinalainen opetusjärjestelmäkin on kuitenkin selvästi ottanut askeleita historian ajattelutaitoja korostavampaan suuntaan. Huomattavaa on kuitenkin se, että historiapolitiikan opetus nyky-Kiinassa painottuu nimenomaisesti osaksi valinnaisten kurssien sisältöä. Lisäksi Kiinan tapauksessa ei opettajahaastattelujen puutteen vuoksi ole mahdollista tehdä erityisen pitkälle meneviä johtopäätöksiä siltä osin, miten opetussuunnitelmien ja oppikirjojen sisältö sekä tavoitteet realisoituvat ruohonjuuritason opetuksessa. Yleisemmällä tasolla voidaan kuitenkin sanoa, että vertailun alla olevat, kulttuurillisesti, poliittisesti ja historiallisesti hyvin erilaiset yhteiskunnat pyrkivät ainakin historiapolitiikan käsitteen opetuksen perspektiivistä tarkasteltuna historianopetuksessa ennemminkin ajattelutaitojen kultivointiin kuin yhteiskunnallisen koheesion vaalimiseen. Eri maailmankolkissa ei kuitenkaan missään nimessä anneta edellä mainitulle koulutuksen kvalifikaatiotehtävälle samoissa määrin painoarvoa, eikä ajallinen vertailu anna tukea teorioille koulutuspolitiikan globaalista konvergenssista.

ASIASANAT: Vertaileva koulutuspolitiikka, opetussuunnitelmatutkimus, historianopetus, historiapolitiikka, Suomi, Yhdysvallat, Kiina

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Olli Suominen
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	8
List of Tables	12
List of Figures	12
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Relevance of the Study	17
1.2 Structure of the Work	18
2 The Interpretative and Methodological Framework for Analysis	20
2.1 Scientific Philosophical Approach to Conducting the Study	20
2.2 Defining Relevant Concepts.....	26
2.2.1 Politics and Political in the Context of This Study	26
2.2.2 History Politics and Related Concepts.....	27
2.2.3 Curriculum in the Context of This Study	34
2.3 The Theoretical Framework	38
2.3.1 The Political Curriculum and Its Functions.....	38
2.3.2 Transitology and Policy Convergence	42
2.3.3 Competing Paradigms of History Education	44
2.4 Comparing Places, Curriculum Levels, and Times	51
2.4.1 Senior Secondary Education	52
2.4.2 Three Different Levels of the Curriculum	53
2.4.3 Contextualizing History Education in the Case Countries.....	55
2.4.4 Comparisons in Time: 1985 vs. 2015	81
2.5 Research Task, Research Material, and Method of Analysis	83
2.5.1 Research Task.....	83
2.5.2 Research Material	84
2.5.3 Qualitative Content Analysis as a Research Method ...	94
2.6 Research Validity, Researcher Positionality, and Ethical Issues	96
3 Dimensions of History Politics in the History Curriculum 101	
3.1 The Outer Layer of the History Politics Dimensions Model ...	102
3.1.1 Addressing the Concept—Ring 1 of the Outer Layer of the HPDM	103

3.2	Mandatory and Standard vs. Elective and AP Courses— Ring 2 of the Outer Layer of the HPDM	106
3.2.1	Aims and Goals, Content, and Exercises—Ring 3 of the Outer Layer of the HPDM	108
3.3	The Inner Layer of the History Politics Dimensions Model	112
3.3.1	Ambiguous or Explicit Talk about the Concept of History Politics—Dimension 1 in the Inner Layer of the HPDM.....	113
3.3.2	Metatalk or Talk about Real Times and Places— Dimension 2 in the Inner Layer of the HPDM.....	123
3.3.3	Faraway Times and Places vs. Events in the Surrounding Society—Dimension 3 in the Inner Layer of the HPDM.....	130
4	History Politics in the Finnish, American, and Chinese High School History Curriculum.....	140
4.1	Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Vague Statements about Human Behavior.....	141
4.2	The Concept of History Politics as an Abstract, Theoretical Notion.....	147
4.3	Ambiguous Actions in Faraway Places and Times	150
4.4	History Politics and the <i>Others</i> —History Politics in Faraway Places and Times.....	160
4.5	Ambiguous Actions in the Surrounding Society	169
4.6	History Politics Here and Now—History Politics in the Surrounding Society.....	176
5	Discussion.....	186
5.1	Contrasting Approaches to Teaching the Concept of History Politics.....	186
5.2	Functions of History Education in Finland, the United States, and China.....	193
5.3	Limitations and Paths for Future Research.....	204
	Bibliography.....	212
	Appendices	231

List of Tables

1. The main differences between the two major traditions of History education	50
2. Overview of the research materials	85

List of Figures

1. The overlapping structure of the intended curriculum	36
2. The relationship between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum	37
3. Comparison of Finland, the United States, and China in Hofstede's cultural dimensions model	79
4. Phillips and Schweisfurth's four-quadrant typology of possible research contexts and the author's relative position vis-à-vis the countries and cultures under comparison	81
5. Outline of the dimensions of the History Politics Dimensions Model ..	101
6. Outline of the outer layer of the HPDM	102
7. Ring 1 of the Outer level of the HPDM: Addressing the Concept	103
8. Ring 2 of the outer level of the HPDM: mandatory and standard vs. elective and AP courses	106
9. Ring 3 of the Outer Level of the HPDM: Aims and Goals, Content and Exercises	108
10. Outline of the inner layer of the HPDM	112
11. Dimension 1 in the inner layer of the HPDM—Ambiguous or explicit talk about the concept of history politics	113
12. Dimension 2 in the inner layer of the HPDM—Metatalk or talk about real time and places	123
13. Dimension 3 in the inner layer of the HPDM—Faraway times and places vs. events in the surrounding society	130
14. Field 1 of the Inner Layer of the HPDM – Epistemologies, Methodologies and Vague Statements about Human Behavior	141
15. Field 3 of the inner layer of the HPDM—The concept of history politics as an abstract, theoretical notion	147
16. Field 2a of the inner layer of the HPDM—Ambiguous actions in faraway places and times	150
17. Field of 4a of the inner layer of the HPDM—History politics in faraway places and times	160
18. Field 2b of the inner layer of the HPDM—Ambiguous actions in the surrounding society	169
19. Field 4b of the inner layer of the HPDM—History politics in the surrounding society	176
20. Qualificative vs. integrative approach to teaching the concept of history politics	196
21. Functions of the History curricula in comparison	201
22. Trajectories of textbook evolution in comparison	202

1 Introduction

While carrying out teacher interviews for this dissertation in March 2017, a History¹ teacher from the United States mentioned in passing being part of the local school district's textbook adoption committee responsible for choosing the textbooks used throughout the school district. Although I cannot quote the teacher here verbatim, as the comments were made after the formal interview, during a casual conversation, it was pointed out to me that while the textbook adoption committee for mathematics, for example, were not much more than rubber-stamp bodies for giving formal approval to decisions that everyone already more or less agreed on, the textbook adoption process for History textbooks was long and arduous: every sentence and word in the textbooks was gone over with a fine-tooth comb. This anecdote reveals something quite interesting and universal about the nature of school History, namely about the contradictions and tensions this work also taps into. It serves as a testament to the fact that the contents of the History school curriculum are not the result of a mere accident any more than they are a God-given truth, but the result of intense political considerations.

Whether we are referring to History or any other subject in the school curriculum, the purpose of the educational system is to enlarge, supplement, and reorganize the part of humans' spontaneous worldview that has emerged as a result of the natural interaction with the environment (Niemi & Niemi, 1982). Obviously, this also applies to our understanding of how the history of humankind has unfolded. At least before the time comes when science fiction time travel becomes a reality, we cannot observe firsthand how the French Revolution, for example, unfolded. Yet, our social environment can preserve and pass on the accumulated knowledge of humankind, including information about past events. However, as the opening anecdote suggests, the process through which this understanding of the past is enlarged, supplemented, and reorganized as a result of education is a tensioned one. Indeed, of all the subjects in the school curriculum, History is perhaps one of the most—if not the most—

¹ Apart from some direct quotations, the word “history” in this work refers to past events as described in documents, and/or the study of these documents and events, while “History” (with a capital H) refers to the school subject.

contentious. This contention boils down to the question of politics, as it is in particular the close relationship between history and politics and the potential to shape the historical consciousness guiding social change that has made History education in schools a volatile topic (Seixas, 2000; Taylor, 2000). “History’s contentiousness lies in its close relationship with politics,” argues Taylor (2000) and continues: “history, because of its very nature, is all about political issues or it is not history” (p. 849). As suggested earlier, our ideas and understanding are, of course, shaped by many different sources, not just by the formal education we receive. Indeed, we are surrounded by historical culture (references to history in our everyday lives, such as historical films, monuments, etc.) and academic history research, both of which shape the way we view the past. Yet, schools are in a particularly noteworthy position to alter youngsters’ ideas about the past (Morton, 2000; Seixas, 2000). The increasingly antagonistic debates about the role of History are especially noteworthy due to the fact that it is among the few school subjects more or less mandated throughout all educational systems of the world (Carretero, Rodríguez-Moneo, & Asensio, 2012; Foster & Crawford, 2006; Ogawa & Field, 2006). Consequently, these deliberations resonate in some shape or form on every continent and in every corner of the earth.

A central issue in these heated debates is the foremost function of History education, a particular focus of this work. Education in general may have numerous societal functions. Yet, the purpose of this thesis is not to address the functions of education comprehensively but a notable and important contradiction between two of them, as they manifest in History. On the one hand, education has been tasked with producing qualifications—i.e., producing and cultivating individuals’ knowledge, skills, and abilities. On the other hand, it has also been tasked with integration—i.e., upholding the unity of societies. This tension between the integrative and qualificative functions of education has been seen as *the* central question in the sociology of education (Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013). It should be further emphasized that the focus of this work is on the functions of education in a limited scope, as, in addition, at different times and in different places, education has obviously served many other kinds of functions as well. For example, in industrialized societies, school has been seen at times as a storage space where idle children are kept away from causing indignation and disturbances in the streets and as a “factory” providing a skilled labor force to serve the needs of the economy (Antikainen et al., 2013).

The aforementioned tension between integration and qualification can also be clearly seen in the field of History education. As Carretero, Rodríguez-Moneo, and Asensio (2012) assert, “identifying the purpose of history education revives the tension between the enlightenment and romantic objectives and the issue of whether history teaching should produce educated citizens of the world or patriotic

nationalists” (p. 2). Indeed, History education has traditionally been synonymous with mastering historical narratives, which in turn has served nationalist ambitions. In other words, History has been subjugated to serve the state by fulfilling an integrative function. Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994) elaborate that “history courses, at all levels, are usually conceived as conveying a specific subject matter rather than fostering a way of thinking about the past” (p. 9). Yet, the latter qualificative function—a way of thinking about the past—has been seen as a central 21st century civic skill (Carretero, 2011; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). For example, Peter Lee (1991) maintains that “[it is] absurd...to say that schoolchildren know any history if they have no understanding of how historical knowledge is attained...the ability to recall accounts without any understanding of the problems involved in constructing them or the criteria involved in evaluating them has nothing historical about it” (p. 48–49). A clear tension exists between these two functions. After all, creating a sense of affinity may well entail the teaching and learning of narratives, which are biased to further nationalistic ambitions. And if the subject matter is not truthful, it may well be that it is not in the interest of those providing it that the students are capable of questioning it. After all, a myth that can be questioned cannot create a sense of affinity (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). As Appleby, Hunt, and Jacobs (1994) aptly put it, “[there is the]...disturbing possibility that the study of history does not strengthen an attachment to one’s country. Indeed, the reverse might be true, i.e., that open-ended investigation of the nation’s past could weaken the ties of citizenship by raising critical issues about the distribution of power and respect” (p. 159). Arguably, the manner in which different educational systems have chosen to approach the topic says a lot about them. Tony Taylor (2000) continues:

[T]he study of history in schools is almost a litmus test for a society’s political openness and demographic strength, since there is a clear distinction between the open study of history in schools as a discipline and the narrow study of history as indoctrination... there is this apparently close correlation between the open or closed nature of historical study in schools and the open or closed nature of a political system and its capacity for self-examination. (p. 850)

An obvious question to be asked thus arises: are educational systems seeking to further unity or equip students with “a way of thinking about the past,” and can we identify some type of change in these patterns?

This leads to the central research task of this work. Despite all sorts of speculations and empirically unsubstantiated claims, relatively few studies have actually tapped into the topic and asked what History is for. Thus, the purpose of this work is to examine whether educational regimes seek to further the integrative or qualificative functions and whether one can identify some type of convergence

between the policies of different educational regimes over time. In more concrete terms, I will approach the questions at hand from the vantage point of high school History education in three chosen case countries—Finland, the United States, and China—and seek to answer whether (and if so, how) these different educational regimes have sought and seek to further critical historical thinking. Three different components of high school education in the aforementioned countries will be examined: official curriculum documents, textbooks, and classroom practices. As “critical historical thinking” and many other similar wordings, such as “historical literacy”—as will be elaborated later on—mean many different things, I will focus more specifically on the teaching of the concept of history politics. The theoretical notion that asserts that historical narratives can be intentionally biased in order to further political ambitions has been referred to by many names. I have chosen to speak about history politics, although other names, such as the mythologization of history, are also used in the academic world. Meanwhile, the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1942), a contemporary observer of the interwar rise of extremist ideologies and who eloquently inspired the title of this work, identified around him:

a degenerate form of history science. I would define it as history in servitude. Everywhere around us tendencies arise which misuse history for political or social purposes...Everywhere a spectre of distorted history science is smirking at us, one that has become a slave to momentary opinions and powers. Such a history science follows fixed political or social tendencies...in this manner historical science is subordinated to explain all factual relationships in a predetermined manner.² (p. 86–87)

As will be elaborated later on, although understanding the concept of history politics (or mythologization of history, history in servitude, etc.) in itself does not equate to possessing a complete set of critical historical thinking skills, understanding what history politics is and how it operates is arguably an essential part of this skill set. The justification for this particular focus as a subset of critical historical thinking is discussed further on.

As will be shown, the analysis of the research material uncovered a myriad of different ways in which the concept has been and is addressed not only in different countries but also at different levels of the curriculum. The findings were juxtaposed against the different possible functions of education and the idea of policy convergence in order to assess the functions that the educational systems under review have sought and seek to advance. The analysis revealed that different

²² In this work, passages of text written originally in languages other than English have been translated by the author.

educational systems and different levels of the curriculum emphasize different functions of education, and these preferences have, in some cases, changed over time, even if these differences and changes were not necessarily very drastic.

1.1 Relevance of the Study

A gap exists in current research. To begin with, History teaching has remained an under-researched problem for a long time (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003). However, the situation has improved considerably over the years. More importantly, despite the importance of the question, the possible contradiction between the goals of national identity building and teaching history as a discipline has only gained attention in the past decade or so.³ Earlier, these issues had rarely been examined in research (Carretero, 2011). As a rule of thumb, previous studies were carried out mainly by psychologists and historians rather than comparative educationalists (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003; Nicholls, 2006). So arguably, even if History teaching is not completely uncharted territory, it is still a novel topic around which many issues and questions remain unaddressed. The reason for this might be that doing so is a daunting task that requires a multidisciplinary approach combining educational science, contemporary history, political science—and, in the case of my work—area studies. Indeed, it has been argued that by linking the study of education policy with the larger literature on public policy and politics—which is the objective of my multidisciplinary approach—the former could be improved (Levin, 2008). Moreover, many of the other viewpoints on which my work builds have been ignored to a large degree. First, curriculum studies have focused heavily on higher-level official documents. Yet, alternative viewpoints should be emphasized. Authors such as Apple (2008), Foster and Crawford (2006), and Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry (2003) claimed that the analysis should be much more multidimensional and happen at multiple levels. In particular, relatively little research has attempted to explore issues of classroom teaching in History (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003; Ouakrim-Soivio & van den Berg, 2018), a viewpoint which I hope to address, even if to a somewhat limited degree. Second, international comparative studies in the social sciences have traditionally had a strong emphasis on comparisons among Western countries and cultures, which in turn, has considerably limited their

³ Of course, some inroads into this territory had already been made earlier. In his groundbreaking yet controversial book *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbooks Got Wrong*, James Loewen (1995) identified this contradiction in (American) History textbooks. Although the focus of his work was on analyzing the teaching of history as a discipline, he examined the conflicting ambitions of school textbooks to promote inquiry on the one hand and “indoctrinate blind patriotism” (Loewen, 1995, p. 14) on the other.

explanatory power. In this research, however, the inclusion of China as a point of comparison expands this horizon. Third, although historical perspectives are gaining popularity in social scientific research, such viewpoints are still often lacking in the field of comparative education. The inclusion of temporal comparisons seeks to bridge this gap.

Although this gap in research exists, an important question remains: why should this gap be examined? The answer consists of two reasons. The first purpose is to serve the “loftier” academic purposes; scientific texts should take part in the academic discussion that the work centers on (Väliverronen, 2002). Research exists in order to advance research. New theories and viewpoints are furthered not for instrumental purposes but simply for their own sake. And indeed, there are gaps in our knowledge, as pointed out earlier. With my humble contribution, I hope to further theoretical and methodological developments in the relevant fields. As I point out in the final chapter, much has yet to be studied. This work, however, can serve as a starting point in examining the aforementioned contradiction between identity building and teaching History as a discipline. In addition to mere scientific contributions and mental exercises, comparisons also assist in normative decisions and judgments (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). This, I hope, will also be the case with my work. Even though I do not seek to engage in a sort of “rebellious research” (see, for example, Suoranta & Rynänen, 2014) that seeks to alter reality by taking a strong normative stand, I nevertheless hope my study will attract a wider readership that includes educational practitioners, teachers, etc., and thus contribute to change in policies and practices in the field, which—I hope—will be used to serve the betterment of the human condition.

1.2 Structure of the Work

The present work is divided into five main chapters, each of which covers several subsection. The work can roughly be divided into two main parts. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the background of the work. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 contain the actual empirical analysis, the findings, and discussion, respectively. To help the reader grasp the structure of the work, let us examine the contents of these five chapters in more detail.

Chapter 1 provides the reader with a broad overview of the topic at hand. It introduces the main research problem and the justifications for carrying out the study.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical and methodological scope of this research and the research materials and examines the ethical issues and choices related to the use of these materials. In the beginning, I analyze the underlying principles of the philosophy of science that have guided the entire work. Next, I clarify a few essential

concepts and describe the theoretical and interpretative framework of this dissertation. The chapter then moves on to examine the contextual framing of this work—i.e., why certain points and units of comparison have been chosen. This is followed by an in-depth look into the research materials and the actual method used in analyzing the data. I conclude this chapter by examining issues related to research trustworthiness, researcher positionality, and ethical issues.

Chapter 3 moves on to the empirical analysis of the research materials. As will be elaborated later on, contrary to the manner in which the analysis progressed, patterns of similarity and dissimilarity were identified in how the concept of history politics is addressed—a framework that I call the History Politics Dimensions Model (HPDM). In essence, a great deal of the theoretical contributions of the work are presented before the actual findings that emerge from the data. Although an uncommon approach, I believe this choice makes the work clearer and easier to follow and avoids unnecessary repetition. Based on the observed patterns, a novel framework in which the concept of history politics can be addressed was identified.

Chapter 4 introduces how different educational systems and levels of curriculum showcase these patterns. The chapter covers each of the six fields of the HPDM separately, looking at different educational systems, levels of the curriculum, and points in time.

Chapter 5 concludes the work and is divided into two main parts. The first section summarizes the empirical findings, which are followed by a discussion in which these findings are juxtaposed against the previously presented theoretical framework in order to finally answer the research questions. The last subchapter discusses possible future paths for research.

2 The Interpretative and Methodological Framework for Analysis

This chapter examines the theoretical and methodological scope of this research in more detail, introduces the research materials, and covers the ethical issues and choices related to the use of these materials. The chapter begins by examining the underlying principles of the philosophy of science that have guided the entire work. Next, I clarify some of the concepts utilized in this study in more detail and explain the theoretical and interpretative framework of this dissertation. This framework was built on the notion that the History curriculum is political in the sense that it seeks to further certain political ambitions and that the curriculum in itself is layered in structure. Moreover, the two main competing functions (integrative and qualificative) of education are introduced in more detail. The reader is also introduced to the idea that (educational) policies may change over time and that policies in different places may converge over time. The theoretical discussion then moves on to introduce to the readership the different schools of History education reflecting these different functions as well as the so-called “history wars,” which have pitted the two aforementioned schools of History education against each other. The chapter then moves on to describe the contextual framing of this work, namely why the question at hand is examined at certain levels of the educational ladder and of the curriculum, in certain countries, and between certain periods in time. After this the chapter continues with an in-depth look into the research materials and the method of data analysis—qualitative content analysis. Finally, we conclude by examining issues related to research trustworthiness, researcher positionality, and ethics.

2.1 Scientific Philosophical Approach to Conducting the Study

In approaching any imaginable research *problématique*, the first question a researcher has to ask him- or herself is how does one approach the task at hand? What are the implicit and explicit choices one makes that guide the manner in which the work is carried forward? In other words, we turn to the question of research *paradigm* in the

sense originally used by Thomas Kuhn (1996).⁴ In Kuhn’s definition, a paradigm was seen as “a way to summarize researchers’ beliefs about their efforts to create knowledge” (Morgan, 2007, p. 50). Also according to Morgan, a paradigm consists of “systems of beliefs and practices that influence how researchers select both the question they study and methods that they use to study them” (p. 49). The reason for exploring our research question was already answered in the introductory part of this work, while the more concrete choices in terms of countries, levels of the curriculum, points in time under comparison, and methods of analysis will be justified later on. Before this, however, the underlying philosophical approach to answering the research question needs to be addressed. As previously mentioned, this work seeks to answer *how* the concept of history politics has (or not) been addressed in History education and what these policy choices can tell us about the motivations to do so (the *why* question). In other words, the focus is on identifying different manners and approaches (and what these approaches tell us about the desired functions of education), but not to answer these questions based on how much History education time wise or in percentages is/has been dedicated to addressing the concept using these different manners or what is the relative emphasis of some approaches in relation to others. Thus, the answers I am seeking are evidently of a qualitative nature. As such, this work is firmly set in the Aristotelian tradition of science, which seeks to provide an in-depth look into a topic (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Mahdi, 2006).

Among the different combinations of ontological and epistemological choices available to qualitative researchers, the social constructivist paradigm seemed like a natural, even self-evident, starting point for this work. The claims that social constructivists make about the reality and nature of knowledge started to gain prominence in the 1960s after the publication of the seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality* by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966. The choice of the social constructivist approach is justified by the fact that the paradigm is built on the notions of social ontology and epistemological relativism. Ontology examines the answers to the question “what is” and thus refers to the subjective understanding of reality; social phenomena are seen—at least to some degree—as constructed by people (rather than existing independently of human thought), and thus there can be many different understandings of reality that may exist simultaneously (Patomäki, 2002; Patomäki & Wight, 2000; Sirén, 2009; Sirén & Pekkarinen, 2017). It should be emphasized that I do not submit to the extreme social ontological view that reality only

⁴ Kuhn (1996) went on to elaborate that in different fields of study, the meaning and applications of a paradigm vary. In other words, “paradigms” can mean either worldviews, researcher’s stances regarding the philosophy of science, or a research community’s shared beliefs. Indeed, the definition of a paradigm has since evolved and changed considerably from the original Kuhnian perspective (Shannon-Baker, 2016).

exists as something that humans construct through the use of language but rather draw from the more realistic ontological perspective that sees reality as existing free from human interpretations (Sirén & Pekkarinen, 2017). Meanwhile, epistemology addresses the question of how it is possible to gain information about the research topic. Emphasis is placed on the interpretative nature of phenomena, as social constructivism represents the idea that knowledge is always unsure and relativist, since it is always constructed based on subjective understandings and interpretations (Niiniluoto, 2002; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009; Sirén & Pekkarinen, 2017). The interpretative element in the making of conclusions and, in particular, the researcher's subjective role in the process are important (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009; Saunders & Tosey, 2012; Williams, 1999). Although epistemological relativism accepts the commensurability of different approaches, it also emphasizes judgmental rationalism—i.e., the notion that not *every* possible approach is equally valid (Bhaskar, 1979; Patomäki, 2002; Patomäki & Wight, 2000; Sirén, 2009, 2010; Sirén & Pekkarinen, 2017). In many regards, these starting points lead to a sort of critical realist or “transcendental realist” approach, as espoused by Ray Bhaskar (1979), who stressed the need to remain loyal to the subjective, epistemological, or what he called “transitive” side of knowledge on the one hand and to the objective, ontological, or “intransitive” side on the other. In simpler terms, these approaches emphasize that a truth outside human perception does exist, of which we as humans are able to obtain information even if this information is imperfect.

In more concrete terms, this paradigm choice manifests first in the fact that the entire concept so central to this work—that of history politics—is seen as socially constructed. Based on existing research literature, in the present study, the concept has been given a very specific meaning, which may not correspond with the definition given by the History curriculum (especially curriculum documents and textbooks) in the three countries under comparison. The exact meaning that I impose on the term is discussed further in more detail. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the paradigm manifests itself in the analysis of the research materials. Namely, the ideas espoused by the eminent British historian Richard J. Evans (2000) were followed. His work strongly recommends that we hold fast in the perilous riptide of extreme relativist views and realist arguments. At the heart of this debate is the advance of postmodernist thinking, in which determinate readings have been abandoned entirely (Hassan, 1987). In scholarship, such egalitarianism can be seen as highly problematic.⁵ As Rosenau (1992) asserts:

⁵ Only two serious issues are raised to the fore here. Authors such as Rosenau (1992) also point out other problematic viewpoints that result from unrestrained espousal of postmodernist ideas, such as the pretentious emphasis on intertextuality and the self-contradictory refusal to engage in theory-building.

Once the initial premises are agreed upon, skeptical post-modernism creates a circle of logic, a world of its own, out of which it is almost impossible to break...[W]ithin a postmodernist framework no single element in a set of dichotomous oppositions can be judged superior. Good/bad criteria are simply unavailable, and all post-modern interpretations are presumed equally interesting. (p. 175)

If all competing interpretations are just competing for a place in the sun, and none is truer than the other, then the only logical conclusion is that even the postmodernist idea about the endlessly interpretative nature of text collapses under its own weight (Evans, 2000). As Boghossian (1996, original page numbering not available) asserts:

If a claim and its opposite can be equally true provided that there is some perspective relative to which each is true, then, there is a perspective—realism—relative to which is true that a claim and its opposite cannot both be true, postmodernism would have to admit that it itself is just as true as its opposite, realism. But postmodernism cannot afford to admit that; presumably, its whole point is that realism is false. Thus, we see that the very statement of postmodernism, construed as a view about the truth, undermines itself; facts about truth independent of particular perspectives are presupposed by the view itself.

Thus, the bulwark against absolute, unrestrained relativism should not be opened. Once the genie is out of the bottle, it cannot be put back in. But this does not mean that this logic has to be taken to the extreme. In fact, when postmodernist ideas are applied with caution, they can provide added value to analysis. As Evans (2000) argued, the careful application of these ideas allows the author to acknowledge his own subjectivity and raises the possibility that one single correct way of reading documents is not (always) possible. Rosenau (1992) argued in a similar manner:

Post-modernism may have a contribution to make on substantive themes, and, indeed, it often provides fascinating insights across a wide range of topics because it focuses on what is nonobvious, left out, and generally forgotten in a text and examines what is unsaid, overlooked, understated, and never overtly recognized. (p. 168)

What these considerations mean in the context of my work is that documents can often be read in a multitude of ways, and at least in theory (in the vernacular sense of the word), the different interpretations can be equally valid, although in the case

of some documents, only one interpretation can justifiably be the only right one.⁶ Yet, in order to avoid the endless swamp of absolute relativism, what is of importance is that even if a multitude of interpretations are possible, it does not follow that infinite, similarly justifiable interpretations can be given to the same passage of text (Evans, 2000). Whether the application of postmodernist thinking is justified at all in the field of social sciences is, of course, questionable, and not all agree. As Rosenau (1992) asserts, the opposite argument has also been made:

The application of post-modernism to the humanities, literature, and the arts may be without undue consequences, but its appropriateness for the social sciences is a question of another order. In the humanities subjectivity and speculation may be playful and interesting, but the social sciences need to be more rigorous and analytical, grounding conclusions on reason and evidence of one sort or another.
(p. 168)

The notable difference here is that the social sciences are seen to be much more clearly linked to policymaking and thus to power relations (Hoy, 1985; Rosenau, 1992). Bearing this possible pitfall in mind, I submit to the idea that postmodernist thinking can be used to extend the analysis without committing to an extreme relativist position.

In practice, the application of these ideas meant that when analyzing the material, I submitted, on the one hand, to the notion that, in some instances, I could not ascribe an absolutely certain meaning to a passage of text. On the other hand, I also subscribe to the idea that although in many cases, a single, fixed interpretation about the actual meaning of the passages of text cannot be ascertained, I also cannot arbitrarily impose any possible desired meaning on it. What limits these interpretations are the words that the passages contain, the ones that they do not, the order of the words, etc. These limitations were all set by the original author(s), who had a meaning and intent that they wanted to convey with the choice of these very words.

As mentioned, in my work, I seek to answer *how* and *why* the concept of history politics is and has been addressed in the educational systems of the three respective countries. In doing so, the fine balance between the extreme postmodernist view of the infinite possibilities of interpretations and the relativist or essentialist view of finding

⁶ It should be noted that, historically, it was not the postmodernists who first suggested this approach to reading texts. Indeed, highlighting nuances and the subjectivity of interpretations has been the stock and trade of historians for a long time (Evans, 2000; Rosenau, 1992). As Rosenau (1992) stated, “post-modernists are not the first to suggest the importance of the reader. Many social scientists have long been aware of the importance of reader’s reactions to a text, and they have been sensitive to the possibility of different readings” (p. 179).

the one and only meaning comes into the picture. By utilizing the ideas set forth above, the passages in the materials were seen to have varying levels of ambiguity and room for interpretation. In the analysis of the material, I have sought to highlight these ambiguities not only through the creation of categories but also by highlighting the ambiguities within each category. Thus, in my work, I commit to a sort of “integration and compromise” approach, as highlighted by Rosenau (1992) and even explicitly espoused by the likes of Evans (2000), who encouraged a healthy middle ground between realist and what he calls hyper-relativist positions. Good and beneficial ideas from the postmodernist toolbox are used to extend the analysis, but “[t]he strategy of reconciliation involves abandoning those post-modern assumptions that appear most absurd to conventional social science” (Rosenau, 1992, p. 181). In short, I submit to the idea that, even though in my work, interpretations are often tentative, they are nevertheless more objective descriptions of the truth than submission to either realist or postmodernist approaches would allow. However, I hold the view that the interpretations I have made should be approached with caution, as the uncertainty factor is always there, especially as power relations are also undoubtedly at play.

However, to approach the research question at hand, one part of the epistemological considerations also comprises pondering the question of what the line of reasoning is in obtaining new information about the surrounding reality. It is not self-evident or God-given whether knowledge arises from experience (induction) or reasoning (deduction). The former seeks to form new theoretical inroads based on data analysis, whereas the latter employs an existing theoretical model, which is then tested with new data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). Especially in American research literature, either one of these lines of reasoning is followed in qualitative research. This dichotomy, however, is blind to a third possible approach: that of abductive reasoning, which this study also follows.

This line of reasoning follows a sort of middle way between a deductive and an inductive line of inquiry. In practice, this means that the analysis has certain theoretical connections, but an existing theory is not tested *per se*. Certain theoretical ideas are first laid out, but the collection and initial analysis of the data progresses in a somewhat freer manner. In the case of my work, this meant that the observations made about how the concept of history politics is and has been addressed arose almost entirely from the research material itself.⁷ As we shall later see, different

⁷ This approach is not followed through entirely consistently. The very definition of what history politics is was based on earlier scholarly work, so in this sense, the observations did not emerge entirely from the data itself. In addition, as elaborated in Chapter 3.2.3, the notion of civil wars as watersheds (regarding how people deal with the past) was used as a theoretical insight in classifying the findings into two categories. Therefore, in a sense, this work also borrows from the tradition of deductive reasoning. For the most part, however, I follow the abductive form of reasoning outlined above.

kinds of *dimensions* were identified in the manner in which the concept is (and has been) addressed. Only in one instance did preconceived ideas guide the analysis of the data in forming these dimensions. Although an unconventional choice, I review the previous research that influenced the formation of this dimension in the section dedicated to the empirical analysis. The motivation for this is that covering the aforementioned portion of literature earlier (in the theoretical framework section, for example) would have left these preconceived ideas somewhat detached and rendered the text hard to follow.

Although the chosen theoretical notions guided the gathering and initial analysis of the data very little, at the end of the analysis, they were brought back into the picture to structure the findings and connect them with the existing theoretical thinking. These theoretical notions are not only tested, but the analysis takes into consideration observations that do not fit the theoretical model. The goal is not merely to test a theory but also to expand it (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). In other words, once the different manners in which the concept of history politics is and has been addressed (the question of *how*) were identified, the observations were then interpreted in light of this interpretative framework in order to answer *why* such an approach has been chosen and what these findings tell us about the possibility of converging national policies.

2.2 Defining Relevant Concepts

Before addressing the theoretical framework, certain conceptual clarifications have to be made. As this work focuses on how the History curriculum is political in the sense that the concept of history politics is addressed as part of education, the focus is on three important questions: what is politics and thus political, what is history politics, and what is a curriculum?

2.2.1 Politics and Political in the Context of This Study

First, we need to define in more detail what politics is and what is thus considered political in the context of this study. Defining the two is no easy task; entire books have been written addressing this question. For the purposes of this work, however, it is not necessary to dig quite as deeply into the matter. Instead, what is needed is a definition of the word that can be operationalized in the context of this work.

In everyday language, politics is often seen as the actions and decisions of politicians and government officials that are a million miles away from people's everyday lives. Consequently, only elections, party politics, and lobbying are considered politics in the most narrow definition (Doyle & Dough, 1998). I thus employ a somewhat broader definition, as politics are also seen to take place in a

much broader arena than just at the highest echelons of the state (Edelman, 1988; Onuf, 1989). Paloheimo and Wiberg (2005) assert that “[p]olitics is the management of shared things that aims to further the actors’ goals” (p. 15). Politics aims to change societal structures. These structures are understood in a broad way, however, as the thing that has been politicized (i.e., named as political) can be a physical entity just as well as it can be a concept (Colebatch, 1988; Palonen, 1988).

Building on these ideas, what is political—in the context of this work—can thus be defined as the ambitions and actions that seek to change societal structures in order to further actors’ goals. These structures in question include concrete physical things, as well as concepts, ideas, etc., whereas the ambitions and actions can be realized in different venues, levels, and forums.

2.2.2 History Politics and Related Concepts

Second, it is very important to explore a theoretical concept central to this work, that of history politics. To do so, we first need to open its meaning in relation to two other interrelated concepts: those of history culture and historical consciousness. Due to the desire to break off all ties to the totalitarian practices of the past, in post-WWII, Western historians were able to focus less on the nation- and identity-building functions of history and more on knowledge itself. Historians have increasingly turned their attention to the problems of contemporary society. This interest in the concepts of history has increased since the early 1980s. Theoretical writing about, rather than empirical studies employing concepts related to, the understanding of history have increased as part of the “new histories” and have taken place especially in Germany (Torsti, 2003). The three concepts that came into being as a result of these discussions are closely interrelated. As Torsti (2003) argues, “history culture, historical consciousness and history politics are not to be understood as isolated or separate phenomena but as part of the understanding that can be characterised as the ‘presence of history’ in society” (p. 53).

History Culture

The term “history culture” (*Geschichtskultur*) emerged in West Germany in the 1980s when it was used to refer to the ways in which the past was “maintained” by producing and using portrayals of the past. In the German context, the term has been heavily politically loaded due to its usage in Holocaust discourse, and thus the term “public history” is instead often used in the Anglo-Saxon research tradition (Salmi, 2001). More precisely defined, history culture refers to the daily public cultural space in which people encounter the past and try to come to terms with it and in which they construct their historical consciousness (Hentilä, 2001; Tilli, 2009; Torsti, 2003).

Jouni Tilli (2009) names manners, rituals, magazines, the Internet, political debates, television, monuments, art, buildings, and video games as a few examples of such manifestations of history culture. Pilvi Torsti (2003) and Sirkka Ahonen (1998, 2002) especially emphasized the product nature of history culture. It can thus be concluded that history culture includes all the people, mechanisms, and avenues through which historical knowledge is presented, transmitted, produced, and used in a society *except* academic history (Ahonen, 1998, 2002; Kalela, 2000; Torsti, 2003). As Pilvi Torsti (2003) puts it, “[i]t is not a professional relation with the past, but a relation expressed through a daily culture of a society” (p. 47). However, the position of History education in schools in this division is somewhat ambiguous. Sirkka Ahonen (1998, 2002) sees History education as part of the academic field, for example, whereas Hannu Salmi (2001) asserts that History education at school is to be seen as part of history culture. For the purposes of this research, it is not of importance to precisely locate the whereabouts of History education in school within the history–academic history dichotomy, as this work does not seek to further the theoretical understanding in this respect, and delineating this difference would not be of assistance in analyzing the research materials.

Collective Memory

A marked difference between the past and history exists. Contrary to what actually took place (the past), history is a reconstruction and interpretation of those events (Virta, 2008). Definitions of historical consciousness (*Historische Bewusstseins*) have varied within the academic field (Torsti, 2003). According to Torsti (2003), “historical consciousness is the way people and communities deal with the past in order to understand the present and future. Historical consciousness links the past and the future, and can construct a sense of continuity” (p. 50). Part of our historical consciousness is the collective memory within us (Torsti, 2003). Arja Virta (2008) discusses a similar phenomenon when she talks about historical memory. Accordingly, Ihanus (2012) describes the phenomenon in the following manner: “Collective memory is comprised of a group’s interpretations of the past, ritualizations and practices of remembrance based on the group’s values, norms and beliefs” (p. 158). This collective memory develops communally and in social interactions, as there are of course no collective memories in the brain *per se* (Ihanus, 2012). Thus, unlike in infantile primary socialization, secondary socialization, which includes our historical identity, is always at least partly a result of the conscious choices we make (Ahonen, 1997). As memories are not simply retrieved individually from the past, memory formation is very much a collective process in which this “collective memory” of a group is constructed from external inputs from the remembering groups in which individual recollections are balanced against those of

others (Lowenthal, 2000; Torsti, 2003). It is of course not always active and conscious behavior that prohibits individual memories from competing for recognition in collective memory. In modern psychology, it is understood that the information taken in by individuals themselves is always reduced and simplified. Either consciously or subconsciously, we filter in only partially the information we are confronted with, as it prevents us from overloading our information processing capabilities (Ahonen, 1997; Niemi & Niemi, 1982). In addition to being reduced and simplified, new information is contrasted with pre-existing concepts and notions (Niemi & Niemi, 1982). Individual conscious mutism and the passing of time also condemn memories to oblivion, although—at least in the case of traumatic events—memories fade over time very slowly (Link 2009; Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, 2003). Despite this social aspect of memory, it is noteworthy that memory also has a subjective character to it, as people do not simply obey some abstract collective will. Thus, as Wertsch (2000) notes, the internationalization of historical narratives is highly contextual, and even if the purpose of History education is to implant a certain type of historical identity into the students' minds, this does not necessarily mean that the students accept it. For this reason, social memory is nowadays often used to substitute the term collective memory (Torsti 2003; Wertsch 2000).

History Politics

To deal with the present, people and nations have to settle scores with the past. As Seixas (2000) puts it, “it is the power of the story of the past to define who we are in the present, our relations with others, relations in civil society—nation and state, right and wrong, good and bad—and broad parameters for action in the future...there is a lot at stake” (p. 21). Such public debate about the past is often referred to by the German term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which roughly translates as “working to overcome the past.” Indeed, curiosity about the past is always bound up with present preoccupations. However, as the quote above already suggests, it is often not just present occupations in general that lead us to pay attention to the past, but present *political* preoccupations in particular (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994; Mylly, 2002). As Juhani Mylly (2002) puts it, “[k]nowledge about history always has some political function and political meanings in the society” (p. 24–25). In other words, at least when the manner in which the past is remembered attains a social dimension, the recollection of history more than often becomes entangled with politics in one way or another. Although the reasons are manifold, arguably for those in power, one of the foremost reasons for the political use of history is the cultivation of social cohesion, national identity, and regime legitimacy (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Jones, 2002; Mylly, 2002; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Torsti, 2003, 2008). Especially during times of—real or perceived—ideological, political, and cultural threats, nations pay

great attention to what binds them together and what separates them from others (Foster & Crawford, 2006). Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994) assert that:

National leaders try to control the collective memory in order to forge a civic identity, while other groups in society recount particular stories to build solidarity, often in defiance of those seeking a shared past. Differently situated still, historians—when they are true to the ideals of truth-seeking and objectivity—seek to expand and complicate the collective memory beyond the utilitarian limits of consensus-building. In doing this they may well turn up information that undermines a nation's self-congratulatory image of or challenges a group cherished beliefs about its past. It is also the case that historians can take on the role of social critic, eschewing the cold façade of scientific fact and pointing their research toward moral lessons. These clashes make the writing of the history of one's own country different from other historical work, for with it, a relatively open-ended scholarly inquiry collides with the vigilant censor of national self-interest and the group pressure of celebratory self-fashioning. (p. 156)

As the quote already suggests, political preoccupations sometimes take priority over the strive for objectivity in the construction of historical narratives. This is where the concept of history politics—in distinction from the mere political use of history—comes in hand. Building on the work of Torsti (2008) and Hentilä (2001), in the context of this work, history politics is understood as an intentionally, actively, and consciously biased view of history that is taken in to serve political ambitions. History politics thus seeks to further political ambitions by influencing the history culture that surrounds people, thereby affecting their historical consciousness and collective or social memory. Albeit not entirely synonymous, Paul A. Cohen's (1997) talk about the *mythologization* of the past also certainly entails the notion of such history politics, where political ambitions shake hands with the intentional misrepresentation of history:

[T]he past treated as a myth is fundamentally different from the past treated as history. When good historians write history, their primary objective is to construct, on the basis of the evidence available, as accurate and truthful an understanding of the past as possible. Mythologizers, in a sense, do the reverse. Certainly, mythologizers start out with an understanding of the past, which in many (though not all) cases they may sincerely believe to be "correct." Their purpose, however, is not to enlarge upon or deepen this understanding. Rather, it is to draw on it to serve the political, ideological, rhetorical, and/or emotional needs of the present... [mythologization] achieves its effect typically not

through out-and-out falsification but through distortion, oversimplification, and omission of material that doesn't serve its purpose or runs counter to it. The mythologized past need not be historically accurate. (p. 213–214)

Building on the ideas of Cohen, it should be further elaborated that in the context of this work, the aforementioned biased view of history espoused by Torsti and Hentilä may include not only actively promoted false narratives of the past, but also behavior such as selective muteness and oversimplification.

Furthermore, according to Torsti (2008), foreign and domestic policy objectives and even the symbolic “universal good” are possible motives for the use of history politics. In addition, she identified six different forums in which history politics are utilized: history education in schools, public history culture, publications (such as popular culture, internet forums, and books), decisions and rulings by international and national actors, speeches and comments by different societal actors, and finally seminars, conferences, and studies dealing with history. In a somewhat broader sense, the concept of history politics has also been described as the aspiration to define the central values, symbols, and goals of a society through a certain history by either using history as political arguments or by battling what can be accepted as history (Tilli, 2009). In other words, history politics has been used as a synonym to what I earlier called the political use of history. However, in this work, this definition of history politics is ignored in instances when it is evident that the contemporary use of history in politics does not include the element of intentional misinterpretation.

Although we can raise examples from ancient Egypt where the pharaohs sought to erase any proof of the existence of their enemies from documents and physical monuments or recall the Roman practice of *Damnatio memoriae*, it was really the age of nationalism that proved to be the golden era of history politics (as defined in the context of this work). The strong interrelating relationship between history, identity, and citizenship developed in the 19th century Europe when politicians and intellectuals tasked history with inventing traditions, ethnogenetic myths, and heroes to construct the biography of nations to affirm identity and inculcate loyalty (Ahonen, 1997; Cajani, 2007; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). These national biographies were then used by the citizenry to identify themselves as part of a collective body, a nation, to create citizenship that was exerted within a nation-state's boundaries (Cajani, 2007). Especially the First World War, as well as the interwar years, proved to be the peak period of these practices that Berger and Conrad (2015) call “historiographical nationalism.” Afterward, the tradition continued to be widespread well into the Second World War and Cold War period (Berger & Conrad, 2015). To a large degree, such practices continue to live on even today, as national histories are constantly being written and re-written to follow outstanding contemporary issues as

defined by powerful individuals and groups (Foster & Crawford, 2006). As all political regimes—including democratic ones—base their legitimacy partly on history, the result is that official history is always manipulated in some ways by those in power (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994; Béja, 2007; Carretero, 2011; Jin, 2004; Jones, 2012; VanSledright, 2008; Wertsch & Rozin, 1998). In the pursuit of their goals, national governments use manipulation or ignoring past events, as well as lying and misinformation, to provide positive representations of the past (Ahonen, 1997; Foster & Crawford, 2006; Lowenthal, 2000; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). As Foster and Crawford (2006) put it:

Nations rarely tell “the truth” about themselves, what national stories provide are claims to truth, the publicly available record of a nation’s past does not provide accounts of what actually happened; rather they represent what it chooses to remember and what it chooses to tell as its national story. What follows from this is that selecting a national past is an intensely political and ideological process. (p. 6)

Despite being a universal trend evident in all societies, such behavior has been most pronounced in totalitarian or authoritarian societies, where the regimes have used their power to provide positive representations of the past, using their influence to suppress rival narratives of past events (Ahonen, 1997; Carretero, 2011; Jones, 2012; Kaye, 1997). To cite concrete examples, the Chinese Communist Party, for example, has done its best to make sure that the bloody crackdown of the 1989 demonstrations is erased from collective memory. As Perry Link (2009) notes, “[t]he custodians of the CCP’s [Chinese Communist Party] post-1989 regime... can hardly expect older generations to forget the truth, but hope that the young will never learn it” (p. 8). It is important to note, however, that not even totalitarian systems have been able to control the expressions of memory completely, and thus the official and personal representations of history are not necessarily one and the same (Ahonen, 1997; Béja, 2007). As the cases of, for example, the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the Soviet Union demonstrate, major disparities sometimes exist between the two representations and may emerge just about anywhere in the world (Ahonen, 1997; Wertsch, 2000).

Such use (or misuse, as many would argue when taking a normative stand) of history intrigues the human mind and has been a standard literary trope inspiring works of fiction such as George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Chan Koonchung’s *The Fat Years* (2011). A passage from Milan Kundera’s *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979) is a good polemical reminder of this universal and transgenerational desire to re-write the past in one’s own image:

People are always shouting they want to create a better future. It's not true. The future is an apathetic void of no interest to anyone. The past is full of life, eager to irritate us, provoke and insult us, tempt us to destroy or repaint it. The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past. They are fighting for access to the laboratories where photographs are retouched and biographies and histories rewritten. (p. 22)

In the scholarly world, the realization that historical narratives are manipulated for political purposes is not a novel idea, but rather the result of a long-lasting, extensive methodological and epistemological discussion concerning the reliability of the writing of history. Leopold von Ranke, the German classicist-turned-historian and the father of modern scientific or professional history writing, already introduced the idea of rooting out forgeries and falsifications from historical primary records using methods borrowed from philology. Von Ranke, however, had not yet linked this idea with the notion that historiography—the authorship of second-hand sources—could also be manipulated for political purposes. Although it was the First World War that really brought the issue to the fore, the view that following Rankean ideals and methods to the point would deliver value-free history had already come under fire earlier. These discussions heated during the interwar years, when philosophers, and most notably the Italian Benedetto Croce, argued for the case (Evans, 2000). In the words of Evans, “Croce argued that historians were guided in their judgement as to what documents and events were important in the past, and what were important, by their present concerns. All history was thus written, consciously or unconsciously, from the perspective of the present” (p. 30–31). With the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and fascist regimes in Western Europe, these discussions intensified.

Due to the desire to break with the totalitarian practices of the past, in post-Second World War societies in the West, historians were able to focus less on the nation and identity building functions of history and more on knowledge itself, as already mentioned. As a result, historians have increasingly turned their attention to the problems of contemporary society (Torsti, 2003). As Torsti argues, “understanding the phenomena related to the use and influence of history has become an important scholarly concern with increasing moral relevance” (p. 37). The emergence of a school of thought known as “new history” has increasingly led to the questioning of the Rankean tradition of history research and to an increase in theoretical literature and important conceptual developments in the field of history research. This interest in the concepts of history has begun to grow only in the early 1980s. Theoretical—rather than empirical—studies employing concepts related to the understanding of history have increased as part of the “new histories” and have taken place especially in Germany (Torsti, 2003). There was a backlash to “new history” thinking, however. As Torsti (2003) explains:

Since the late 1970s, however, “the return of history” bolstered the building of new museums, the rewriting of history textbooks, the publishing of historical books and so forth...In history research, this turn has been defined as neo-conservatism. The reevaluation of history finally led to the *Historikerstreit* (history dispute) among historians, which focused on the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich and the attempt to build a new historical identity for Germany. *Historikerstreit* further emphasised the demand for the conceptualisation of such commonly used terms as historical consciousness among historians who wanted to challenge the conservative, nationalistically-orientated attempts in the field of history. (p. 22–23)

Indeed, it was during the so-called *Historikerstreit* that the central theoretical concepts of this work were first explored by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1987) when referring to the modus operandi of conservative German historians (Torsti, 2008). According to Habermas and many left-leaning German historians who also took part in the *Streit*, the national conservative authors had been guilty of intentionally belittling the horrors of the Nazi regime (Berger, 2012; Torsti, 2003).⁸

2.2.3 Curriculum in the Context of This Study

Finally, to answer the question of what curriculum means in the context of this study, let us begin by noting that there are different competing views on what a curriculum is and, thus, there is no universally acknowledged definition (Barrow & Woods, 1994; Klein, 1990; Wiles, 2008). Consequently, researchers such as Malinen (1987) and Rokka (2011) claim that the concept of curriculum should always be defined in research according to the specific context in which it is used. Some researchers (see, for example, Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013) refer to curriculum as explicit documents guiding education. I, however, build on definitions that define curriculum more broadly—as a plan of the actions that aim to realize the educational goals that have been set for schools without an explicit reference to only documents (see, for example, Kosunen & Huusko, 2002; Taba, 1962). Taba (1962) defines the curriculum as a “plan for learning.” Building on Taba’s work, van den Akker (2003, 2007) asserts that curriculum takes place on various levels, extending from national-

⁸ The etymology of the term history politics (*Geschichtspolitik*) itself is somewhat new. It was first used by the German political scientist Edgar Wolfrum in 1996 (Wolfrum, 1996), although in his definition, such behavior did not necessarily include the element of intentional misinterpretation of past events. This definition is relatively close to the broad definition used by Jouni Tilli (2009), introduced earlier.

level curriculum documents to classroom practices. Regardless of the level of the curriculum, the curriculum comprises different contents. As Levin (2008) argues, “[m]ost curricula are organized around at least two levels of objectives—very general or broad goals and then much more specific learning activities and objectives” (p. 14). Van den Akker (2003) identifies the following different types of content as components of the curriculum: rationale or vision (“Why are they learning?”), aims and objectives (“Toward which goals are they learning?”), content (“What are they learning?”), learning activities (“How are they learning?”), teacher role (“How is the teacher facilitating learning?”), materials and resources (“With what are they learning?”), grouping (“With whom are they learning?”), location (“Where are they learning?”), time (“When are they learning?”), and assessment (“How to measure how far learning has progressed?”). It is important to note, however, that the first component (rationale or vision) serves as a major orientation point to which the other components are linked (van den Akker, 2003). In addition, the relevance of the above-mentioned components differs between the different levels of the curriculum. Macro-level documents, for example, usually focus only on the first three items (Kuiper, Nieveen, & Berkvens, 2013). However, textbooks, for example, do not address the question of why learning happens. Instead, they merely comprise content. In addition, the stated aims may very well be different from the actual objectives. As a result, in the context of this work, curriculum refers to the content in national-level curriculum documents, textbooks, and classroom practices. In turn, this content can tell us about the actual aim and ambition of History education (as opposed to the publicly stated rationale or vision and aims and objectives).

Additionally, it should be noted that the curriculum is not a monolith. A distinction has been made between the intended and the implemented curriculum (Cuban, 1992; van den Akker, 2003).⁹ These two correspond—at least partly, as I will show—to the different levels of the curriculum. This work also employs the distinction between the intended and implemented curriculum. At the very top is the

⁹ In addition, van den Akker (2003, 2007) and Cuban (1992) identified a third possible level, the attained curriculum (what the students actually learn). As Rantala et al. (2020) assert, “[c]overing an issue under teacher’s tutelage does not automatically mean understanding it profoundly” (p. 127). Furthermore, De Groot-Reuvekamp et al. (2014) introduced yet another category which they termed “suggested curriculum,” which, according to the authors, refers to documents that “have been offered to teachers and textbook publishers as guidance for the implementation of the intended curricula, but they neither belong to the formal documents, nor to the implemented curriculum” (p. 494). On the other hand, Cuban (1992) also identified a “recommended curriculum,” which, according to Heinonen (2005), means the educational policy serving as the basis for the curriculum. Arguably, even a tested curriculum exists, as what is being tested does not necessarily correspond to what is being intended to be taught and learned or to what is actually being taught.

intended curriculum, or what Svingby (1979) has coined as “curriculum poetry.” It is noteworthy that regardless of whether we talk about official curriculum documents, textbooks, or both, there may well be contradictions and conflicts within this level; a curriculum may aim to achieve conflicting, and even mutually exclusive, goals (Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013) (see Figure 1).

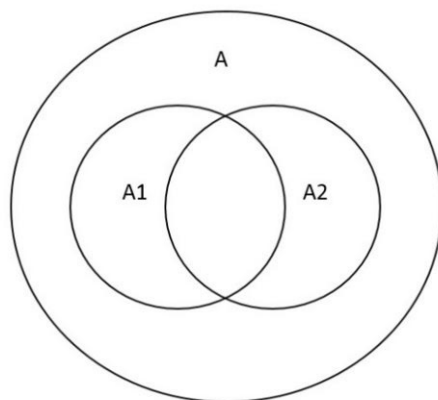


Figure 1. The overlapping structure of the intended curriculum. The intended curriculum (A) may well comprise elements which are at least partly in conflict with each other (A1 and A2).

It is of course the case that these ambitions set forth in the intended curriculum are not always realized (Levin, 2008; Westbury, 2008). As Robert K. Merton (1959) affirmed, different systems have functions at different levels and all systems have manifest and latent functions, as well as dysfunctions. Antikainen, Rinne, and Koski (2013) elaborate:

Manifest function means the publically expressed, intended and known function...Latent function in turn tells about the consequences of actions, which are not known or intended, but work mainly to support the manifest function...Dysfunction is instead harmful to the realization of the objective or it weakens the survival of a structure, system or an institution. A dysfunction emerges when the manifest function is not achieved or some former latent function no longer exists. (p. 155)

In other words, manifest function may turn into latent function or even dysfunction. This also applies to education. In the words of Husbands, Kitson, and Pandy (2003), “[n]o matter how prescribed the curriculum, central government’s control over education will always be diluted by other influences, including...schools, departments and individual teachers” (p. 109). Factors such as the interpretation of

curriculum documents and textbooks, freedom of movement, available technology and facilities, teacher's previous knowledge, and the subjects of teaching result in the same curriculum being executed in different ways (Davis Jr., 2006; Fan & Zhu, 2000; Schrag, 1992). Standardized testing is yet another important factor that affects what is being taught and studied in classes (Rantala et al., 2020). Despite the importance of these testing practices, due to the need to narrow the focus of this study, I did not examine testing itself even if its effects on the implemented curriculum were highlighted by teachers.

As a result, many authors (see, for example, Ball, 1994; Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2003) emphasize the gap between the written curriculum and the actual practices of the institutions providing the education. In instances when a gap between the two exists, references are made to the so-called hidden curriculum (Uusikylä & Atjonen, 2000). These differences are illustrated in Figure 2: the intended curriculum (A) and implemented curriculum (B) can—at least in an ideal situation—be one and the same (case 1). Usually, the two overlap only partially, and there is a gap between the two (case 2). One may also imagine that the two are completely disconnected from one another (case 3). When a gap exists between the two (cases 2 and 3 in Figure 2), the parts of the implemented curriculum that do not overlap with the intended curriculum can be seen as the so-called hidden curriculum. It is of course worth asking if case 1 in Figure 2 can truly ever exist. For example, Resh and Benavot (2009) claimed that gaps between the intended and implemented curriculum occur in all national educational systems. Consequently, the implemented curriculum and hidden curriculum become synonymous.

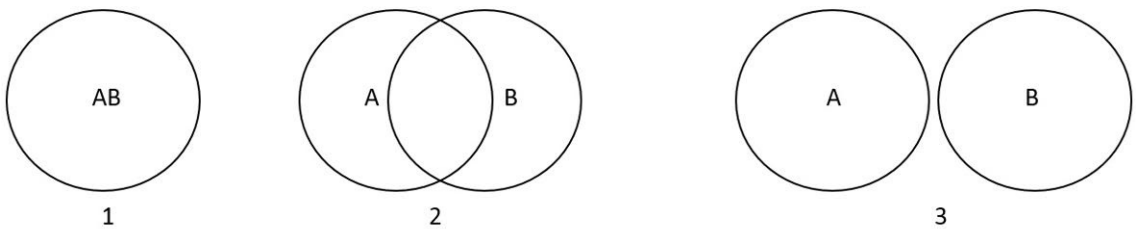


Figure 2. The relationship between the intended curriculum (A) and the implemented curriculum (B).

If the intended and implemented curriculum are in conflict with one another, those at the receiving end of teaching are more influenced by the latter. In other words, the hidden curriculum is a more influential factor in education than the intended curriculum (Broady, 1991).

What is also noteworthy is that different levels of the curriculum may be part of either the intended or the implemented curriculum.¹⁰ Fan and Zhu (2000) notice this possibility with textbooks when they assert that “how textbooks are used in classrooms and how textbooks are designed are two related but different issues. The former is implemented curriculum, while the later (sic) is intended curriculum” (p. 119). Heinonen (2005) mirrors these notions when he asks “[i]f study materials, for example, do not correspond with the school’s curriculum, do they then enforce a hidden curriculum?” (p. 18). Researchers such as Cuban (1992) see the tested curriculum as a separate level. However, I assert that whether it be textbooks (or other materials except official curriculum documents for that matter), tests, or even classroom practices, they are not part of the intended or implemented curriculum *an sich*. Instead, they may well be compatible with the intended curricula to varying degrees.

2.3 The Theoretical Framework

Now that we have a solid understanding of what history politics, curriculum, and political mean in the context of this work, we can move on to examine the actual theoretical or interpretative framework. As already mentioned in the introductory part of this work, no previous studies have sought to answer the questions this work taps into. As a result, there is no pre-existing theoretical or interpretative framework that could directly be adopted *an sich* to approach the research task at hand. This, however, does not mean that no earlier scholarly work could be of assistance in this endeavor. Instead, theoretical ideas about the political nature of the curriculum, the competing functions of History education, and the notion of converging national policies guided the final interpretation of the research material and subsequent findings. Let us now examine each of these theoretical ideas separately in more detail.

2.3.1 The Political Curriculum and Its Functions

This theoretical exploration begins with the notion that education can arguably be considered a site of politics. Such ideas are based on the work of the Italian Marxist theoretician and activist Antonio Gramsci. Leaving his normative views aside, his idea of hegemony can serve as a valuable analytical tool for understanding the question at hand. Traditionally (meaning also in the orthodox communist thinking into which Gramsci had been socialized), the term has been associated foremost with

¹⁰ Some researchers (see, for example, Lahdes, 1997; Vitikka, 2004) see study materials or written documents in general categorically as part of the intended curriculum.

political or economic power. Although Gramsci also saw hegemony in this manner, he expanded this traditional view: by becoming the common sense of the age, it was not only unequal political and economic power, but also the power of ideas and theories and the control of experience and consciousness that uphold the capitalist society (Agnew, 2005; Heywood, 2007). Juha Koivisto and Timo Uusitupa (1989) claimed:

Gramsci uses the concept [of hegemony] to investigate those political, cultural and ideological forms, through which one basic class of a society is able to achieve leadership vis-à-vis other classes and groups...Gramsci emphasized those complicated practices, through which people agree to be dominated, thereby giving birth to a hegemony. As the “cementing” element of these practices, Gramsci sees ideology, old wives' tales and so-called common sense. (p. 68)

Thus, hegemony was a sum of coercion and consent on the material and ideological levels, which in turn translated into stable social order and higher forms of political organization, such as the state (Estrella Faria, 2013; Miliband, 1977). In fact, in such thinking under normal circumstances, coercion recedes to the background and gives way to consent (Malo, 2013). For Gramsci, ideology was present everywhere in society: in the arts, literature, popular culture, language, mass media, and—most importantly for our work—education (Heywood, 2007). Consequently, so were possible sites of hegemony.

Building on Gramsci's ideas, authors such as Michel Apple have explored the ideological dimension of education. Apple argues (2008) that “education is...a site of conflict about the kind of knowledge that is and should be taught, about whose knowledge is official, and about who has the right to decide what is to be taught, how it is organized” (p. 25). Indeed, as a result, decisions about educational politics are always—at least on some level—political decisions (Levin, 2008). As Levin states, “[p]olicies govern just about every aspect of education—what schooling is provided, how, to whom, in what form, by whom, with what resources and so on” (p. 8). In a sense, education does not only reflect the surrounding ideology but, in fact, participates in its construction (Apple, 1982). As education of course cannot—and will not—transmit all possible knowledge and values, a “selective tradition” (choosing the relevant important information from the vast pool of knowledge) plays a central part in educational decision making (Williams, 1961). Apple (1990) describes this selective tradition as “someone's selection, someone's vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group's cultural capital disenfranchise another's” (p. 20). In other words, the selection and organization of knowledge for schools is an ideological process, as

legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations in which different stakeholders struggle to have a particular discursively constructed “reality” accepted as truth by others (Apple, 2000; Ullah, 2012).

Consequently, as education as a whole is political, authors such as Apple (2004) and Pinar et al. (1995) claim that the curriculum is therefore logically also political. The curriculum is a compromise between political, cultural, and economic aspirations, although these aspirations can change over time (Antikainen, 1998). In other words, the curriculum is a socio-historical construction reflecting the distribution of power in society, which in turn has been translated into recommended or mandated regulations, standards, textbooks, and methods of study and should therefore be contextualized politically, culturally, and economically rather than be seen as neutral (Levin, 2008; Moreno, 2007; Pinar et al., 1995; Westbury, 2008). However, the curriculum does not always simply mirror the ideas of the ruling class in a coercive, unmediated manner (Apple, 2000). Instead, as Apple (2000) argues (when referring to the situation in the United States, for example), “[c]urricula aren’t imposed... Rather, they are the products of often intense conflicts, negotiations, and attempts at rebuilding hegemonic control by actually incorporating the knowledge and perspectives of the less powerful under the umbrella of the discourse of dominant groups” (p. 53). Consequently, even in the most authoritarian societies, curriculum policymaking is always shaped by politics, ideology, personal values, interests, and issues in the public domain, even if issues are not always politicized and intensely (and even less publicly) discussed (Levin, 2008; McNeil, 1977; Särkijärvi, 2002; Walker, 1992). Although there is substantial debate on whether it is formal education or non-school factors that shape study and student outcomes, for the aforementioned reasons, it is not surprising that the content of school curricula has always been a hotly debated and controversial topic (Levin, 2008).

The notion that the curriculum is political only gets us so far. If the curriculum is political, the question nevertheless remains: in *what way* is it political? What are the political ambitions that the curriculum seeks to further? As suggested in the introduction to this work, education can serve a very wide array of different functions and purposes ranging from keeping idle youngsters at bay to choosing the “right” people for the right position in society (Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013). However, as mentioned earlier, this work does not seek to comprehensively address these competing functions of education. Instead, the focus is on the possible tension between the integrative and qualificative functions of (History) education. This choice of focus is of course not random. As explained, the tension between these two functions has been a central question in educational research for a long time, which is no coincidence either. As Antikainen, Rinne, and Koski (2013) stated, theoreticians of sociology, such as Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber, have compressed the very central problem of the sociology of education in the

question: “is education in the modern society a tool of the machinery that preserves and monitors the society or does it also offer the possibility for individuals and groups to realize their ambitions and to change the society?” (p. 11).

On the one hand, education has indeed been a “tool of the machinery,” as the purpose of education has been integration—i.e., ensuring the continuity and survival of society. Even though education’s role and function have varied with time and according to the local context, education has clearly played (and still does, especially in developing nations) an important role in the nationalist objectives of “nation-building” or state formation and the preservation of cultural values (Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013; Feinberg, 1998; Foster & Crawford, 2006; Green, 1997). According to Andy Green (1997), nation states have set up national education systems partly in order “to spread the dominant cultures and inculcate popular ideologies of nationhood; to forge the political and cultural unity of the burgeoning nation-states; and to cement the ideological hegemony of their dominant classes” (p. 14). Émile Durkheim had also noted that with the birth of modern societies, the feeling of oneness, which had been based on religion and without which societies cannot thrive, had fragmented and was thus replaced by education (Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013). Antikainen, Rinne, and Koski (2013) elaborate:

Every generation necessarily has to learn a certain minimum amount of the cultural tradition, so that the community would remain a community and continue to function...The safeguarding of continuity for school takes place in the form of transmitting cultural heritage and socialization. At the same time, the preconditions for such an integration are created, in which a more or less random group of people develops into a more or less unified nation. (p. 171–172)

On the other hand, the purpose of education has been to produce qualifications. Antikainen, Rinne, and Koski (2013) elaborate: “[o]ne function of education is to...transmit to children, young people and adults the necessary qualifications needed in individual and societal lives as well as in the work market. Qualifications mean the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values that individuals need when acting in the work market and as citizens in a democratic society” (p. 158). In modern society, knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself is no longer as important a qualification as it once was. Instead, the qualifications that education offers are the skills to manage and survive in a rapidly changing society (Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2013). The authors continue: “[i]ncreasingly many need knowledge, literacy and analytical skills to seek and choose the information what he or she needs in order to make choices in life and in order to put information in their own lives into perspective. Thus the function of education is increasingly becoming the

development of the ability to learn rather than to produce the qualifications for everyday life management and the sharing of information” (p. 165).¹¹

2.3.2 Transitology and Policy Convergence

Traditionally, studies in the field of comparative education have focused on comparisons made in spatial terms. The main unit of these comparisons has been (and to a large degree still is) the nation state (Sweeting, 2007). This study also engages in such comparisons in space, as the comparisons between the different educational regimes suggest. Yet, comparative education does not need to focus solely on comparisons made between such units. To begin with, my work carries out comparisons between different levels of the curriculum to go beyond the level of mere “curriculum poetry.” Perhaps even more importantly, comparisons can just as well be made in temporal, as well as spatial, terms (Sweeting, 2005). Indeed, as Sweeting puts it, “one could characterise comparative education as *all* efforts to detect and comment on similarities and differences between forms of education, whether these forms are expressed in locational or in temporal terms” (p. 149, emphasis added). Therefore, the history of education and comparative education are, at least to a certain degree, affiliated and overlapping (Cowen, 2002; Kallio, 2012; Sweeting, 2007). The concept of time has gathered fairly little interest in comparative research (Kallio, 2012). Yet, the trajectory is definitely toward more rather than less temporal comparisons. The field of comparative education is of course no exception in this respect. Indeed, in the past decades, historical perspective has become a standard feature of social scientific research (Klein, 2017; Kuukkanen, 2016).

Comparisons made in temporal terms in this work build on the notions of transitology and policy convergence. Robert Cowen (1999, 2002) was the first to introduce the notion of transitology, which, as Kallio (2012) explains, “refers to periods of time, during which one can identify widespread political and societal changes, transitologies” (p. 63). Second, the notion of policy convergence provides a framework for answering how policies have changed over time. And not only changed, but in fact, whether they have *converged*, or in other words, whether a “movement over time toward some identified common point” is detectable (Inkeles & Sirowy, 1983, p. 305). What this formulation suggests, then, is that mere similarity does not equal convergence, as the question is rather about *becoming* similar

¹¹ In some instances, the reference to the production of qualifications has also been used in connection with the notion that education offers diplomas, certificates, and other formal records of study. In the present work, however, qualifications have a vastly different meaning.

(Bennett, 1988, 1991). In Bennett's words (1991), convergence refers to the movement from "different positions towards some common point" and "becoming more alike" (p. 219). To be more precise, policy convergence has been defined as the notion that societies grow more alike in terms of structures, processes, or performance (Kerr, 1983). When they do so, they can converge at the level of *policy goals, policy content, policy instruments, policy outcomes, or policy style* (Bennett, 1991; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). While some of these dimensions converge, others may diverge. However, this study does not seek to comprehensively address these different possible levels of convergence. Instead, the focus of this study is on convergence in policy content, which Bennet (1991) describes as "the more formal manifestations of government policy—statutes, administrative rules, regulations, court decisions and so on" (p. 218). Within this niche, the focus of this study is, more precisely, on the convergence of government policy as it manifests at the level of high school textbooks. Such an approach, I argue, allows me to investigate any possible convergence beyond the level of superficial similarity. Such policy convergence does suggest comparisons between different localities but also a focus on changes over time. As Atkinson and Bierling (1998) put it, "[c]omparisons are simultaneously temporal and spatial" (p. 72). As a final point, it should be noted that when making comparisons in time, some new problems arise: according to Sweeting (2007), the access to and incompleteness of sources may be an especially salient problem when performing comparisons in time. As we shall later see, precisely due to such difficulties, comparisons in time were done only in a somewhat limited range in this work. These limitations are discussed further on in more detail.

In the field of comparative education, there is increasing debate over whether education systems worldwide are converging toward a global model (Dale, 1999; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Verger, 2014). "A central question in globalization studies" Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2006) ask "is whether educational systems are abandoning their distinct cultural conceptions of 'good education' or 'effective schools,' and are gradually converging toward an international model of education" (p. 2). The proponents of the so-called world culture theory—an approach within the field of neo-institutionalist theories—certainly seem to think that a convergence independent of the economic, political, or cultural context is taking place. We are, they argue, experiencing a supposed "global sameness" (Silova & Rappleye, 2015) in terms of policies and even practices among countries with different national attributes (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000). According to the advocates of this theory, this convergence has been driven by universal and universalizing processes, the logic of science, and the myth of progress (Carney et al., 2012). On the other hand, the critics of this idea have pointed out the danger of a type of "brand name piracy" taking place, in which a superficial similarity is taken as proof of international convergence (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006). World culture

theorists, the critics claim, cite policy texts as evidence of a global, shared vision, whereas the notion of global “sameness” does not hold if one looks beyond these policy texts (Carney et al., 2012). Consequently, to analyze the matter thoroughly, it is worth asking whether it is the idea, the policy, or the practice that has converged (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012).

In more concrete terms, the starting point in this work is to compare geographical/political units at different levels and in temporal terms. The work examines how the policy trajectories of these educational regimes have developed after certain transitional points and whether some convergence is identifiable.

2.3.3 Competing Paradigms of History Education

This fundamental juxtaposition between different functions of education and the evolution of educational policies over time is also evident in the field of History education. As Tony Taylor (2000) noted, History education has a Janus-faced appearance, as it has the potential to be either one of the most empowering or one of the most oppressing subjects in the school curriculum. We shall now turn our attention to these two functions of education and especially on how the two have manifested themselves in the field of History education as a juxtaposition between the so-called “great tradition” and “new history.”

It should be pointed out, however, that other typologies of traditions of History education have also been presented. For example, some critics have claimed that the “new history” tradition in education is nothing more than a repacked and rebranded version of the “great tradition,” as in the end, both aim to produce a “best story” version of past events, even if the criteria for truth and the methods to get there differ. In essence, this postmodernist approach asserts that the two extremes of this “great tradition”–“new history” continuum in education are merely two sides of the same positivist coin (Seixas, 2000). Thus, instead of offering a mere dichotomy, Seixas proposed that there are, in fact, three diverging approaches to how History can be being taught. Accordingly, the postmodernist avenue borrows from the “disciplinary” one the idea that students should learn disciplinary skills while simultaneously refraining from seeking to produce a “best story.” Instead, the aim is to attain an understanding of how to relate different interpretations of the past to their political uses in the present. The approach to which I refer to as “new history” lies somewhere between Seixas’ postmodernist view and the disciplinary approach: although I define it as an orientation that seeks to cultivate in students an understanding of the political use of the past in the present, it is not necessarily related to the notion that they are *not* simultaneously expected to come up with a “best” (i.e., most valid) interpretation of what actually took place, as a purely postmodern approach would suggest. Instead, for the purposes of this work, it was

deemed irrelevant whether the students are to learn about the concept of history politics without the expectation that they are then to come up with a “best” version or whether they are indeed expected to prefer certain interpretations over others once they understand the concept.

“Great Tradition”

Not surprisingly, the purpose of History education in particular was and still is intimately linked to the function of education as a force for integration, as the ideological goal has been a sort of nationalistically oriented form of citizenship (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Harris, 2011; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; VanSledright, 2008). As Junco (2011) stated, “...what is taught at school under the name of ‘history’ is a story constructed in accordance with the romantic paradigm and dominated by sentiment. Its goal is to forge a stable collective identity, to create an established space for belonging where future citizens may feel embraced and comforted” (p. xiv). Especially recent history is subject to such tendencies (Thornton, 2006). Peter Seixas (2000) employed wordings such as “heritage,” “enhancing collective memory,” and “history in schools to shape collective memory” to describe the same phenomenon. In the endeavor to cultivate integration and nationalism, the utilization of history politics has played a seminal role, as without an authoritative best version to support the case, mobilization for a social or national cause becomes impossible (Harris, 2011; Seixas, 2000). Carretero, Rodríguez-Moneo, and Asensio (2012) elaborate:

The historical content that is closely linked to the construction of a national identity tends to positively value the predominant social group, to explain the features of the national identity in essentialist rather than historical terms, to reject sources that conflict with a socially acceptable account of events, to positively assess political developments in the country, to uncritically employ certain emblematic historical figures (often based on a “heroes and villains” dichotomy), and to create continuity and permanent links between the facts and characters of the past and the present circumstances of the national group. (p. 2)

In short, the History that is taught to children is a fact-heavy national past where the facts have been carefully chosen to meet cultural, ideological, and political needs (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Taylor, 2000). This approach does not engage students in, as Seixas (2000) puts it, “historical disciplines’ modes of inquiry” (p. 20). Most obviously, this relationship between nationalistic goals and History education manifested itself in the so-called “great tradition” of History education, which originated in the four countries of the United Kingdom. Yet, these ideas were

influential from the turn of the 20th century up to the 1970s on every level of the educational ladder, even in progressive democracies (Bertram, 2008; Dickinson, 2000; Sylvester, 1994). Historical knowledge was cherry-picked to provide stories of moral purpose, progress, betrayal, the heroism of outstanding individuals, or in short, to teach pupils about good and bad and to provide examples to imitate and avoid (Dickinson, 2000; Hawkey, 2004; Seixas, 2000; Taylor, 2000). The “great tradition” thus mirrors one of the two faces of Taylor’s (2000) Janus: “[o]ppression may come when, as has so often happened in the past, history becomes merely a means of political or religious self-justification” (p. 843). Although the “great tradition” has often been seen as the most salient example of such practices, in some instances, History education has been used to serve even more extreme goals. States have utilized History education for the sole purpose of promoting certain political ideologies or ideas, and History education has served as an avenue for regimes to use and abuse history for present purposes (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Jones, 2012). In the most extreme cases, History education has not only been used to cement nationalist unity, but even to promote thinking and behavior such as Marxist determinism, xenophobia, and even outright racism (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015).

“New History”

Although the nationalistic and even more extreme ways of teaching History were first questioned during the decades leading up to the First World War, no serious alternative to teaching the “great tradition” existed until the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (Cajani, 2007; Sylvester, 1994; Taylor, 2000). In the 1970s, Paul Hirst began to strongly emphasize learning the procedures—not just the content—of disciplines at school (Hirst, 1973). During the following years and decades, a debate emerged in history science concerning the reliability of historical knowledge, which in turn highlighted the importance of historical scholarship in the field of History education (Burke, 2001). Simultaneously, the growing disdain toward the Fascist experience and the idea that education should be a mere vessel for nationalistic and militaristic indoctrination hastened the change (Cajani, 2007; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Taylor, 2000). The “great tradition” came under fire also because it was seen as highly disinteresting (Alridge, 2006; Dickinson, 2000). As Seixas (2000) pointed out, at the time, schools devoted only marginal attention to questioning historical accounts and assessing them in relation to other accounts. Such an approach, however, would be “suited to the education of critical citizens in a liberal democracy: it should help them to develop the ability and the disposition to arrive independently at reasonable, informed opinion” (p. 24–25). Indeed, historical thinking is seen as the most important civic skill in today’s world, as it allows students to critically gather and

assess information (Rantala et al., 2020). Such thinking reflects the other side of Taylor's (2000) Janus face: "[the e]mpowerment [offered by History education] may come from developing in students a rational capacity for examining evidence, comprehending the relationship that existed (and still exists) between individuals, ideology and historical change" (p. 843).

Consequently, with the onset of the emergence of "new history" or "alternative tradition" thinking, the way History was taught also began to change (Hawkey, 2004; Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003; Sylvester, 1994). The "new history" movement—which began in the late 1970s and which most obviously manifested in the UK—suggested that History learning should not only require memorization but should also provide leisure and aim to develop pupils' understanding of the historical model of inquiry so that they would not only be capable of *knowing* but also *doing* history by critically analyzing the past (Bertram, 2008; Cajani, 2007; Dickinson, 2000; Foster, 2012; Husbands et al., 2003; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Shemilt, 1980; Sylvester, 1994; Taylor, 2000). History education moved away from the sole emphasis on content, and a more nuanced balance was struck between content *and* methodology (Taylor, 2000). Following this turn, a plethora of terms and phrasings sprang into existence; wordings such as "historical skills," "historical understanding," "historical literacy," and "historical thinking," for example, entered the vocabulary of those dealing with issues related to History education. Seixas (2000) talks about "History in schools as an exercise in disciplined knowledge" and "History as a way of knowing." Of course, this was not the only dimension that separated the "new history" from the "great tradition." According to Lawrence Stenhouse (1975), the teacher's role was now to become a neutral chair whose responsibility was to lead the pupils to ask the right questions. In other words, it was no longer the teacher's duty to teach a specific viewpoint on a historical issue but rather to teach the possible disputes and reasons behind them. In addition, along the lines of constructivist models, pupil participation was encouraged and the syllabus was less chronologically organized and encouraged a wider array of options (Bertram, 2008; Dickinson, 2000; Husbands et al., 2003). The range of topics extended from the realm of domestic political history of the distant past to including all groups of people in all cultures who "shaped history" in all times—including the very near past. Issues such as women's history, history from below, oral history, microhistory, etc. were included in this expanded scope of historical writing (Sylvester, 1994; Torsti, 2003). As a result of these new ideas, in many countries, the notion of doing history has been elevated as the foremost goal of History (Rantala et al., 2020).

However, stating the principal goal of "new history" is one thing. Delineating what it actually means is quite another. The concepts used to define this new approach may have a myriad of different meanings. Historical skills and historical

literacy, for example, are vast and ambiguous notions, whose definitions can range from following class instruction to interpreting sources (Counsell, 2000; Ouakrim-Soivio & van den Berg, 2018). The ability to do history has even somewhat counterintuitively been seen to include certain factual knowledge as well (Elmersjö, Clark, & Vinterek, 2017). Some researchers emphasize that historical thinking means working with sources, which in turn means the acquisition of some sort of skill set (Laville, 2004; Reisman, 2015; VanSledright, 2014). Meanwhile, others emphasize a more holistic approach rather than an assembly of separate skills and processes (Levesque, 2008; Seixas, 2004). As Samuel Wineburg (1991a, 1991b) claimed, historians possess certain *heuristics* that enable them to interrogate documents for a variety of possible meanings by taking a skeptical stance toward a document's reliability and to scrutinize them for authorial viewpoint, bias, and intent. What is common to these different conceptualizations, however, is that in one way or another, they all focus on historical source materials and the skills needed in interpreting them, at least as a component of a more holistic approach (Ouakrim-Soivio & van den Berg, 2018). Even this definition is fairly problematic because it can easily lead to circular logic, where an ambiguous definition is used to explain another one and vice versa. Historical skills, historical literacy, or even the ability to do history mean to possess the skills needed to interpret different historical source materials. But does the possession of these skills mean anything else than having historical skills and the ability to do history? Thus, a comprehensive answer to the question "What are historical skills?" cannot be given, as different authors have attributed very different, even contradictory, meanings to the term.

For the purposes of this work, a more clearly defined and operable definition is thus needed. These skills—regardless of whether we call them historical literacy, historical skills, or the ability to do history—have been defined so that they include at least some conceptual knowledge (Lee, 2011; Rantala et al., 2020; Shemilt, 1980; VanSledright, 2014). As Lee (2011) argues:

[Historical literacy] involves an understanding of the discipline of history and the key ideas that make knowledge of the past possible. Students should be helped to acquire a conceptual apparatus enabling them to understand the different kinds of claims made by history, and how these can be tested (including knowledge of how we know, explain and give accounts of the past). (p. 65)

Or, as he puts it more simply, historical knowledge involves understanding and "[a]chieving understanding means learning new concepts" (p. 64). Moreover, the most central task of History education that emphasizes thinking skills "[i]s to train the students to question information, which may be tendentious or even malicious" (Rantala et al., 2020, p. 120). Based on these considerations, this work starts off with

the premise and understanding that history politics as a concept is something that historical thinking skills, historical literacy, etc. certainly include. Understanding the concept alone is arguably not enough to acquire these heuristics or historical literacy, although it certainly plays a part in the process. Therefore, the present study focuses on whether education seeks to further the understanding of such conceptual knowledge about history politics.

Although an operable definition of what historical thinking skills, historical literacy, etc. entail is certainly needed to carry out this analysis, it does not follow that the definition I adopted is the only viable option. Instead, a more comprehensive definition could have certainly been constructed. For example, instead of merely focusing on the concept of history politics, one could have also examined how history education conveys the notion that history is used to support political arguments without necessarily engaging in intentional misinterpretations. In other words, one could have analyzed the larger phenomenon of political use of history, which entails, but is not limited to, what the notion of history politics encompasses. Such a definition would certainly have offered a more complete understanding of how these different educational systems approach teaching critical thinking skills and the concepts needed to do so. However, as with scientific inquiry, one always has to keep space and time limitations in mind.

History Wars—Convergence or Divergence in History Education?

The two alternative traditions of History education—one emphasizing a coherent national narrative and the other the multiperspectivity and interpretative nature of studies—are locked in a fierce battle (van Nieuwenhuyse & Pires Valentim, 2018). Some think that the two traditions can co-exists, while others do not (Rantala et al., 2020). Different sections of society emphasize different functions. According to Rantala (2018) and Ahonen (2016), politicians focus on the integrative functions, whereas History educators on studying the nature of history science. Of course, there are disparities between different societies. Taylor (2000) identified three approaches to the matter: totalitarian and pluralistic democracies occupy the two extremes of teaching or not teaching history to justify the existence of the ruling regime and ideology, whereas paternalistic states lie somewhere between the two. It is noteworthy that the traditions may well mix (even below the systemic level); in fact, identity building and critical thinking have been seen as necessary supports to each other (Husbands et al., 2003; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). The two opposing traditions can be summarized as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The main differences between the two major traditions of History education. Building on the work of Husbands, Kitson, & Penry (2003), Rantala (2018), and Slater (1995).

	Great tradition	New history
<i>Nature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on national history • Unchanging facts • Historical knowledge is of a descriptive nature and does not emphasize explanation. • Emphasis on memorization • Intentional misinterpretation of history in the service of political ambition (history politics) as a modus operandi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of content reflecting world history and the experiences of diverse groups of people • Historical knowledge is constructed from evidence and can be challenged. • Historical knowledge is both descriptive and explanatory. • Focus on problem solving • Intentional misinterpretation of history in the service of political ambition (history politics) as study content
<i>Aims and purposes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of skills (qualifications)
<i>Proponents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History educators

As previously mentioned, the “new history” approach has gained ground over the past decades, although it has also had its critics. The motivations are obvious. Although some were worried that students would become lost in an endless swamp of relativism and confusing anecdotes, the more conservative critics claimed that the reforms of History education inspired by the “new history” scholarly tradition had gone too far, opening the possibility that open-minded inquiry into the past might weaken the attachment to one’s country (Ahonen, 1998; Ahonen, 2002; Appleby, Hunt, & Jacobs, 1994; Dickinson, 2000; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Seixas, 2000). Nationalist movements across the globe have argued that liberal values and the skill-oriented history teaching they embrace are destroying traditional values and morality (Rantala et al., 2020). Despite the challenge posed by “new history,” the triad of history, identity, and citizenship still stands strong—thus, History is still being taught with a nationalistic bias (Cajani, 2007; Ferro, 1984; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). In practice, inquiry skills have not been extensively developed in schools, and states everywhere still seek to compel students to master an official account of the past (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendy, 2003; Wertsch, 2000). Foster and Crawford (2006) argue, “[m]ore subtly, nations which give the appurtenance of stability, cohesion and well established liberal traditions also re-visit and re-invent aspects of their past to promote particular forms of domestic behavior and to support the creation of a particular form of national and/or international identity” (p. 6). On the other hand, Torsti (2008) states that

In all societies, history education in schools serves political ambitions in one form or another. These ambitions can be, for example, to support the existing societal model, to which history education provides the basics and often also the justification for the present situation. Alternatively, history education can be aimed at reinforcing and constructing hostile images either between those living in the same society or towards neighboring states or communities.¹² (p. 62)

In fact, not only has the “new history” approach not been wholeheartedly embraced, but the 2000s have seen a *resurgence* of the “great tradition,” in which nations revisit their traditions in order to construct canonical narratives of national history (Ahonen, 2016). As in the English language abstract of her paper, Ahonen states:

After a period of focusing on the skills of evidence handling and thinking critically and regarding them as the essence of history curriculum, the old ideal of a fixed substantive content of teaching was revived. The trend has been most obvious in the post-secessionist countries of Eastern, South Eastern and Central Europe, but can also be observed in some Western democracies. (p. 266)

Consequently, despite having at least seemingly converged toward the “new history” approach, today, nation states are (at least to a degree) returning to their old ways, and thus, in a sense, diverging in their approaches to teaching History.¹³

2.4 Comparing Places, Curriculum Levels, and Times

A few important questions to answer are: what is being compared in this study, what are the compared units, and why have they been chosen for comparison? Simply stating that the study is located in the field of comparative education obviously does not answer this question—the field is very fragmented and diverse in terms of what is being compared to what and why.

The overall justification for the present research project has already been addressed at the beginning of this work. That is, the work seeks to further the

¹² Some concrete examples of the use of history politics in education can be found, for example, in Torsti’s (2008) paper.

¹³ Of course, one has to keep in mind the inherent dilemma of nationalistic policymaking. Despite the claims about respecting national traditions and particularities, the manifestations of nationalism appear rather uniform across the globe: statues of war heroes, national anthems, and the teaching of “great tradition” histories in school. Paradoxically, on some level, the return to such an approach can also be seen as a sign of convergence.

theoretical understanding of a significant topic in which a notable gap in research exists, which can then hopefully be used in assisting normative decision making. But pointing out a gap in research does not specifically answer why one should examine this question at certain levels of the education ladder and curriculum, in certain countries, and at certain points in time. As a result, in this chapter, we examine these particular choices in more detail. First, I justify why the focus of the research is on senior secondary education, and next, why specific levels of the curriculum were chosen for analysis. The following subchapter takes an in-depth look into the choice of countries and educational systems, and the chapter concludes with a section discussing the points in time selected for comparison.

2.4.1 Senior Secondary Education

Answering the first question (why examine high-school-level education?) is rather straightforward. Although it is at the primary and junior secondary education level where all students in the three countries study History¹⁴ (at least to some degree), History education at this level is mainly focused on learning very basic, simplified chronological narratives. For this reason, I opted to focus on the senior secondary level, where the cognitive abilities of students have already developed to a point at which one can expect them to be able to—if required by those providing the education—engage in activities requiring more than mere memorization, such as critical thinking. The same applies to tertiary education, although by this time, students already specialize in certain subjects, and many no longer encounter History studies in any shape or form (with the exception of students of History, political science, etc.).¹⁵ Even though not all students in the three countries continue to high school, as will be seen, many nevertheless do. Therefore, it is arguably at the high-school level where states are most confronted with the central dilemma of this work: should all future citizens—and not just those few who continue to study History in universities—be equipped with the necessary skills to understand and question the history politics surrounding them? For these reasons, I believe that focusing my research on the high-school level is the most appropriate choice.

¹⁴ As will be elaborated later, not all students in these three countries continue their studies in high schools.

¹⁵ Outside of the structured interviews, I asked many of the teachers about this matter. They unanimously agreed with the notion that teaching critical thinking and subject skills is emphasized more and more as the students progress from elementary school to junior secondary education and then to high school. This premise should, of course, be problematized, as I suggest in the final part of this work. It has also been noted that, at least at the level of curriculum documents, historical thinking is already brought to the fore at the elementary level in Finland (Rantala et al., 2020).

2.4.2 Three Different Levels of the Curriculum

Second, why address the question at the chosen levels of the curriculum? The answer lies with the fact that official curriculum documents, textbooks, and teacher interviews represent both the official, intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum. Moreover, all these curriculum levels are political in nature, at least in some shape or form. Although certain levels of the curriculum are ignored, I believe that the selected levels and materials provide a rather comprehensive, cross-sectional picture of the entire curriculum.

Official, state-sanctioned curriculum documents usually occupy the role of the intended curriculum (Uusikylä & Atjonen, 2000). Authority over government-level curriculum documents resides with governments—either national or subnational ones (Levin, 2008). Moreover, these documents are overtly political in nature. As Westbury (2008) elaborates. “state-mandated programs of study present authoritative statements about the social distribution of the knowledge, attitudes, and competencies seen as appropriate to populations of students” (p. 47). As the focus of my research focuses (partly) on the level of the intended curriculum, choosing these documents for analysis was more than justified.

Textbooks are an important—if not the single most important—contributing factor to the structure of education (Ammert & Sharp, 2016; Apple, 2008; Davis Jr., 2006; Holmén, 2006). Because they are used in the classroom, textbooks—and not curriculum documents—set restrictions on and guide what takes place in real-life classroom settings (Ammert & Sharp, 2016; Karvonen, 1995). The fact that textbooks have been used extensively in History education research is easily explained by the fact that the analysis of History textbooks is central to understanding the interplay between power and culture (Foster & Crawford, 2006). By their very nature, textbooks are social constructions, as their producers are responding to competing claims to legitimate knowledge and instill their own values and viewpoints in textbooks (Apple, 2000; Davis Jr.; 2006; Foster & Crawford, 2006; Holmén, 2006; Zhu & Fan, 2006). Textbooks can thus be seen as a clear example of a political curriculum:

[T]he widespread international presence of the humble history textbook should not disguise its ideological and cultural potency. Indeed, essential to understanding the power and importance of history textbooks is to appreciate that in any given culture they typically exist as the keepers of ideas, values and knowledge. No matter how neutral history textbooks may appear, they prove ideologically important because they often seek to imbue in the young a shared set of values, a national ethos, and an incontrovertible sense of political orthodoxy. (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p. 1)

Holmén (2006) goes even further when he asserts that “[w]ith the big volumes of the editions which are intended to win the acceptance within the public at large and with official sanctioning that the governmental authorization includes, better than any other source category textbooks give an expression of the dominating societal views on history and the surrounding world” (p. 24). By their nature, textbooks are conservative, as new results find their way into them somewhat slowly (Andolf, 1972). This is possibly due to the fact the work of the authors is influenced by the textbooks they themselves have used in school and is often built on earlier textbooks (Holmén, 2006). Textbooks often replace curriculum documents as the primary references on which teachers—especially untrained ones—structure their teaching (Davis Jr., 2006; Långström, 1997). As Ammert and Sharp (2016) argued, “[t]eachers use them [History textbooks] as guides to inform their teaching as well as to explicitly set instructions for their pupils” (p. 63). History textbooks are thus no different from textbooks in general, as they contribute to the content and pedagogical strategies of History teaching (Ammert & Sharp, 2016). Consequently, Apple (2000) claimed that it is these books that constitute the “real curriculum” in schools. As a result, textbooks have been seen to routinely carry the same authority as policy documents (Apple, 2000; Foster & Crawford, 2006). Thereby, it can be argued that textbooks also play the role of intended curriculum (Fan & Zhu, 2000; Zhu & Fan, 2006). It should be noted, however, that textbooks in particular may be part of either the intended or the implemented curriculum. Especially after the Second World War, textbook authors have usually had to work within the parameters and restrictions set by curriculum documents and official inspection and approval bodies (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Holmén, 2006; Lehtikoinen, 1981). The scope of these limitations varies, of course, between different countries and educational systems. For example, only in some countries are teachers able to freely choose the textbooks they use (Davis Jr., 2006; Foster & Crawford, 2006). In class settings, the importance of textbooks varies considerably. The textbook may well define the curriculum, or it may have no function whatsoever (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Nicholls, 2006). For these reasons, choosing textbooks for analysis is more than justified. In this research, I follow Holmén’s (2006) definition of the textbook as “a book which is continuously used in teaching and includes essential parts of the material which should be taught” (p. 23). In addition, I build on the ideas of Karvonen (1995), who stated that either a single book or a set of different volumes can be considered a textbook.

Unsurprisingly, in the field of History education research, school textbook and curricula studies have traditionally been the backbone of empirical studies and have been used in a myriad of different ways as source material (Lehtikoinen, 1981; Torsti, 2003). However, I seek to extend this horizon with the incorporation of teacher interviews. Interviews are one of the most used methods of gathering data and they

are especially suitable for researching topics on which not much is known (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008). As the subject of how critical thinking is taught at the grassroots level has not been thoroughly explored, teacher interviews were also included as a level of analysis.

2.4.3 Contextualizing History Education in the Case Countries

Justifying the choice of the three countries is much more complex process than the ones outlined above. These choices require a thorough examination. We have to start off with the notion that although nominally, comparisons in this work are done between three different countries (China, Finland, and the United States—I will continue to use these country names throughout this work), what is in fact being compared are the educational systems of two countries (China and Finland) and the educational system of a school district (in one state in the United States). The reasons for this discrepancy are practical. As will be explained later, the educational system in the United States—unlike in China and Finland—is, to a large degree, not organized at the national level. Therefore, taking the whole of the United States as a unit of comparison is not an option. Instead, only one school district, which will be introduced in more detail further on, was selected to represent the entirety of the United States. The limits and challenges of this decision will be addressed in the discussion section of this work. Likewise, the limitations of the argument that Finland and China *can* be considered homogenous countries, at least in terms of how their educational systems are structured, will also be taken into consideration.

The overarching rationale for comparing the three aforementioned countries stems from the fact that they represent very different political and cultural contexts, therefore providing a presumably comprehensive take on how and why the concept of history politics is taught globally. The substantial differences between the three units under comparison can be justified by both qualitative and quantitative considerations. I begin this line of argumentation by utilizing the so-called cultural dimension model developed by Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist and scholar of organizational behavior. This four-dimensional model of national cultures was created based on his work at IBM and was later expanded and updated to five dimensions by Michael Bond and his colleagues and eventually to six dimensions by Hofstede's research fellow, Michael Minkov (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). This cultural dimensions model has since become a bedrock in the study of cultural differences. According to Minkov and Hofstede (2011),

[t]he foundation of Hofstede's multidimensional cultural model originated from his analysis of some 116,000 survey questionnaires administered to employees

of the IBM corporation in 72 countries. Hofstede argued that many national differences in work-related values, beliefs, norms, and self-descriptions, as well as many societal variables, could be largely explained in terms of their statistical and conceptual associations with four major dimensions of national culture. (p. 11)

The six dimensions identified by Hofstede, Bond, and Minkov are Power Distance, Individualism (vs. Collectivism), Masculinity (vs. Femininity), Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term (vs. Short-Term) Orientation, and finally Indulgence (vs. Restraint). Power Distance reflects the different attitudes toward how to handle the inequality between people. In essence, the two extremes determine whether cultures tend to avoid inequalities between people or whether the presence of and respect for authorities is seen as natural and necessary and it is accepted that power in society is distributed unequally. In cultures with high Power Distance, the state is usually structured around authoritarian ideals, whereas in cultures with low Power Distance, the system is more pluralistic. In education, the two cases correspond to teacher and student centeredness, respectively. Individualism vs. Collectivism deals with the question of whether the emphasis is on fulfilling individual aspirations and people are expected to look only after themselves or whether the importance of communities is emphasized and people are expected to look after others (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Hofstede et al. (2010) elaborate:

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. (p. 92)

In the field of education, the difference is noticeable. Hofstede et al. continue:

The purpose of education is perceived differently between the individualist and collectivist societies. In the former it aims at preparing the individual for a place in a society of other individuals. This means learning to cope with new, unknown, unforeseen situations...In the collectivist society, there is a stress on adaptation to the skills and virtues necessary to be an acceptable group member. This leads to a premium on the products of tradition. (p. 118 –119)

Masculinity (vs. Femininity) deals with the question of whether society places emphasis on “tough” masculine values, leading to a differentiation between the roles

of men and women or on “soft” feminine values, leading to a society where men and women are both expected to behave in a modest and empathetic manner. Uncertainty Avoidance deals with the question of whether people in a given culture feel uncomfortable and threatened in uncertain and ambiguous situations. Cultures that avoid uncertainty shun ambiguous situations and look for structure in organizations, institutions, and relationships, which in turn decreases ambiguity and unpredictability. Long-Term (vs. Short-Term) Orientation deals with the question of whether society orients itself toward a long-term-future focus or whether tradition and orientation toward the past and present are emphasized. (Hofstede et al., 2010) Finally, Indulgence (vs. Restraint) concerns the “extent to which a society allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun” (Zhao, 2011, p. 364). People in more restrained societies see the maintenance of order as an important goal (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Although the merits of Hofstede’s model are often acknowledged and his work is seen as the most comprehensive framework of national cultures, the model has also been met with fierce criticism. Some of the limitations of the framework include methodological shortcomings (Tayeb, 1996), the lack of representativeness of the sample (Robinson, 1983), cultural bias (Roberts & Boyacigiller, 1984), and outdatedness (Mead, 1994). Summing up, McSweeney (2002), for example, affirms that “Hofstede’s claims are excessive and unbalanced; excessive because they claim far more in terms of identifiable characteristics and consequences than is justified; unbalanced, because there is too great a desire to ‘prove’ his a priori convictions rather than evaluate the adequacy of his ‘findings’” (p. 112). Despite certain drawbacks and deficiencies, I argue that if approached with certain caution, Hofstede’s ideas constitute a valuable tool for assessing the relative differences of the cultures under comparison and providing the necessary contextual background for the case studies.

In addition, several other quantitative measures are taken into consideration in building the argument that the chosen units represent very different cultural and political contexts. One such measure employed here is the Democracy Index of the British business Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). According to Rahman (2015),

[d]emocracy and autocracy are measured by democracy index which is introduced by Economic Intelligence Unit and has been calculated since 2006 for 167 countries covering almost the entire population of the world. The Democracy index is based on five factors: Electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties, the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. These 167 countries are divided into one of four categories: Full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime or autocracy. (p. 305)

Additionally, Freedom in the World is an annual survey compiled by the American non-governmental organization Freedom House.¹⁶ The survey measures the degree of civil liberties and political rights across the globe and classifies countries accordingly (Giannone, 2010). As described by Zakaria (1997), the political and civil liberties of the survey “correspond roughly with democracy and constitutional liberalism” (p. 23). Freedom House elaborates that the pairs are then averaged to determine an overall status of “Free,” “Partly Free,” or “Not Free” (Freedom House, 2018). Finally, the Index of Economic Freedom is compiled by the American conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation together with the Wall Street Journal. According to Chen and Huang (2009), the index

has been acclaimed as the most comprehensive and systematic empirical measurement of economic freedom in 157 countries throughout the world since 1995. Based upon a set of objective economic criteria, the index is more than a simple ranking, as it also identifies ten specific components, namely business freedom, trade freedom, fiscal freedom, freedom from government, monetary freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom, property rights, freedom from corruption, and labor freedom...A grading scale of 0–100 is used to construct the economic freedom index, and a score of 100 represents the highest level of freedom. (p. 190– 91)

These surveys and quantitative measures have also been criticized extensively. As with Hofstede’s model, the claims about cultural differences between the subjects under comparison resting on these qualitative measures should thus be approached with caution.

But how do the three countries compare in terms of their respective cultural and political contexts if we account for these differences and similarities in both quantitative and qualitative terms? The purpose of this chapter is by no means to provide an exhaustive overview of the matter, but rather to give the readership a general understanding of the countries that are being compared, how History education is organized in institutional terms, and its ideological and political underpinnings over time. Special attention has been paid to the juxtaposition between the two different functions of History education introduced earlier. Only by understanding this background can we hope to explain in a meaningful manner how the concept of history politics is addressed at the high-school level in Finland, the United States, and China and why comparing these three countries in particular is

¹⁶ It has been argued that Freedom House is institutionally and financially related to the U.S. government, and consequently not a non-governmental organization in the truest sense of the word (Giannone, 2010)

justified. In terms of the structure of the chapter, the three countries are addressed separately.

Finland

Finland is a sparsely populated country with approximately 5.5 million inhabitants located in Northern Europe. Historically, Finland was part of the Swedish Kingdom until 1809, when it became a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire, and it finally gained its independence in 1917. The country fought a bloody civil war in 1918 and participated in the Second World War against the Soviet Union and later Germany. Although during the Cold War, the country remained independent and neutral, its leeway and freedom of movement were heavily influenced and curtailed by the interests of the Soviet Union. The country joined the European Free Trade Association as an associate member in 1961 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1969, and finally, after the Cold War, the European Union in 1995. In terms of its political structure, Finland is a social democratic welfare state, where the state is largely responsible for securing basic assets for its citizens and has a high rate of investment in human capital (Ahola-Launonen, 2016; Andersen, Holmström, Honkapohja, & Korkman, 2007). As Salminen (2013) explains,

Finland is a country with a democratic political system, a market economy, and a large welfare sector including a strong local self-government. The most important feature is that the public sector still dominates in many areas of the society. Publicly financed welfare services cover social security, health care, and education, including reallocated social benefits and high taxation. (p. 58)

Yet things have been changing. Salminen continues, “[a]s a result of political and administrative reforms, more responsibility of public services has been transferred to the market and to the actors of private sector” (p. 58). Solely in economic terms, Finland can be seen as a mixed economy. In EIU’s Democracy Index, Finland is ranked as the 8th most democratic state in the world and belongs firmly to the “full democracy” category, whereas in the Freedom in the World survey, it has consistently received a full score of 100. In the Index of Economic Freedom, Finland is listed in the category “mostly free,” with a score of 74.1. Ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and religiously, Finland is a very homogenous country (Degni, Suominen, Kauhanen, & El Ansari, 2010; Heikkinen, 2011; Holm & Londen, 2010; Sahlberg, 2006). Although the number has been increasing steadily, only about 5% of the population are immigrants (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014). In terms of its culture, Finland has been seen as part of the Western culture or Western countries. Yet,

Eastern influences are obvious, and thus, the country has also been seen as a border line between the East and the West (Bergmann, 2017; Kirchner, 2014). In the light of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions model, Finland’s national culture ranks low (0–33) in Power Distance (33, which according to Hofstede et al., [2010] is typical for Protestant countries) and in Masculinity (26) and medium (34–66) in Individualism (63), Uncertainty Avoidance (59), Long-Term Orientation (38) and Indulgence (57).

In Finland, senior secondary education is not (and has never been) mandatory.¹⁷ However, at present, the great majority of students finishing the nine-year compulsory education continue their studies. Senior secondary education consists of high school or vocational school. At the time of writing, every year, roughly half of the students finishing compulsory education continue their studies to high school.

The National Curriculum has been updated roughly in 10-year cycles, with the most recent core curriculum for high schools at the time of writing being approved in 2015 and put in use in the autumn of 2016 (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015).¹⁸ The National Core curricula for high school education have been written by two successive bodies under the Finnish Ministry of Education: the National Board of General Education (*kouluhallitus*) and, more recently, the Finnish National Board of Education (*opetushallitus*) (Sakki, 2010; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Veijola & Mikkonen, 2016). According to Veijola and Mikkonen (2016), the National Core Curriculum “defines the objectives and core contents of different subjects, subject groups, thematic subject modules, and student counseling” (p. 2). Municipalities write their own curricula based on the National Core Curriculum, and schools (i.e., first and foremost, the teachers) subsequently write their own curricula based on the municipal-level curricula (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Rokka, 2011). Nowadays, high school History is taught as a separate subject (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015), although this has not always been the case.

In the 1985 Finnish curriculum, History studies comprised six mandatory courses. Course number one, The Foundations of the Development of Western Culture, deals with the origins of human culture, ancient history, and history of the early Middle Ages. Course number two, The Society of Expanding Exchange, covers issues such as the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and the Age of Enlightenment. Course number three, Society of Estates in Finland, examines pre-independence Finnish history and its connections to the history of Europe and the world. Course four,

¹⁷ As of 2020, an intense debate is taking place in Finnish society on whether the mandatory school age should be extended. The current (as of 2020) government of Finland is extending the age to 18 years in the hopes of ensuring that every youngster will complete at least senior secondary level education.

¹⁸ Breaking with the tradition of 10-year cycles, a new National Curriculum was approved in late 2019 while this work was ongoing. This curriculum will come into use in August 2021.

Industrializing Society, covers the industrial, societal, and economic development of the Western world from the 19th century onward. Course number five, World of Today, recounts 20th century military, political, and economic history. The sixth course, History of Independent Finland, goes over Finnish history from the age of industrialization all the way to the modern day (i.e., mid-1980s). The 2015 Finnish curriculum also consists of six courses, of which only the first three are mandatory. In terms of history of events and eras, course number one, Human Within the Changes of the Environment and Societies, addresses the entire history of mankind with a focus on major transformations, such as the birth of civilizations and the industrial revolution. Course two, International Relations, recounts the main events of global history from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day. The third course is titled History of Independent Finland and goes over Finnish history from the mid-19th century onward. Course four, The Development of the European Worldview, focuses on the development of ideas, religions, and worldviews throughout history. Course five, From the Eastern Land of Sweden to Finland, focuses on the history of Finland before the age of Autonomy. The last course, Cultures of the World Meet, examines the cultures and history of extra-European countries.

In addition, schools may nowadays offer elective courses that they design themselves. Before the early 1990s, textbooks in Finland had to be approved before publishing by the National Board of General Education (Karvonen, 1995; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Takala, 1987). Today, textbooks are produced by commercial firms and no longer require approval. Instead, schools can decide for themselves which textbook series to use. Although anyone can, in theory, publish a textbook, in practice, it is the big publishing houses that control the market (Pingel, 2000). Yet, no public information is available to determine exactly which books are used the most (Sakki, 2010).

Finnish high school teachers (of History and other subjects) are required by law to have a master's degree, pedagogical training equivalent to approximately one year of full-time studies, and extensive studies in the subjects they teach (equivalent to approximately one or two years of study in the subjects being taught, which can be included in the required master's degree).

As there are no longer school inspections or a system of official approval of textbooks in Finland, the only manner in which the state can interfere with History education is through the National Curriculum (Rantala, 2018). As the retreat of the state is a rather new phenomenon, the state has sought to use this opportunity. Consequently, the most recent National Core Curricula documents have limited the autonomy of subnational actors to make their own curriculum, whereas municipalities may also limit the possibility of schools for drawing up their own curriculum. Nevertheless, schools and individual teachers still have room for

maneuverability; schools, for example, may offer school-specific courses in addition to those mandated by the National Curriculum (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Veijola & Mikkonen, 2016). Moreover, teachers are free to approach the themes at hand from different viewpoints as they see fit (Komulainen & Rajakaltio, 2017; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). In general, a strong doctrine of educational autonomy still reigns supreme in Finland (Uljens & Nyman, 2013), although textbooks still play a very central role in History education (Rantala et al., 2020).

Yet, before the transition to the modern senior secondary education system in Finland during the 1970s, History education in the *Gymnasium* (high schools) centered strongly around the memorization of chronological historical events (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). During the interwar era, the purpose of education in general and History education in particular was to construct a strong national identity representing the values of the conservative and bourgeoisie (“White Finland”—i.e., the values of the winning side of the Finnish Civil War, or the War of 1918, fought against the Reds and led by a section of the Social Democratic Party). Strongly nationalistic viewpoints especially emphasized anti-Russian attitudes (Ahonen, 2017). In the field of education, History supported, for example, the myth of the common ethnic birthplace of Finns, whereas the history of the War of 1918 was written and studied only from the viewpoint of the winning side (Ahonen, 2017; Rajala & Ahonen, 2015). After the Second World War, fierce history battles were fought in Finnish society at large about the role of Finland in the outbreak of the Continuation War in 1941 and about the way in which the War of 1918 was remembered. The past relationship with Russia and the Soviet Union was now intentionally interpreted with present political considerations in mind. Consequently, the educational system was “purged” from overtly nationalistic tendencies. As a result, the manner in which issues such as the history of Russia/Soviet Union, the War of 1918, the labor movement, and socialism were addressed was modified. During the Cold War era, the opposing domestic ideological groupings actively sought to affect how the subject was being taught in schools, and new viewpoints that previously had been ignored rose to the front. The role of ethnic minorities as actors in Finnish history, for example, was acknowledged only during the 1970s. All in all, however, education served more clearly political-pragmatic rather than extreme ideological functions (Ahonen, 2017; Rantala, 2018). Even though the crudest forms of history politics—and especially the role of the state in furthering such views—are, to a large degree, a thing of the past, the longing for a grand national story lives on to this day. Certain narratives about the past, such as those regarding the history of Finnish participation in the Second World War, reached almost mythical proportions and still play a salient part in the historical consciousness and, consequently, the History education in the country (Ahonen, 2017; Rantala, 2018). As Ahonen (2017) notes,

[a] united people, a destined national state, a nation of survivors, an equal community, belonging to Europe and the role as a guardian of peace are the mythical elements of the Finnish canon, which due to their strong communal meaning and contract-like trustworthiness can defy even changing knowledge. (p. 12)

The Finnish educational system is strongly influenced by the German educational tradition, emphasizing the cultivation of critical thinking (Reichelt, 2009; Tomperi, 2008). Although understanding the nature of history and cultivating critical thinking skills had already emerged in the National Core Curriculum in the early to mid-1980s, the real turning point was the 1994 curriculum. The trend has only intensified over time, and in the 2004 curriculum, historical thinking skills were already elevated above the required content knowledge (Rantala et al., 2020). The most recent curriculum (from 2015) strongly emphasizes the nature of history science as the starting point of History education, and thus, the focus is placed on understanding how historical knowledge is constructed and on the critical evaluation of historical knowledge (Ouakrim-Soivio & van den Berg, 2018; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Veijola & Mikkonen, 2016; Veijola, Sulkunen, & Rautiainen, 2019). According to Ouakrim-Soivio and van den Berg (2018),

In the new high school curriculum (2015) the nature of history as a field of knowledge is emphasized as the starting point of teaching. Attention has also been paid to the construction of historical knowledge and to the critical evaluation of the reliability of knowledge...The high school curriculum...talks about the ability to construct information about the past with the help of appropriate sources and about the ability to evaluate information critically while at the same time understanding its ambiguous and relative nature. (p. 35)

Some evidence also points to similar changes below the official, curriculum level. Although some revisions had already happened in curriculum documents and textbooks earlier, classroom practices did not start to incorporate teaching critical thinking skills until the 1990s, when the national curriculum changed from a chronological to a more theme-based form and the national matriculation examination started to emphasize the ability to process information (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). However, very little information is available about what actually happens in Finnish senior secondary History classes (Rantala et al., 2020). Despite the official ambition, the evidence available suggests that reality and practice have not yet quite met (Rantala et al., 2020). The reasons for this are manifold. First, the textbooks are still content heavy. As Rantala and Ahonen (2015) argued, “textbooks do not heavily support the comparative use of sources and explaining the events from

different viewpoints. The presented sources often merely illustrate the topics and do not provide challenging or conflicting information” (p. 123). Second, teachers are chronically short of time to cover everything (Rantala et al., 2020). Finally, the tradition of teaching content lives on strong in the teaching community (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015; Veijola & Mikkonen, 2016). Veijola and Mikkonen (2016) elaborate:

[T]eacher-centered orientation is strong in history teaching, and the teachers’ basic ideas about what history is and how it should be taught have not changed. Even when new methods like co-operative learning are used, the basis of history teaching is still content oriented...[I]t has proved hard for teachers to change their teaching methods. It is difficult especially for novice teachers to find a proper balance between substantive and procedural knowledge in their teaching. Moreover, experienced teachers commonly stick to their familiar teaching habits. They might not see the point of following the latest didactic discussion, or they may lack sufficient skills to teach procedural history and hence continue to teach in the way they have always done. (p. 2)

United States

Not much needs to be said about American history; arguably, any reader of academic doctoral dissertations is familiar with the basic outline of American history: Native Americans, Columbus, the Revolutionary War, Indian Wars, slavery, Civil War, reconstruction, World Wars, Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, 9/11, and so on and so forth. Politically, the United States is a federal republic comprised of 50 states with high levels of autonomy. De facto, the United States is a two-party system where nearly all elected officials in the legislature belong to either the Democratic or Republican party. Economically, the United States is a mixed economy and a world leading economic powerhouse. In the EIU’s Democracy Index, the United States is listed as a “flawed democracy” (ranking 25th in the world); in the Freedom in the World survey, it ranks as “free” (with a score of 86); and in the Index of Economic Freedom, the United States is listed as “mostly free” (with a score of 75.7). Culturally and ethnically, the country is an extremely diverse “melting pot” of different cultures, religions, and ethnicities. In Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions model, the national culture of the United States ranks low in Long-Term Orientation (26), medium in Power Distance (40), Masculinity (62), and Uncertainty Avoidance (46), and high in Individualism (91) and Indulgence (68).

As of 2020, high school education is compulsory for all students in the United States, although at the age of 18, students can choose to drop out. United States does not have—and has never had—a national school system, and consequently, the

manner in which education is organized is decided at the state or local level. Barton (2012) elaborates:

[T]he nation's schools are controlled at the local level: All towns and cities (known as school "districts") have almost complete autonomy in deciding what is taught in their classrooms, and in most cases this autonomy devolves to individual schools, where teachers have a great deal of latitude in deciding what to teach. The federal government has essentially no role in influencing the curriculum...Standing between federal and local levels, however, are state governments, and these do indeed have an impact on local curriculum. (p. 194–195)

History is located under the umbrella of social studies (Zhao, Hoge, Choi, & Lee, 2007). However, there is great variation across contexts and grade levels within the social science curriculum. As no federal national curriculum exists, different states and localities may mandate attention to different units, periodizations, themes, or skills (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Levstik, 2008). The History curriculum typically includes a mixture of both mandatory and elective courses (Zhao et al., 2007). Many of these courses are shared by numerous states, however. Nowadays, American History and World History are almost universally adopted courses (Bain & McArthur, 2009; Stern & Stern, 2011),¹⁹ although the latter started to become mainstream only in the 1980s (Beers, 1993). Levstik (2008) elaborates, “[a]lthough ninth-grade patterns vary considerably, tenth graders are likely to take World History, eleventh graders to take post-Reconstruction through 20th-century U.S. history” (p. 50). By 2010, all states except Rhode Island had set social science standards that included U.S. History in some form (Stern & Stern, 2011). For instance, 94% of high school graduates had taken a U.S. History course in 2005 (Shettle et al., 2007). In addition, as of 2005, at least 22 states required a course in World History for high school graduation, and as these states include the most populous ones, most likely, the majority—if not all—high school students in America need to finish a course in World History (Bain & Shreiner, 2005; Zhao et al., 2007). It should be noted, however, that this does not mean that students study the same classes throughout the nation. For example, Bain and Shreiner (2005) noted about World History classes: “[h]owever, we should not assume that agreement over world history’s value as a school subject leads to agreement on what constitutes the history of the world that students study” (p. 245).

¹⁹ Hammond (2014) goes so far as to say that American and World History are required courses.

In addition to the so-called core or standard courses, a non-profit organization called the College Board organizes Advanced Placement (AP) courses in different subjects. Sheila Byrd (2007) explains: “Nearly 60 percent of U.S. high schools participate in the AP program. High schools may offer as many AP courses as they like, and students may take as few or as many of these courses as they want, though schools often establish prerequisites for enrolling in them” (p. 8–9). As of 2018, 38 AP courses are offered. In the field of History, AP European History, AP United States History, and AP World History are offered under the umbrella of History and Social Sciences, whereas AP Art History is offered under the umbrella of Arts (The College Board, 2018). Some AP courses replace standard courses (for example, the student can take either a standard or an AP World History course), whereas others are standalone (for example, AP European History). AP World History was first tested in 2002, while AP United States History and AP European History were introduced in 1956 when the AP program was launched nationally (Bain & Shreiner, 2005; Blackey, 2002; Henry, 1994). Although no definite year can be ascertained for AP Art History, it seems that the course appeared in the AP syllabus somewhere around 1990. What is noteworthy, however, is that separate AP textbooks did not start emerging in the market until the 2000s. Finally, in addition to the core and AP courses, schools can offer different elective courses that take a more in-depth look at a certain era or topic (Hammond, 2014).

Most, albeit not all, of the 50 states require high school teachers to obtain a teaching certificate (a credential permitting educators to instruct). Teachers are not required to have a degree in the subject they teach, and only some require a master’s degree. According to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2019), as of 2011–2012, nationwide, 26% of American high school History teachers in public schools had both a postsecondary degree (bachelor’s degree or higher) in the subject they were teaching and a teaching certificate. This is the lowest percentage among all subjects. By comparison, the numbers in math, music, and natural science are 61.5%, 87.3%, and 72.3%, respectively. In the United States, the vagueness of the curricula and the vast local autonomy have left a lot of room for maneuverability for teachers (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). The same course may be taught in different ways (Levstik, 2008). American teachers tend to teach directly from the texts, and thus History textbooks play a crucial role in how students encounter history in American classrooms (Banks, 1990; Blumberg, 2008; Foster, 2012; Loewen, 1995; Rantala et al., 2020; Sadker & Zittleman, 2007; Thornton, 2006; VanSledright, 2008; Watts-Taffe, 2006).

The textbook adoption process in the United States varies between states (Thornton, 2006). Many states (22 in 2006, according to Watts-Taffe [2006]) have textbook adoption committees, which decide through a public process which books are to be used state-wide (Apple, 2008; Foster & Crawford, 2006; Thornton, 2006; Watts-

Taffe, 2006). Meanwhile, in states that do not have adoption committees, the decision is made at the school district level or even at the level of individual schools (Watts-Taffe, 2006). According to Foster and Crawford (2006), “even schools within non-textbook adoption states commonly employ history textbooks that are either identical to those use used (sic) in other states or have striking similarities” (p. 22). The adoption cycle in both adoption states and “open states” is five to eight years, though the intervals are not necessarily regular, especially in smaller states and districts (Watts-Taffe, 2006). Although the private market is responsible for the production of textbooks (Apple, 2008; Bender, 2009), the books are very similar in terms of content (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Gosse, 1995). This is because producers seek to ensure that their material is approved by the adoption committees (Foster & Crawford, 2006). As a result, even non-adoption states end up using the same textbooks as the ones in which adoption committees are responsible for the choice (Thornton, 2006).

Education, and History education in particular, has often been the foremost avenue through which the ideological direction of the United States is set. In History education, as in society at large, a recurring theme in the 20th century has been the juxtaposition between the more liberal and conservative approaches, which mirror the front lines of the “great tradition” vs. “new history” debate. In this connection, Hartman (2013) affirms:

Americans have always fought the so-called culture wars, a term of recent vintage that signifies the angry, often politically consequential clashes over moral conduct and, indeed, over the meaning of Americanism itself. And, for as long as Americans have fought the culture wars, they have debated the role of education, the institution most essential to ensuring the reproduction of national identity... the culture wars, more than a battle over national identity, have served as a struggle for the soul of America. (p. 114–115)

The battle between the different approaches rose to the national agenda when, in order to boost the nation’s competitiveness in the global economy, the senior Bush administration sought to compile a progressive national History curriculum. A consensus over *The National History Standards* was reached between teachers, specialists, administrators, etc. in 1994. However, in the face of conservative accusations about the abandonment of traditional history, the *Standards* were never released. On the level of individual states, similar battles over the course of History education have happened since (Hartman, 2013). However, according to some, the “culture wars” narrative is somewhat exaggerated, as the battle for the curriculum between the liberal and conservative forces is not quite as fierce as some commentators seem to suggest. In reality, these quarrels have mainly been confined to the level of rhetoric and ideology, whereas the grassroots impact has been much smaller (Barton, 2012).

Much like in the German tradition, which has influenced the education in Finland, the Anglo-American educational model has emphasized the cultivation of critical thinking (Tomperi, 2008). Yet, for the most part, the conservative approach has had the upper hand, and consequently, History education's function has traditionally been the canonical transmission of the past (VanSledright, 2014). Occasionally, the subject has even taken rather propagandistic dimensions. American war history in particular has been presented in a militaristic and glorifying manner (Fitzgerald, 1979). However, such political use of history has not been limited to war history. James Loewen (1995), for example, asserted that U.S. History textbooks painted a very mythological, inaccurate, and Eurocentric picture of the past that largely ignored the role of Native Americans and African Americans in American history and paid very little attention to issues such as social class, social stratification, and social inequality (Foster, 2011; Grever & van der Vlies, 2017). According to Loewen (1995), textbooks presented the reader with "an embarrassing amalgam of bland optimism, blind patriotism and misinformation pure and simple" (p. 374). In other words, History education was clearly laden with the use of history politics. To this day, coverage is emphasized over depth in the History curriculum (Hammond, 2014). Even though more recent viewpoints are arguably more nuanced and outright history politics is not an outstanding issue, History education is nevertheless still highly politicized in many ways. For example, in U.S. History textbooks, according to VanSledright (2008),

despite occasional adjustments, the principal narrative arc of progressive and continuous national development has remained largely impervious to serious adjustments. These books are not stories of various tribes and their fortunes or troubles. Nor are they compilations of eyewitness accounts that chronicle intriguing or lurid events that readers might find engaging. To be sure, the books may contain some of these elements. But in the end, they are typically submerged under the weight of narrating the growth of the nation-state. The arc is predominantly concerned with military, economic, and political processes from British colonization along the Atlantic coast to war for independence with Britain; from early government formation through challenges to the fragility of that government to industrialization; and onto the world wars and the Cold War of the 20th century and victories over Communism and the triumphs of globalized capitalism from the late part of that century and into the next. The story is primarily populated with champions of politics (presidents especially), business (entrepreneurs and CEOs and their technological advancements), and military campaigns (generals). The cast is decidedly Eurocentric, with preferences leaning toward an anchoring in the accomplishments of Anglo-Saxon men. The primordial theme is Manifest Destiny, that powerful 19th-century idea that the Judeo-

Christian God mandated the immigrant Anglo-Saxon “race” to create the United States, connect it from one coast to the other, advocate for its democratic and capitalist values, and sow liberty and the freedoms carried by assertions of natural rights to all those who would claim its birthright. It is a story that repeatedly forefronts the ideals of America’s Founding Fathers. It makes plain that the citizens of the United States grow ever closer to achieving those ideals. Attaining freedom for all is pivotal. The tone is one of gloriousness. Blemishes and heretofore unachieved ideals are glossed in service of that tone. Internecine and racial conflicts and coercive forms of nationalist enforcement are noted but typically in the context of how the United States, by the way it settles these disputes, moves ever closer to achieving its founding ideals. (113–114)

As a result, portrayals of memorable events in the Second World War, for example, are still presented in a rather celebratory, unproblematic manner (Foster, 2012). Yet, there has been some recent emphasis on historical thinking skills, as these ideas began to gather pace in the early 2000s (Ouakrim-Soivio & van den Berg, 2018; Rantala et al., 2020). Nevertheless, for the most part, the attitude toward a more liberal approach has remained lukewarm at best. VanSledright (2008), for example, claimed that high school History education in the United States does not provide students with disciplinary literacy or a sense of understanding history, and those who have sought to teach disciplinary skills have been accused of anti-Americanism. As Levstik (2008) elaborates, “concern about so-called revisionist history also focuses on patriotism and fear that ‘warts and all’ national history will not only detract from a traditional national narrative of progress, but weaken students’ pride in national accomplishments and support for perceived national goals” (p. 52). Moreover, conservative groups have criticized the recent changes (or the attempted changes) made to History education for being liberally biased (Curry, Sabina, & Loffi, 2016). Fonte and Lerner (1997), for example, asserted that the planned 1994 *Standards* “both romanticize and overemphasize the significance of non-Western cultures while denigrating and deemphasizing the role of Western civilization” (p. 20).

There are some indications that elective courses focus more on historical analysis (see Levstik, 2008), and although they are not necessarily applicable to all AP courses, Zhao et al. (2007) affirm that

[a]dvanced-track students get a much more demanding rendition of world history than do their less able classmates. Advanced Placement... world history classes demand higher levels of fact retention and conceptual understanding than do regular classes. However, the AP history courses are often taught in more traditional ways than other courses where there may be more leeway for temporary forays into less mainstream content...Classes for lower-track

students, however, will be filled with rote instruction, covering less content in less depth. Standards for learning in such classes will be reduced to the minimums needed for passing required graduation tests. (p. 101)

Of course, as already mentioned, the unit of comparison in terms of modern U.S. curriculum documents, textbooks, and teacher interviews was not the nation as such or as a whole. Instead, for mainly logistic, financial, and practical reasons, only one locality was chosen for comparison: a school district in North Carolina. In March 2017, I was going to attend the annual Comparative and International Education Society conference in Atlanta, Georgia. As at this point, the data collection for my work was ongoing, I decided it would be feasible to kill two birds with one stone due to limited time and financial resources. Thus, before my travel, I contacted school districts in Georgia and in the neighboring states to arrange interviews with the teachers. After taking initial soundings among the contacts in different localities, a large urban school district in the neighboring state of North Carolina seemed like the most feasible choice, as the school district officials seemed quite welcoming and ready to help. However, *ex post facto*, this choice was also justifiable because of contextual factors, although I freely admit that I had limited choices as to where to carry out the interviews.

At approximately 10 million inhabitants, North Carolina is the ninth largest state in the U.S. in terms of population (United States Census Bureau, 2018). North Carolina is a typical southern state with a large white population and a large African American minority. In cultural terms, it is a conservative and religious part of the U.S. Yet, it is a suitable point of comparison, as it is, in many senses, a state of averages: although North Carolina is arguably part of the southern culture, it is also perceived as one of the most progressive ones among the southern states (Genty, Adedoyin, Jackson, & Jones, 2014; Hilburn & Fitchett, 2012; Hood III & McKee, 2010; Husser, Eaves, & Fernandez, 2019). The political attitudes of North Carolinians and their elected leaders are typically more moderate or progressive than those in other parts of the American South (Husser, Eaves, & Fernandez, 2019). Already in 1947, the journalist John Gunther (1947) assessed the state in the following manner: “North Carolina is by a good deal the most progressive Southern state will, I imagine, be agreed to by almost everybody” (p. 787). To be fair, this narrative of North Carolina as being dissociated from the conservative traditions of the South has also been questioned (Hilburn & Fitchett, 2012; Husser, Eaves, & Fernandez, 2019). Eamon (2008), for example, argued that “[t]oday, the prevailing current among academics is much more skeptical, even hostile” (p. 20) toward the notion that the state is quite as progressive as previously suggested. For example, the state is prolific in the use of the death penalty (Unah, 2011). Yet, at minimum, North Carolina is arguably by no means a state of extremes for the most part. For example,

in terms of politics, the state has solidified itself as one of the “battleground” or “purple” states, where the juxtaposition between the two major parties runs high (Deeb-Sossa & Billings, 2014; Kinsella, 2013). In the 2020 presidential election, for example, of all states won by Donald Trump, his victory in North Carolina was secured with the closest margin (Joe Biden’s victory in a few states was even tighter). I argue that this, along with certain factors that determine the structure of the educational system in the state (which I will discuss in the research materials section), means that the findings regarding the state of History education in North Carolina possess, in fact, certain representative and explanatory power in the context of the entire United States.

Although the case-study school district in North Carolina offered both statewide and local elective courses, they were excluded from the analysis since they were not nationwide. Therefore, only the following courses were chosen as subjects of analysis: American History I and II, World History, AP World History, AP American History, and AP European History. In the chosen school district, 9th graders complete World History, whereas American History I and II are taken in the 11th grade. AP courses can be taken at any point from the 9th grade up, although certain AP courses require that the student has first completed other standard courses. All interviews were carried out in public schools that followed the statewide curriculum and used the same textbooks (chosen at the district level) for all the mentioned courses. The standard level course covers the American experience only from American independence onward, whereas the AP course also briefly examines the preceding history of the North American continent. The World History course (both standard and AP) seeks to provide a comprehensive look into the entire history of the world. Meanwhile, AP European History focuses on the post-1300s European history.

China

China was first unified politically in 221 BC by the Qin Emperor. The dynastic history lasted until 1912, when the Republic of China was established. During the era of imperialism, China suffered from internal conflicts and tensions and was constantly ransacked and exploited by foreign powers. In the Second World War, China fought alongside the Allies against Japan. After the war ended, the civil war fought between the nationalists and communists reignited, coming to a close in 1949, when the Communist People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established. During the Cold War era, Mao’s totalitarian China underwent a series of massive societal campaigns that led to domestic turbulence and conflict. Externally, China first aligned itself with the Soviet-lead socialist block, but during the 1960s and 1970s, a split between the two countries emerged. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China embarked on a path of economic and political reforms in the 1970s and 1980s.

Political liberalization, however, came to a standstill following a bloody crackdown of student demonstrations in 1989 (the so-called Tiananmen Square Massacre).

In ideological terms, modern-day China is still a nominally communist and Marxist state, which in practice means that the PRC is a one-party-state where the Communist Party of China (CCP) reigns supreme (Wen, 2010). CCP controls all state bureaucracies in a top-down, centralized manner (Wen, 2010; Zhang, 2006). However, present-day China is arguably a more market oriented and less centralized country than at any time during the PRC era (Ruan & Jin, 2012). When it comes to the Chinese economic model, countless different names (e.g., “Leninist corporatism,” “state capitalism,” etc.) have been used to describe the curious, mixed economic model combining state control over strategically important fields of the economy and a free private sector that supports the public sector. Although an economic powerhouse in terms of the absolute size of its economy, in many respects—for example, in terms of per capita GDP—China is still a developing country. Despite reforms toward decentralization and market economy, the EIU’s Democracy Index classifies China as an “authoritarian” system (ranking at 130), the Freedom in the World survey sees China as a “not free” system in terms of civil liberties and political rights (with a score of 11), and the Index of Economic Freedom lists China’s economy as “mostly unfree” (with a score of 57.8). Moreover, over the past decade, under the rule of Xi Jinping, China has again become increasingly authoritarian (Kalathil, 2018; So, 2020). Although opinions are highly divided on to whom the future belongs, it has become a mantra often repeated by politicians and analysts that the world of tomorrow will become increasingly multipolar (Cox, 2012; Moravcsik, 2010). Many commentators have seen the Asian region, and especially China, take a more significant role on the world stage (Cox, 2012). It should, of course, be noted that many observers have questioned this “rise of the rest” narrative (see, for example, Sharma, 2012). Yet, as a result of its opening-up policy, China is arguably increasingly connected to the outside world both institutionally and culturally.

Nevertheless, culturally, China still remains a “long way away from nearly everywhere” (Ghemawat, 2001, p. 144).²⁰ In terms of values, Chinese culture is deeply rooted in Confucianism, emphasizing self-sacrifice, service to the state,

²⁰ Naturally, as the quote illustrates, China is not *entirely* isolated culturally. Instead, it is strongly connected to the other East Asian states (Muthiah, 2010). According to Huntington’s definition (1996), for example, Sinic culture covers China, Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, Korea, and Vietnam. According to some (see, for example, Reischauer, 1974), Japan should also be seen as part of this Sinic world. This connection is, in fact, so intimate that Lucian Pye (1990) has sarcastically noted that “China is a civilization pretending to be a state” (p. 58).

authority, and social harmony (Duncan, 2018; Gannon, 2004). According to Reischauer (1974), as part of the East Asian cultural sphere, China shows

a strong emphasis on family solidarity, on filial piety, on subordination of the individual to the group, on the ideal of group harmony as opposed to a balance between conflicting rights, on social organization, on careful political (as opposed to religious or purely cultural) integration, on hard work as a value in itself, on frugality, and on education as morally uplifting and the proper road to personal and family success. (p. 342)

In Hofstede's model, China's national culture is high in terms of Power Distance (thus strongly reflecting the Confucian ideals, as Hofstede et al. [2010] pointed out) and Long-Term Orientation (80 and 87, respectively), medium in Masculinity (66), and low in Individualism (20), Uncertainty Avoidance (30), and Indulgence (24). However, it should be noted that culturally, China is a very heterogeneous country (Kwon, 2012). Although over 90% of the population are of Han ethnicity, 55 minorities are officially recognized. Even among the Han population, regional cultural differences are very salient.

In modern China, as in earlier times, senior secondary education is not compulsory or even universally accessible (Jones, 2012). In the 1980s, nationwide, only one one-year course of mandatory World History was taught during the freshman year. The course covered the entire history of humankind chronologically, although the history of China was omitted in its entirety. This curriculum was uniform nationwide, and the course structure was fixed (Biao, 2001). Nowadays, History is a separate subject in high schools and is taught together with geography under the umbrella of "Humanities and Society" (Zhao et al., 2007). For the most part, students still follow one national curriculum across the country (Vickers, 2006). As a result of the qualitative turn in Chinese education (see below), a nationwide curriculum reform began in 1999 (Zhao et al., 2007). As for History, the resulting new curriculum, which was initially experimental, dates back to 2003 and is still in use as of 2020 (Chen, 2010; De Giorgi, 2012). It is officially known by the title 普通高中历史课程标准 (实验²¹) (*putong gaozhong lishi kecheng biao zhun [shiyān]*), in English: *Ordinary High School History Curriculum Standards [Trial]*. However, this curriculum is not entirely nationwide. For example, since 2001, Beijing has been among the regions exempted from having to follow the national curriculum (Jones, 2002). The national curriculum includes mandatory and elective

²¹ When introducing terms and proper names to the reader, the Chinese characters have been transcribed to the Latin alphabet using the *pinyin* romanization system. Tone markings have been omitted.

courses. All courses cover Chinese and foreign history side by side. During the first year of their studies, students learn history from the point of view of political systems; in the second year, the focus is on the economy and society; and, finally, in the third year, the history of science, philosophy, ideology, and culture is covered. These three courses (History I, II, and III) form the compulsory part of Chinese senior secondary level History education. In addition, students are offered six elective courses (Chen, 2010; De Giorgi, 2012; Fan, 2011). The elective courses cover topics such as 20th century war and peace and world cultural heritage. In addition there are two different tracks of study. Zhao et al. (2007) explain, "...in China there are advanced classes and lower-level classes. Advanced-track students in the social science major are grouped in one class, and they are provided with the best teachers and equipment. These classes demand higher levels of fact retention and conceptual understanding than do regular or lower level classes. The lower level class covers less content in less depth" (p. 102–103). However, there are no differences between the curriculum document and the textbook.

As a result of educational reforms, the participation base in curriculum and textbook design has been broadened, as academics and subject experts have increasingly taken part in the process, which in turn has decreased state control (Jones, 2012). As Jones (2002) argued, the quality-oriented reforms "have created a professional community of curriculum stakeholders with diverse ideas and interests which do not necessarily coincide with those of the state" (p. 548). Despite this trend toward decentralization and strengthening autonomy at the local level, to this day, the Ministry of Education still plays a central role in determining the contents of education in China, while the general outlines, textbook standards, and teacher requirements are set by the central government with the supervision of the CCP Central Propaganda Department (Callahan, 2010; De Giorgi, 2012; Zhao et al., 2007). For example, although limited pluralism in textbook production has been allowed since 1988, and competing versions of textbooks have begun to be published as a result of the decentralization trend, throughout the country, only a few different textbook series are used by all high school students, and the state-sponsored People's Education Press still dominates the market for high school History textbooks (Chau, 1995; Fan, 2011; Jones, 2002, 2012; Vickers, 2006). However, regarding English Language Teaching textbooks, what Wang (2007) states is surely at least partly applicable to History textbooks as well:

The actual intention to decentralize textbook publication was not widely practiced as most local educational authorities, school principals, and teachers were unwilling to take risks by using books published by publishers other than PEP [People's Education Press]. This was because...over the past 50 years, PEP had been the most authoritative publisher of school textbooks and it enjoyed a

high reputation...most schools and teachers were worried about regional and national examinations, which they believed would be based on PEP's textbook.
(p. 92)

Even if other textbook series are used, all the available textbooks for the nine high school History courses have to follow the state-approved standards; the differences in content are thus minor (Fan, 2011; Zhao et al., 2007).

After the PRC was established, China followed the centralized education model, which was adopted from the previous republican Guomindang government and the Soviet Union and emphasized knowledge transmission in History education (Jones, 2012; Zhao et al., 2007). Yet, the purpose was not, of course, to transmit historical knowledge for its own sake. Instead, in line with its ideological peers elsewhere, the communist Chinese party-state has always stipulated that education serves political purposes (Chau, 1995). What these purposes have been have shifted with political tides, as campaigns and political realignments have dictated what was taught, to whom, how, and when. Through the early decades of the People's Republic, History education was the main avenue through which new ideological precepts, such as the law of socialism, historical materialism, internationalism, and communist morality were inculcated (Callahan, 2010; Chau, 1995; Jones, 2002; Jones, 2012; Müller, 2011).²² In the post-Mao era, the task of education to provide legitimacy to the CCP became increasingly salient (Jones, 2002; Wang, 2008; Weatherley & Magee, 2018). The watershed was the failings of the Cultural Revolution and the unwelcome socio-economic side effects of the economic restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s, which eventually led to the bloody 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. Although nationalism, patriotism, and the legitimatization of the party rule had been a central part of the *raison d'être* of History education already throughout the 1980s, as a result of Tiananmen, the trend only intensified as the party launched the so-called Patriotic Education campaign. Even though it was initiated as a short-term propaganda campaign, it evolved into an institutionalized policy during the course of the 1990s (Weatherley & Magee, 2018).

In the endeavor to secure the Party's claim to rule, the active manipulation of historical narratives has been an essential tool to ensure that the presented narratives convey the right ideological precepts. During the "red years" of Mao's rule, as Harrison (1972) considers, the party's rewriting of history was "the most massive attempt at ideological reeducation in human history" (p. 92). However, it should be noted that History education in the service of those in power has been part of the Chinese culture for many millennia. The dynastic emperors tasked historians with

²² For a more comprehensive look into these developments, see Chau (1995), Jones (2002, 2012), and Müller (2011).

writing the histories of the earlier dynasties in order to legitimize their own power. During the republican era, history was also used to further political ends. Therefore, this practice was by no means a novel idea that emerged with the communist takeover in 1949 (Jones, 2012). To this day, history has played a central part in the party-state's claim to power. According to Callahan (2010), "modern history is an important security issue in the People's Republic of China" (p. 31). As the party-state's claim to rule rests on its attentiveness to history and the control of memory in post-1949 China, the past has been extensively manipulated and used to legitimize communist rule, and the party-state is doing its utmost to make sure that the way the past is remembered is in accordance with the approved political line (Béja, 2007; Callahan, 2006, 2010; Evans, 2003; Jin, 2004; Kaye, 1997; Smith, 2003). To a large degree, only official history exists, and free discussion on a number of historical topics remains almost completely absent in Chinese society at large. Interpretations that are not compatible with the official party narrative are relentlessly persecuted, and the only way for repressed memories to enter the public discourse is through the realignment of the political line (Béja, 2007; Callahan, 2010; Evans, 2003; Jin, 2004; Smith 2003). The vision of history promulgated by the party-state is restricted both by direct control and indirectly by self-censorship (Jones, 2002). One of the key areas of such ideological influencing—or history politics—is again History education (Callahan, 2010). In the words of Jones (2002), "history education has been fundamental to the transmission of the state-authorized memories on which state-authorized identities may be constructed" (p. 546). As part of the Patriotic Education campaign, the so-called National Humiliation narrative has become prevalent in the country's education system and emphasizes the suffering and humiliation that China had to endure at the hands of foreigners in the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century and how much the country has been transformed by the communist revolution (Callahan, 2010; Wang, 2008). This narrative is built on a very selective reading of Chinese history (Callahan, 2010). For example, the story of the "Nanjing Massacre" of 1937 is intentionally politicized in Chinese History textbooks (Foster, 2012).

The Chinese educational system is strongly influenced, unsurprisingly, by the Confucian tradition, emphasizing memorization and repetition while de-emphasizing critical thinking (Chang, 1997; Chien, 2014). Yet, toward the end of the 20th century, there were clear signs of change in the air. Although the nationwide universal curriculum helped popularize historical knowledge, by the 1990s, it was seen that it had not quite satisfied the needs of the modernization process (Chau, 1995). In reply, qualitative improvement was prioritized in the agenda and became the main focus of educational reforms (Kong, 2009; Law, 2007; Liu, 2008; Lo, 1999; Peng, Thomas, & Yang, 2006; Postiglione, 2011; Xin & Kang, 2012). These ambitions have manifested foremost in the emerging notion of *quality education*

(素质教育; *suzhi jiaoyu*). This notion gained momentum in the late 1990s and essentially became the foremost goal of education policy (Chen Cravens, Chu, & Zhao, 2011; Della-Iacovo, 2009; Kipnis, 2006; Law, 2007; Lin, 2011; Lo, 1999; Yang & Guo, 2005). With the onset of quality education, increasing emphasis has been placed on values such as efficiency, choice competition, outcome, practicality, and plurality (Chen Cravens et al., 2011; Della-Iacovo, 2009; Lin, 2011; Lo, 1999; Qi, 2011; Xin & Kang, 2012). Most importantly, the purposes of History education have also been realigned. Following the trend set by the introduction of quality education, a need to develop students' abilities was identified (Chau, 1995; Jones, 2012). Serious talk regarding cognitive skills emerged, and memorization increasingly gave way to "understanding" history in order to help the nation in its modernization drive (Chau, 1995; Jones, 2002). Consequently, steps toward teaching critical thinking skills have been taken (Chen, 2010). For example, changes emphasizing problem-solving skills and critical thinking have been argued to manifest in the newest textbooks (Chen, 2010). However, without a doubt, this emphasis on pedagogy and thinking skills has by no means meant that ideological education no longer plays a role in History education, even if ideological training has been integrated with knowledge and skill-training (Jones, 2002). Even with the onset of quality education, the ultimate goal of education is to be of assistance in the nation-state's quest for national strength (Chen Cravens et al., 2011; Della-Iacovo, 2009; Lin, 2011; Lo, 1999; Qi, 2011; Xin & Kang, 2012).

Comparing Finland, the United States, and China—Justifications and Rationales

As previously seen, the three countries represent different political and cultural contexts and historical trajectories. The United States and China are arguably economic, political, and military superpowers. As such, they are the two most important poles in the world of today and tomorrow. Both are also very heterogeneous culturally and, in light of Hofstede's cultural dimensions model, also very masculine cultures. Meanwhile, Finland is neither an economic, political, or military superpower. Finland has a very homogeneous population, and its culture, according to Hofstede's model, is a rather feminine one. In terms of political culture, Finland and the United States are arguably (liberal or social) democratic Western nations with free economic systems. When it comes to Hofstede's model, Finland and the United States share a low Power Distance and Long-Term Orientation (i.e., they are short-term oriented) and a higher mid-range Indulgence. Other common points of the two societies are an educational tradition that emphasizes critical thinking skills and that History education is, at least in light of existing evidence, clearly tilting toward teaching historical thinking instead of "great tradition."

Problematic and painful events in history have increasingly been called into question, especially in Finland. Meanwhile, China is politically and economically an autocratic one-party state (even if its economy has become increasingly free over the past few decades). In cultural terms, Power Distance and Long-Term Orientation are very high in Hofstede's model, whereas Indulgence is very low. The political use of history and even outright history politics permeates the entire society, and History is still firmly taught with the "great tradition" mindset. The Confucian educational philosophy has emphasized rote-learning and de-emphasized individual thinking skills. On the other hand, China and Finland share an educational structure in which senior secondary education is—at least in theory—optional and History education is organized around mandatory and elective courses. In the United States, senior secondary education is meanwhile mandatory, and History education comprises a sort of two-track system with differing standard and AP courses.

In some respects, all three countries are either very similar or very different from each other. Similarities are arguably few and far apart. It should be noted that at all three *do provide* senior secondary education, and in terms of their historical trajectory, all three have stood in the "great tradition" end of History education at least at some point in time. As for differences, in political terms, China is a very centralized country, whereas the United States and Finland sit somewhere in between, as rather curious, yet different kinds of hybrids. In the United States, individual states are quite free to organize education as they see fit. Yet, within the state of North Carolina, the education system is quite centralized, as the curricula are established by either the state or the College Board and the textbooks are chosen by the school districts. In Finland, centralization in curriculum development is coupled with lower level autonomy in implementation, as there is no textbook supervision, for example. As for Hofstede's national culture model, the three countries are all somewhat different from each other in Uncertainty Avoidance, yet not by a huge margin, as they all occupy the low-mid to high-mid spectrum. On the other hand, in terms of Individualism vs. Collectivism, the United States is a very individualistic country, China a collectivist one, and Finland something a bit above the midway between the two hypothetical extremes.

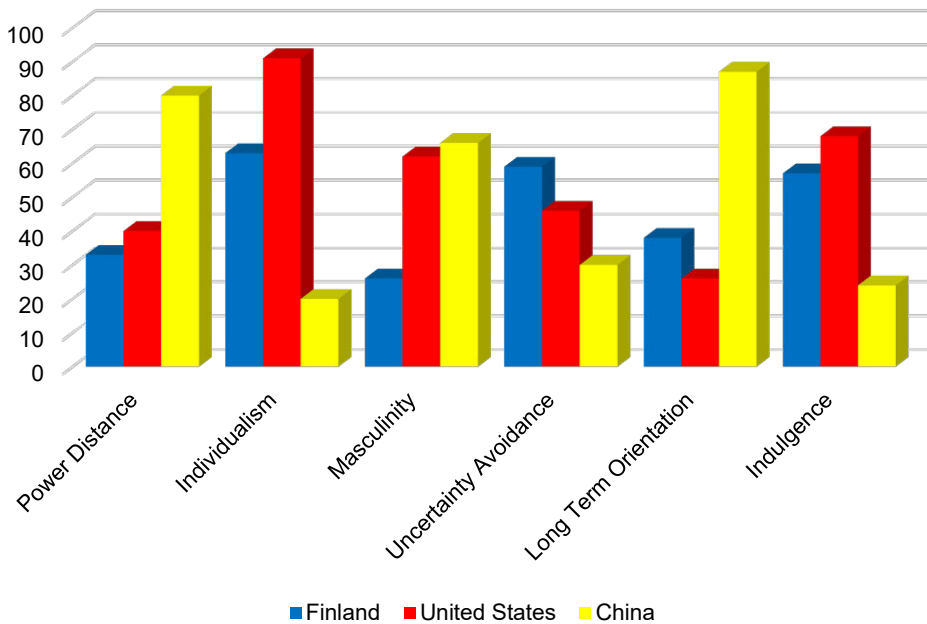


Figure 3. Comparison of Finland, the United States, and China in Hofstede's cultural dimensions model.

However, the answer to the question of why Finland, the United States, and China were chosen for comparison comes in two layers. First, the overlying justification lies in the contextual factors explained above: the countries fulfill certain prerequisites stemming from their political, cultural, economic, etc. backgrounds and, namely, the interesting contrasts they showcase in these aspects. Second, I build on the ideas of, for example, Bereday (1964) and Lor (2019), who assert that research in comparative education requires a deep cultural and linguistic competence of the target area, as researchers' ability to work with different contexts in cultural and comparative studies may well affect data collection, analysis, etc. (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). This is an especially salient point for Western scholars researching China, as the lure or curse of *orientalism* is always present. Said (2011) introduced the term as a set of assumptions about the "true nature" of "oriental" cultures and societies. According to him, Europeans have a certain way of thinking, interpreting, and portraying the Orient: in many cases, as opposite to the Western, more valuable culture. The West is seen as superior, in contrast to the weak East. In essence, orientalism is based on a narrow and deficient understanding of the research subject; it is possible to explain the cultures of "others" by resorting to the assumed "true nature" of these cultures, entirely without the need for deeper analysis.

Although mainly referring to Middle-Eastern cultures, Said extends this way of dealing with the “others” to Far-Eastern cultures and societies (Said, 2011). Indeed, Chinese culture is often explained in an essentialist manner and without proper expertise. I, of course, hope my personal skills and background allow me to avoid such simplistic explanations.

The division into these two layers, I argue, is of utmost importance, as the contextual preconditions (first layer) often only *limit*, but do not necessarily *determine*, the choice of countries. In this regard, I have identified a certain lack of scholarly integrity in the field of comparative studies, whether in education, politics, history, etc. Perhaps in order to justify grant applications or/and to give a certain *raison d'être* for the work at hand, the choice of countries is often justified *only* on the basis of certain characteristics that the countries fulfill, even though many other possible comparable units (such as countries) would fit certain criteria that the author has defined. In the case of my work, for example, choosing North Korea or Russia would have certainly also been interesting choices that would have arguably told us quite a lot about the different manners in which the concept of history politics can be taught.

Yet, as a researcher, I do not have the necessary skills to carry out such analyses, as I am no specialist in modern-day North Korea nor a qualified Kremlinologist. To help in assessing whether the chosen countries meet the requirements imposed by Bereday (1964) and Lor (2019), I employ the model by Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008), who proposed a four-quadrant typology for categorizing research contexts: on the one hand, the researcher is either familiar or unfamiliar with the context of the studied unit, and on the other hand, the unit under study can be either familiar or unfamiliar vis-à-vis the researcher's own home culture.

Based on this model, once the contextual factors that the overarching rationale for making comparisons are in place, one can initially choose a context that comes from any of the four quadrants described above. However, in order to actually do research with deep cultural and linguistic competence, the chosen unit has to fit in either quadrant 1, 2, or 3; one cannot properly do research on an unfamiliar context that is nothing like one's own home culture and/or one does not properly understand (quadrant 4). It should be noted that one can choose a unit of comparison from quadrant 4 and then familiarize oneself with it—thus turning it into a context that is located in quadrant 3.

What about the choice of individual countries? The choice of Finland is obviously easily justifiable. Having been brought up and having lived in Finland for most of my life, in an almost tautological fashion, Finland for me is both the home culture and a very familiar culture. In Phillips' and Schweisfurth's (2008) typology, Finland is thus located in quadrant 1 and qualifies as a suitable research context. Next, the United States and Finland are, in many respects, much closer to each other

than either one is to China, as previously seen. The choice lies in my personal qualities as a researcher. The American culture has become very familiar to me through education, popular culture, and personal interest, and I speak English fairly well. Nevertheless, I have only spent limited time in the country as a business traveler and tourist, and I have never studied the cultural, political, and historical context methodologically and extensively. Based on these considerations, the United States would qualify as a country in quadrant 2; it is a culture that is very close to my own, yet at least somewhat unfamiliar to me. As for China, its culture is arguably almost diametrically opposite to Finland in many respects—i.e., very different from my home culture. Yet, the choice is justified mainly because I am familiar with China, as I have studied Chinese culture, politics, history, language, etc. extensively and spent years living in the country. In light of these facts, China would qualify for quadrant 3. Moreover, I feel that my personal expertise in Sinology helps me avoid unnecessary simplifications and distortions of reality (i.e., orientalist tendencies).

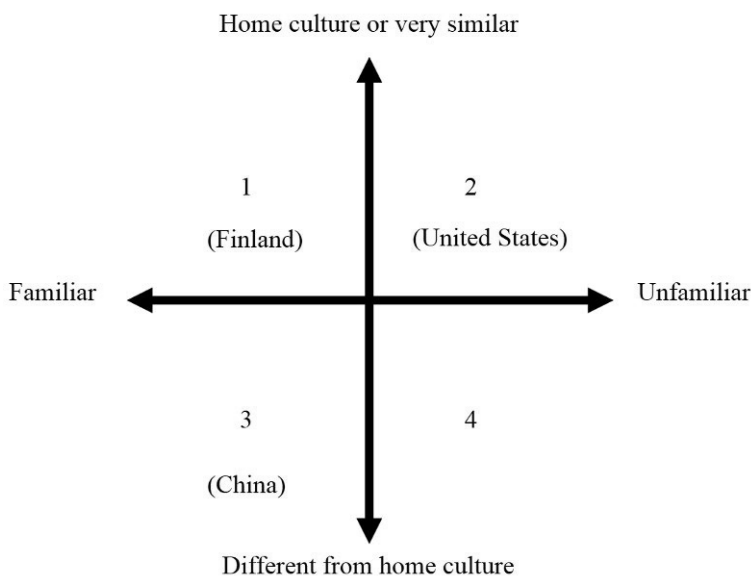


Figure 4. Phillips and Schweisfurth’s four-quadrant typology of possible research contexts and the author’s relative position vis-à-vis the countries and cultures under comparison.

2.4.4 Comparisons in Time: 1985 vs. 2015

As explained earlier, comparisons over time are one of the goals of this work. The choice of these two particular moments in history will be justified as follows. First, it should be noted that, in reality, I am not comparing these two years with each other exclusively, but rather two short *timespans* in history: the mid to late part of the

1980s vs. the mid to late part of the 2010s. These two years merely stand in to represent these general timeframes.²³ The choice of research materials represents roughly the state of the educational systems in question during these two periods. For example, in Finland, the teacher interviews were carried out in 2017, the curriculum document dictating what is to be taught was published in 2015, and the textbooks corresponding to this document were published between 2016 and 2018. This collection of research materials thereby represents these aspects of Finnish high school history education during the latter half of the 2010s. Meanwhile, the three older American textbooks were published between 1982 and 1986, thus representing high-school level history textbooks during the mid- to late-1980s. But as will be seen, change over time was not analyzed comprehensively in terms of the research materials. In fact, changes in educational policy were examined only from the vantage point of the textbooks, whereas the curriculum documents and teacher interviews were not compared in such a fashion. The reason boils down to the availability of research materials. Both old and new textbooks in all three countries were readily available. However, acquiring some of the older textbooks and older curriculum documents from the 1980s proved to be more difficult. Regarding the teacher interviews, it would have not made much sense to ask about matters retrospectively, especially as the point in time for the comparisons was the mid-1980s, when most of the teachers interviewed were not yet in the profession (or even born, as was the case with some).

But the question remains: why these two timespans as points of comparison? The choice of modern educational systems²⁴ is evident: it is in my interest to understand what these three educational regimes are accomplishing at the moment. This can also tell us something about the expected skills and competences of the generation who is entering the workforce *en masse* in the 2020s. The choice of the present day (or a point in time as close to it as possible) as a unit of comparison is also of great value if the results of the study are to be used to develop better practices in the future. The main reason why the late-1980s were selected is that this timespan represents, as elaborated earlier on, a point in time just *before* major changes and restructurings in

²³ When carrying out comparisons in time, one should keep in mind that education is conservative, in the sense that it changes slowly, and thus, the educational system and culture at any given point in time do not necessarily reflect the very latest or current societal trend, insomuch as they reflect earlier thinking, going back even decades (Lidstone & Stoltman, 2008; Lloyd, 2013; Reimann, 2013). As Reimann (2013) argued, “education is conservative and inert in its (very) nature and tends to be slow in reacting to changes and fails to keep up with developments and shifts in society” (p. 184).

²⁴ Obviously, the research setting represents the *modernity* of a certain point in time (mid- to late-2010s), which now, by the 2020s, is already part of the near-past. The eternal dilemma of works dealing with the present society is that no matter how up-to-date they are, as soon as they are published, they already become works of history in a sense.

the teaching of History took place in all three countries—in other words, a major point of *transitology* or major political and societal changes, as espoused by Cowen (1999, 2002). First, as seen earlier, the overall structure of the education system in all three countries began to increasingly emphasize subject-specific thinking skills after this point in time, at least to a degree. Second, the textbook industry in all three countries started to undergo major changes at the time. This is of utmost importance, as the argument regarding temporal change (or the lack thereof) in education is based solely on the analysis of textbooks. In Finland, the government control of textbooks was abolished in the early 1990s; around this same time, separate books began to be published for AP courses in the United States; and in China, the publication of competing textbooks series was allowed even if government approval of these alternative series was still required. Third, the expectations for students in the mid- to late-1980s belong to the generation born in the early to mid-1960s, people who will likely start retiring from working life *en masse* during the 2020s. In other words, the study of educational policy at these two points in time represents, in a sense, the study of a generational change. Finally, for the whole world, thus including the countries under comparison, the late-1980s represented a major point of political realignment as the Cold War was drawing to a close. Finland gained larger political leeway as the influence of the Soviet Union on Finnish politics diminished and the country began to align itself ever increasingly with the rest of Western Europe. The United States was beginning to emerge from the Cold War era—which had defined its entire political identity for half a century—as a winner. In China, the end of the Cold War and the nascent economic reforms put the country on a trajectory of growing prosperity, international contacts, and influence, but also one of increasing societal juxtapositions and tensions.

2.5 Research Task, Research Material, and Method of Analysis

In this chapter, the research task, research materials, and method of analysis are examined in more detail. I begin with an in-depth look into the research task at hand by clearly elaborating the research questions. Next, the chapter examines the research materials (i.e., the primary data) and explains how they were coded and referenced in the body of the text. The last section describes in more detail the method of qualitative content analysis.

2.5.1 Research Task

As explained in the introduction, the main purpose of this work is to examine whether the educational regimes in Finland, the United States, and China are seeking

to further integrative or qualificative functions in high-school level History education and whether some sort of convergence can be identified. To address this overarching objective, two separate questions had to be answered. First, how do these different educational regimes teach the concept of history politics and how have they taught it in the past? In other words, what are the different manners of teaching the concept implemented by different educational systems at different levels and at different times? Second, based on the answers to the first question, I will seek to determine whether the aforementioned regimes seek to further the integrative or qualificative functions of education and whether some sort of convergence is identifiable.

As elaborated earlier, the research design follows the logic of abductive reasoning, which, in practice, means that the theoretical concepts and notions structured the collection and analysis of the research material very little; instead, the observations arose from the data itself. However, in the end, certain theoretical ideas were brought into the picture to structure and make sense of these findings. This, in turn, has meant that (almost without exception), no particular trends, features, characteristics, themes, etc. were sought from the data when answering the first question. Instead, I allowed the data to “speak for itself” (i.e., to yield new information in an inductive manner). By contrast, the answer to the second research question emerged from assessing these findings against the tensioned relationship between the integrative and qualificative functions of History education and the convergence of educational policies globally.

2.5.2 Research Material

As mentioned, curriculum documents, textbooks, and interviews with high school History teachers were used as the primary research material for this work. Although the choice of these levels of the curriculum and these materials was justified earlier, we need to examine in more detail what kind of materials formed the base of the empirical analysis and how they were chosen and/or created, as many other decisions had to be made to narrow down the amount of possible research material. Although limiting the explanatory power of this work, this narrowing down was a necessary step, as otherwise, the amount of source material would have been overwhelming in terms of the time and energy needed to comb through it all. The interviewees were also chosen according to certain criteria, the limitations of which are discussed toward the end of this work. In addition to elaborating the selection process of the curriculum documents and textbooks, the following subchapters describe the documents themselves and how they were coded for research purposes.

Table 2. Overview of the research materials²⁵.

	Finland	United States	China
<i>Curriculum documents</i>	2015 National Curriculum covering both mandatory and elective courses	6 different curriculum documents from the 2010s altogether, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 standard course documents • 3 AP course documents 	2003 Trial Curriculum covering both mandatory and elective courses
<i>Textbooks</i>	31 textbooks altogether, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 old (ca. 1985) mandatory course textbooks from three different book series • 15 modern (ca. 2015) textbooks from three different book series; 9 for mandatory courses, 6 for elective course 	9 textbooks altogether, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 old (ca. 1985) American History course textbooks (one textbook divided into two parts) • 5 modern (ca. 2015) textbooks; 2 for standard courses, 3 for AP courses 	29 textbooks altogether, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 old (ca. 1985) World History textbooks (one textbook divided into two parts) • 27 modern (ca. 2015) textbooks from three different series; 9 for mandatory courses, 18 for elective courses
<i>Teacher interviews</i>	9 interviews in 9 different schools	10 interviews in 9 different schools	

Curriculum Documents

When choosing the curriculum documents, two considerations were of essence. First, I selected high-level documents that directed high school History education at the local level where the interviews were conducted. This choice was based on the assumption that it is these high-level documents that outline the official policies in terms of whether (and if so, how and why) students should understand the concept of history politics. In the case of China and Finland, this meant national-level History curricula documents, whereas in the United States, the curriculum documents came either from the state level (standard level course curricula documents) or national level²⁶ (AP American History, AP World History, and AP European History). Second, only subject-specific (History) curricula were analyzed, excluding curriculum documents that dealt either with other subjects or with educational goals, practices, contents, etc. at a more general level. As mentioned, official high-level curriculum documents were chosen for analysis in each of the three countries. However, I was not able to acquire the 1980s documents in any of the countries, with

²⁵ For a complete listing of the research materials, please consult Appendix II.

²⁶ It should be further emphasized that, although the AP curricula are *de facto* nationwide, they are not mandated at the national level, as the College Board is not a state agency.

the exception of Finland. In the case of China, older curriculum documents can only be found in book form, and these books proved to be more or less impossible to acquire. In the United States, I contacted both the chosen school district and state-level educational officials in North Carolina, but unfortunately, older curriculum documents were no longer preserved. For this reason, the older curriculum documents were not analyzed.

In China and Finland, the process was rather straightforward. I selected the 2003 trial curriculum in the case of China and the 2015 curriculum for Finland, coded as CHNC and FINC, respectively, where the three-letter code at the beginning stands for the country and C for “curriculum.”²⁷ Both the Finnish and Chinese documents cover the History curriculum through individual courses and introduce a general framework for the entire subject. In China, there are three mandatory courses (History I, History II, and History II) and six elective ones (A Retrospect on Major Reforms in History, Democratic Thought and Practice in the Modern Society, 20th Century War and Peace, Evaluating Chinese and Foreign Historical Figures, Exploring the Mysteries of History, and Gathering of World Cultural Heritage).

The case of the United States was a bit more complex. As mentioned, a national curriculum in History does not exist. Therefore, I chose for analysis the curriculum documents for the individual courses—i.e., the official curriculum documents published by the College Board intended for the three AP courses offered in my case study district: AP American History (latest dates back to 2017), AP World History (2017), and AP European History (2017) and the three North Carolina state-wide curriculum documents intended for the standard courses: American History I (2011) and II (2010) and World History (2010). Following the notation system used for the other two countries, these documents were coded as USACx, where USA stands for the United States of America, C for curriculum, and x is a running number that corresponds with the aforementioned courses as follows:

- USACA1: North Carolina Public Schools curriculum for the standard American History I course
- USACA2: North Carolina Public Schools curriculum for the standard American History II course
- USACB: North Carolina Public Schools curriculum for the standard World History course
- USACC: Nationwide curriculum for the AP American History course

²⁷ The Chinese curriculum document was acquired as an electronic version (see the *Sources* section at the end) that does not include page numbers. Therefore, the page numbers are not given when referring to the document.

- USACD: Nationwide curriculum for the AP World History course
- USACE: Nationwide curriculum for the AP European History course.

Textbooks

Numerous books were chosen for analysis. In total, the sample from the three countries consisted of 72 textbooks with an estimated total of 12,000–14,000 pages of text. All were either purchased or, in the case of some of the Finnish books, acquired from libraries on loan. The choice of textbooks was decided based on whether they were mandated or designed to be used with the curriculum documents guiding high school history education during the periods under comparison. In the empirical part of this dissertation, the books are not referred to by using the name of the author(s), but referred to by the name of the book, the book series or an especially assigned code. I believe this will make it easier for the reader to follow the text, and emphasis will be on the book(s) rather than the authors, as the textbooks in all three countries were written by a team of authors and the individual contributions are not clearly marked. In fact, in the United States and China, textbooks are written by a team of anonymous experts, while the people listed on the cover act as editors. In the case of the new People's Press textbooks in China, the editors of the books are not even stated. To distinguish between old and new books, either 1985 or 2015 is used in the reference code assigned to the books. These codes are examined below in more detail, country by country. It should be noted, however, that for the most part, these two codes (1985 and 2015) do not refer to the actual year of publication of the book(s) in question, but rather provide information about the era when they were published.

There is no publicly available information on which books have been and are most commonly used in Finnish history classes (Sakki, 2010). However, only a limited amount of Finnish language textbook series²⁸ were available at the two points in time under comparison. Three different series corresponding to the 1985 curriculum were chosen for analysis based on the fact that they were readily available. The series *Historia* (in English: *History*) was published by WSOY, *Lukion historia* (*Gymnasium [level] history*) by Otava/Kunnalispaino, and *Muuttuva*

²⁸ Although teaching following the 2015 National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools is given in several languages in Finland, the corresponding textbooks have always been published only in Finnish and Swedish. Only the Finnish language book series (both old and new) were chosen for analysis. Although Finnish and Swedish are the official languages of the country, those who speak Finnish as their first language are much more numerous. In 2017, only 6% of high school students studied in Swedish language high schools (Statistics Finland, 2018).

maailma (*The Changing World*) by Kustannuskiila. It should be noted that the books in the series were published between the mid-1980s and early 1990s. For all three series, each book in the series corresponds to one of the six courses of the curriculum. These books will be referred to using the format “FINB1985xy,” where FIN stands for Finnish, B for books, 1985 for the era when the book was in use, x for a letter indicating the book series (A for *Historia*, B for *Lukion historia*, and C for *Muuttuva maailma*), and y for the number of the book which—as explained above—corresponds to the number of the course.²⁹ Thus, the *Lukion historia* book for course number three, for example, is coded as FINB1985B3.

Three Finnish language high school History textbook series have been available nationwide in conjunction with the 2015 curriculum. The series *Kaikkien aikojen historia* (*History of All Times*) was published by Edita, *Historia ajassa* (*History in Time*) by Sanoma Pro, and *Forum* by Otava. As for each series, each book in the series corresponds to one course of the curriculum, consequently, the books carry a corresponding number in Roman or Arabic numerals and a subtitle that is word for word the same as the title of the course. For example, the title of the *Forum* series’ book intended to be used with the second course (*Kansainväliset suhteet* [*International Relations*]) of the curriculum is titled *Forum II: Kansainväliset suhteet* (*Forum II: International Relations*), whereas the Sanoma Pro book intended for the fifth course (*Ruotsin itämaasta Suomeksi* [*From Eastern Land of Sweden to Finland*]) of the curriculum is titled *Historia ajassa 5: Ruotsin itämaasta Suomeksi* (*History in Time 5: From the Eastern Land of Sweden to Finland*). What is noteworthy, however, is that not all three series cover all six courses as, at the time of writing, not all publishers had released all the new textbooks corresponding to the 2015 curriculum. In the empirical part of this work, the books will be referred to by the format “FINB2015xy,” where FIN stands for Finnish, B for books, 2015 for the era when the book was in use (“newer” book), x for a letter indicating the book series (A for Edita’s *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series, B for Sanoma Pro’s *Historia ajassa* series, and C for Otava’s *Forum* series), and y for the number of the book which—as explained above—corresponds to the number of the course. For example, Otava’s *Forum* book intended to be used with the third course will be referred to as FINB2015C3, whereas Edita’s *Kaikkien aikojen historia* book for the first course will be referred to as FINB2015A1.

²⁹ Some of the *Lukion historia* and *Muuttuva maailma* series books cover two courses in one volume. Although the two courses are clearly separated, the page numbering is continuous. The coding of the books in this work separates the sections of the book according to the course (i.e., although physically, one of the books in the series, for example, covers courses 1 and 2, the two are separated here as FINB1985B1 and FINB1985B2).

Although some of the History courses under the umbrella of social studies were already being taught by the mid-1980s (except for AP World History and AP Art History), in the United States, I was not even able to ascertain whether separate textbooks existed at the time for standard and AP United States History and AP World History (or whether the standard course books were also used in AP classes) and whether purpose-made textbooks existed for AP European History and AP Art History. Moreover, no information was publicly available about which books were used in the chosen school district at the time. The only information about the books used during the 1980s concerned the most commonly used standard American History textbooks. For this reason, these books were used as a point of comparison. The fact that most popular nationwide 1980s standard-level United States History textbooks (which were possibly also used in AP classes at the time) were compared to books used in one single school district around 2015 is evidently somewhat problematic. Yet, this was a necessary choice in order to carry out at least some comparisons over time.

According to Lerner, Nagai, and Rothman (1992), the three most commonly used American History textbooks in adoption states and the largest 100 school districts in the 1980s were *America: Its People and Values*, *Rise of the American Nation* (both published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), and *A History of the United States* (published by Ginn & Co). The choice of these books was justified by two factors. First, these were the most popular textbooks nationwide at the time, which contributes to the generalizability of the findings. Second, the school district of my choice had not stored information about the books used around the mid- to late-1980s. Although not necessarily representative of the overall situation during that period, these books cover the history of the American experience all the way from the earlier human settlements on the North American continent to the present day, although—at least if measured by the number of pages—more emphasis is clearly put on the era of European settlement, and especially on the history of the United States post-independence. These books are coded as USAB1985A through USAB1985C, where USA stands for the United States of America, B for books, the number series for the time span of the materials (“old” books), and the running letter for the individual book. The codes for the books are thus as follows:

- USAB1985A: *America: Its People and Values*
- USAB1985B1 and USA1985B2: *Rise of the American Nation* (The edition I acquired consists of two separate physical books: Volume 1 covers pre-reconstruction history, whereas Volume 2 covers events from the reconstruction onward. The two are distinguished from one another by the additional number at the end, which corresponds to the volume of the book. The reason for this physical division is unknown.

- USAB1985C: *A History of the United States*

As for the modern books, in the chosen case study district in the United States, the books chosen for analysis covered all the History textbooks used in teaching the statewide standard courses (United States History and World History) and the textbooks used in AP United States History, AP World History, and AP European History classes (the three AP History courses taught in the respective school district). The choice of district-specific textbooks was justified by the fact that no information regarding the textbooks most commonly used nationwide (or even statewide) was publicly available. Although the selection of such books would have made the findings more generalizable, unfortunately, this was not an option due to insufficient information. Thus, only the books used in the chosen school district were picked for the analysis. The school district was in the middle of a book adoption cycle during the time I carried out my research. All in all, I selected five modern books, which are coded as USAB2015A through USAB2015E, where USA stands for the United States, B for books, and the running letter for the individual book:

- USAB2015A: *The Americans* (textbook for standard American History I and II)
- USAB2015B: *World History: Human Legacy* (textbook for standard World History)
- USAB2015C: *America's History* (textbook for AP American History)
- USAB2015D: *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (textbook for AP World History)
- USAB2015E: *The Western Heritage Since 1300* (textbook for AP European History).

In China, the older textbooks comprise two 人民教育出版社 (*Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe* [People's Education Press]) books used nationwide around the mid-1980s titled 高级中学课本: 世界历史 (*gaoji zhongxue keben: shijie lishi* [Upper secondary school textbook: World History]) and divided into 上册 (*shangce*) [first] and 下册 (*xiace*) [second] volume. As mentioned, at the time, History in Chinese high schools consisted of a one-year course of World History. As was the case with the *Rise of the American Nation* textbook in the U.S., it is not clear why two physical books were compiled and used in class instead of one single volume. In the text, these books will be referred to as CHNB1985A and CHNB1985B, respectively, where CHN stands for Chinese, B for book, 1985 for the period the books were in use, and the final letter for the volume of the book. As for the modern Chinese books, three different book series published by three different publishing houses were analyzed: 人民出版社 (*Renmin chubanshe* [People's Press]), People's Education Press (the same publisher as the one of the 1980s textbooks above), and 岳麓书社

(*Yuelu shushe* [Yuelu Press]). No precise information is available regarding the popularity of different book series. However, since the People's Education Press dominates the market (as explained above), its book series was the obvious choice for analysis. The other two series were chosen so that the sample would better represent the (limited) textbook pluralism in China and because they were readily available in bookstores in Beijing while visiting the city in 2016. The titles of all the different textbooks from all the different series correspond to the name of the course. Thus, all three textbooks intended to be used with course number eight, 探索历史的奥秘 (*Tansuo lishi de aomi* [*Exploring the Mysteries of History*]), carry the exact same title as the course. The Chinese textbooks will be referred to by using the format "CHNB2015xy," where CHN stands for Chinese, B for books, 2015 for the period when the books were in use, x for a letter indicating the book series (A for the People's Press series, B for the People's Education Press series, and C for the Yuelu Press series), and y for the number of the book, which corresponds to the number of the course. For example, the Yuelu Press textbook for course number four, 历史上重大改革回眸 (*Lishi shang zhongda gaige huimou* [*A Retrospect on Major Reforms in History*]), will be referred to as CHNB2015C4, whereas the People's Press textbook four course number nine, 世界文化遗产荟萃 (*Shijie wenhua yichan huicui*, [*Gathering of World Cultural Heritage*]), is referred to as CHNB2015A9. The newer Chinese textbooks include some primary source readings written in classical Chinese.³⁰ As the author of this work is not literate in classical Chinese, the material these passages contain has been omitted from the analysis.

Teacher Interviews

Interview methods vary, and they can be distinguished based on the number of people being interviewed at the same time, the level of structurization, or the implementation method (Eskola & Vastamäki, 2015; Kylmä & Juvakka, 2007). In this study, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teachers. Although there is no universally accepted definition of the meaning of the term, the central idea of such interviews is that certain viewpoints are predetermined, whereas others are not (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008). According to Eskola and Suoranta (2003), in a semi-structured interview, the questions to all the interviewees are the same, but unlike in a structured interview, there is no set choice of answers; consequently, the respondents may answer in his or her own words. Following these ideas in the context of my work, this meant that the interview did not consist of asking certain predetermined questions, but rather the focus was on certain *themes* that were

³⁰ Classical Chinese is the written language form that was commonly used for almost all formal writing in China until the early 20th century.

covered one way or another during the interview. These themes emerged partly from the observations arising from the analysis of the curriculum documents and textbooks. This choice was justified by the fact that, as the goal of this study was, among other things, to analyze the differences between different levels of the curriculum, the findings had to be in some way comparable. However, the interviewees were granted the necessary space to address these themes rather freely, so that their choice of answers was not entirely predetermined.

The central theme around which the interviews centered was how the teachers addressed the concept of history politics and how much leeway did they have in these choices (and why). However, in addition to the more casual discussion, the information gained from the already ongoing analysis of the curriculum documents and textbooks led me to also ask more formal questions regarding the manner in which the teachers addressed the concept. In other words, some elements of a structured interview were also included. For example, as the analysis of these text documents had already yielded that the concept can be addressed either at a more abstract or contextualized level, the teachers were also asked about this matter if they did not raise the issue themselves. Teacher interviews were carried out only in Finland and the United States; I was not able to arrange such interviews in China. Despite my best efforts to pull the right strings and recruit the help of my connections in the country, I was unable to secure the necessary backing to carry out the interviews. In other words, despite the initial help I received, no authoritative institution or expert was willing to help me arrange the interviews and/or obtain the necessary permissions to carry them out. Their choice is understandable. My best guess is that the reason lies with the fact that the research topic can be seen as a somewhat matter—an especially salient problem when doing research in modern-day China. During the past few years, the problem has become even more pervasive than before, as China has tightened its grip on academic freedom. An option would have been to carry out the interviews by arranging meetings directly with local teachers. However, I feel that this would have been a rather unethical choice that could have yielded serious problems not only to myself, but also to the interviewees. The limitations of this forced choice are discussed further on.

When it came to the teacher interviews carried out in Finland and the United States, some—albeit few—ground rules had to be set to determine eligibility. The limitations of my choices concerning the interviews are discussed at the very end. The main criterion was that the teacher had to have taught or be teaching at least one course included in the most recent History curriculum under scrutiny (the courses in the 2015 National Core Curriculum in the case of Finland and any of the five courses that were part of the statewide curriculum in the chosen locality in North Carolina). In Finland, this meant that teachers from non-public schools were also eligible and—as it turned out—did participate in the study. In the United States, all the interviewees

were teaching in public schools. In the end, all the teachers in Finland and most teachers in the United States had taught or were teaching more than one course. No other requirements were set concerning the length of the teachers' working careers, background education, sex or gender, which courses they taught, etc. What is noteworthy, however, was that although in Finland, at least one teacher had taught/was teaching each mandatory or elective course, in the United States, none of the respondents were teaching or had taught AP World History, despite the fact that the school district was offering the course. The limitations set by this choice are discussed at the end of this work. In very practical terms, once I had signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the local school district representatives in Finland and in the United States, I e-mailed all the high-school level History teachers in the chosen case study district who followed the relevant curriculum and asked them whether they would be willing to participate. Right from the get-go, I decided that I would aim for ten interviews in each locality, as this would generate a manageable amount of material considering the time and resource limitations. As it turned out, in the United States, precisely ten teachers were willing to participate in the study, whereas in Finland, I had to settle with nine. Each interview lasted between 30 and 75 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed into written form.

The interviews in Finland were conducted in a large urban school district in the southern part of the country. Nine interviews in nine different schools were carried out during the fall of 2017. With two exceptions, the teachers interviewed had taught all six History courses in the 2015 curriculum (see Appendix II for a summary of the Finnish material). The youngest of the participants had been a teacher for only a few years, whereas the most senior of them had been in the profession already for over 20 years. Four of the nine teachers were women, and the remaining five were men. In the United States, ten interviews in nine different schools were carried out during the spring of 2017 in an unspecified, large urban school district in North Carolina. The most junior of the respondents had just started as a teacher a year before the interview, while the two most senior teachers interviewed had been teaching for 18 years. The courses taught by these participants included American History I and II, AP American History, World History, and AP European History. Notably, as stated, none of them was teaching or had taught AP World History. Of the ten American teachers, two were women and eight men. The interviews in Finland and the United States were coded as FINT1 through FINT9 and USAT1 through USAT10, respectively. The three-letter code at the beginning stands for the country (FIN for Finland and USA for the United States), T for teacher, and the running number for the individual interview.

2.5.3 Qualitative Content Analysis as a Research Method

As mentioned previously, the methodological take in this research is qualitative. Nevertheless, for anyone engaging in qualitative research work, the choice of possible methods of analysis is almost limitless. In conducting this study, qualitative content analysis was utilized in approaching the data. This method can be used to analyze almost any sort of material that is in textual form (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). The unit of analysis can be individual words, expressions, or sentences. In the case of my work, meaningful passages of text were taken as the units of analysis. In English, language content analysis refers to two different kinds of research methods—content classification and content analysis. The former refers to a quantitative analysis of the data, whereas the latter to a verbal description of the data's contents. In the context of this work, the approach refers to the latter—qualitative content analysis, which progresses through classifying, condensing, and finding similarities and differences. The research material is approached by first reducing the data. This means the removal of all irrelevant information by either condensing the material or chopping it into smaller pieces. After reduction and/or simplification, the data are clustered by seeking similar and divergent concepts therein. Concepts with essentially the same meaning are clustered under one class, and the data thus becomes condensed as more generalized concepts are formed. Finally, the class is given a name that corresponds with the content of the class. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009)

In practical terms, the acquired research material was first turned into text format and read thoroughly, and all the relevant passages that were seen as addressing the concept of history politics were highlighted and extracted from the text. Passages were highlighted very generously, as *any* and *every* passage that, according to my interpretation, could be understood as addressing the concept was taken into consideration. In line with Torsti's (2008) work, all possible motives and forums for history politics were taken into consideration in the definition of the concept employed in this work. Regardless of what precisely the motive was, as long as some political motivation was identifiable, the behavior was treated here as a manifestation of history politics. One example would be a politician being dishonest about his political opponent's past behavior to further his own political career. Similarly, in the context of this work, the forums were deemed irrelevant; we are dealing with history politics independent of whether untruthful statements about the Holocaust, for example, were made by a politician in a speech or presented in a history film. Finally, it should be noted that although none of the definitions discussed above state it explicitly, at least implicitly, they contain the notion that "past" or "history" is understood as everything that has happened before the act of misinterpretation took place. Thus, an intentionally biased narrative about the fall of the Roman empire written in the present day or the omission of some important details in a

contemporary warlord's speech about his or her recent actions may both be considered examples of history politics in the context of this work provided that the underlying motivations are political and include the element of intentional misinterpretation. As will later be seen, some passages clearly addressed the concept, whereas in others, the possible link was much more tentative or even hypothetical. Yet, whenever the possibility that the passage was *not* addressing the concept could not be ruled out, it was added to the data to be analyzed in more detail.

With the help of the NVivo qualitative data analysis software, the identified passages were then coded and clustered under umbrella terms that captured certain patterns of similarity. In other words, all meaningful passages of text were grouped together based on similarities and differences. According to the abstractive logic of scientific reasoning, the categories emerged as a result of a bottom-up, open-ended coding process of the data. What is of importance here is that certain parallel taxonomies (or dichotomies) emerged, and each identified passage was placed in a specific umbrella category under each identified taxonomy or dichotomy. Once the categories were formed, numerous quotations were used to highlight the similarities within one category and the differences between them. As highlighted in the paper by Antaki, Billig, Edwards, and Potter (2002), a possible pitfall in qualitative analysis is under-analysis through over-quotation. In my work, I have used numerous quotations; the reason is because although some of the statements in certain categories were seemingly very different, they nevertheless shared a common trait that deemed them representative of a certain archetype. In a sense, I followed Jackson and Mazzei (2013), who emphasized highlighting differences within categories rather than seeking some sort of stability in the data. What I aimed to do with the excessive use of direct quotations was to showcase how seemingly very different types of statements and how materials in different countries do, in fact, share certain similarities.

However, merely identifying categories does not suffice. Indeed, once the categories are formed, only then can the analysis proceed in a qualitative and/or quantitative fashion (Forman & Damschroder, 2007; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). Although Antaki et al. (2002) discussed the pitfalls of discourse analysis, many of their arguments can easily be extended to other qualitative research methods. Most importantly, the authors claimed that summarizing the data is sometimes confused with analysis. Indeed, this is a problem that has also been explicitly associated with qualitative content analysis (Grönfors, 1982; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009), “[w]ith the help of content analysis, one can only have the material organized for making the conclusions” (p. 103). Simply put, bringing the data into text form and categorizing it does not qualify as analysis. Of course, if one approaches the data deductively (theory-first approach), categorizing the data does, in fact, already yield new information, as the research is essentially

testing an existing theory in new circumstances. However, if the categories *do not* emerge from the theory (as is the case in my research, for example), simply summarizing and categorizing the material does not yield much new information. Thus, what I have chosen to do is not leave the emerging categories as they are, but instead analyze them further so that they can be interpreted in light of the theoretical notion that the curriculum is political in a sense that it is furthering either qualitative or integrative functions.

2.6 Research Validity, Researcher Positionality, and Ethical Issues

In qualitative research, there is a plethora of different views and notions relating to the question of the reliability and validity of the work rather than one single, universally accepted way of addressing the matter (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009; Tynjälä, 1991). The terms reliability (the repeatability of the results) and validity (whether the research studies what it promises to study) are often used when assessing and evaluating quantitative studies (Eskola & Suoranta, 2003; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009; Tynjälä, 1991). However, many scholars (see, for example, Mäkelä, 1990; Tynjälä, 1991) argue that these criteria cannot be used to evaluate qualitative studies. The main critique of these ideas is the notion that unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is based on a relative understanding of the reality, meaning that research does not seek to uncover an objective truth about the study subject, but rather seeks to provide one viewpoint of the subject under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009; Tynjälä, 1991). As a result, in qualitative research, the foremost source of research validity and reliability is the researcher him- or herself, and consequently the assessment of research trustworthiness applies to the research process in its entirety (Eskola & Suoranta, 2003). As Eskola and Suoranta (2003) assert, “[t]he starting point of qualitative research is the open subjectivity of the researcher and the admittance of the fact that the researcher is the central research instrument of his or her work” (p. 210). A widely used model espoused by Lincoln and Guba (1985) utilizes the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability³¹ to assess qualitative studies. Eskola and Suoranta (2003) defined these criteria as follows:

Credibility as a criterion for reliability means that the researcher has to make sure whether his or her conceptualizations ja interpretations correspond with those of the research subjects...Transferability is possible with certain

³¹ Lincoln and Guba recommend using the term *trustworthiness* (rather than reliability) in qualitative research.

conditions, even though generally in the naturalistic paradigm it is seen that generalizations are not (due to the complexity of the social reality) possible. Dependability is increased by taking into consideration the researcher's presuppositions and pre-conceived ideas. Confirmability means that the interpretations which are made are supported by other studies examining the same phenomenon. (p. 211–212)

However, as Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) point out, these four concepts have been given various kinds of interpretations and meanings. As an overarching principle, I have followed the principle that the best manner in which one can enhance the validity of one's work is simple honesty (see, for example, Creswell, 2014). In practice, this means that I will seek to explain all possible measures used to increase the trustworthiness of the work.

First, the notion that the researcher's (i.e., my) conceptualizations and interpretations correspond with those of the research subjects is of utmost importance (Sandelowski, 1995). One of the foremost ways to achieve this is via direct quotations, which I have used prolifically to back up my claims (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Guthrie, Petty, Yongvanich, & Ricceri, 2004; Harwood & Garry, 2003). Additionally, it has been suggested that the trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be increased through discussions with the research subjects and other scholars at different points in the research project (Kylmä & Jumakka, 2007). In my work, however, I did not go so far as to maintain contact with the research subjects. First, even if maintaining contact with the interviewed History teachers would have been possible (which, to a large degree, was not, as many no longer had the time or interest for further communication via e-mail afterward), this was not the case with the authors of curriculum documents and textbooks. As explained, the authors of different passages of text in these documents are not clearly distinguished from one another, and in some of the books, the authors are not even mentioned. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2003), however, it is not necessarily important that the interpretations are reviewed by the research subjects (in this case, the teachers and the authors of the textbooks and curriculum documents), as they may well be blind to their own subjective interpretations. Instead, the interpretations and sometimes very difficult demarcations were critically reviewed and commented by colleagues and supervisors. By doing so, I essentially engaged in what Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) called peer debriefing—a process in which external evaluators critically analyze and comment on the work. This debriefing took place through informal discussions with my colleagues and supervisors and through more formal presentations at national and international seminars, workshops, and conferences. As a result, I hope, the interpretations I have made correspond to what the original subjects of the study intended.

As briefly noted, the notion of transferability suggests that the trustworthiness of the work depends partly on whether the research results can be transferred into another context. Studies are transferable to other context(s) depending on how similar the context under study and the context to which the results are transferred are. However, as stated earlier, it has been asserted that sweeping generalizations in qualitative work are not possible due to the complexity and heterogeneity of the social world (Eskola & Suoranta, 2003; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). Alasuutari (1994) goes so far as to state that one should not talk about generalizability in qualitative research at all. Moreover, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a researcher alone cannot make judgments about the transferability of research results; instead, he or she has to describe the research subjects and the research context thoroughly so that the readers can determine whether the results are transferrable (see also Tynjälä, 1991). As the purpose of this study was not to present transferable results but to examine the three countries and educational regimes case by case, the question of transferability can be ignored. However, as researchers such as Flyvbjerg (2011) suggested, generalizations can be made even based on case studies as long as they are done with caution. I have done my best to describe the research subjects and context as thoroughly as possible so as to allow the reader to critically assess whether these findings can be generalized to other contexts.

It has also been suggested that the researcher has to take into consideration both the external and internal contingent factors that may affect the interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Eskola and Suoranta (2003) argued that the dependability of a study can be increased by considering the researcher's own preconceived ideas and assumptions. Indeed, the constructivist worldview emphasizes that researchers should recognize how their personal qualities shape the interpretations that are being made so that they can seek to limit the influence of these factors (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). As a result, there are increasingly strong calls for critical self-reflection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Fontana, 2004; Silverman, 2009). I have done my best to address this issue in the present work. Right from the get-go, I submit to the notion that the influence of subjective judgments and interpretations can never be eliminated (Hatch, 2002). In the words of Primeau (2003), “[r]eflexivity enhances the quality of research through its ability to extend our understanding of how our positions and interests as researchers affect all stages of the research process” (p. 9). This self-critical attitude, I argue, manifests itself in the thorough discussion about the ontological and epistemological starting points of this work (and how these starting points have influenced the interpretation of the research materials) and in the justification of the choice of countries for comparison. Indeed, discussing these paradigms in empirical research has been explicitly encouraged for this particular reason (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Shannon-Baker, 2016). As Shannon-Baker (2016) explains, “when a researcher provides information about

their beliefs, it gives their audience a better understanding of the potential influences on the research” (p. 321). Moreover, as has been suggested (see, for example, Hirsjärvi, Remes, & Sajavaara, 2009), the trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be improved by providing an accurate description of the research project. I have done my utmost to critically assess my own work and describe the research project all the way from data gathering to writing conclusions so that the reader can follow my reasoning and critically assess it.

Finally, confirmability refers to, according to Eskola and Suoranta (2003), whether other studies on the subject can confirm the findings. As previously explained, very few studies have addressed the issues on which my study focuses. Nevertheless, I have done my best to utilize earlier scholarly work in the construction of the interpretative framework. As will be seen, my findings are generally in line with the literature on the nature of the compared educational systems and that of different types of political systems in general. However, my work also provides a more nuanced view of some of these aspects and, in some cases, even challenges previous assumptions, such as the notion of policy convergence.

Finally, as the ethical guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK Guidelines, 2019) suggest, taking ethical questions into consideration is one way to increase the validity of scientific work. Moreover, ethics need to be considered for the sake of common human decency, and thus, the researcher bears ethical responsibility for making sure that the results correspond to the research material (Kyngäs & Vanhanen, 1999). As these guidelines (TENK Guidelines, 2019) recommend, research permits from the respective school districts where the interviews were carried out—as explained earlier—were obtained prior to data collection. The guidelines also advise that participation to the study should be voluntary and based on accurate information about the study itself (informed consent). This was, of course, a relevant point to consider in my work, given that teachers were interviewed. While conducting these interviews, the participants were informed about the aim of the project, how the gathered data would be used in carrying out the research, and the fact that the conversations were recorded and the interviews would be anonymized in the final publication. The interviewees were also told that they had the freedom to choose not to answer the questions or quit the interview at any time and were explicitly asked to give their consent by signing a form. Before the interviews, I also encouraged them to interrupt me at any time if they needed clarifications or had any questions about the themes we were discussing. As Huotelin (1992), for example, stated, the informants are also responsible for the study and about the information they provide, as they are fully aware of the fact that their comments could be used in the study.

The TENK guidelines also mention that the anonymization of the research participants may well be justifiable. In the case of my work, the identities of the

interviewees are kept secret, as previously mentioned, and the interviewees are only referred to by using a country code and a number (see the section about research material for more details). The author of this work is the only person who has been in contact with the interview transcripts, and they have all been kept on a secure hard drive. The anonymization of the participants was done for several purposes. First, informing the interviewees that the interviews would remain anonymous hopefully allowed them to speak about the relevant issues more freely, as anonymization would safeguard them against any repercussions they might face in their respective work communities. A second reason was to maintain the anonymity of the school districts (as per their request) I needed to cooperate with in order to carry out the interviews. Although the school district in Finland did not specifically ask to keep their location a secret, in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, I decided not to reveal the exact location where the interviews took place.

3 Dimensions of History Politics in the History Curriculum

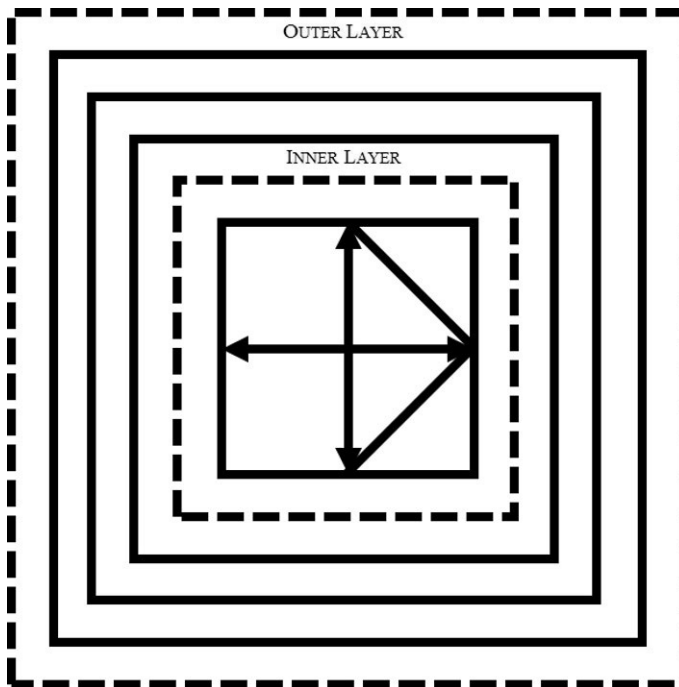


Figure 5. Outline of the dimensions of the History Politics Dimensions Model.

How is the concept of history politics addressed in the three educational systems under scrutiny? This chapter moves on to the empirical analysis of the research materials. Whether we are referring to the curriculum documents, textbooks, or teachers, how the concept is taught varies considerably. As previously explained, the analysis of the research material progressed by identifying the manners in which individual curriculum documents,

textbooks, and teachers address the concept of history politics. Based on these findings, patterns of similarity and dissimilarity were identified.

However, in terms of the *presentation* of these findings, this setting is turned upside down: identified patterns of similarity and dissimilarity (or what I call dimensions) are first presented, and only then is the reader presented with an overlook into how different educational systems and levels of curriculum showcase these patterns. Although this choice may seem somewhat counterintuitive, I believe it avoids unnecessary repetition (i.e., this approach was taken for the sake of

readability and clarity). Based on the observed patterns, a framework of different manners in which the concept of history politics can be addressed, which I coined as the History Politics Dimensions Model (HPDM), was identified. This model is divided into what I call the outer and inner layers. Let us examine them separately, layer by layer, like peeling an onion.

3.1 The Outer Layer of the History Politics Dimensions Model

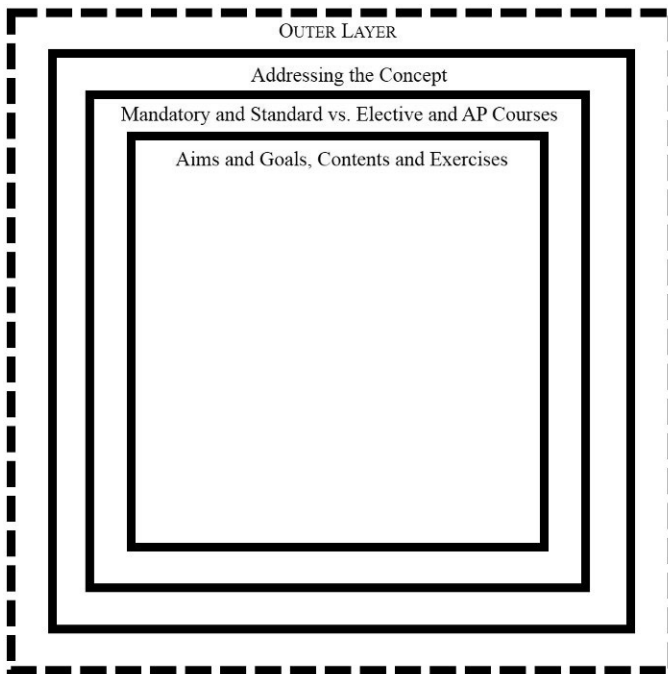


Figure 6. Outline of the outer layer of the HPDM.

The outer layer of the HPDM comprises answers to three separate questions that determine how the concept is taught. These questions and their answers are seen as the *outer layer* because these identified patterns of similarity and dissimilarity are either explicitly or implicitly always present when the concept of history politics is addressed. When it comes to the outer layer, there is first the question of whether the concept is taught at all. As we shall see, this

is not necessarily the case. Second, the different types of courses offered by different educational systems may determine what approaches are taken, and there may thus be differences in how the concept is taught. Third, the concept can be addressed either as an Aim and/or Goal for the studies, as Content to be learned, or as an Exercise. Let us look at these three questions in more detail.

3.1.1 Addressing the Concept—Ring 1 of the Outer Layer of the HPDM

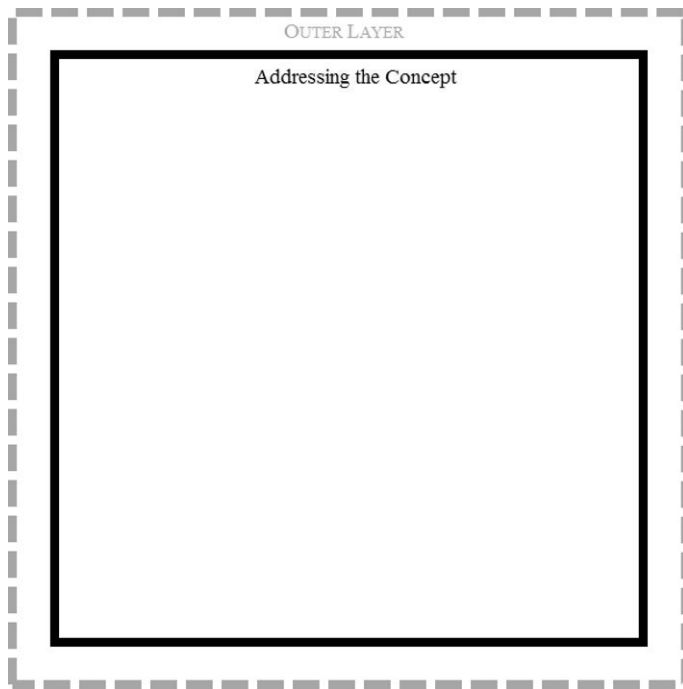


Figure 7. Ring 1 of the Outer level of the HPDM: Addressing the Concept.

The first question in the outer layer of the model is the most fundamental question that emerged from the reading of the materials: whether the concept of history politics is addressed at all. In curriculum documents and textbooks, history politics is addressed, as we shall later see (although, in some cases, such as that of older Chinese textbooks, in a very limited manner). With teachers, the case is a bit more complex, however. To begin with, many teachers do

discuss the topic. For example, consider the following statement of a Finnish teacher (FINT3):

We do address the manner in which...politics affect. In general terms, when we talk about history writing—what affects what is being researched and how it is being researched—this [topic] is addressed.

Another Finnish teacher (FINT2) concurred: “I think really what I like would like to teach [is]...that history is a really strong weapon when a skilled person knows how to use it.” Similar viewpoints were voiced by teachers in the United States. For example, one (USAT1) stated that “that’s exactly where I like to get at...Like why...history is a political tool, like why is it used this way.” Another (USAT3) said, “I do bring that up in class. You know, I try to address that, that bias...[I]t’s always been a theme just making students aware of these [issues].”

What is important, however, is that in both countries where interviews were carried out, there were some dissenting voices. Some of the statements given by one

of the teachers in Finland (FINT6) gave a strong impression that he/she does not, in fact, address the topic (although, as we shall see, some of his/her other answers modified this position to a degree). Similarly, one of the teachers in North Carolina (USAT10) was an exception to the rule, stating that although in his/her classes the students are assigned to form opinions based on what they read and to cite evidence to back up their claims, discussions are nevertheless *not* taken to the point of addressing issues from the standpoint of “using history as a political weapon” as he/she put it.

For the most part, it is obviously not a simple question of yes or no whether the concept is taught. Instead, both in Finland and in the United States, the teachers approach the subject to varying degrees and by using different methods. Although an interesting question in itself, the issue of quantity (i.e., how much the concept is taught) falls outside the scope of this study. The different manners in which the concept is addressed is of importance, however, and these differences will be elaborated later on. Whether we talk about quantity or the different manners in which the concept is addressed, it is important to note that what makes this leeway possible, according to the teachers, is the autonomy that they have been given. In Finland, one of the teachers (FINT1) explained: “Teachers have a lot of room for maneuverability...Like teachers are still allowed to [teach the concept how they see fit].” Sarcastically, he/she continued: “Here [in Finland] we do not yet at least...politically monitor what happens there [in class].” Likewise, across the Atlantic, a teacher (USAT1) stated:

I have almost as much like autonomy as I could ever want... I have complete autonomy... So sometimes (?) I spend like a day doing something that would probably be a footnote in other classes...‘Cause I think it’s a worthwhile interesting topic.

Meanwhile, another History teacher (USAT8) said, “[a]nd the way I teach things this year might not be the same things that way I teach it next year. ‘Cause I might find something new to try, or something I tried didn’t work, so I gotta adapt it. And that keeps me on my toes.” Other teachers in the U.S. (USAT2, USAT7) concurred that there is no feeling of having to avoid or focus on certain subjects and that there are no restrictions on what can be said in class, respectively.

Yet, in both countries, there was some disagreement about the actual level of the leeway among teachers when it came to the concept of history politics. In the eyes of one of the teachers in Finland (FINT1), *not teaching* the concept at all is not really an option:

I would like...say that the teacher does not have such a choice that they [issues dealing with the concept of history politics] would not come up [in class]. They have to. If you use like the curriculum and the accepted didactic methods there [in class], they come up inevitably. You cannot avoid them.

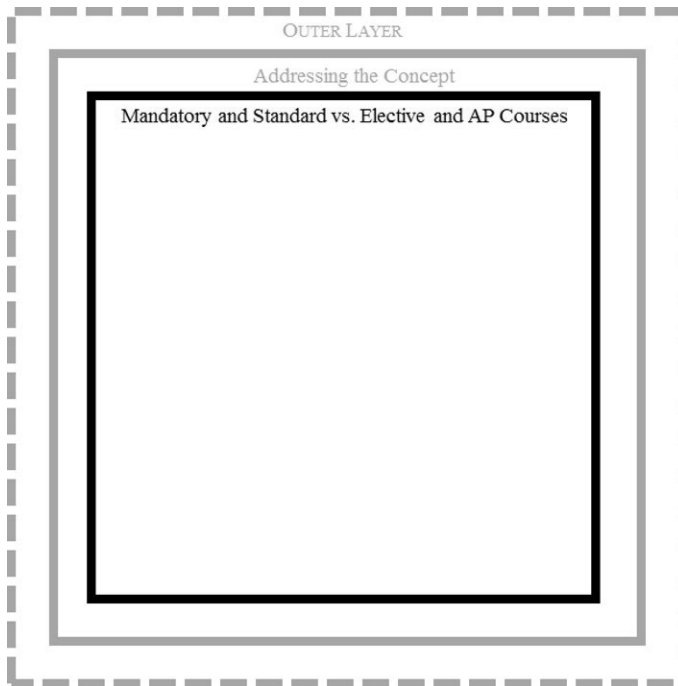
Similarly, in the United States, a teacher (USAT5) asserted that critical thinking skills are certainly something that the state and the school district are pushing for, even if it is up to interpretation how this is actually to be done. However, not all the teachers agreed about the necessity to teach the concept. In the case of Finland, the answers given by one of the teachers (FINT6) were in direct opposition to the earlier statement voiced by FINT1 concerning the constraints set by the curriculum:

[I do not address the topic] partly because like I do not have to...Simply put, because I don't have to. It sounds kind of rotten. Like I don't think about like the politics, that it is necessarily to be taught. Because of like these external pressures. It is an interesting topic like of course, but...

Similarly, the discussions with the American teachers suggest that teaching the concept is certainly not mandated. An American teacher (USAT2, who was teaching only U.S. History) stated the following: "Just as matter of teaching it [the concept of history politics] comes across. But I guess, it wouldn't have to... You could be a U.S. History teacher and do your job and never touch that idea." A fellow North Carolina teacher (USAT10) concurred: "[T]hat's [teaching the concept of history politics] not at all that the point of History education in the United States." Mirroring the previous viewpoints, USAT3 affirmed the following: "Do we focus on doing it [i.e., teaching the concept]? I can't really think of bias being taught specifically" (it should be noted that it is not entirely clear whether he/she was referring to his/her own teaching, his/her impression of the teaching of others, or both).³²

³² He/she was likely referring to other teachers—otherwise, he/she would have completely negated his/her earlier statement about bringing up the topic into class.

3.2 Mandatory and Standard vs. Elective and AP Courses—Ring 2 of the Outer Layer of the HPDM



The second question in the outer layer of the HPDM addresses the differences identified between the mandatory and standard courses on the one hand and the elective and AP courses on the other hand. Reading through the materials, it became obvious that, at times, different types of courses addressed the concept of history politics in a different manner. When it comes to curriculum documents and textbooks addressing the topic, it suffices to say that different kinds

Figure 8. Ring 2 of the outer level of the HPDM: mandatory and standard vs. elective and AP courses.

of courses may address the concept differently. These differences are examined in more detail later.

With the teachers, however, the case was again somewhat different. The identified difference when it came to the manner in which the participants taught the concept was more about quantity rather than quality. As an American teacher (USAT8) stated, “I think at each level [the concept is] addressed, it’s just the intensity and amount varies.” In Finland, many teachers (for example, FINT3, FINT5, and FINT7) suggested that the topic is covered more during the elective courses, whereas in the United States, one teacher (USAT2, who had taught/was teaching only U.S. History courses) asserted that history politics was more of an explicit component of the AP (U.S. History) curriculum. Other teachers in the U.S. (such as USAT9, for example) claimed that the situation was actually the opposite and the concept is analyzed more in the standard courses. Several reasons, such as “student quality,” the amount of mandated content, and the demands of standardized testing, balanced the scales one way or another. Although an

interesting issue in its own right, this line of questioning was not followed further, as the amount of how much the topic is taught falls, as mentioned, outside the scope of this study.

But when it comes to whether the concept is approached in a different manner altogether depending on whether the course is mandatory/standard or elective/AP, *none* of the teachers suggested anything of the sorts, even though they were explicitly asked about the matter. Instead, many Finnish and American teachers disagreed altogether with the notion that there is any difference between the types of classes, at least when it came to the end result. At best, it was suggested that there is perhaps some difference in terms of how early this viewpoint is taken into consideration. For example, an American teacher (USAT1) asserted that he/she gets to the debates about bias quicker with the AP students, whereas with the standard-level students, it took months to build the scaffold before they were able to start addressing these issues. Yet he/she never suggested there was any difference other than the pace it takes to get to the topic. Another respondent (USAT5) similarly stated the following:

In a standard level class they need more scaffolding to understand what they're going to have to accomplish in order to be able to discuss things...Does it happen faster in a higher level course? Yes...They've already had the scaffolding. So...it is a slight difference, but it's not a difference in my expectation. It's a difference in how we get there. And how soon we get there. But we get there in all of them.

3.2.1 Aims and Goals, Content, and Exercises—Ring 3 of the Outer Layer of the HPDM

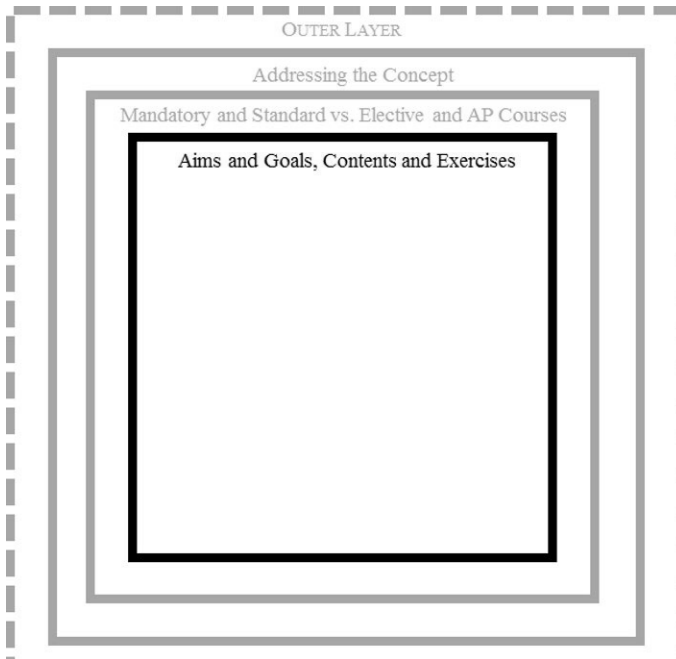


Figure 9. Ring 3 of the Outer Level of the HPDM: Aims and Goals, Content and Exercises.

The third and final question in the outer layer of the HPDM is whether the concept of history politics is approached as an Aim or Goal for the studies, as factual Content to be learned, or as an Exercise that has to be done.³³

First, the materials indicated that the talk was occasionally about the Aims and/or Goals of education. In these instances, it is asserted that something should be studied (and possibly also learned). It is not delineated, however, how one should actually achieve

these Aims. For example, notice how under the title “History and the reproduction of history” in the 2003 Chinese trial curriculum, the Aims and Goals of one of the elective courses in terms of what the students ought to understand and know are “[u]nderstanding the objectivity of the historical process as well as the subjectivity of the reproduction of history” (CHNC). My interpretation is that when such Aims or Goals for studies are presented, they essentially mean that the theme in question should be studied comprehensively—i.e., it should include both teaching Content and presenting the students with Exercises. Let us examine the two separately.

Second, sometimes the readership is presented with Content to be learned. This means that the audience is *told* something about the concept of history politics. For example, consider how the following picture caption from a Finnish textbook *tells* the reader (allegedly) factual information about Kalevala:

³³ When talking about these three distinctive ways of addressing the topic, they are written with a capital letter throughout the study.

[The Karelian and Finnish national epic] Kalevala is not a trustworthy source about the ancient past of the Finnish nation. Despite this, the mythical themes of the work were harnessed to evoke the Finns' consciousness of their own history and about their special national character. (FINB2015A3, p. 33)

Third and finally, in some instances, the students are also presented with Exercises, in which they are required to use what they have learned to produce new information or recap factual information that they have learned. For example, consider the following end-of-chapter "Review Question" in one of the American textbooks: "Why did armed struggle [against Native Americans] continued as late as 1890, despite the U.S. 'peace policy' that was proclaimed in the 1870s?" (USAB2015C, p. 537).

It should be noted that sometimes, the three different types of passages of text mix, and it can be very hard to distinguish between them. This was especially evident in Finnish textbooks. Consider, for example, the following passage from the opening pages of a textbook that introduces the reader to the structure of the book. Notice how the passage blurs the distinction between Aims and Goals on the one hand and Content on the other:

The interpretation spreads [in the book] highlight some central chain of events during an era. Differing views of the event are introduced. The text and the documents as well as questions related to it open up the ambiguous nature of history research. The aim is to understand the nature of history science. (FINB2015A2, p. 4)

On other occasions, the reader is presented with passages of text, where questions are prefaced with information about the topic (i.e., Content and Exercises intermingle):

All the countries which participated in the First World War produced propaganda which served their own goals. Newspaper articles, flyers, cartoons and posters were distributed in the countries, seeking to solidify the populace's positive attitudes towards the war. The posters can be divided into three types: those seeking to support the warfare financially, those seeking to construct a negative image of the enemy and recruitment posters.

- a) Find from the Internet propaganda posters from countries belonging both to the Allies and to the Central Powers.
- b) Assemble a picture gallery, where you classify different types of posters produced in different countries.

- c) Evaluate the type of posters, their foremost goals, their potential to influence their target audience, the relevance of the publication year, similarities and differences and other qualities.
- d) Present the posters to the group. (FINB2015A2, p. 83)

Occasionally, these questions were accompanied by instructions on how to answer them. In the case of these “mock questions,” an Exercise is, in fact, a Content passage. For example, Finnish students are expected to analyze a Nazi war propaganda poster and wartime statistics of airplane production in certain countries participating in the war. They are then presented with the following question: “Compare the picture that the documents below paint of Germany’s chances of success in the Second World War. What could explain the picture that they paint?” However, they are then presented with additional instructions that make it clear that the passage is not an Exercise after all, but rather Content presented in the form of an Exercise: “Take source criticism into consideration. The poster was war propaganda. Its purpose was to generate faith in German success and create a mental image of a justified war. The poster does not give a truthful picture of Germany’s situation, because in 1942/43 German war luck had already changed” (FINB2015C2, p. 94–95). Moreover, on some occasions, even binding documents include parts that are in fact, not binding. Namely, the American AP History documents conclude with a section titled “History Instructional Approaches,” which is meant to provide possible approaches and exercises for the teacher. However, this section of the document serves as a sort of supplementary role and cannot be seen as a binding document. For example, as one of these documents (USACC) states, “[t]his section on instructional approaches provides teachers with recommendations and examples of how to implement the course in practical ways in the classroom” (p. 99). Therefore, it cannot be interpreted that these documents approach the topic at hand through Exercises.

Whereas with curriculum documents and textbooks, the demarcation is usually easy to make, with teachers, the case is again a bit more complex. In the individual statements concerning how the respondents dealt with the concept of history politics, a clear distinction could not be made between teaching the concept either through Content or through Exercises. This results from the fact that during the interviews, the teachers were not explicitly asked to differentiate between the two when giving concrete examples of how they taught the concept. Consider, for example, the following comment made by one of the American teachers:

Like an example [of the use of history politics] we do is Abraham Lincoln, [who] was a president during the Civil War. He is remembered as a hero ‘cause he kept the country together and ended slavery. But we also go and look at why do we remember him that way versus some of the abuses he had, where he was kind of

dictatorial when he was in power. So how we're remembering him and how it gets revised. (USAT1)

The teacher is clearly explaining how they address the concept of history politics in class by using the way Abraham Lincoln is remembered as an example. Yet, he/she does not specify whether “going and looking at the way he is remembered” means that the students are simply told how Lincoln has been remembered or whether the students are, for example, expected to find this out by themselves—or both. However, it was clear from the interviews that although at the level of *individual* statements, such as the one above, a distinction could not be made; at a more *general level*, both are approaches that are part of teaching. The fact that (allegedly) factual information was conveyed came through the interviews very clearly, as indicated by the comments cited throughout the analysis. When asked about teaching the concept through Exercises, many also elaborated on a very general level that this is indeed also the case. One Finnish teacher (FINT1) asserted, for example, that “[i]n class we also do like train interpreting documents. For example, I just did that yesterday. More than one time yesterday.” He/she continued: “We bring to the classroom something that originates from the era under scrutiny... And then like the assignment for the student is to evaluate like what kind of like trustworthy information can we deduce from it like in history science. And then it of course goes to where historical knowledge comes from, so the question... becomes like usually at this point this kind of very skill-oriented at the same time.” Another teacher (FINT4) concurred: “Usually I like... use different kinds of contradiction exercises in teaching. I mean, contradictory texts, contradictory pictures. And then the basic question is always: ‘Who wants to tell? What? In what position? To whom? Why?’ And we train this practically throughout the entire high school.” Meanwhile, in the United States, one teacher (USAT7) stated that he/she addresses the topic through the “[c]orroboration of primary sources. So I would say: ‘What do other documents say? So we have this document here written from this era, this time, this date roughly. Okay, so are there any other primary sources we can examine where it says something different?’” Another participant (USAT1) explained: “[T]hey [the students] have to be reading some sort of primary source every day and they have to be analyzing it.” According to some teachers, the reason for these Exercises had to do with their perception of how actual learning happens. A Finnish teacher (FINT5) stated, “[a]nd like this interpretational nature of different kinds of information... it has to be trained, it doesn't come naturally.” Meanwhile, FINT8 remarked: “But like in a way in my opinion the only way how you can really learn... or like recognize the political use of history [is] to really do some exercises.” It is noteworthy, however, that the difference regarding how much the concept was taught was also reflected in the role of Exercises. For instance, one (FINT6) teacher implied that he/she does not do Exercises where the concept would be addressed.

3.3 The Inner Layer of the History Politics Dimensions Model

The inner layer of the HPDM comprises the different possible approaches in addressing the concept of history politics (either as an Aim or Goal of the studies, as Content, or as an Exercise on the one hand, and as part of mandatory/standard or elective/AP courses on the other). In this inner layer of the HPDM, several dichotomous dimensions that determine the manner in which the concept is addressed were identified. First, the conceptual proximity varies. Occasionally, the concept is clearly addressed, whereas sometimes, this is only a possibility (Dimension 1). Second, the concept can be addressed either at an abstract, theoretical level or by talking about matters in a specific time and place (Dimension 2). Third, when the discussion concerns a specific time and place, contextualizations vary from distant times and places to the surrounding society (Dimension 3). The different possible alternatives in these three dimensions together form six different ways in which the concept can be addressed. The three dimensions and six emerging fields can be summarized in visual form as follows in Figure 10.

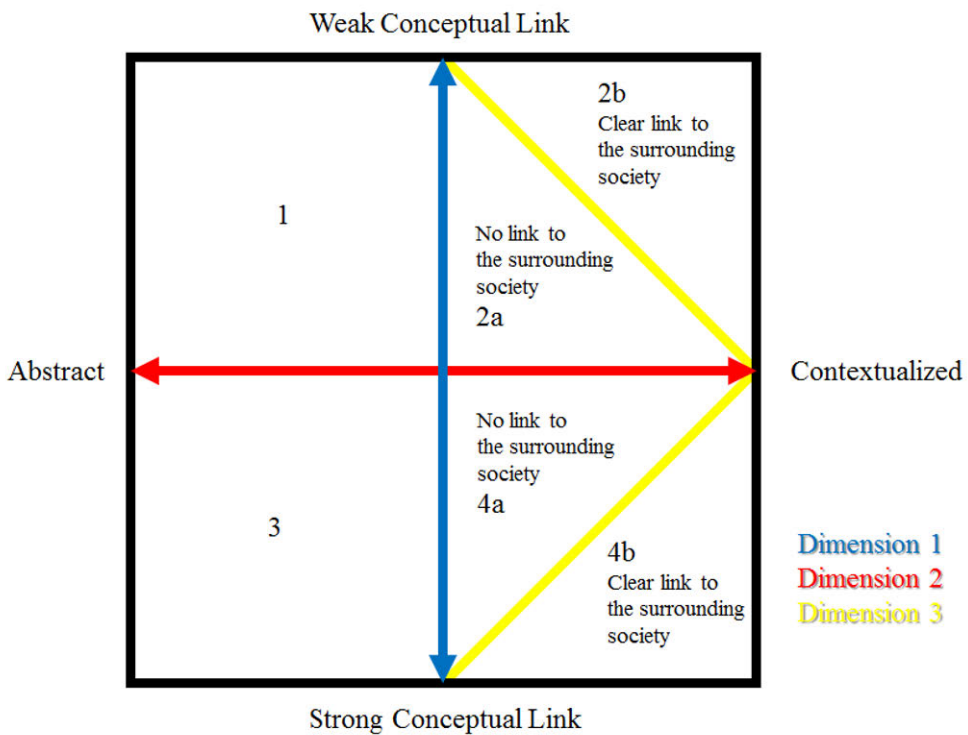


Figure 10. Outline of the inner layer of the HPDM.

3.3.1 Ambiguous or Explicit Talk about the Concept of History Politics—Dimension 1 in the Inner Layer of the HPDM

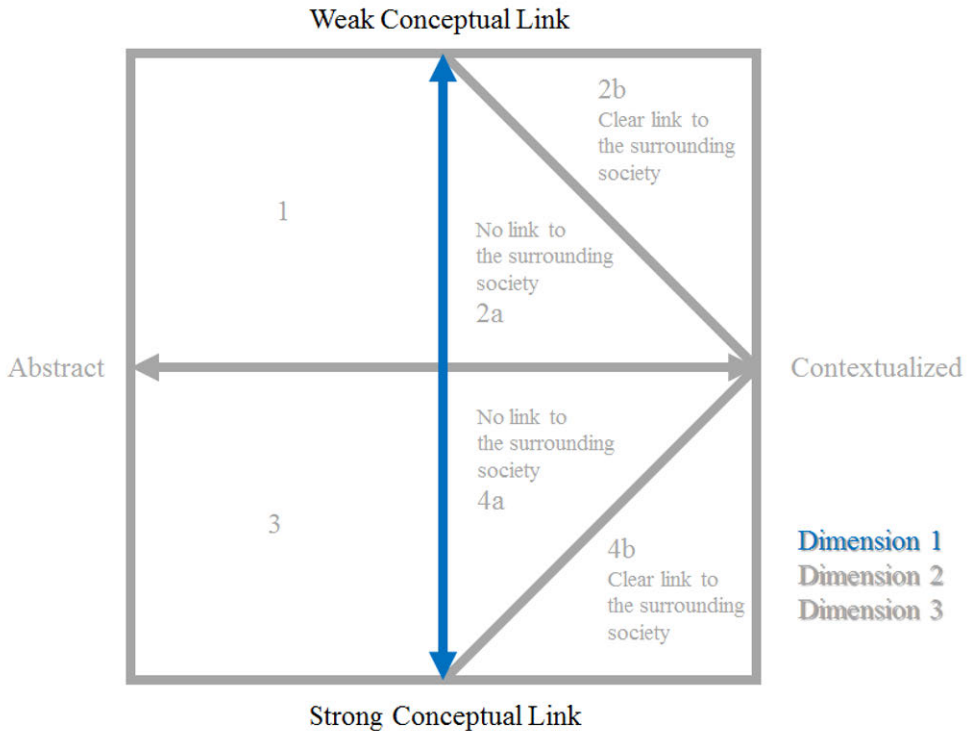


Figure 11. Dimension 1 in the inner layer of the HPDM—Ambiguous or explicit talk about the concept of history politics.

The first observation emerging from the data was that it is not always entirely clear whether a paragraph is indeed talking about the concept of history politics or not. A close reading of the materials revealed two different kinds of passages: in some, the conceptual link to history politics was identified as weak, whereas in others, as strong.

What was common in the former case was that the choice of words was so ambiguous or unclear that it was not entirely clear whether the text was in fact addressing history politics or not. Yet, this is certainly one valid interpretation. Consider, for example, the following Aim or Goal from the Finnish 2015 curriculum, where the description of course number six (Cultures of the World Meet) in Finland runs as follows:

The course focuses on the concept of culture and the changes in the thinking regarding cultural differences. In addition [the course] focuses on how the attitude towards different cultures has varied with the changes in thinking and with the changes in societies. Culture is understood as a wholesome concept. The course focuses on the encounters and interactions between Europeans and extra-European cultures during different times. (FINC, p. 175)

Is this passage of text talking about history politics—the intentional misinterpretation of history motivated by political ambitions? This is arguably not the most obvious interpretation of the meaning of the passage. Indeed, it takes a considerable stretch of the imagination to link “attitudes towards different cultures” and “encounters and interactions” to the concept of history politics, as the use of history politics has arguably been a very salient part of the Europeans’ relationship with African and South American cultures, for example. Yet, the statements in this category can very well be seen as references to something else. For example, the passage above could more likely be interpreted as talking about racist attitudes and actions (which, of course, can and often have been linked to the use of history politics in one way or another). To cite further examples, consider the following paragraphs. A Finnish textbook discusses the travels of Marco Polo in the following manner: “Some historians...do not believe Polo himself visited China. Instead, his story is alleged to be based on other people’s stories” (FINB2015C6, p. 61). Meanwhile, a passage from the *America’s History* textbook (USAB2015C) asserts that, “[President Woodrow] Wilson famously praised the film *Birth of a Nation* (1915), which depicted the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan in heroic terms” (p. 663), whereas another American textbook expects students to answer how the message of a cartoon in the so-called Dreyfus Affair is “contradicted by facts” (USAB2015C, p. 693). Do these passages suggest that history was intentionally “twisted and turned”? Moreover, was this done to further political ambitions? In all instances, the possibility that the statement is talking about history politics is very real, but arguably this is not the only—and in many cases not the most likely—possible interpretation. Maybe Marco Polo did visit China after all. Maybe portraying the Klan in “heroic terms” is a reference to something completely different. Maybe the film was simply taking a *moral* stance in favor of the KKK’s cause. Maybe the cartoon is contradicted by facts simply because the author got facts *unintentionally* wrong. No further clues are given to ascertain which possible interpretation is correct. What is of importance, however, is that the reference to history politics is arguably one possible interpretation of the passage—even if, on some occasions, such as in the very first example, it is a very remote one. Sometimes, even a detail as minor as quotation marks may suggest something of this nature. The *American Traditions & Encounters* textbook tells (USAB2015D, p. 867) the reader how

Japanese Second World War kamikaze pilots “volunteered” for their suicide missions. Undoubtedly, the use of quotation marks suggests that, in reality, this was not the case, lending credence to the interpretation that the passage is in fact dealing with the concept of history politics. Obviously someone—although we do not know who, where, and when—has claimed that the pilots did not volunteer for their deadly missions.

Certain limitations should be pointed out. First, statements where the conceptual link was identified as weak were found in both curriculum documents and textbooks. The teachers, however, never mentioned teaching the concept in this way. This results mainly from the research setting: the teachers were *explicitly* asked about teaching the concept according to how the interviews were framed.³⁴ Therefore, there is no reason to suspect that they were ambiguous about “depicting something in heroic terms” or asserting that something was “alleged,” so that there is no knowing whether the talk was indeed about history politics or not.

Second, it should be noted that, as already suggested above, even in the curriculum documents and textbooks, the conceptual link to history politics is not equally weak in all passages. This ambiguity is certainly the most obvious

³⁴ The teachers had received the interview framework in advance and, on some occasions, when the teacher had not familiarized himself/herself with the questionnaire, I began our talk by asking whether they were familiar with these theoretical notions that I associated with the concept of history politics (see the interview framework in the appendices at the end). USAT6, for example, responded in the following manner: “[T]his is something that we talked about for at length when I was in graduate school...[A] lot of the theory that we talked about was memory and memory politics...[and] the power of memory and how it changes and gets shifted.” When asked whether he/she was familiar with the concept, USAT3 confirmed and explained in detail how in the modern American education system, History teaching has been subjected to precisely such pressures: “[I]t [history politics] is definitely happening here in the United States. To give you a couple of examples...the state of Oklahoma...in 2015 banned teaching Advancement Placement US History because they felt like it was too liberal. We discuss issues over the course of teaching US History...the treatment of Native Americans...all these ramifications of slavery and, you know, the pros and the cons of US imperialism for example with the Philippines. So this led to Oklahoma banning the course. States like Kansas have limited individual content. The state of Texas famously ten years ago had various committees where they reduced the role of one of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, because they didn’t like his stand on religious equality. So they literally reduced his presence in textbooks. So it’s definitely happening here.” Thus, when it comes to the interviews, the conceptual link to history politics is consistently considered as being strong. For example, when asked about concrete examples that the teachers used to introduce the topic, even vague answers such as “Finnish history” or references to Nazi propaganda were seen as addressing the topic, because the whole interview had been *explicitly* framed so that it focused on the concept of history politics. For an overview of the interview framework, please see Appendix I.

contribution to the subjective elements in the analysis discussed earlier. At times, it was indeed very hard to draw a line between the passages of text that did or did not refer to the concept of history politics. In order for the reader to understand this problem arising from the ambiguous nature of the passages of text, I would like to begin by quoting the Renaissance era French philosopher Michel de Montaigne, who fittingly stated (1965) that “[i]f falsehood, like truth, had only one face, we would be in better shape...But the reverse of truth has a hundred thousand shapes and a limitless field” (p. 24). Life is full of all sorts of misunderstandings, misquotations, villainy, mischief, lies, swindles, deceits, and humbug. And in narrations about history—especially in simplified and generalized ones, such as school textbooks—it is not always possible (or even necessary from the point of view of the original author) to explain in fine detail whether a quote is the of “reverse of truth” and if so, what kind—even if, for the purposes of my work, delineating this difference is of utmost importance. Indeed, on some occasions, the connection to the concept of history politics is arguably very weak. Let us examine this statement more closely. Consider, for example, the following passage from an American textbook from the 1980s: “Baseball was *not* invented in 1839 by Abner Doubleday, though his claims were taken seriously at one time” (USAB1985B2, p. 152, original emphasis). It would be quite a leap to identify intentional misinterpretation of history and political motivations here. In many cases, it is even harder to imagine that the intended audience—the students—would be able to identify such a possibility when even a scholar studying the topic through the prism of “history politics”—that is, the author—struggles to do so. However, as argued, this argument can safely be discarded due to the fact that this work is not a reception study seeking to uncover what the students actually learn from the attained curriculum. Let us examine further examples that elucidate the very hard demarcations I had to make while analyzing the material. Some passages, for example, described contrasting and opposing takes on certain historical events—either discussing what factually happened or how the events should be interpreted in symbolic or moral terms. A picture caption explaining the dispute over the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn, Estonia, is a good example:

A demonstrator opposed the relocation of the Bronze Soldier Statue of Tallinn to a new location in the spring of 2007. For the Russian minority in Estonia, the statue erected in 1947 represents the victory of the Soviet army over Hitler’s Germany, whereas for the Estonians, the statue is a symbol of Russian occupation. The relocation caused massive riots and aggravated even further the already-tense relationship between Russia and Estonia. (FINB2015A2, p. 133)

Although neither intentional misinterpretation nor political motivations are explicitly mentioned, it is arguably a very justifiable argument that either one—or both—given

the interpretation of the same event, is in fact engaging in history politics. In some instances, even the words “history politics” are used, but their meaning might differ from the one used in this study, as the source does not explicitly define the term. Consider the following Exercise from a Finnish textbook:

What kind of **history politics** is linked with the concepts:

- a) Drift wood b) Separate war?

(FINB2015C3, p. 125, emphasis added)³⁵

Although often, as seen above, it is unclear whether history was misinterpreted and whether this was done due to political ambitions, this is not always the case. Sometimes, at least some of the elements of history politics are present. To begin with, some passages clearly suggest that history *was* intentionally misrepresented, even if the motive to do so remains somewhat unclear. In the case of Finland, the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* textbooks series, for example, suggests that the reason might be that historical sources are based on “hearsay” and suggests that “the one who has written the source wants to portray his or her own actions the actions of someone else in a positive light and he or she is therefore distorting the events” (FINB2015A1, p. 10). Other passages from Finnish textbooks describe the emergence of the so-called Hitler diaries in the 1980s (FINB2015B1, p. 9) and how in earlier history writing, the surprise and fear of the South American Indians meeting Europeans for the first time were exaggerated (FINB2015B1, p. 113). But why this was the case is not elaborated. Maybe the motivations for forging the Hitler diaries, for example, were purely financial. When the *Human Legacy* textbook (USAB2015C) is discussing the 1982 Falklands War, the reader is told that “[Argentinian] military leaders lied to the public about the war via false reports of victory. When the truth was discovered, the ruling military was humiliated and discredited” (p. 978). Meanwhile, *America’s History* (USAB2015C) states that during the race for the presidency of the United States in 1840,

Whig speakers assailed “Martin Van Ruin” [Martin Van Buren] as a manipulative politician with aristocratic tastes—a devotee of fancy wines, elegant clothes, and polite refinement, as indeed he was. Less truthfully, they portrayed [William Henry] Harrison as a self-made man who lived contentedly in a log cabin and quaffed hard cider, a drink of the common people. In fact, Harrison’s father was a wealthy Virginia planter who had signed the Declaration

³⁵ The two concepts in the Exercise refer to interpretations regarding Finnish war history. They are further discussed in other examples later on.

of Independence, and Harrison himself lived in a series of elegant mansions. (p. 338–339)

Although political motivations are certainly the most obvious explanation for such bending of the truth, as we can see, they are not explicitly brought to the attention of the readers. In the case of China, consider the following passage from a People's Press textbook. The reference to "fabricating news" clearly means that untrue narratives of the past were knowingly and willingly transmitted:

The first visit of Mao Zedong to the Soviet Union was also one of the few overseas visits in his lifetime...During the initial contacts, Mao Zedong implicitly suggested that the two sides should negotiate a "sweet" deal.³⁶ For a while, the Soviet side did not understand Mao Zedong's intentions, and consequently during the first ten days the talks between the two sides did not achieve considerable headway...Some western news services even fabricated news that [Mao] Zedong was under Stalin's house arrest. (CHNB2015A1, p. 86)

Even though it is evident from this passage that Western news chose to not stick to the truth, the motive to do so is not. One possible interpretation (but certainly not the only one) was that they were furthering some sort of political agenda. It could also be argued that they were trying to increase their sales, for example. Similarly, Chinese textbooks state that in the interrogation reports of the inquisition, the confessions were always recorded as having been given willingly, despite the fact that they were often obtained through torture (CHNB2015A4, p. 56). One could certainly think of other motives for such behavior—for example, the sadism of the torturers and their subsequent desire to hide their actions. Finally, consider the following passage: "Many of the official dynastic histories of China were compiled by the new dynasty. Therefore in the historical scrolls the winners often *embellished* themselves" (CHNB2015A8, p. 18, emphasis added). "Embellishing" would certainly suggest that history was intentionally misrepresented, even though the motive is not entirely clear.

Meanwhile, some passages turn this entire setting around 180 degrees by talking ambiguously about actions where the motives *were* clearly political, without clearly linking these actions to intentional misinterpretations of history. Hence, the meaning of the term "history politics" in this passage from a Finnish textbook is again somewhat different from the definition employed in my work:

³⁶ Literally "both a 'good looking as well tasty' thing" (Chinese: "一个 '既好看又好吃' 的东西").

When history is used to further political goals, the issue at hand is history politics...However, not all use of history is history politics. Some turn to history for entertainment purposes or use it to better understand the current world. The use of history becomes history politics when the goal is political influencing. (FINB2015B2, p. 13)

Similarly, in Finland, *Kaikkien aikojen historia* states that “[t]he most hated race in the Third Reich were the Jews. According to the Nazi *propaganda* it was them who were to blame for Germany’s misfortunes” (FINB2015A2, p. 60, emphasis added). Meanwhile, the *Forum* series explains: “[During the First World War] the effective *propaganda* of the English turned the minds of the Americans to support the war” (FINB2015C2, p. 36, emphasis added). The question is, although “propaganda” arguably refers to political ambitions, does it also refer to intentional misrepresentations of history in these passages? The statements themselves (or the accompanying ones) offer no clues, so it is again up to the reader’s interpretation. After all, not all propaganda utilizes (true or false) history as arguments, yet this may very well be the case. A Finnish textbook also tells us that “[t]he politico-historical interpretations of the winners of the Civil War [of 1918] were strongly present in schools in the Inter-War period (FINB2015A3, p. 83). It is also explained, for example, how Finns “used history” (p. 13) and how “historians searched history for evidence” (p. 12) to justify the Åland Islands and Eastern Karelia as being part of Finland in the 1920s and 1940s, respectively. At the same time, one Exercise asks the students to answer how the Holocaust has been “utilized” in politics (FINB2015C2, p. 69) without elaborating what this “utilization” actually means. In one of the American textbooks, the reader is told, for example, how King William of Germany “used a disagreement over domestic policy to dismiss Bismarck” (USAB2015E, p. 833). Although the motive for action is clearly political (dismissing Bismarck), the question is, once again: what does “using a disagreement” mean here? Does it mean that King William intentionally and knowingly misinterpreted history to further this agenda? It is certainly a possible interpretation, yet not the *only* one. The same goes for the actual meaning of “telling myths” in the following passage from *Human Legacy*: “Alongside the gods, Greeks also told myths about heroes. Stories about these heroes were used to teach Greeks where they came from and what sort of people they should try to be” (USAB2015C, p. 132). Or consider the actual meaning of the verb “persuade” in this passage from *Western Heritage* (USAB2015E):

In February 1820...the duke of Berri, son of Artois and heir to the throne [of France] after his father, was murdered by a lone assassin. The ultraroyalists persuaded Louis XVIII that the murder was the result of his ministers’

cooperation with liberal politicians, and the king responded with repressive measures. (p. 628)

Does it mean that the ultraroyalists intentionally lied to King Louis XVIII about the nature of the assassination? Or does it mean something less sinister? For example, did the mentioned ultraroyalists really believe the narrative they were pushing? After all, pushing a false narrative is arguably not lying (nor history politics, for that matter) if one thinks it is true. Lying—including the use of history politics—involves the element of intentionality. Consequently, the actual meaning of “persuasion” here is left up to the reader. Consider also the following passage from a People’s Press textbook:

In 1950, a civil war broke out between North and South Korea. Immediately, the United States dispatched troops to intervene. Soon after, it [the United States] *manipulated* the United Nations to form the so-called “United Nations army,” which was mainly composed of American troops, directly participating in the Korean War and severely threatening China’s security. (CHNB2015A1, p. 157, emphasis added)

Obviously, the actions of the United States were motivated by political considerations, namely the desire to intervene in the war. But what does “manipulation” mean in this context? Does it mean that the Americans somehow intentionally misrepresented historical events to influence the United Nations? This is certainly possible. However, it could just as well mean, for example, that the Americans used very convincing rhetoric that appealed to emotions to justify their actions. Next, consider the meaning of “using a Japanese soldier as an excuse” in the following passage from the very same textbook:

On July 7, 1937, the Japanese army used a missing Japanese soldier as an excuse to demand an entry to Wanping county town for searches. After facing a rejection from the Chinese defenders, they immediately bombarded Wanping county town and Lugou bridge and began a total invasion of China. (p. 35)

Did a Japanese soldier really go missing? And if so, did the Japanese know about his whereabouts and his fate, for example? The text itself does not offer conclusive proof to determine what is actually meant by the phrase. Similar references to using excuses are being utilized when referring to, for example, how Russia used the assistance of Yugoslavs as an excuse to expand in the Balkans at the beginning of the 20th century (CHNB2015A6, p. 8), how Germany and Austria-Hungary saw the shooting of Archduke Franz Ferdinand as an excuse to launch military actions in

1914 (CHNB2015A6, p. 9), and how the first emperor of China used aiding the state of Yan as an excuse to attack the state of Zhao in 236 BC (CHNB2015A7, p. 4). Although the exact choice of words is different, in a similarly ambiguous manner, the readership is told, for example, how the Japanese army “created” the North China incident “in order to divide and erode North China” and how Hitler “created” the Reichstag fire in order to suppress communists and progressives (CHNB2015A1, p. 36; CHNB2015A6, p. 44). The books also explain how Charles I of England “misinterpreted” the provisions of the 1628 Petition of Right in order to impose taxes (CHNBA5, p. 47; CHNB2015B5, p. 15). The political motivation behind the actions is clear, yet the nature of the actions is not.

In contrast to such vague and ambiguous use of language, on other occasions, the conceptual link was identified as being strong. Without resorting to an extreme-relativist view about the meaning of words and language, I argue that in these instances, there is absolutely no question that the paragraphs are about history politics. All the elements of history politics come together: first, it is made clear that history is intentionally being misinterpreted, and second, there is no doubt that this is done to further political ambitions. Consider, for example, the following two passages of text from a Finnish and an American textbook, respectively. Attention should be paid to the two crucial determinants mentioned above. First, it is stated that “[t]he concept of history politics means interpreting a historical event or phenomenon in such a manner that it furthers desired political goals” (FINB2015C3, p. 13). The other passage says:

Napoleon [Bonaparte] also used and invented opportunities to destroy his enemies...in 1804, he violated the sovereignty of the German state of Baden to seize and execute the Bourbon duke of Enghien (1772–1804). The duke was accused of participation in a royalist plot, though Bonaparte knew him to be innocent. (USAB2015E, p. 583)

Notice how, in the latter example it is very clear how history was intentionally manipulated. Although Napoleon Bonaparte knew what had actually happened, he still went on to claim that the duke of Enghien had participated in a plot. Moreover, Bonaparte did this to destroy a political enemy.

As a final point, it should be noted that within one single passage of text, both weak and strong conceptual links can sometimes intermingle. Consider how the following long passage of text from a Finnish book under the heading “Mythical interpretations” utilized, on the one hand, very ambiguous wordings, and on the other, very clearly states that history politics was indeed at play:

Starting from the 1560s, Sweden expanded with territorial conquests and the kingdom needed a past, which would defend its ambitions to become a great power. The rulers were satisfied when scholars published works in which the Swedes were connected with the ancient Germanic nation of the Goths and with the mythical Scythians of the antiquity. The origin of the Finns was traced back to the sons of Noah, who were thought to have conquered the world after the great flood. Historians looked for inspiration from the Bible and from tales from the antiquity and invented themselves new events and heroes. For example, the ancient stories about the happy northern Hyperboreans were connected with the North. A linguistic kinship was sought for Finnish from Hebrew and Ancient Greek. The explanation about the origin of the nation was used to justify the dominant political status quo and political ambitions. If Sweden could be proven to be the birthplace of the civilization of the antiquity, it could more easily demand a great power status in Europe. Some historians doubted the eloquent interpretations right from the beginning, but too vocal skeptics were sidelined when decisions about funding and posts were being made. The critical voices strengthened during the 18th century when Sweden lost its great power status, and history was no longer needed to support politics. Simultaneously the talk about source criticism began in the academic world. The trustworthiness of sources was assessed in more detail and interest focused on folklore, the study on languages and primary sources...In the new interpretations, the history of the Finns was no longer as complimentary as before. Finns did not have great kingdoms, but instead the community had been quite primitive until the Western cultural influences had moved it as a part of Christian Europe. The Professor of the Academy of Turku, Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739–1804) rose to the forefront of new historical scholarship. He emphasized the importance of sources and familiarized himself with both historical sources as well with the gathered folklore...Albeit stories about a past as a great power were no longer being told, a basis for national identity was nevertheless being sought from the poetry and heroes of Kalevala. In independent Finland, it was important to create a united national story and to build a glorious history for Finland. For this reason, the interpretations about the past emphasized the unity and common roots of Finnish language and people. After the Second World War, the emphases of politics changed. The political pressure to find a common story had decreased, and the evolving research had changed the understanding of the origin of the people living in Finland. (FINB2015B5, p. 11–12)

3.3.2 Metatalk or Talk about Real Times and Places— Dimension 2 in the Inner Layer of the HPDM

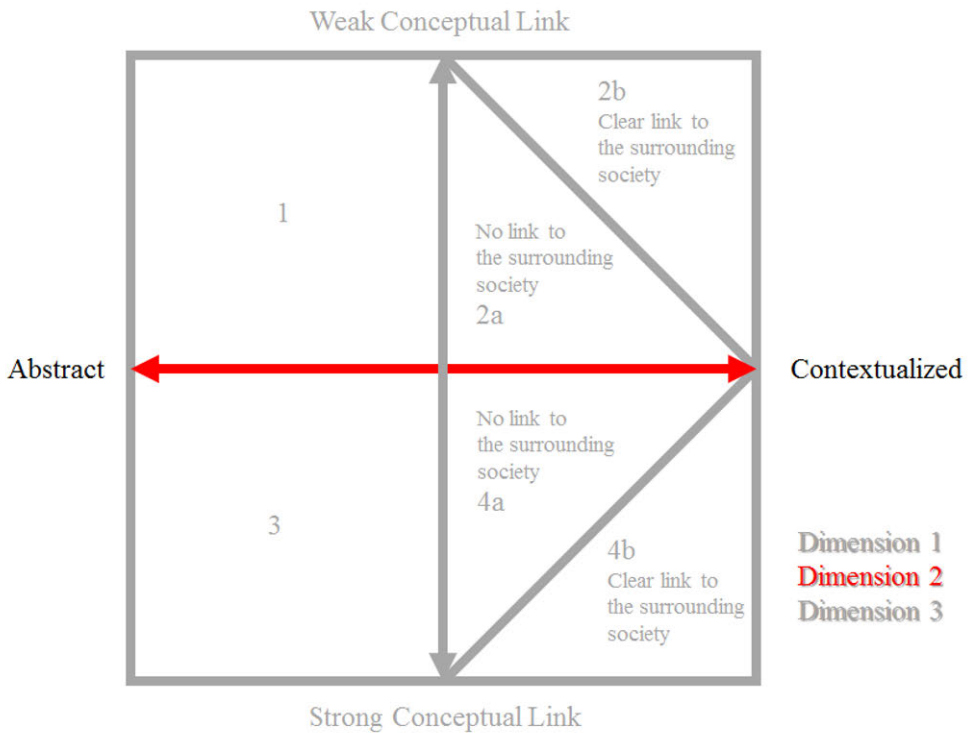


Figure 12. Dimension 2 in the inner layer of the HPDM—Metatalk or talk about real time and places.

A difference emerged from the data regarding the level of abstraction or contextualization. On some occasions, the concept is addressed at a very abstract, theoretical and/or methodological level. In these instances, the course undoubtedly gives *some* context to the statement, but the statement itself does not provide any further hints regarding its context. In other words, the students are offered meta-level knowledge about the phenomenon in question and receive only the necessary information needed in carrying out historical analysis, which seeks to identify the use of history politics. Consider, for example, the following passage from a Chinese textbook and notice how the statement is not talking about a particular time, place, or event in history. In a sense, it is an *ahistorical* statement: “Myths and history are different, but the contents of myths often reflect history” (CHNB2015A8, p. 30).

Some of these passages, such as the one above, address universal human traits. They seek to elucidate how humans behave (or have behaved) without elaborating whether they refer to a certain group of people or humanity as a whole. Next, the

following passage from a Finnish book series asserts that “[i]t is possible to influence the historical consciousness of the citizenry by passing laws which mandate how a certain phenomenon of history should be interpreted or how it should be called” (FINB2015B3, p. 10–12). Or consider the following passage from a Chinese textbook: “Myths and legends are often mixed with historical facts” (CHNB2015A8, p. 41). Meanwhile, other similar paragraphs address the epistemological and methodological starting points of history science. They explain to the student what makes certain statements about the past true(r) and/or how one arrives to these conclusions. For example, the Finnish *Historia ajassa* series textbook notes:

Historical knowledge is never absolutely certain. Instead, it comprises interpretations made by researchers. Understanding historical knowledge requires familiarity with historical sources and research methods as well as a critical approach to different kinds of interpretations. (FINB2015B1: 6)

Under the title “Analyzing assumptions and biases,” *The Americans* textbook (USAB2015A) tells students that “[a] bias is a prejudiced point of view. Historical accounts that are biased reflect the personal prejudices of the author or the historian and tend to be one-sided” (p. R15). Some of these passages dealing with epistemology and methodology also discuss the historical development of these viewpoints.³⁷ One of the books in the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series (FINB2015A4), for example, informs us that “[t]he German historian Leopold von Ranke developed the methods of history science and emphasized that the conclusions should be based on primary sources. History was an unknown world, and one had to give up modern day preconceptions in order to understand it” (p. 170). Furthermore, some of these passages also urge—some implicitly, others much more explicitly—students to put these ideas into practice when *doing* history.³⁸ Consider the following example: in the United States, *Human Legacy* subtly seeks to cultivate a certain kind of behavior in students:

Once you understand history as an argument, you have a crucial role to play in it. History can no longer be served on a silver platter for you to swallow whole.

³⁷ It should be noted that these statements are, of course, contextualized in the sense that they explain who contributed to the development of the philosophy of history (and also possibly when and where), but the actual contributions are not contextualized in any manner; they are just abstract notions about the nature of history and history research.

³⁸ Although such passages of text arguably represent neither Content, Exercises, nor Aims and Goals, in this study, they have been categorized as Content due to the fact that all these different types of text seek to cultivate certain skills not for their own sake, but to enable students to put these skills into practice.

Once you see history as an argument, you realize that for every major historical interpretation, there are multiple ways of viewing things. (USAB2015C, p. H23)

Certain caveats are in order, as the two different types of identified passages often intermingle and the line between general statements about human behavior and statements about epistemology and methodology is not always very clear. Notice, for example, how the following Content passage from a Finnish textbook discusses both the methodological starting points of history science and makes a universal statement about human behavior: “A text document is a primary source, which tells something about the phenomena of its time through the viewpoint of its author” (FINB2015A1, p. 64). Similarly, the following two passages from American textbooks blur this difference:

Muslim scholars also studied history. In the 1300s, Ibn Khaldun...wrote a history of the world. He made comments on general issues that still interest historians. For example, he warned historians against such basic errors as bias and praising rulers too highly in order to gain their favor. (USAB2015C, p. 272)

Every primary source—textual, visual or statistical—was created for a specific purpose. Even if the author is an eyewitness or participant, people construct different accounts of the same event, which are shaped by their perspective. That doesn’t necessarily mean the author intentionally wrote it to mislead or provide only part of the story, but every document is limited and imperfect in the information it provides. (USAB2015C, p. xlvii)

In contrast to such abstract, theoretical or methodological talk, in many instances, the passages of text are contextualized. This means that the student is given concrete, context-specific examples of events that have happened at a certain time and point in history. In contrast to the *ahistorical* talk described earlier, these passages are clearly *historical*: somebody did something in a certain place and time. Next, consider the following passage of text from the *Western Heritage* textbook in the United States. Notice how it clearly discusses events taking place at a certain time and point in history:

[I]n March 1819, a student named Karl Sand, a Burschenschaft member, assassinated the conservative dramatist August von Kotzebue, who had ridiculed the Burschenschaft movement. Sand, who was tried and publicly executed, became a nationalist martyr. Although Sand had acted alone, Metternich used

the incident to suppress institutions associated with liberalism. (USAB2015E, p. 624)³⁹

Another passage—an Exercise—in an older American textbook (USAB1985B1) tells students that “[t]he delegates of the Hartford Convention of 1814 were accused of treason by some of their opponents” and then asks the following three questions: “(a) What did they do that might be considered an act of treason? (b) Do you think they were guilty of treason? (c) Does the fact that the nation was at war at the time affect your answer?” (p. 237). Evidently, this Exercise directs attention to a particular time and place (the Hartford Convention of 1814 and its aftermath) rather than address matters in an abstract, non-contextualized manner. Or consider how this passage of text from a People’s Education Press textbook similarly talks about events in a particular time and place (in this case, after the 1911 revolution in China):

Before succeeding Sun Zhongshan⁴⁰ as the interim president, Yuan Shikai solemnly vowed to remain faithful to the Republic. However, after stealing the fruits of the revolution, he soon tore down the pretenses of a democratic republic and raised a butcher’s knife against the revolutionaries. (CHNB2015B7, p. 61)

Yet again, certain limitations should be noted. First, the more abstract passages sometimes intermingle with the contextualized ones in textbooks. This mixing

³⁹ Throughout this study, contextualized (“real life”) examples of history politics are brought to the attention of the reader. As will be seen later, such examples come from a seemingly endless range of different points and times in history and deal with various different kinds of events. Although understanding the historical background behind the events is of utmost importance in interpreting the meaning of these passages, I have chosen not to elaborate (or even inquire into) the historical backgrounds in extreme detail. The reason for this is two-fold. First, covering these issues would take excessive time and energy, and most importantly, would require an expertise that I do not possess. Elaborating in more detail the historical background of the example cited above would require familiarity with 19th century Austrian history—a field of which I know very little. Second, when it comes to the textbooks, the reader—the student—most likely does not (and is not expected to) possess this expertise either. He or she has to interpret the meaning of these passages relying only on the very same information provided in the books. Therefore, I have chosen to cite mainly the necessary background provided by the books themselves or by the respondents during the interviews. Only very rarely have I chosen to elaborate the matter in more detail. On these occasions, the additional information is something that the students in the respective countries or I as a researcher (as seen by the teachers) am expected to know, even if outsiders are not. For example, a Chinese student is expected to know that a reference to “New China” in a Chinese textbook means the People’s Republic (i.e., post-1949 era), but an outsider surely does not know this. Therefore, this additional information has been supplemented on some occasions.

⁴⁰ More commonly known by his Western name, Sun Yat-sen.

usually happens within a passage of text, but occasionally, even within one sentence. Consider the following rather long passage from a Finnish textbook, in which particular and general approaches to human behavior alternate throughout the text:

“Does Finland have a history?” asked Zacharias Topelius in 1843. The question was whether Finland had already been able to develop into such a cultured nation, which had the right to its own history. Topelius answered his rhetorical question negatively. The crucial point was that Finland was lacking a written history. Nothing was known of a nation, of which nothing had been written about. Well, the situation concerning knowledge about Finland was not quite as dire. Finns, as without exception all nations, had legends and ancient tales telling about the past, based on which historians had tried to build as glorious past, as possible for the Finns. Only after annexation to Russia, when Finland had become a clear geographical entity with its new borders, had the preconditions for a general presentation of Finnish history been established. In 1869, Yrjö Koskinen published a book called *Textbook on the History of the Finnish Nation* (Oppikirja Suomen kansan historiassa). In the foreword, he justified his book by stating that until now, the people of Finland had lacked a history and therefore had to be “fabricated.” The meaning of the last word has changed over time, but in this case, the expression hits the nail on the head. Throughout history, one of the purposes of history writing has been to produce information about the past, through which the formation of one’s own nation and state becomes understandable. In nationalism, this function rose to special prominence when the unique nature of the nation and its right to its own state began to be justified. When in the 19th century, history writing began to be used to construct Finland, it relied on contemporary state-of-the-art scientific history writing, which was represented by source-critical research developed in Germany. The genuine ambition was to justify the construction of Finland with scientific facts. However, there were and are all sorts of uses of history. In addition to history writing, the nation was also constructed with narratives, which cannot withstand scientific criticism. The most important thing for the use of history is not whether the arguments used are true or not, but the ambitions the use of history serves. (FINB2015A3, p. 33)

Or notice how the opening sentence in this picture caption titled “Counting scalps” from an American textbook is making universal statements, whereas the rest of the passage talks about a particular time and place in history:

Effective propaganda usually contains a grain of truth, in this case, the Indian warriors’ practice of scalping their wartime victims. Entitled “A scene on the frontiers practiced by the humane British and their worthy allies!”, this cartoon by Philadelphia artist William Charles accuses the British of paying the Indians

to kill—and then mutilate—American soldiers. “Bring me the scalps, and the King our master will reward you,” says the British officer in the cartoon. The verse at the bottom urges “Columbia’s Sons” to press forward their attack; otherwise, “The Savage Indian with his Scalping knife, / Or Tomahawk may seek to take your life.” (USAB2015C, p. 237)

Second, it is not always clear whether one is dealing with abstract or contextualized statements. Consider, for example, the following: “One of the most important weapons of information warfare is history politics. The history of the enemy is distorted, and one’s own history is embellished and explained in a favorable light. This kind of use of history is done to further one’s own political goals” (FINB2015A2, p. 13). Whether “information warfare” refers to warfare only in modern times or to warfare in general is not elaborated. Or notice how the final sentence in this passage is, in fact, talking about how sources should be used when analyzing modern crises:

International crises always have their own historical backgrounds and particularities, and the reasons of the crisis can stem very far from history...When compiling a report on a crisis, conflict or war, it is reasonable to examine the background of the events from the viewpoint of different actors and stakeholders. Very often, the different sides of a conflict appeal to history to seek for injustices committed by the opposing party. The political use of history is one of the most important means of war in the propaganda war that is part of crises. In the analysis of *contemporary crises*, the importance of media and source criticism is highlighted—it is recommendable to use several different sources and to ponder the possible motives of news and statements. (FINB2015A2, p. 14, emphasis added)

Finally, note how under the title “Internet exercise” in an Exercise for Finnish students: “Find a *recent* example of the use of history. History can be used to explain one’s own ambitions, actions or solely for entertainment purposes. The example can come from politics, sports or the world of entertainment” (FINB2015A1, p. 11, emphasis added).

Whereas with curriculum documents and textbooks, both ways of addressing the topic (abstract and contextualized) were identified (although not in the case of every individual curriculum document or textbook), with individual teachers, this was not always the case. Again, the teachers’ leeway allowed for alternative approaches. Many Finnish teachers (FINT1, FINT2, FINT4, FINT5, and FINT8) stated that they addressed the topic at an abstract, theoretical level and very little, if at all. FINT8 explained: “I really don’t start off in that order that I would first do [a theoretical

class on the topic]...Instead I bring the politics into the teaching [of the events].” Another teacher (FINT2) elaborated in a somewhat similar manner:

I can actually offhand say that we cannot afford such a luxury that we would approach that [the concept of history politics] from a theoretical point-of-view... Sometimes the discussion will run wild, but I would say that we go more through examples here...The examples kind of illuminate how strong a weapon that [history] actually is.⁴¹

Similarly, some American teachers stated that they addressed the topic simply through examples rather than by bringing any theory into the picture. USAT9, for example, said that he/she taught the topic “along the way,” “case by case,” and “through concrete examples.” He/she also noted what was not brought up: “definitely not like the theory behind it. That’s not something that’s come up.” Even the one teacher (USAT1) mentioned above who suggested that he/she addressed the topic first at an abstract, theoretical level explained how he/she “typically” approached it through examples. Using a speech by Richard Nixon as an example (see Chapter 4.6), he/she mentioned the following example of how single events are covered by going step by step toward a deeper understanding of how history politics might have played a role in the events:

I *typically* build them up to it. I just start basically what’s this speech about, and they’re usually pretty good at that. And then you just slowly build them up to a point where it’s like why would they do it that way? And...you know, once we get to that, then...that’s usually little more probing where I have to ask the questions, kinda unstick them. And then...the idea then is always why would we see it this way today? (emphasis added)

The reasons for approaching the topic through examples for the mentioned Finnish teacher (FINT2) had to do again with “student quality”:

When you come to the first class in high school, [to have] first this theoretical bomb...that like frightens you. There are very few [students in class] that like [say or think?]: ”A-ha, here’s this kind of [theoretical] thinking in here!”

⁴¹ It is noteworthy that the same teacher also mentioned that at least sometimes—albeit rarely—the discussion also takes place on an abstract, theoretical level. This apparent contradiction obviously illustrates how the respondents varied their teaching styles to meet the needs of the situation and the freedom they had to do so.

The reason stated by the American teacher USA9 for approaching the question through concrete examples was very similar: he/she felt that the kids simply might not understand what he/she is talking about. He/she followed, however, with a sarcastic disclaimer: “I’m probably selling my students short and just trying to justify my own laziness...like: ‘It’s over their heads, they wouldn’t get it.’” It should be noted that the teachers also varied their approaches. For example, FINT1 noted, “[i]t [the level of abstraction] is like a bit of a choice in my opinion.” The level of abstraction varied again based on “student quality.” FINT2 elaborated: “Like many times it happens that the same content, same course, and the level of abstraction stays very low. And then another group comes in, stars are in a different position, and you reach phenomenal heights.” Yet, the former groups are apparently much more numerous, as FINT2 continued: “Reaching a theoretical level, it is indeed more like the exception than the rule.”

3.3.3 Faraway Times and Places vs. Events in the Surrounding Society—Dimension 3 in the Inner Layer of the HPDM

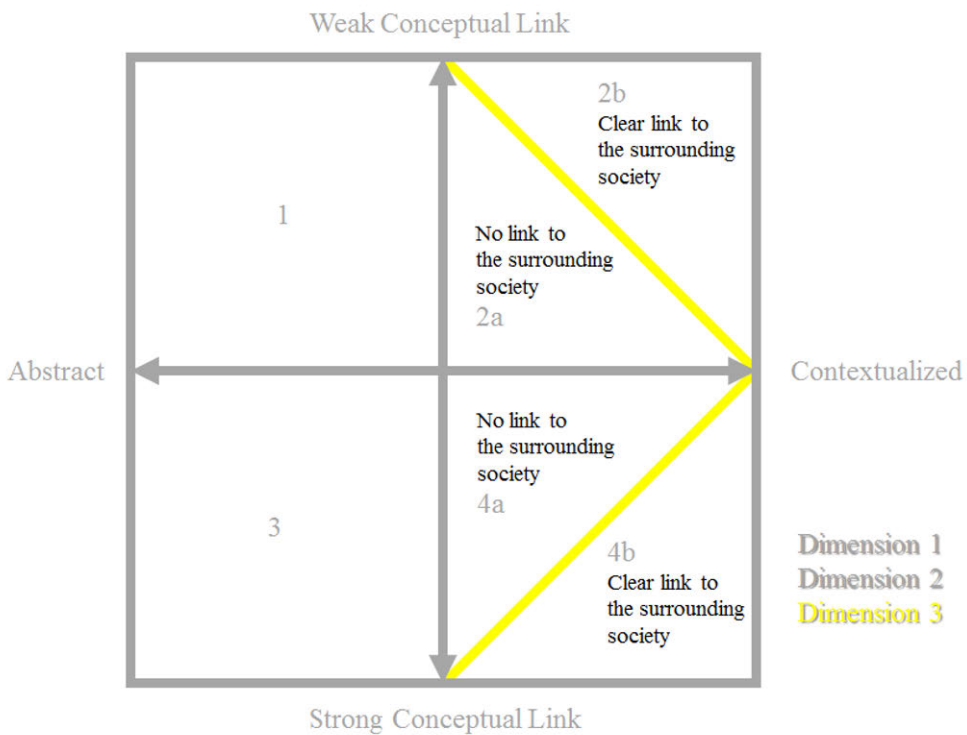


Figure 13. Dimension 3 in the inner layer of the HPDM—Faraway times and places vs. events in the surrounding society.

In the data, a further differentiation was identified in terms of what the actual given context was when the passage of text was contextualized (see Chapter 3.2.2). Although a simplification of reality to a degree, the identified dichotomous dimension addresses whether history politics is brought to the attention of the students as something that happens in places far away (culturally, geographically, and/or in of time) or in the surrounding society. Dimension 3 is the one and only instance for which it should be noted that previous research was of essence in how this dichotomous dimension came to being. This dimension emerged from the earlier discussions regarding the fact that the use of history politics may have both domestic and foreign policy objectives and that in every society, history is in some form intentionally misrepresented to further political ambitions. But what was then deemed a suitable delineation between the two approaches? When is the concept addressed through examples from distant places and times and when is it not? The delineation between the two was based on the aforementioned notions that especially recent history—and the history of one’s own country in particular—is subject to nationalistically motivated interpretations (Thornton, 2006). More specifically, the idea that civil wars often create ruptures, after which people are comfortable with forgetting the past in order to help them move past the trauma, was used as an analytical tool for coming up with an operable watershed (Kissane, 2016), as all three countries under scrutiny have undergone a traumatic civil war in modern times: Finland in 1918, the United States between 1861 and 1865, and China between 1927 and 1949. Moreover, the end of the civil war in the three countries arguably served as the starting point after which the modern political systems of these countries took shape. In Finland, it was only after the Civil War that the country became a secure parliamentary democracy; the United States as we know it, in many respects, also came into being as a result of such a war; and in China, the communist People’s Republic was established also after the end of the Civil War. Consequently, these events were used as watershed points in time for identifying examples from different contexts (and the examples were plenty). The limitations of this choice are discussed in the final part of this work.

As mentioned, contextualized passages rarely draw parallels with the surrounding socio-political context. Instead, although they clearly discuss events in a particular time and place, this place and time is very remote from the surrounding society (i.e., that of modern, post-civil war Finland, China, and the United States). Consider, for example, how the following passage from one of the Chinese textbooks is clearly *not* discussing matters in modern-day (i.e., in post-civil war) China: “In July of 1917, the bourgeois interim government [in Russia] carried out an armed suppression of the demonstrating masses, creating the July incident” (CHNB2015B7, p. 92).

Although an interesting topic in itself, classifying this variance of contexts in more detail would require expertise, which I arguably do not possess as a researcher.

The ramifications of this fact are addressed in the discussion section of this work. However, in order to provide the reader with some idea of what this variation means in practice, certain examples should be given. In terms of time, the passages extended all the way to ancient history and pre-modern times. Consider the following Exercise from a Finnish textbook. Under the title “The interpretation of sources: When was Pompeii destroyed?” the following Exercise accompanied by contemporary primary sources can be found in one of the books in the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series:

Familiarize yourself with the documents dealing with the destruction of the city of Pompeii in a source-critical manner.

- Do any of the documents give a false picture of what happened? What might be the reason why the picture painted by the document is misleading?
- Which of the sources do you think are trustworthy? What makes them trustworthy?
- What contradiction is found in the documents? What is your answer on the matter? (FIN2015BA1, p. 12)

Or consider the following passages from an American and a Chinese textbook, respectively. Again, pay attention to the temporal distance between the historical contexts the statements deal with and the societies in which the statements are made:

Shakespeare wrote histories, comedies, and tragedies. Richard III (1593), an early play, stands out among the histories, although some scholars view the picture it presents of Richard as an unprincipled villain as “Tudor propaganda.” (USAB2015E, p. 346)

Are the legends taking place in the city of Knossos true or false? (CHNB2015B8, p. 48)

In the case of teachers, USAT5, for example, cited Hammurabi, Greeks, Romans, and the Nika riots in the Byzantine Empire as talking points through which he/she addressed the concept of history politics. At the other extreme of the temporal axis, passages can extend all the way up to the present day. Consider, for example, how in the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* (FINB2015A2) series, the reader is presented with primary sources and the following questions in an Exercise dealing with the ongoing (as of 2020) crisis in Ukraine:

- What is the attitude towards the crisis in Ukraine in the given documents?
- How do the documents differ from one another as sources?

- With the help of the Internet, find out how propaganda has been utilized and information war been waged in conjunction with the crisis in Ukraine. Remember source criticism! (p. 17)

As for teachers, FINT8 mentioned that he/she brought the concept of history politics to the attention of the students by talking about the “the actions of Trump.”

On the other hand, in terms of geographical location and cultural proximity, some passages deal with places and cultures are very distant from their past and present cultures. FINT9, for example, said he/she addressed the concept of history politics by talking about “China and Japan,” which, from a Finnish standpoint, are and have always been very distant places both geographically and culturally. Meanwhile, others cite events taking place much closer in geographical, albeit not cultural, terms. USAT10, for example, explained how he/she had told students how America had been allegedly founded on the idea of religious freedom, yet, in light of the evidence of religious intolerance, this was clearly not true. These events were, of course, taking place in the same geographical location, but arguably, the distance in time also meant cultural distance, as societies change over time.

In contrast to passages that discuss matters in distant places, times, and cultures, other statements clearly concern events in the surrounding socio-political system. In other words, it is no longer unclear whether the passages in question address the possible use of history politics in modern (i.e., post-civil war) Finland, United States, and China. Consider the following example of an American textbook discussing events in early 20th century American literature:

One of the most famous muckrakers was Lincoln Steffens, whose book *The Shame of the Cities* (1904), first published serially in McClure’s magazine, denounced the corruption afflicting America’s urban governments. Steffens used dramatic language to expose “swindling” politicians. He claimed, for example, that the mayor of Minneapolis had turned the city over to “outlaws.” In St. Louis, “bribery was a joke,” while Pittsburgh’s Democratic Party operated a private company that handled most of the city’s street-paving projects—at a hefty profit. Historians now believe that Steffens and other middle-class crusaders took a rather extreme view of urban politics; the reality was more complex. But charges of corruption could hardly be denied. (USAB2015C)⁴²

⁴² In the original textbook format, certain parts of this passage were highlighted. However, as in most cases, this work does not seek to emphasize the same points (such as certain words) that the texts do; therefore, formatting, such as the use of italics or bold letters, has been removed from direct quotations. The titles that sometimes precede passages of text were also removed (although sometimes, these titles are mentioned in this work in the body of the text).

What is of importance is that the passages are considered to talk only about events in the surrounding societal and political context, when both the interpretation of a past event (which may entail the use of history politics) and that of the event that is being analyzed take place in that same context. Although these two are one and the same thing most of the time, this is not always the case. On some rare occasions, the event itself and its possible use as a means to do history politics happen at two different points and/or places in time, and only one of them happens to be that of the surrounding societal context. Consider the following example from a Finnish textbook. Notice how in the Exercise, the student is tasked with evaluating the trustworthiness of interpretations made of events that have taken place in faraway places and times, but which have been made in the student's own living environment: "Find information about the film *The Girl King* [Finnish: *Tyttökuningas*]. How does it portray Christina [Queen of Sweden]? How trustworthy is the film about Christina as a historical source?" (FINB2015C5, p. 102). Here, we are clearly not talking about an interpretation of events made in *modern Finnish society* about *modern Finnish society*. To cite another example, notice how in this passage in *Human Legacy* (USAB2015C), the reader is presented with a 1989 speech by Ronald Reagan about the Soviet Union and then asked, "[d]o you think he was biased about the Soviet system? Why or why not?" (p. 903). Although Reagan's interpretation takes place in the surrounding society, he is in fact interpreting events in an entirely different cultural and political context (that of the Soviet Union).

Certain observations should once again be made regarding the distinction between the two types of statements. First, as implicitly suggested by many teachers and even explicitly by some (such as USAT5), teachers also have the freedom to choose any particular examples they wish. Yet, as FINT4 and FINT9 pointed out, the course context itself determines which examples can be used. Moreover, despite the leeway they had, the teachers often raised certain specific topics. When teaching through concrete examples, according to FINT8, the examples are not chosen randomly; instead, to a large degree, the same examples are given over and over: "Well, we [teachers] always have some constant themes. I mean it is like wholly impossible to think that one would teach from dusk till dawn without any footholds." These considerations, of course, do not mean that there is no variance whatsoever in the choice of examples. In this connection, FINT6 asserted⁴³:

Teacher: Like at this point [in my career] I feel that...bit like that there are no recurring themes. It [the concept of history politics] comes up like...

⁴³ At least partly negating his/her own insinuation that the concept is not addressed at all.

Interviewer: When it so happens.

Teacher: When it so happens, yeah.

FINT9 explained that in his/her class, topical issues are especially used as examples. On the other hand, many teachers (FINT1, FINT5, FINT7, and FINT8) suggested that, in many cases, it was again the “student material” that determined the choice of examples in the end; either the students had certain areas of interest or, in some cases, they were so thoroughly disinterested in the topic that this had an effect on the choice. FINT5, FINT7, and FINT8 made the following respective observations:

One has to constantly like take into consideration what the student knows in advance. Or what they know about this topic...Then you can start off like that...The kind of like linking has to always start off with the students’ knowledge level.

It [the actual chosen contextualization] depends a bit on the group...I have really bright students, so it might be that they raise the issue...So it might be that I thought that: “Okay, so let’s think that we raise the issue of Germany or we talk about the United States during the Civil War”, and then I have thought in advance that I could raise some [example] where this [the concept of history politics] can be seen. But then again, it might just suddenly come into mind and then we do it then.

To put it in a nasty way, it [what kind of examples are highlighted] depends on the student material. When you have students with a Russian background, then it is useful to take topics where Finns and Russians have been involved and start unraveling it [the events] from this perspective...So one has to be a bit delicate, but also to take hold of the interest that arises from the class...In the class, we might emphasize things differently from what I had thought in advance. But I think in that manner learning happens...The question just pops up, and that is usually the most fruitful moment to continue from there. And I feel that is what one should take hold of.

Yet another explanation offered was the teacher’s own professional well-being. As FINT8 put it, he/she tried to change the used examples and talking points so that

he/she would not lose interest.⁴⁴ Interestingly, FINT8 also raised the idea that the actual nature of the contextualization was irrelevant: “[When] I choose topics concerning, for example the political use of history...They can like come from any era whatsoever, it doesn’t really matter. But it adds to their competence to identify something that is happening now or to possibly see something that is the target in the future.” Despite the aforementioned considerations and reservations, the teachers did mention some examples where the concept of history politics came to the fore. Regardless of whether the talk was about textbooks or teachers’ viewpoints, again two subcategories were identified.

Second, it should be noted that whether in some instances, the passage is in fact referring to a distant time and place (i.e., not in the surrounding society) is not always clear. Once again, the role of my own subjective interpretations is to be highlighted. References to certain places are somewhat ambiguous and could thus arguably be seen as pointing to the surrounding societal and political context. However, for the sake of consistency, the mere possibility that the passage referred to the surrounding societal context did not qualify it as an example as such. Take the example of different Finnish book series discussing the outbreak of the First World War. The *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series explains that “[t]he outbreak of the First World War is one of the most researched but also one of the most controversial topics in world history...The outbreak of the First World War has become a textbook example in history research of how explanations vary according to which viewpoint is emphasized at a given time” (FINB2015A2, p. 40). *Historia ajassa* asserts in a similar tone, “[e]ven today a consensus over the causes of the First World War has not been reached. Researchers of every era bring forth their own viewpoints and interpretations” (FINB2015B2, p. 34). Clearly, the actual context of these statements is so ambiguous that they could be interpreted as talking about modern Finland. The excerpts could well be read so that in modern-day Finland also, the outbreak of the war is a “textbook example” of a controversial topic that researchers disagree on. Although these interpretations are quite a stretch, some statements make even more direct references. In the Finnish case, some, for example, highlight a difference of interpretation between Finland and a foreign power. In the following example, it is discussed how the Winter War of 1939 began: “Suddenly, the situation got tense again when foreign minister Molotov made an accusation against Finland that its artillery had fired at the village of Mainila located in the Soviet side of the Karelian Isthmus. Finland explained that it did not have artillery near the border which would

⁴⁴ Interestingly, FINT8 had also noted that he/she used certain recurring themes. This seemingly contradictory approach again emphasizes the teachers’ leeway: he/she likely meant that, for the most part, the same examples are used, but changes are sometimes made so that he/she does not lose interest in the topic himself/herself.

have been able to fire the shots” (FINB2015A3, p. 119). Another example elucidates how at the beginning of the Continuation War, Finland and Germany disagreed whether the two countries were allies or whether Finland was at war at all (FINB2015B3, p. 122). Yet, the statements are vague enough so that even if we were to interpret both instances as discussing history politics, it would still be up to interpretation whether it was the Finns or the other side that was engaging in it. Next, consider this passage from *Kaikkien aikojen historia* (FINB2015A2), which is part of the narrative of Cold War history:

During the Cold War, the ideological battle between two opposing systems and worldviews was also fought with interpretations of history. Stereotypical images of history, which embellished one’s own history and distorted the opponent’s history lent themselves excellently as means to so-called ideological warfare. The press, literature, radio, television and movies transmitted history propaganda. One of the unquestionable classics was George Orwell’s satirical play *Animal Farm* (1945). An animation film based on the play (1954) was funded by the American intelligence agency CIA. In the play, animal characters carry out (the October) revolution, but instead of a utopian society, they end up with pigs’ (Stalin’s) dictatorship and terror. The golden era of agent films and movies were the 1950s and 1960s. The imagery that was used was crude and pointing fingers. In the Western propaganda, they also knew how to use humor and make fun of the opposing side, but Eastern propaganda was grim and came with a hostile tone. The difference between the Western and Eastern social systems could be seen that in the East only one truth prevailed, which was strictly controlled by the ruling Communist party. In the West, there were calls for pluralism and for the freedom of speech. History interpretations critical of one’s own system were free to be published without any kind of preventive censorship. Meanwhile, in the countries of the Eastern bloc, Western cultural products, movies, books, newspapers, journals or music were not publically available at all. You could not buy them from bookstores or borrow them from libraries. In the worst-case scenario one could go to jail for the possession of printed products or records smuggled from the West. So who did the Cold War history propaganda reach? This is a good question because in practice, the opponent’s propaganda did not have very good chances of spreading amongst the general public on either side. The stereotypical characters of the potbellied capitalist of the West and the starving peasant of the East remained alien on the opposing side. They had a bigger impact on one’s own side and on one’s own citizens. (p. 101)

The topic of the Holocaust is also raised: “In the history politics debate regarding the Holocaust, people encounter [the extreme view] of those denying the entire

Holocaust” (FINB2015B2, p. 92). Arguably, the text would suggest that such views are also possibly voiced in modern-day Finland, yet this is not explicitly mentioned. In another instance, a passage mentions how poets during the dawn of nation-states sometimes used outright lies to manufacture the mythological epics that were used to create the nations (FINBA4, p. 161). So are these passages of text in fact talking about modern-day Finland or not? The ambiguous formulation leaves much space for interpretation. Sometimes, the link to modern-day Finland is arguably *very* hypothetical. A picture caption in the *Forum* series states: “A depiction of a 16th century Aztec sacrificial ceremony from a Mexican manuscript. *The Europeans* exaggerated the Indians’ sacrificial rituals in order to justify the cruel treatment of the Indians” (FINB2015C1, p. 89, emphasis added). The text is undoubtedly about history politics, but the link to Finland is barely there. Finns are indeed Europeans, but it is hard to fathom why they would have had the motivation to exaggerate events in the Americas to justify the cruel treatment of the natives! Moreover, even if this were the case, it is not really elaborated when “The Europeans” exaggerated the rituals—during the time of the conquests or also after them? On one single occasion could such an ambiguous passage be identified in an American textbook, as the reference to the specific actors involved was very general. When discussing events during the First World War, *Human Legacy* makes the following point: “Governments...sought to control public opinion. They censored newspaper reports about the fighting, worried that truthful descriptions of casualties might discourage the public” (USAB2015C, p. 785). It is clear from the statement that governments’ control of public opinion was essentially about the use of history politics. Moreover, the period is very precise (WWI). Although the given contextualization refers to “governments” that participated in the war (of which the U.S. government was one), this link is not explicitly made. All in all, in some instances, the connection to modern-day societies is almost non-existent, yet one cannot rule out such a possibility with absolute certainty. Some passages talk about how people in the surrounding society have been examining the past in distant times and places. Notice how the following passage talks about post-war Finnish historiography and how it identified the use of history politics in earlier times:

Only during the second half of the 20th century have researchers have interpreted the importance of the State Diet of Porvoo [Finnish: *Porvoon valtiopäivät*] with less fervor, without nationalistic ambitions. The debate has lost its political meaning, and only some Finnish researchers argue about the matter. The majority of contemporary [i.e., modern-day] researchers see that the Russian interpretations of the time [i.e., in the past] were founded and that the Finnish interpretations have given the State Diet of Porvoo too much weight in terms of its importance. Already the use of the concept State Diet [Finnish: *valtiopäivät*]

is associated with nationalistic interpretations, because in reality, it was a regional Diet—*landtdagar* [in Swedish]. The word State did not yet exist in the Finnish language, but its utilization strengthened the picture of the birth of a state called Finland. According to the hegemonic contemporary [i.e., modern] interpretation, the estates of Finland swore a pledge of allegiance to [the Russian Emperor] Alexander [I] and Alexander promised to retain the Finnish constitution and the privileges of the estates. According to contemporary interpretation, this kind of king’s promise was an old, medieval tradition, which was commonly used in Europe until the 19th century in conjunction with succession procedures of rulers. Thus, in essence, it was about compliments, which contemporaries and some researchers have later interpreted as treaties. No state was founded through such treaties. (FINB2015C3. p. 16)

Teachers also engaged in ambiguous use of language. Consider the following comment by FINT1: “And then the Cultures Meet course [course number six, Cultures of the World Meet] has this...occident and orient setting where Europeans like go and become like rulers elsewhere in the world. And then of course describe very easily their own actions with a very large like...brush.” Some specifically mentioned that certain events or themes were, for example, ambiguous references to the Second World War, the Cold War (FINT7, FINT8), the Holocaust, the use of the “Jew card” (sic), “legacy of colonialism,” “imperialism” (FINT8), “Finnish history” (FINT5), “the changes in Finnish terminology” (FINT3), or “national myths” in European and Finnish history (FINT4). All these mentioned themes, events, or figures of speech are vague enough to justify the interpretation that they actually address how history politics is used in modern Finland, but arguably—to varying degrees—they can just as well be interpreted as references to something completely different. Similarly in the United States, it was not always entirely clear whether the teachers were talking about the surrounding societal context or not. Some U.S. teachers used rather ambiguous wordings. USAT1, for example, told that he/she discussed in his/her classes the way Abraham Lincoln has been remembered (without really elaborating whether he/she was referring to these discussions in the past or/and in the present day). Meanwhile, USAT4 discussed in ambiguous terms the “threat of...nationalism” and “capitalism and socialism and these ideas.”

4 History Politics in the Finnish, American, and Chinese High School History Curriculum

The HPDM, a model with outer and inner layers, emerged from dissimilarities and similarities in the data. But how do the three educational systems under comparison approach teaching about history politics? Which of the three fields in the outer layer and six fields in the inner layer are covered at different levels of the curriculum? This chapter continues and deepens the empirical analysis by focusing on how these different dimensions, which affect the ultimate choices, come together in practice in the three countries. In a sense, the three educational systems and the different levels of the curriculum are juxtaposed against the backdrop of the HPDM (which, in fact, emerged from the findings). The analysis progresses by looking at the six different fields in the inner level of the HPDM, while the outer-level aspects are addressed simultaneously as part of the analysis.

4.1 Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Vague Statements about Human Behavior

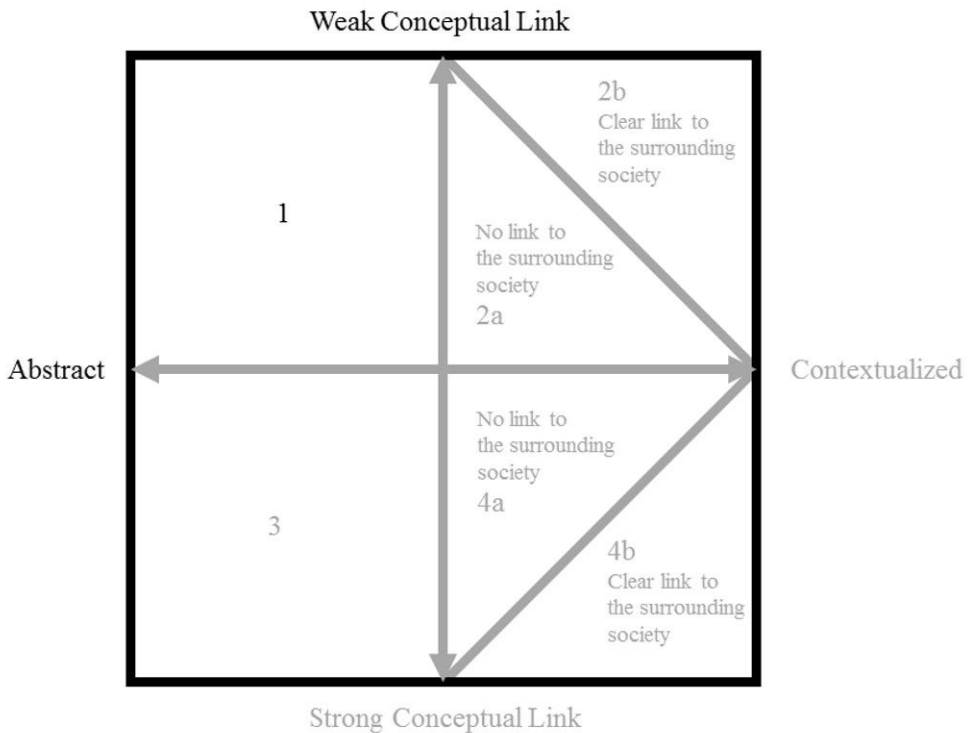


Figure 14. Field 1 of the Inner Layer of the HPDM – Epistemologies, Methodologies and Vague Statements about Human Behavior.

On some occasions, the conceptual link remains weak, while the text describes abstract theoretical notions (Field 1 in HPDM). Consider, for example, the following passage from a People’s Education Press textbook.: “historians, in the process of reflecting objective historical movements, always have certain subjectivity” (CHNB2015B8, p. 8). Although this abstract theoretical passage certainly highlights the interpretative nature of history, it does not explicitly highlight the use of history politics. “Certain subjectivity” in the quotation above could refer both to the notion that historians are (at least unconsciously) never free from subjective influences, such as unconscious bias or even limited language skills, and to the notion that (at least on some occasions) they intentionally misinterpret history to further their political ambitions.

Finland

In Finland, the 2015 curriculum set Aims and Goals that address the matter in this manner. The learning Aims and Goals of course number one (Human Within the Changes of the Environment and Societies) in the 2015 curriculum include, for example: “History research, research methods and the use of sources” (FINC, p. 171), whereas in the course description of the same course, it is asserted that: “In the course the utilization of diverse historical source materials is studied.” To cite another example, one of the essential Contents of course number two (International Relations) to be studied is listed as: “The use of history as a means for politics” (FINC, p. 172).

The 1980s Finnish textbooks contain Aims and Goals, as well as Content and Exercises, addressing the matter from this perspective. An ambiguous, elusive Aim or Goal in a textbook from the *Historia* book series runs as follows:

Now, you deepen your historical thinking by pondering the reliability and meaning of knowledge. Together with your teacher, you get to evaluate the actions of people of the past from their viewpoint and compare events with the present day. You are expected to learn new skills, acquire information independently and to apply in learning and in societal life what you have learned. (FINB1985A1, preamble)

“Evaluating the actions of people of the past from their viewpoint” might certainly entail the notion that the student is expected to learn concepts such as history politics, but such a goal is not explicitly stated. The teacher or reader might very well interpret the meaning of this passage in a different manner. As mentioned, the textbooks also contain Content passages addressing the concept at an abstract level, where the words chosen are open to multiple interpretations. Keeping this in mind, consider, for example, the following passage from one of the older Finnish textbooks: “A historian evaluates the reliability of his or her sources. The authors of memoirs often embellish their own actions or overestimate them” (FINB1985A1, p. 72). Or notice how this approach is mirrored in another book in this lengthy passage:

Individually, a person can remember events from quite a long stretch of time. But a person’s memories fade. Over time, new layers are attached to them, which distort the earlier memories, and they are limited to dealing with only a small portion of past events...Historians are by no means unanimous. On the contrary, many historical questions have continuously given reasons for new studies and brought up different kinds of interpretations. What have been the early phases of humans, the homo sapiens, and when did this species appear on the face of the earth? What kind of man was the Athenian philosopher Socrates? Why did the

mighty Roman Empire fall? These, as well as many other questions, are still waiting for solutions which would satisfy everyone, and it is unlikely they are ever achieved. The uncertainty and the disagreement concerning past events are result of mainly two reasons...On the other hand, every historian brings his or her own personality and worldview into the interpretations and interprets the traces of past events under this light differently from some other researcher. In this manner, different understandings of the past are born. (FINB1985A1, p. 9)

In addition, the students are told, for example, about the contributions of Henrik Gabriel Porthan to scientific, critical history scholarship in Finland (FINB1985A3, p. 107). Interestingly, in (only) one of the old textbooks from the *Muuttuva maailma* series, the students are tasked with answering questions concerning the reliability of historical sources based on a fictional example (FINB1985C2, p. 282–284). Although the fictional story is set in a real historical context (the Finnish countryside in the 1880s), the events and sources describing them are entirely fictional. Arguably, the Exercise is to cultivate students' understanding at a more general, abstract level, even if the Exercise appears contextualized.

The 2015 Finnish textbooks also address teaching the concept of history politics from this standpoint. Few passages set out Aims and Goals, such as the following: “[In the book,] attention has been paid to the foundations of formulation of historical knowledge, to the assessment of the reliability of information and explaining phenomena from various viewpoints” (FINB2015A1, p. 3). The students are also provided with concrete information about the topic from such a viewpoint. These Content passages in the newer textbooks address the matter rather extensively. From reading the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series, the student would gain the following information:

[T]he researcher...has to make his or her own interpretation of what has happened and why. However, the interpretation cannot be arbitrary. Instead, it has to be based on the sources and on their critical examination, i.e. source criticism. An old text, for example does not tell anything unless we are able to find out who has written it, in what situation and why. (FINB2015A1, p. 9)

On the other hand, *Historia ajassa* (FINB2015B3) explains that: “The public discussion over the past and the interpretations of history is also called *menneisyydenhallinta* (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*)...[which] means that one has to be able to talk openly also about the painful and difficult issues of history” (p. 13). Moreover, some Exercises expect the student to analyze the matter from a similar standpoint and at an abstract, theoretical level without making explicit references to the concept of history politics. One textbook asks the students the following: “Which

factors increase or decrease the reliability of sources? Take both internal and external source criticism into consideration” (FINB2015B1, p. 13). The very same book series also asks the student, “[w]hat does the proverb: ‘History is written by the victors’ (Finnish: ‘*Historia seuraa voittajan miekkaa*,’ literally ‘History follows the sword of the victor’) mean?” (FINB2015B1, p. 11). In addition, students are expected to answer why genocides are a controversial issue (FINB2015C2, p. 17), to look for famous forgeries or hoaxes in history (FINB2015C1, p. 11), to ponder where, when, and why books have been burned (FINB2015B4, p. 61), why certain countries have chosen to legislate the interpretation of history in a certain way (FINB2015B3, p. 13), and how rulers have used history to justify their own positions (FINB2015B3, p. 10).

United States

In the various standard course curriculum documents in the United States, the “Clarifying objectives” section include Aims and Goals such as using “historical comprehension” and “historical analysis and interpretation” to “[d]ifferentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations,” “[i]dentify issues and problems in the past,” “[c]onsider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past,” “[e]valuate competing historical narratives and debates among historians,” and “[e]valuate the influence of the past on contemporary issues” (USACA1, p. 3–4; USACA2, p. 3; USACB, p. 2). Meanwhile, AP curriculum documents state that students are expected, for example, to be able to “[e]xplain how a historian’s context influences the claim or argument” (USACE, p. 8).

The older 1980s textbooks contain both Content passages and an Exercise of this HPDM field. One Content passage under the title “Building social studies skills: Identifying fact and opinion” in the series *America: Its People and Values* (USAB1985A) reads as follows: “An opinion is different from fact. A fact is something that can be observed and or proven. It is something that can be checked in other records...A writer might use loaded words, or words intended to stir your emotions” (p. 241). In the chapter “Building Social Studies Skills: Using Primary and Secondary Sources,” the same book (USAB1985A) continues to explain that:

It is important to remember that primary sources are not necessarily more objective, or true, than secondary sources. Many things can influence a writer’s treatment of a topic or event. For instance, someone who has been personally involved in an event may have a hard time describing it objectively. Also, the writers of both primary and secondary sources might have opinions that affect the way they present the facts. As a result, the first step in reading any source is to determine which statements are facts and which are opinions. Then look for

anything that offers insight into the period when the writer lived. All this will help you interpret the source. (p. 255)

As mentioned, the older textbooks also contain one lone Exercise that falls under this category. In it, students are expected to define what the word “propaganda” means (USAB1985B1, p. 134).

Similarly, the newer textbooks (both standard and AP) include both Content passages and Exercises. This is an example of the former from the *Human Legacy* textbook:

[In history,] [t]here is no single right answer to big questions of historical interpretation like there is in math. Interpretations aren't right or wrong as much as they are better and worse. Better interpretations account for more of the evidence and are able to explain more of the big picture—incorporating social, geographical, cultural, and political factors in so doing. Weaker interpretations ignore pieces of evidence or use ideology as a substitute for hard thinking. (USAB2015C, p. H24)

Meanwhile, *The Western Heritage* textbook (USAB2015E) mentions that “[i]n the process [of fifteenth century scholarly renaissance,] the Italian humanists invented, for all practical purposes, critical historical scholarship” (p. 284). As for the Exercises, only a few address the concept of history politics from this viewpoint (field in the HPDM). In the standard course *The Americans* (USAB2015A) textbook, the student is presented with the following question: “Why do you think some groups have tried to suppress the culture of others over the course of history?” (p. 467). Although the question is from a textbook on American history (and part of a theme box titled “Diversity and national identity” on the subject of oppression in the context of the United States), the nature of the question is such that no specific context is given. One could very well assess the question in the context of modern America but also in the context of ancient India, for example. Moreover, the ambition to suppress the culture of others can clearly be linked to the concept of history politics, even if the Exercise does not explicitly seek to draw attention in this direction. Although “hidden from sight” in a Content passage, the *Traditions & Encounters* AP book (USAB2015D, p. 749) asks what might be the consequences of “manipulating nationalist feeling for political purposes.”

China

In the Chinese 2003 trial curriculum, a passage from the section of the document dealing with course eight (Exploring the Mysteries of History) elaborates that the

Aims and Goals of the course are to “[u]nderstand the objectivity of historical process and the subjectivity of reproduction of history as well as to explain the relationship between history and the study of History” (CHNC). Additionally, the entire subject aims to “further improve the ability to read and obtain historical information through various channels and to cultivate historical thinking and problem-solving ability through cognitive activities such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, induction and generalization of historical facts.” In the modern Chinese textbooks, students are meanwhile confronted with Aims and Goals and Content passages dealing with the concept of history politics in this manner. In one of the elective textbooks, the readers would come across the following Content passage, for example:

History is objective, but in historical accounts, it is very hard to avoid the limitations set by subjectivity. In addition to intentional falsifications, prejudiced understanding of history can also affect the reliability of an account...When reading history, we need to...separate forgeries from the truth. (CHNB2015A8, p. 18)

The same book continues by telling us that “we should...see that in the remains of...places’ historical culture, there is also content that is embellished and exaggerated due to nativist emotions” (CHNB2015A8, p. 116). The reference to “embellishment,” “exaggeration,” and “nativist emotions” would certainly allow for the interpretation that the passage is, in fact, talking about history politics. In a similar, somewhat ambiguous fashion, one of the Yuelu Press elective course texts tells us that “[m]any pompous excuses are used as an excuse for ravaging and massacring different ethnicities, heretics and foreign countries” (CHNBC9, unnumbered preamble).

The elective course textbooks also include some Exercises. In an ambiguous manner, the students are asked, for example, “What is the difference between objective history and written history[?]” (CHNBB8, p. 7) and to give examples of significant historical legends and myths (CHNBA8, p. 48).

4.2 The Concept of History Politics as an Abstract, Theoretical Notion

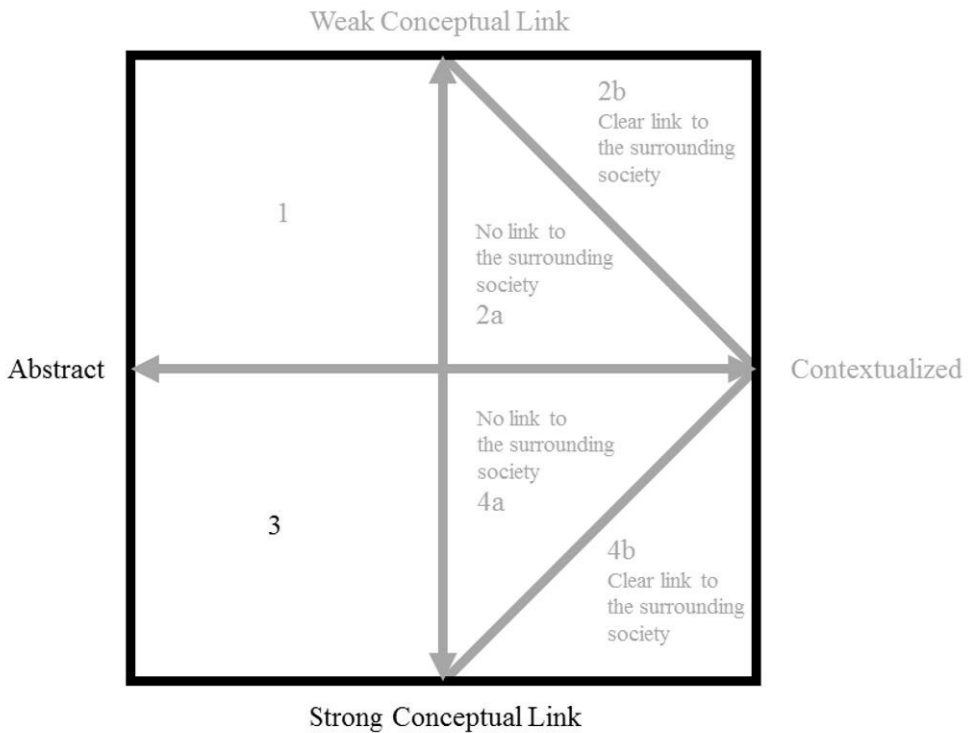


Figure 15. Field 3 of the inner layer of the HPDM—The concept of history politics as an abstract, theoretical notion.

On some occasions, human behavior is no longer discussed in very ambiguous terms that can be interpreted in many ways. Instead, the reader is very clearly told what history politics is and how it is a universal mode of behavior. In the vocabulary of the HPDM, the level of abstraction remains high, while the conceptual link is strong (Field 3). Consider, for example, the following passage from a Finnish textbook: “shamelessly different sides of conflicts misrepresent the history of the enemy in their propaganda” (FINB2015A3, p. 179). Such passages were identified only in modern Finnish textbooks (but notably not in China, the United States, or in the older Finnish textbooks). It has also been implied that such viewpoints are used by some teachers in Finland and the United States to address the topic. It should be noted, however, that many teachers insinuated that they also aim for a more theoretical understanding of the concept through teaching about very specific contextualized

instances and then connecting the dots between the two. Citing a specific event (The Boston Massacre of 1770) USAT6 had used as talking point, he/she continued:

It seems like, you know, one of the things that I always preach really is the idea of like continuity. And that things that happened back then are still issues that are happening right now...[W]hen we talked about the Boston Massacre, it was like: "What was the Boston Massacre?" And we start writing down things upon the board. You know, it was an assembly that got out of control, okay. [M]ilitary fired on a crowd, you know. Okay, so there was like riot, a mob, you know, it was getting unruly, it was protesting, you know, it was violence, power, control, the military, the police. And then I just erase the word Boston Massacre, I was like: "Does this look familiar to you?" And they we're all like: "Oh, it is!"

Similarly, one Finnish teacher told that although he/she addressed the theoretical background, he/she covered the theme through one or, at best, a few case studies in which the topic is thoroughly examined: "And then", as he/she (FINT9) put it, "in other instances, you can refer to them."

Finland

When it comes to the Finnish textbooks, it is only the contemporary ones that offer students such insight, and only the books intended for mandatory courses. Moreover, all passages identified in the Finnish textbooks were Content passages. For example, the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series states that:

The history of humankind is also seen differently in different countries, and the significance of one's native country is often highlighted. Nationalistic highlighting of one's native country can sometimes lead to contempt for other countries and nations. History knows examples of the manipulation and misuse of the results of history research to justify ethnic cleansings and racism. (FINB2015A1, p. 11)

When encountering such behavior in the Finnish books, one is also urged to put certain skills into action in order to identify such behavior and even shield oneself from the use of history politics. For example, the following passage teaches students how to guard themselves against such behavior: "One can protect oneself from this kind of manipulation of history by searching for information in a versatile way and by exercising strict source criticism. The most important thing is to pay attention to who is using history and what kind of ambitions is he/she seeking to further with it" (FINB2015A3, p. 179). Interestingly, as mentioned, none of the older Finnish books

or any (old or new) American or Chinese books address history politics in this manner.

As for the teachers, FINT3 elaborated: "At the beginning one, of course, speaks about the general foundations of history research... That of course politics that deal with the subject matter influence what is being researched and funded and what is popular in each country." Meanwhile, FINT9 affirmed: "I always go through the concepts and terms at the beginning of a course... First, you like go through the concepts and terms. Because in my opinion, it is such a central part." The reason to teach in this manner was linked to how the teacher perceived what really counted as truly understanding the concept: "One part which is there [in the teaching] is that one has to be able to use the concepts and terms. That one knows something about like a framework to which international politics are linked to. And how one talks about it" (FINT9).

United States

Of all the American teachers, only USAT1 explicitly indicated that he/she addressed the topic in such a manner that the students were taught about history politics through theoretical discussions. He/she was not very confident about the feasibility of such an approach, however, as he/she felt that the students attend so many other classes simultaneously, classes where they are faced with matters that are similarly hard to comprehend and which they forget. USAT1 oscillated between the two approaches (teaching theory vs. teaching contextualized examples):

I bring that [the theoretical point of view] up at the beginning of class. I can almost see the light in their eyes leave in a sense [as] if they feel like I'm asking them something that's unattainable for them. They don't do it. But if I walk 'em there [i.e., use contextualized examples], it's very attainable for 'em and then they get it.

China

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, *one* of the elective course textbooks (a Yuelu Press book) in China includes a Content passage that could arguably be considered a clear theoretical reference to the topic, as it certainly seems to suggest that the politically motivated intentional misinterpretation of history is a phenomenon to be reckoned with: "[H]istorical documents, that is, commonly seen history books, are written by humans...[and they] cannot fully reflect the truth about history. It has been very common to use political power to tamper with and to falsify history" (CHNBC8, p. 3).

4.3 Ambiguous Actions in Faraway Places and Times

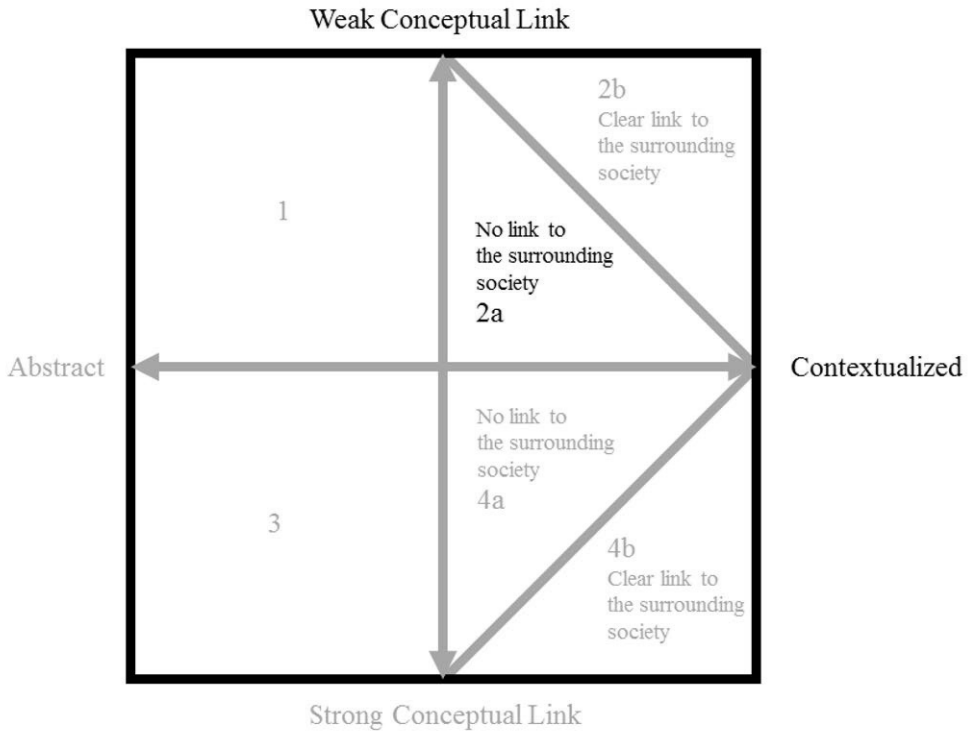


Figure 16. Field 2a of the inner layer of the HPDM—Ambiguous actions in faraway places and times.

Some passages utilizing very ambiguous and vague language (i.e., with a weak conceptual link to history politics) address matters by drawing links to events and times far away (Field 2a of the HPDM). Notice how the following passage from a Chinese textbook approaches the topic in a very ambiguous manner, which—depending on the reader’s interpretation—could or could not be seen as addressing the concept of history politics and doing so in a context that does not evidently and/or explicitly coincide with modern-day China:

At present, although the Cold War has ended, Cold War Mentality continues to affect the development of international relations. For a long time, the United States portrayed the Soviet Union and socialist countries as “evil forces” of authoritarianism, aggression, and expansion, thus becoming the ideological root for seriously distorting the understanding of socialism. (CHNB2015B6, p. 102)

In all three countries, almost all curriculum documents and all textbooks (old/new, mandatory/standard, and elective/AP) addressed the topic in such a fashion. While the curriculum documents set such Aims and Goals, relevant textbook passages included both Content and Exercises.

Finland

In Finland, the Aims and Goals of the 2015 curriculum address history politics in this manner as part of both the mandatory and elective courses. Consider, for example, the Aims and Goals of course number six (Cultures of the World Meet, cited earlier in Chapter 3.2.1): “The course focuses on the encounters and interactions between Europeans and extra-European cultures during different times.” Similarly, the introduction of course three (History of Independent Finland) explains that during the course “one familiarizes oneself with the different sources of *Finnish history*, the changing interpretations and the use of history knowledge” (FINC. p. 173, emphasis added). As part of the same course, it is also expected that the student “[i]s able to evaluate interpretations made of *Finnish history* and the motivations behind them in their historical context” (emphasis added). In these two latter instances, it is noteworthy that the identified statements do not go the full distance and clearly talk about modern Finland. Although these latter two passages have *more* contextualization than the first one, considerable room is left for speculation and interpretation as to the actual context in which the topic should be addressed. Even if the passages are to be seen as references to history politics, they make use of very vague contexts—“immediate surroundings” or “Finnish history.” Indeed, apart from the fact that these issues are to be addressed as part of a course dealing with different eras of Finnish history, what these “immediate surroundings” and “Finnish history” actually mean is left open for interpretation. On the one hand, what is the actual political, geographical, and cultural context of these statements? Does “immediate surroundings,” for example, mean one’s immediate daily living environment, the city one dwells in, or the whole of Finland? Would students in both the north and south of Finland be studying the same topics? On the other hand, what about the time scope? Is the student to understand “the use of history knowledge” in Finnish history within the given context of the course (Finnish history after the 1917 independence) or also before that? In other words, the link to modern-day Finland still has to be seen as merely possible at best. This ambiguity of context is undoubtedly a conscious choice, as elsewhere in the document, the content is clearly contextualized, explicitly talking about modern-day Finland. For example, one of the mandated chapters of course number three (History of Independent Finland) is “Finland in the Second World War” (FINC. p. 173).

The older 1980s textbooks contain numerous such Content passages (but notably no Exercises). For instance, when discussing the Renaissance, these textbooks state: “When the humanists examined the Bible in its original language, at the same time, they also exposed erroneous interpretations and understandings of the Catholic Church, thus giving tools for the Reformation” (FINB1985C2, p. 179). What the “erroneous interpretations and understandings” actually mean is left open, even if the passage arguably means that the Catholic Church was engaging in the use of history politics. An alternative—perhaps even a more plausible—explanation is simply human error and/or the lack of necessary skills. In addition, students are told, for example, how the work of the Roman historian Livy on the history of Rome was not written in a very critical fashion (FINB1985C2, p. 280), how the interpretations of the causes of the First World War were conflicting (FINB1985A4, p. 124), and how the legend and the folk poem about the killing of Henry, the Bishop of Finland, are not trustworthy historical sources (FINB1985B3, p. 30–31).

The modern Finnish textbooks from the 2010s contain numerous examples of texts belonging to this field of the HPDM—both Content passages and Exercises. Consider the following Content passage:

[European travel books in the 19th century] were intentionally made to be more interesting than before, and facts were combined together with folklore and hearsay. Travel and adventure literature repeated foreknown facts and consolidated prejudices. In addition to prejudices, the image that the authors conveyed was dependent on the sources they had used. (FINB2015C6, p. 16)

Another passage says, “Taiwanese high school students protest against the changes being made to History textbooks in 2015. According to the high school students, the changes make History education in the schools too China-centered” (FINB2015A1, p. 10). It is obvious that the statement should be understood in the context of History education in Taiwan and, namely, to its relation to China. History education being “too China-centered” could very well be linked, for example, with the idea that although contenting interpretations of historical events exist, the ones that are presented in the textbooks are highly politicized and in favor of China. But the statement is still rather ambiguous: is this really the case, or is the message about something entirely different? Maybe the passage simply suggests that in quantitative terms, the textbooks are seen as having too much focus on China, even if this excessive information is truthful. Next, consider the ambiguous choice of words in this picture caption:

The Frauenkirche in the city center [of Dresden] survived [the allied bombing in February 1945] but collapsed the following day. The new Frauenkirche was built

on the same site as a symbol of reconciliation between the opposing sides of the war. It was inaugurated in 2005. Since 1995, the bombing of Dresden and the German civilian casualties of the war have been remembered at the site, of whom it was not appropriate before to remember in such a public manner. (FINB2015B2, p. 85)

It is a fair question to ask why it was “not appropriate” to remember the victims—the use of history politics is valid—albeit arguably not the only possible—explanation. Other examples of such ambiguous statements are a passage telling us how Russia has hardly progressed in dealing with the purges of the Stalin era (FINB2015A2, p. 72), one about how post-war Japan has dealt with its actions in the Second World War (FINB2015B2, p. 161), an extensive discussion describing how Australia officially apologized for the treatment of the aboriginals (FINB2015C6, p. 49), and numerous passages describing differing views on particular issues, such as the attitudes of the German populace toward the Versailles Peace Treaty (FINB2015B2, p. 48, 52, 74) and those of the Turkish state and other actors toward the Armenian genocide (FINB2015A2, p. 72; FINB2015B2, p. 53). Notably, the new textbooks also contain Exercises. The students are expected to answer, for example, how Hitler linked the Aryans to Germans (FINB2015B6, p. 94). What this “linking” actually means is left for the reader to decide. Similarly, students are asked to explain why Marco Polo’s travelogue has been suspected as a forgery (FINB2015B1, p. 103), how reliable a historical source is a 1940 Soviet painting depicting the October Revolution (FINB2015C2, p. 42), how the encounter between the Europeans and native Americans is depicted in a historical painting (FINB2015C1, p. 104–105), to ponder what kind of interpretations have been made about the origin of Finns throughout time (FINB2015B5, p. 13), and how and why the statue erected by the Russian government commemorating the 1945 Yalta Conference differs from the original photograph (FINB2015B2, p. 94). Again, the concept of history politics could very well be linked to one or more of these questions, but the link is nowhere explicitly made.

United States

Only in a few rare instances do the American curriculum documents contain such passages. In total, two passages dealing with the Aims and Goals of the course were identified. The paragraphs can be found in the AP European History curriculum listed under the heading “Key concepts” and refer to interwar events in Europe (i.e., to events that clearly are not linked to the surrounding society). They state that Fascist dictatorships used “propaganda” and “glorified war and nationalism to attract the disillusioned,” while Mussolini and Hitler are portrayed as having manipulated

the “fledgling and unpopular democracies in their countries” (USAC5, p. 111). When it comes to the textbooks—both modern and old—the examples are again much more numerous and contain both Content passages and Exercises.

In the 1980s textbooks, the readers are told, for example, about the rumors that spread throughout the United States just before the start of the Civil War (USAB1985A, p. 430), how a painting of the Boston Massacre in 1770 is “inaccurate” (USAB1985B1, p. 106), how during the California Gold Rush of 1848, most stories of fortunes made overnight were untrue (USAB1985B1, p. 322), and how Hitler blamed the Jews for the German defeat in the First World War (USAB1985C, p. 537). *A History of the United States* (USAB1985C) describes how Columbus, after his crew grew rebellious, “altered the records of distances they had covered so the crew would not think they had gone too far from home” (p. 6). From *America: Its People and Values* (USAB1985A), the student learns the following: “After 1803, the United States claimed that most of West Florida was actually part of the Louisiana [land] Purchase. Spain insisted that this area was Spanish territory. The dispute lasted for years” (p. 284). Again, in all these instances, the use of history politics is a possible, yet not a self-evident, interpretation of the meaning of these passages. Whether the motives of Columbus, for example, can be considered political is dubious. Nevertheless, what is not told in the final example is on what these claims were based. One might believe that either one or even both were somehow engaging in the use of history politics. However, as the background is left unexplained, it might just as well be the case that the two were interpreting the land purchase documents in different manners or that someone had inadvertently misunderstood the provisions of the deal, for example. Students are also tasked with Exercises. *Rise of the American Nation* presents the following set of questions, which operate at such a level of ambiguousness that it is not quite clear whether the concept of history politics plays a part in the information provided to the students or whether the students are expected to bring this perspective into the picture when answering the questions:

Some British textbooks blame the American Revolution on a small group of radical agitators in America who were impatient with British leaders. (a) Do you agree or disagree with this interpretation? Explain. (b) Why do you think that British textbooks might present this interpretation of the Revolution? (USAB1985B1, p. 134)

Does the choice of words (“blame”) suggest that history politics are at play? Do the questions expect the student to answer that one or more parties are engaging in history politics? No clear answers are given. Additionally, the students are expected to read a firsthand account of the National Road from 1835 and then answer whether

they think the description is accurate or not (USAB1985B1, p. 478), to answer “How did false advertising and rumors affect the settlement of the English colonies [in North America]?” (USAB1985C, p. 46), and to speculate on a cartoonist’s motives based on his or her depiction of American President Andrew Jackson (USAB1985A, p. 333, 337).

In the newer American textbooks, the students are told (i.e., confronted with Content passages) about rumors that spread during the French Revolution:

Some people spread rumors that the king had hired foreign soldiers to punish the Third Estate. As a result, a panic later called the Great Fear swept through France. This panic was based on both fiction and fact. For example, rumors of massacres spread from village to village, and many people believed all kinds of wild stories. In the region of Champagne, for example, 3,000 men tried to find a gang of thugs reportedly seen in their neighborhood. However, the gang turned out to just be a herd of cattle. (USAB2015C, p. 597)

Or consider the following passages from *Western Heritage*:

In 1519, he [Ulrich Zwingli] competed for the post of people’s priest in the main church of Zurich. His candidacy was initially questioned after he acknowledged fornicating with a barber’s daughter, who had since delivered a child. Zwingli successfully minimized the affair, claiming the woman in question had been a skilled seducer, and denying any paternity as she had had affairs with other men as well. (USAB2015E, p. 328)

and

In 1678, a notorious liar named Titus Oates swore before a magistrate that ... [the King of England, Charles II’s] Catholic wife, through the physician, was plotting with Jesuits and Irishmen to kill the king so [the duke of York, king’s brother] James could assume the throne. Parliament believed Oates. In the ensuing hysteria, known as the Popish Plot, several innocent people were tried and executed. (USAB2015E, p. 387)

Let us look at the first two examples in more detail. What were the “rumors” and “fact and fiction” in the first instance? What about the reference to “minimizing the affair” in the second? Both statements could arguably be seen as references to the intentional misconstruction of history, although it is certainly not the only justifiable interpretation. Similarly, the motives in both cases are somewhat unclear. Was the intention of spreading rumors to cause a panic, and if so, is this to be seen as a

political motive or not? Was the decision made by Zwingli to apply for the mentioned job made in order to further a political agenda or not? In a similar vein, it is explained how pogroms in Russia were fueled by wrongly blaming Jews for the assassination of Alexander II (USAB2015C, p. 730), how Jews were cast as scapegoats for the Black Plague (USAB2015E, p. 258), how the contributions of certain figures to Soviet history were ignored up until the Gorbachev era (USAB2015E, p. 967), and how Ming officials referred to the pirates ravaging the east coast of China as Japanese although they were, in fact, Chinese (USAB2015D, p. 587). Other passages contrast opposing viewpoints. For example, “[t]he Turkish government officially denies that the Armenian deaths should be considered genocide, although most historians disagree” (USAB2015C, p. 788). To cite another example, the reader is told:

From the start of his career, Andrew Jackson was a controversial figure. “Hot-tempered,” “Indian-hater,” “military despot,” said his critics, while his friends praised him as a forthright statesman. (USAB2015C, p. 328)

As mentioned, the newer American textbooks also contain Exercises. For instance, the students are asked to evaluate whether a historical novel by Charles Dickens shows bias (USAB2015C, p. 600), how a European engraving and its caption depicting Native Americans might have shaped Europeans’ ideas about the Natives (USAB2015D, p. 537), and why Olaudah Equiano, an 18th century slave, might have claimed he was born in Africa even though the evidence suggests he was born in the United States (USAB2015C, p. 95). The reader is also presented with the eyewitness account of an American diplomat who was in Leipzig during the *Kristallnacht*. An example of a question is: “Why did the Nazis claim that the destruction of life and property in Leipzig and other German cities arose from spontaneous actions?” (USAB2015E, p. 890). When answering the question, the choice of words—Nazis *claiming* something—could certainly be linked with the concept of history politics, but this is certainly not the only possible interpretation. Another passage from an American textbook asks students to answer “How history is invoked” to support the positions of different actors in a disagreement about the balance between papal theocracy and secular authority (USAB2015E, p. 270) but without really elaborating what is meant by invoking history to support certain positions. In one Exercise, students are exposed to two paintings of Napoleon Bonaparte (USAB2015C, p. 611). Two arrows in each picture point to the painting, with the other end of each arrow connecting to a text box. In the first picture, the text boxes present the following additional information: “Napoleon actually rode a mule across the Alps instead of a fine horse like the one in this painting” and “Napoleon looks like big, impressive man in this portrait. In fact, he was 5’6” or shorter.” In the second picture, the

following is stated: “Notice the scuffed, dusty boots and rumpled coat” and “Contrast Napoleon’s slumped posture in this painting with his pose in the other one.” The reader is then tasked with the following Exercise:

As is the case with famous people, historians and artists have also portrayed Napoleon in different ways, depending on their points of view. Compare the two portraits of Napoleon above and how the artist’s viewpoint differed.

Under the title “Reading like a historian,” the reader is then presented with further questions about the paintings. Under the heading “Draw conclusions,” one of these additional questions runs as follows: “Which of the portraits do you think is a more realistic painting?”

China

In the Chinese curriculum, one passage of this type was identified. In the document, one of the Aims and Goals of course six (20th Century War and Peace, an elective course) is listed as: “Understand the reasons Auschwitz concentration has been declared [UN] World Heritage and to understand the human efforts to learn from history and to avoid repeating the disastrous mistakes of history” (CHNC). This passage dealing with a sort of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* could well be interpreted as a reference to history politics, but the links are barely there. The statement is clearly talking about a particular event in history (the strive of humankind to “learn from history and to avoid repeating the disastrous mistakes of history” in the post-WW II era), but it is also evident that this context is not exclusively that of modern China. As was the case in Finland, this is an obvious choice, as other mandated content explicitly draws connections to the surrounding societal system, as the students are expected, for example, to learn about “[t]he change of the economic structure of modern China” (CHNC).

In the older textbooks, a few Content passages of this type were identified. For example, one can find the following passages:

By the end of the 19th century, the series of bloody massacres had reduced the number of Indians from more than one million to 240,000. The survivors were driven to the desolate and remote western regions and trapped in the so-called “reserves” to live miserable lives. The peaceful and idyllic “Westward Movement” advocated by the American ruling class was actually a history of Indians’ blood and tears. (CHNB1985B, p. 18)

On September 18, 1931, Japan launched a long-premeditated war of aggression against China, occupying the entire northeast of China. The Asian theater of the World War was beginning to take shape. In order to cover up its crime of encroaching on China's northeast, in March 1932, Japan brought forward the puppet [emperor] Pu Yi and established the false [state of] Manchukuo. (CHNB1985B, p. 233)

Additional examples comprise how, in his work *Prometheus Bound*, the Greek tragedian Aeschylus created a hero image based on myths (CHNB1985A, p. 43), how the early United Nations was manipulated by the United States (CHNB1985B, p. 285), and how Oliver Cromwell sent troops on an "expedition" to Ireland (CHNB1985A, p. 149, quotation marks as in the original text), without elaborating in detail what these passages of text meant. In contrast to the somewhat limited approach in the Curriculum and older textbooks, numerous Content passages and Exercises in this field of the HPDM were identified in the newer Chinese textbooks. Consider the following Content passage:

The exact costs of the first Western voyage [of Columbus] are no longer available, but based on various clues and indicators, the total sum was about two million Maravedís...Isabella had intended to sell the jewels in her crown, but it was not needed. It is said that she indeed pawned her jewelry for Columbus. *This is a legend which began in the 17th century.* (CHNB2015A2, p. 84, emphasis added)

Why did such a legend emerge? Was it a result of intentional "twisting and turning" of history? And if so, what were the motives to further such a narrative? The book offers no clear answers. Moreover, the passage clearly does not address matters in modern-day China. Similarly, the reader is told, for example, how Ludwig van Beethoven had initially dedicated his third symphony to Napoleon but later withdrew this dedication and changed the name of the composition after becoming enraged over the fact that Napoleon had crowned himself as emperor (CHNB2015A3, p. 144). However, the passage leaves it up to the reader to interpret whether it was Beethoven's intention to deny any previous association with Napoleon altogether and whether his motives for the changes were indeed political. Perhaps Beethoven's actions were simply a symbolic act of defiance. Similarly, the readership is being told how the Treaty of Versailles "buried the seeds of the German national revenge," which was then "used" by Hitler (CHNB2015A6, p. 29). Or consider the ambiguous choice of words in this passage from a Chinese textbook dealing again with the issue of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*:

In September 1972...China and Japan signed the Sino-Japanese Joint Declaration. The declaration stated that the abnormal state of affairs between China and Japan was over and that the governments of the People's Republic of China and Japan had established diplomatic relations. The Japanese side expressed a deep sense of remorse for the significant losses it had inflicted on the Chinese people in the war. (CHNB2015A1, p. 92)

Does this mean that before the Declaration, the Japanese had refused to express remorse and even denied the matter altogether? And if so, was such a decision motivated by political considerations? Similarly in China, some passages contrast opposing viewpoints on a historical event. Consider the following paragraph:

When viewing the nature of religious reforms [in 16th century Europe], some people think that the religious reform was an anti-feudal movement of the emerging bourgeoisie class, whereas others think of it as a national liberation or ideological emancipation movement. In fact, religious reform touches upon a wide range of issues, and analysis from different viewpoints will yield different types of answers. (CHNB2015A4, p. 63)

The readers of the Chinese textbooks are also presented with questions. The following Exercise comes from the People's Education Press series. The readers are presented with a passage from President Woodrow Wilson's speech in which he is explaining the justifications for the United States joining the First World War. The readership is then confronted with the following questions: "Was the purpose of the United States joining the War what Wilson had said it was? What was the real intention?" (CHNB2015B6, p. 17).

4.4 History Politics and the *Others*—History Politics in Faraway Places and Times

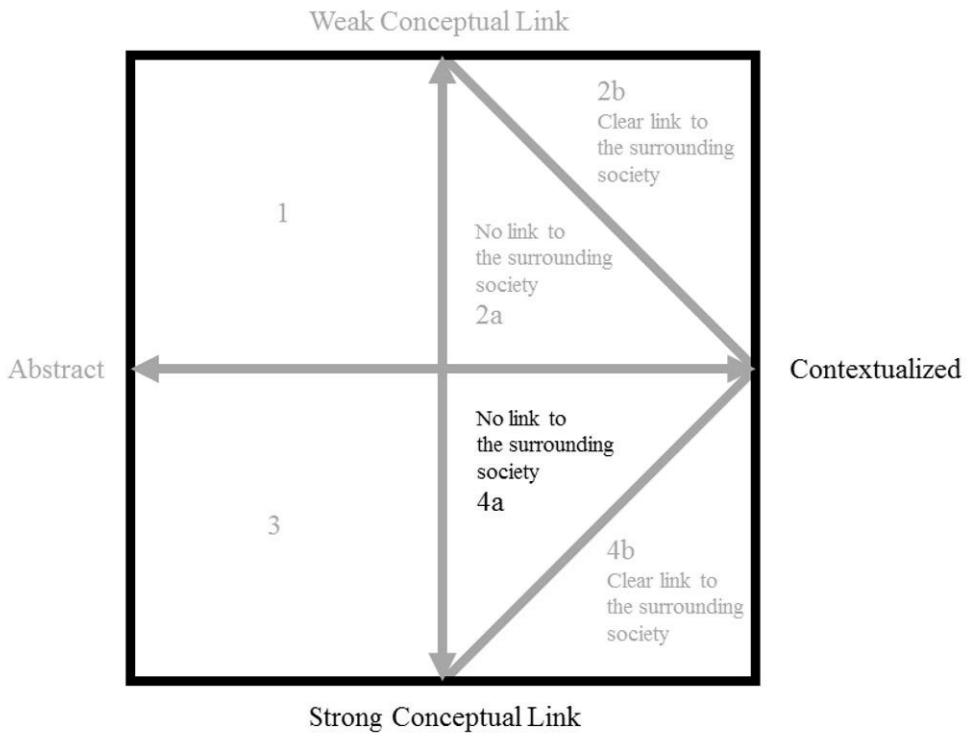


Figure 17. Field of 4a of the inner layer of the HPDM—History politics in faraway places and times.

In some passages of text, history politics in concrete times and places far away is clearly discussed (Field 4a in the HPDM). Consider, for example, how this excerpt from *America’s History* makes it clear that history was intentionally misinterpreted for political purposes (i.e., the text is evidently about history politics) on the one hand, yet on the other hand, this was done by people other than those living roughly at the same time and place in history as the reader (in this case, by the pre-Civil War President of the United States, James Knox Polk):

“We were there to provoke a fight,” recalled Ulysses S. Grant, then a young officer serving with [General Zachary] Taylor, “but it was essential that Mexico should commence it.” When the armies clashed near Rio Grande in May 1846, Polk delivered the war message he had drafted long before. Taking liberties with the truth, the president declared that Mexico “has passed the boundary of the

United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon the American soil.” (USAB2015C, p. 419)

Passages of a similar nature are to be found in all countries. Additionally, teacher interviews in both Finland and the United States suggested that the respondents approached teaching the concept from this angle.

Finland

The Finnish textbooks—both old and new—are dealing with the concept in this manner. In the older textbooks, only Content passages were identified. The newer ones—both mandatory and elective course textbooks—included both Content passages and one Exercise (in a mandatory course textbook). The older Finnish textbooks state, for example, that:

The writing of history has sometimes been used by the Arabs to further other ambitions. This was not simply due to religious reasons. Sources about the Umayyads era, for example, are one-sided, as the sources which have survived are mainly from the Abassids era, when the favor of the caliphs was pursued by defaming the Umayyads. (FINB1985C2, p. 270)

In addition, a picture caption describes how Stalin had his political competitor Leon Trotsky “erased from documents and history” (FINB1985A5, p. 21) and how in the 17th and 18th century stories about a magnificent past were invented in Sweden to support the quest to become a great power (FIN1985B3, p. 82; FIN1985C3, p. 115).

Regardless of whether we are talking about mandatory or elective course textbooks, the Content passages in the newer books cover varied cases, such as how the state of Iran is denying that the Holocaust ever happened (FINB2015B2, p. 92), how imperial Germany lied about the actual date it had recognized the independence of Finland (FINB2015A3, p. 67), how the famous photograph of raising the flag on Iwo Jima was staged to serve propaganda needs (FINB2015B2, p. 93), and how the Italian fascists intentionally exaggerated the importance of the March to Rome in 1922 (FINB2015B2, p. 64). Next, events in modern Soviet/Russian history are a very salient, often-cited theme. Under the title “The law controls the only historical truth in Russia,” the *Kaikkien aikojen historia* series elaborates on this Soviet/Russian theme extensively:

Duma, or the Russian parliament, approved of a law in 2013, according to which those who distort the Soviet Second World War history or who otherwise insult it [the Soviet Union/Russia?] can be sentenced to up to five years in prison. The

distortion of history is a euphemism that is directed against the opposition inside Russia and against the interpretations of history made in the Baltic countries, Ukraine and Poland. The Russian opposition, some media actors and human rights organizations have strongly opposed the politicization of history, but their voice is not being heard. Distortion of history which runs contrary to Russia's interests are, for example, claims, according to which the Soviet Union had occupied the Baltic countries up to the 1990s, or that in the 1930s, a famine had taken place in Ukraine as a result of the forced collectivization of the agriculture, which claimed millions of lives. The 1940 murder of 22,000 officers in Katyn, which was already officially acknowledged in the 1990s has been denied again. In the 1990s in Russia, it was also acknowledged that the Soviet Union started the Winter War in 1939 and attacked Finland. This undeniable fact now also runs contrary to Russian history law. In order to safeguard the one and only historical interpretation, Putin ordered that all schools in the country must adopt a new textbook. Its mission is to remove the ambiguity in the former textbooks and to offer a unified and correct picture of Russian history. In Putin's Russia, the wheel of history has been turned backwards with a heavy hand. The reason is the longing for Russia's Soviet-era greatness, which was also acknowledged by the Western countries. To justify this restoration, a certain type of history politics is needed. (FINB2015A2, p. 158)

Interestingly, in contrast to the passage cited earlier (see Chapter 3.2.3), which merely highlights a difference of opinion without explicitly talking about history politics, the passages in the *Historia ajassa* and *Forum* series evidently do so when explaining the Mainila incident of 1939. Notice how it is brought to the attention of the reader that the Soviet Union was dishonest about its actions and used its own false flag operation to justify its assault on Finland:

[On] November 26th 1939, Molotov, the foreign minister of the Soviet Union, gave a letter expressing dissatisfaction or a note to the Finnish government stating that the Finnish army had used its artillery to shell the village of Mainila on the Soviet side [of the border] and several Soviet soldiers had died. In its own response, Finland emphasized that there was no Finnish artillery at the border area within firing range from Mainila. In reality Soviet Union was behind the Shelling of Mainila, and its objective was to frame Finland as the instigator of the war. Referring to the Shelling of Mainila, the Soviet Union discontinued the non-aggression pact and broke off diplomatic relations with Finland. November 30th, 1939 Soviet troops began an assault over the border to Finland. The same day, its bomber aircrafts bombed Helsinki and other large cities. The Winter War had begun (FINB2015B3, p. 113).

On the 26th of November 1939, Finnish border troops reported on explosions heard from the direction of Mainila village over on the Soviet side. On the same evening, the Soviet Union handed a note to Finland, which stated that Finns had fired at its [Soviet Union's] territory with artillery and that several Soviet soldiers had either died or were injured. The Soviet Union demanded that Finnish troops would be withdrawn from the border area. The Finnish reply emphasized that there was no artillery in the area, that would have been able to fire the shots. Finland was prepared to withdraw its troops if the Soviet Union did the same. The Soviet Union discontinued the non-aggression pact on the 28th of November and the next day, it broke diplomatic relations with Finland. The Soviet Union's own special troops were behind the so-called Shelling of Mainila, and the purpose was to frame Finland as the instigator. The Winter War begun on the 30th of November 1939, when Soviet troops attacked across the border and Soviet airplanes bombarded Helsinki. (FINB2015C3, p. 99)

Other cited examples from the Soviet Union are, for example, a picture caption explaining how Leon Trotsky was erased from official Soviet photographs after his fall from power (FINB2015B2, p. 45) and a passage explaining how the Soviets were not truthful about the motives of why the military base of Porkkala, which they had occupied after the Second World War, was returned to Finland in 1956 (FINB2015B3, p. 155). As mentioned, interestingly, one single Exercise from a mandatory course textbook deals with the matter, although even here, it is somewhat questionable whether an explicit reference to history politics is being made and whether the question is even a question or a sort of faux-question, as the passage arguably already answers the question itself. A picture caption in one of the books reads as follows:

Red Army soldiers placing the Soviet flag atop the German Reichstag as a symbol of the taking of Berlin. A Red Army photographer staged the situation as a tool for propaganda on May 2nd 1945. The picture has also been manipulated: afterwards, the Soviets noticed that one of the soldiers was wearing two watches on his wrist. Why was the second watch later removed from the picture? (FINB2015B2, p. 89)

The Finnish teachers also addressed the matter in this fashion. FINT2, for example, asserted that: "A classical example which I have used regarding history politics is how the Nazis changed school textbooks...in the 1930s. And after the war, History was not taught in Germany," whereas FINT3 mentioned First World War German propaganda. A theme that was repeated very often by the teachers consisted of references made one way or another to the history of the Soviet Union and Russia

(FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT8, and FINT9). For example, FINT2 noted in a joking manner, “[a]nd...when you talk about like Stalin’s persecutions and the totalitarian system of the Soviet Union, I have always joked [in class] that if we’d have Stalin now, then you’d have a different teacher...I would be somewhere mining stones.” He/she was undoubtedly suggesting that he/she sought to teach the students how History education in Stalin’s Soviet Union was highly saturated with the use of history politics. Events from Finnish history dating far back, such as the Siege of Sveaborg in 1808 (FINT5), the Finnish Famine of 1866–68, and Johan Vilhelm Snellman’s reforms in the 1860s (FINT8), were mentioned. Although it appears that FINT2 was talking about History education in general, not his/her own teaching, he/she interestingly described through a *negation* how the concept of history politics is taught: “I would say that in History, the kind of Finnish history politics is very thin. It’s more about pointing fingers at others that: ‘Look how dumbly they know history.’” However, it is somewhat unclear whether he/she meant that this applies to his/her teaching as well or whether it was an observation regarding other teachers’ teaching or even the subject as a whole.

United States

In the case of both the older and newer American textbooks, only Content passages were identified. In the older book *Rise of the American nation*, a special topic box under the title “Needed: A Hero” introduces the historiography of George Washington to the reader. Notice how the two emphasized passages in the text link political motivations with the intentional distortion of the past.

“You have a great deal of money lying in the bones of old George if you will but exert yourself to extract it.” So wrote Mason Locke Weems (Parson Weems) to his publisher, Matthew Carey. “Old George” was none other than George Washington, the subject of a best-selling biography by the clergyman-author. Eager customers bought over 50,000 copies in the ten years after it was published in 1800. Parson Weems did much to make a near-mythical figure out of our first President. *As a traveling bookseller, he realized that Americans were hungry for heroes. The young United States was anxious to take its place among far older countries with legendary pasts.* Who could be a better symbol of national pride than George Washington? At the time of his death in 1799, Washington was certainly admired, but as a human being with human flaws. For example, he was not a brilliant general or a spellbinding orator, and he was known to have lost his temper now and then. *But Weems made him almost godlike, creating incidents to serve his purpose.* It was Weems who created the cherry-tree story, in which Washington’s honesty more than made up for his carelessness with his

hatches. Weems's hero worship set the tone for decades. Scholarly biographies depicted Washington as a perfect leader. His correspondence was edited to remove its saltier phrases. Flowery speeches were made every year on his birthday. Dignified pictures of him hung everywhere. The capital of the new nation bore his name. Many years were to pass before Americans allowed Washington to come out from under his halo and be admired as a man rather than revered as a saint. (USAB1985B1, p. 253, emphasis added)

Similarly, it is told, for example, how in early 19th century America, the so-called Sedition Act was intended to silence American citizens even though the supporters of the Federalist party who supported the Act claimed it was a necessary war preparation (USAB1985B1, p. 215–216). Other examples include how the Spanish knowingly accused an Inca emperor of crimes he had not committed in order to prevent him from leading an uprising against the Spaniards (USAB1985C, p. 19) and how during the Cuban missile crisis, the Soviets denied the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba (USAB1985C, p. 651).

In the newer books, no difference was identified between the standard and AP course books. The readership is told, for example, about the so-called Dreyfus affair in France. *Western Heritage* (USAB2015E) examines the affair in detail:

The greatest trauma of the Third Republic occurred over what became known as the Dreyfus affair. On December 22, 1894, a French military court found Captain Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935) guilty of passing secret information to the German army. The evidence against him was flimsy and was later revealed to have been forged. Someone in the officer corps had been passing documents to the Germans, and it suited the army investigators to accuse Dreyfus, who was Jewish. After Dreyfus had been sent to Devil's Island, a notorious prison in French Guiana, however, secrets continued to flow to the German army. In 1896, a new head of French counterintelligence reexamined the Dreyfus file and found evidence of forgery. A different officer was implicated, but a military court acquitted him of all charges. By then the affair had provoked near-hysterical public debate. The army, the French Catholic Church, political conservatives, and vehemently anti-Semitic newspapers contended that Dreyfus was guilty. Such anti-Dreyfus opinion was dominant at the beginning of the affair. In 1898, however, the novelist Émile Zola (1840–1902) published a newspaper article entitled "J'accuse"(I accuse"), in which he contended that the army had denied due process to Dreyfus and had suppressed or forged evidence...They also claimed, and properly so, that Dreyfus had been framed to protect the guilty persons, who were still in the army. In August 1898, further evidence of forged material came to light...The Dreyfus case divided France as no issue had done

since the Paris Commune. By its conclusion, the conservatives were on the defensive. They had allowed themselves to persecute an innocent person and to manufacture false evidence against him to protect themselves from disclosure. (p. 701–702)

Another example talks about the Japanese army faking the so-called Mukden or Manchuria Incident. Under the title “The Inside Story—Why would an army bomb its own railway?” the readership is told that:

In 1931, a bomb exploded in the Chinese region of Manchuria, damaging a Japanese-controlled railway line. Japanese soldiers stationed in Manchuria immediately blamed the blast on Chinese sabotage. Given Chinese unhappiness with the Japanese presence in China, it was easy to believe that China was responsible for the attack. However, China had nothing to do with the explosion. The bomb had been planted by Japanese soldiers who wanted to use the excuse of this alleged Chinese attack to quickly take over Manchuria. Japan would then have access to the region’s rich natural resources, which were badly needed by the Japanese industry. (USAB2015C, p. 818)

Other examples include a description of how Bismarck used a tampered telegram to lure the French into a war with Germany in 1870 (USAB2015E, p. 699), how the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shah Ismail, as well as his successors, controlled and manipulated the accounts of their rise to power to justify their rule (USAB2015D, p. 613), and how after the fall of Stalin, textbooks in the Soviet Union were purposefully rewritten to deflate his reputation (USAB2015D, p. 882).

Some of the American teachers also described how they had used examples from faraway places and times. During our talks, one of them (USAT5) passionately explained to me:

Like I gave the example of Hitler being an obvious example...Hitler is the obvious choice in this discussion as somebody that really like morphed, embraced, reformed, and projected the history that he wanted to. Whereas like your Bismarcks or something like that, like they’re not as well known. And yet, you really wanna talk about your political manipulator like: “Woah, that’s the guy to look at!” So that’s what I mean. I would also look into...Bismarck. Because a Hitler doesn’t come out of nowhere.

Examples from distant American history were also cited. USAT6 mentioned that he/she addressed the theme while covering the events of the Boston Massacre of 1770:

The one [example] that springs to mind was when we talked about the Boston Massacre...[T]here's that famous like a sketch that Paul Revere made...I use that as a way to show: "Hey look even back then, we're kind of blowing up events and kind of using like something that may have happened and twisting it a little bit and using it as propaganda."

Another teacher also explained how he/she addressed the same events through an Exercise:

We do like a murder mystery type with the Boston Massacre. And we say: "Well the colonists, they called it a massacre and...Paul Revere...painted it this way." And we look at Captain Preston, who was the leader of the customs officials...fired upon, you know? What is he saying about the story? [T]wo conflicting stories...who knows the truth? And then we took primary sources from eyewitnesses...And we said: "Well listen, we have three (sic) completely different stories. Where's the truth? The colonists said the British provoked it. The British said the colonialists provoked it by throwing stones and, you know, oyster shells. So who knows?...I mean, so when you look at correspondence...then it's up for the kids to decide.

These examples should be interpreted with certain reservations. First, it was not always clear how the viewpoint about the intentional manipulation of history to further political ambitions fit in with the examples the teachers cited. For instance, even though USAT6 mentioned how he/she had used Hitler as an obvious choice to pinpoint "somebody that really like morphed, embraced, reformed, and projected the history" (see above), it is not entirely clear what he/she had told the students about Hitler and the way he used history. In fact, some of the examples raised by the teachers were not even as elaborate as the ones above. Oftentimes, the teachers merely mentioned events that they had covered with the particular thematic approach (i.e., that of history politics) in mind without actually making any reference to how history politics had been part of the picture when the topic was covered. For example, during the discussions with Finnish teachers, "the Chinese Cultural Revolution" (FINT2) and "North Korea" (FINT5 and FINT7) were mentioned as discussion points where the concept of history politics was raised to the attention of the students. Similarly, in the United States, mentions of "Nazis" (USAT4) and "Bleeding Kansas" (USAT6) were voiced, yet without specifying how exactly the concept of history politics was addressed.

China

In Chinese textbooks, passages of this nature are few and far between. Yet, some Content passages are to be found in elective course textbooks. An Yuelu Press textbook, for example, explains the following to the reader:

As early as the Meiji Restoration, Japan had established a “mainland policy” of encroaching on China and continuously penetrating with force into the northeastern region of China. The [Japanese] Ministry of the Army viewed Northeast China as Japan’s “lifeline,” and sought to monopolize it. After Zhang Xueliang’s “change of flag” in 1928, Japan’s power and influence in the Northeast greatly weakened. The Ministry of the Army had decided on a policy of using military power to invade and occupy Northeast China, and the Kwantung Army was the vanguard in the invasion. The Japanese Kwantung Army stationed in the Northeast had been plotting invasion and occupation for a long time. For more than two years, senior army officers Kanji Ishiwaru and Seishirō Itagaki had carried out secret investigation and planning, and they decided to use a conspiracy to provoke an incident in order to create an excuse for invasion and occupation. On the evening of September 18th, 1931, the Japanese Kwantung Army created the Liutiaohu [Mukden] incident. Less than three months later, the Japanese army occupied the entire Northeast territory. The September 18 Incident and the occupation of Northeast China greatly improved the Ministry of the Army’s political status in Japan. In 1936, the February 26 *coup d’état* attempt took place in Japan, after which the subsequent government cabinet was entirely subordinate to the Ministry of the Army. This marked the establishment of the Japanese fascist system. The September 18 Incident was the beginning of the road for Japanese fascists to re-partition colonies by force and to dominate the world. It was a serious challenge to the Versailles-Washington system, which marked the formation of the source of war in Asia. Under the instigation of fascist extreme nationalism, the Japanese people emerged to support the war fever. The Ministry of the Army and other fascist forces wantonly propagated the “Manchurian incident.” They incited people’s awareness of crisis and xenophobia and described the invasion as “rising up vigorously to defend Japan’s interests,” thus prompting the population to support the war. (CHNBC6, p. 39)

Similarly, it is told of Japan how right-wing forces in the country were denying the damage that Japanese forces had caused in Asia during the Second World War (CHNBA9, p. 134) and how in 1943, the Nationalist Party [of China] (*Guomindang*) published a pamphlet falsifying Chinese history (CHNBB5, p. 104–105)

4.5 Ambiguous Actions in the Surrounding Society

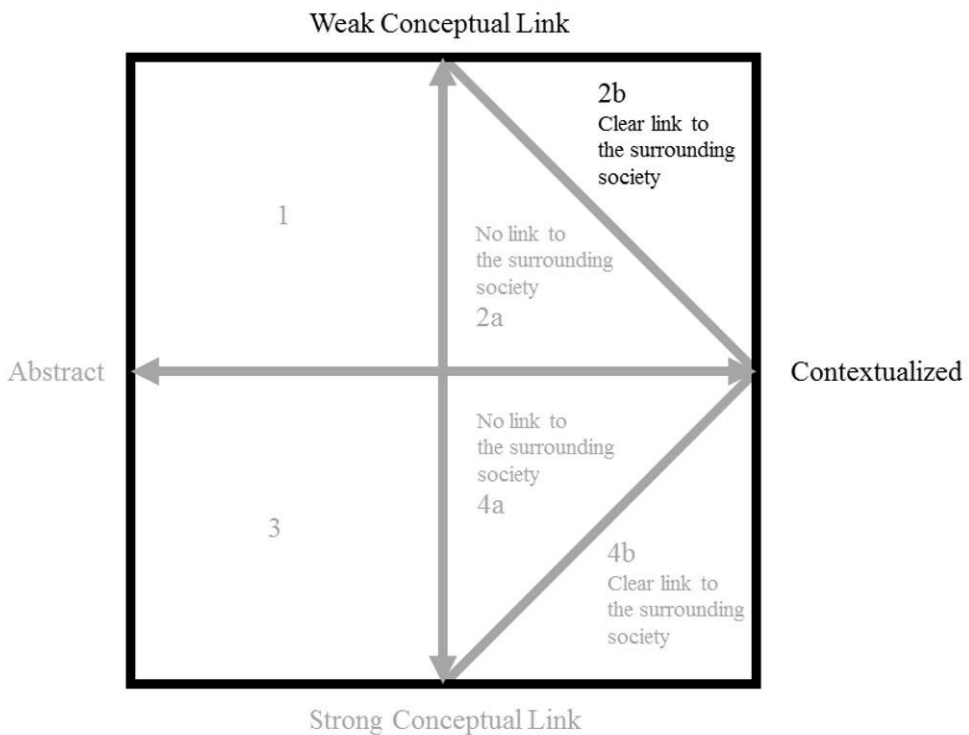


Figure 18. Field 2b of the inner layer of the HPDM—Ambiguous actions in the surrounding society.

Some identified passages of text discuss events in the (near) past of the surrounding society in a rather ambiguous manner (Field 2b in the HPDM). Consider the following passage from *The Americans* textbook. Notice how the picture caption ambiguously discusses the manipulation of an image in 1970s America:

Mary Ann Vecchio grieves over the body of Jeffrey Glenn Miller, a student shot by National Guard troops at Kent State [University]. In the original photograph, a fence post appeared behind the woman's head. It is believed that someone manipulated the image in the early 1970s to make it more visually appealing. (USAB2015A, p. 963)

Passages of this type were identified in all three countries.

Finland

When it comes to the case of text documents in Finland, only textbooks (old and new) contained such passages, whereas interestingly, the 2015 curriculum document did not. The older textbooks have only very few such passages, all of which are Content passages. One from the *Lukion historia* series tells students that “[t]he War of 1918 has been called by many names...The disputes about the name of the war are part of the aftermath and settling of scores [Finnish: *jälkiselvittely*] of the war” (FINB1985B6, p. 84). Does this suggest that history politics are at play? Once again, it is certainly a possible interpretation, but by no means the only one.

In the new books, examples of this type are much more numerous. The analysis revealed no difference between mandatory and elective course books. Some of these identified passages are Content passages. Consider the following paragraph from *Kaikkien aikojen historia*, which discusses how the Finns have perceived their relationship to Russia and the Soviet Union in the 20th century and beyond:

In addition to hindsightful thinking and explaining things in a favorable light, our historical thinking is often plagued by a narrow national viewpoint. In this matter, descriptions of a Finnish national mentality are very fitting: Finns are unsocial and introverted, and if the neighbor comes too close, you move further away into the wilderness. A Finn does not resort to outsiders’ help but manages on his or her own. These stereotypes are still commonly used, even if they do not have any base in reality. A narrow national viewpoint has rooted itself strongly in Finnish history writing that describes the history of our country. These descriptions are at their narrowest when they totally ignore that the outside world has always existed around Finland. The significance of outside influences is acknowledged, but the national viewpoint is not always able to take into consideration how Finland was interwoven into international processes of interaction Relationships with the East (i.e. with Russia) have always been a matter of life and death for Finland. Since the era of oppression at the turn of the 20th century an image has been rooted in Finnish history writing where Finland is the small and gritty small David who, for centuries has fought against the big and mean Goliath as if rest of the world did not exists. David has defended Finnish laws and rights to the very end, which the Goliath has decided to trample to the ground and gobble small Finland into its mouth thereafter. Like David, Finland has been left alone and it has been forced to learn to cope on its own without any outside help. It has also succeeded in that time and again. When enough attention hasn’t been paid to the significance of the outside world, the duel has left an impression that the leadership of Russia/the Soviet Union has constantly plotted against Finland. In this scenario, Finland has appeared as more important than what has really been the case. In reality Finnish matters have

hardly ever been at the top of the paper pile on top of Russia's or Soviet Union's leaders' desks. (FINB2015A3, p. 10)

In the cited example above, what do the references to “hindsightful thinking,” “explaining things in a favorable light” that “plague[s] our historical thinking,” and the “narrow national viewpoint” that “has rooted itself strongly in Finnish history writing” refer to? Do they suggest that history politics were at play? Was history misinterpreted intentionally? Were the motives to do so political? This is a possible, yet not an indisputable interpretation. What is evident, however, is that the context is clearly that of modern-day Finland. Meanwhile, in another book, the trials that followed the War of 1918 are addressed in the following manner:

There was no will or time to process every Red's case in the court of law. The state crime tribunals [Finnish: *valtiorikosoikeudet*] were not able to cope with the enormous workload. In many localities, field court-martials were set up where sentences were handed out without proper investigation. Capital punishments were not based on the law, yet hundreds of Reds were executed based on, for example, neighbor's accusations. (FINB2015B3, p. 76)

Or consider how ambiguousness arises from two competing views of history that are presented without a proper explanation of why they have emerged. *Kaikkien aikojen historia* explains the ongoing debate about *Finlandization*:

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, a fierce showdown began in Finland, which is still ongoing in both history research and in the media. The interpretations that have been put forth are entirely of opposing nature. Some scholars argue that our [i.e., Finnish] political culture became badly rotten during [president] Kekkonen's time and that some notable personalities were even liaisons of the KGB's, the eastern neighbor's intelligence service. Some scholars find these accusations unreasonable, as Finland made it through the Cold War better than any other neighboring country of the Soviet Union. It retained its democracy and its western societal system. Moreover, it was during those very decades when Finlandization is claimed to have been at its worst when it [Finland] became a Nordic welfare state where the standard of living for its citizens was amongst the highest in the world. A crucial obstacle to research on the phenomenon of Finlandization is the fact that most of the most important Soviet-era archives are behind locked doors in Moscow. This leaves room for all sorts of speculations, which get a lot of visibility in the media. (FINB2015A3, p. 146)

The history of Finnish participation in the Second World War is also covered. The *Kaikkien aikojen historia* (FINB2015A3) series elaborates, for example, about the Continuation War:

In the truce agreement signed between Finland and the Soviet Union 19.9.1944, it was ruled that Finland had started an offensive war against the Soviet Union. Majority of Finns felt that Finland had not started the war. As a result, the conditions of the truce agreement were seen as entirely unjust. (p. 128)

Further examples discuss the different ways the War of 1918 has been remembered (FINB2015A3, p. 91, FINB2015B3, p. 77–80).

Readers of the Finnish textbooks are also presented with Exercises. Finnish students are, for example, expected to compare different sources assessing the political position of Finland in the 1970s and to answer the following questions, among others: “What is the position of the author and for what possible purpose was the text written?” and “Ponder which of the documents evaluate Finland’s politics and position critically and which are compassionate towards them?” (FINB2015A3, p. 147). A very interesting example of Exercises comes from a *Forum* series textbook. Following a chapter right at the beginning of the first book in the series, which discusses issues such as the nature of history as a field of inquiry and epistemological starting points of research, the student is presented with the following question: “What kind of source-critical questions can be asked from this [*Forum* series] textbook?” (FINB2015C1, p. 11). In the third book of the series (the book intended to be used during the course History of Independent Finland), the student is instructed to “[l]ook at the table of contents of the book. Which topics do you think could be delicate for Finnish historians?” (FINB2015C3, p. 16). “Asking source critical questions” or “delicate topics for Finnish historians” could certainly be linked to the concept of history politics in modern-day Finland. Other presented Exercises challenge students to consider how and why different names have been used to describe the War of 1918 (FINB2015A3, p. 81) and what ramifications these different names have had and to answer why Finland wanted to present itself as neutral when the Continuation War broke out (FINB2015B3, p. 127).

United States

One passage of this type was identified in the American curriculum documents. In the AP U.S. History curriculum, one Aim or Goal listed under the heading “Key concept” is the following: “Official restrictions on freedom of speech grew during World War I, as increased anxiety about radicalism led to a Red Scare and attacks on labor activism and immigrant culture” (USAC4, p. 77). The reference to “official

restrictions on freedom of speech” could very well be linked to the use of history politics in the United States during the First World War. In the textbooks, such passages were much more numerous.

In the older textbooks, the students are told, for example, how after the Civil War, rumors spread that the federal government would grant freed slaves land and farm animals (USAB1985B1, p. 395), how industrial leaders claimed that the journalist Ida Tarbell had selectively stayed silent about the positive contributions of large corporations to American society (USAB1985A, p. 559), and how Richard Nixon accused his opponent of links to communists as part of his bid to enter the U.S. Senate (USAB1985C, p. 603). *A History of the United States* talks (USAB1985C, p. 420) about President Theodore Roosevelt in the following manner:

Roosevelt never lost his boyish excitement. He kept up his boxing. After he was hit in the eye while boxing with a young army officer, his left eye became blind. He managed to keep this a secret, and he devised ways to prevent people from knowing that he could see in only one eye.

Again, it is dubious whether the passages are talking about intentional misinterpretation of history and political motives or not. Let us look at the cited passage in more detail. It is, of course, up to interpretation whether mutism about past issues (and perhaps faking physical prowess) and allowing the audience to come to their own conclusion indeed constitutes a form of intentional misinterpretation of history. Moreover, the motives of such actions are not entirely clear, and from a human standpoint, it is easy to argue that Roosevelt acted in this manner out of some sort of personal shame and lack of self-worth rather than due to political considerations, although this might arguably also be the case. The students are also provided with Exercises dealing with matters from this perspective. They are asked, for example, how a 1979 report of the Kennedy assassination differed from the Warren Commission report published in the assassination’s immediate aftermath (USAB1985C, p. 658), to provide evidence either for or against a criticism given about President Grover Cleveland (USAB1985C, p. 401), to assess whether there might have been some ulterior motives for impeaching President Andrew Johnson in 1868 (USAB1985A, p. 472), and to identify whether facts support President William Howard Taft’s opponents’ claims that the President was against conservation of natural resources (USA1985B2, p. 171).

Both the modern standard and AP textbooks took a similar approach. When it comes to Content passages in newer textbooks, a picture caption in *The Americans* (USAB2015A) states that, “[w]hen [in 1898,] the *U.S.S. Maine* exploded in the harbor of Havana, newspapers like the *New York Journal* were quick to place the blame on Spain” (p. 554). What does the choice of the words “place the blame” mean

here? Perhaps the newspapers knew that Spain was not to be blamed, yet they furthered such a viewpoint to further some—possibly a political—ambition. In *America's history* (USAB2015C), it is meanwhile stated that,

[a]fter reconstruction ended, many white southerners celebrated the Confederacy as a heroic “Lost Cause.” Through organizations such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans and United Daughters of the Confederacy, they profoundly influenced the nation’s memories of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. (p. 502)

What does it mean here that the organizations “profoundly influenced the nation’s memories”? Misrepresentation of history is certainly a possibility. Moreover, no indication of clear motives for this “influencing” is stated, leaving it open to interpretation that in its entirety, the statement suggests that history politics was at play. Students are also told, for example, how President Franklin D. Roosevelt hid his polio from the public (USAB2015D, p. 820). Both the mandatory and AP course textbooks also confront students with Exercises. *America's history* (USAB2015C) asks the student the following questions: “Why did U.S. policies toward Native Americans in this era [1850s to 1890s] result in so much violence? Why did armed struggle continue as late as 1890, despite the U.S. ‘peace policy’ that was proclaimed in the 1870s?” (p. 527). The students are also tasked with assessing “the unstated editorial policies of yellow journalism” (USAB2015A, p. 557).

China

In China, relatively few passages were to be found in the newer textbooks. Both Content paragraphs and Exercises were identified. Interestingly, only one example of the latter was identified, in a mandatory course textbook. Content passages, meanwhile, were identified in both mandatory and elective course textbooks. One example is the following:

[The] compilation [of genealogies] is a kind of a folk custom. During certain periods after the founding of the New China [i.e., People’s Republic of China], genealogies were regarded as “feudalistic” remnants and they were destroyed on a large scale. (CHNB2015A8, p. 117–118)

The actual meaning of the statement is quite unclear, although it could arguably be seen as a reference to history politics. Does the physical destruction of documents equal the intentional misinterpretation of history? Was the purpose of the destruction of the documents to erase the history they contain (i.e., to intentionally misrepresent history) or to simply symbolize the opposition to “feudalistic” practices, for

example? And were the motives political or not? The book offers no clear answer, and thus, both can be seen as valid interpretations. In an ambiguous way, without explicitly addressing whether the talk is of history politics or not, the reader is told that:

Mao Zedong abandoned the correct line of the Eight National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which brought about a series of errors and setbacks in the guidance work. In 1957 the anti-rightist struggle led by Mao Zedong was greatly extended. He wrongly believed that the current main contradiction was the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and between socialism and capitalism. In 1958, Mao Zedong promoted people's communes and the "Great Leap Forward" movement throughout the country, leading to phenomena such as exaggeration and "collectivization." To a certain extent, Mao Zedong was aware of the seriousness of the problem and tried to adjust the "Great Leap Forward" tendency of exaggeration. He demanded that food indicators should be established on the basis of reality...However, the mistakes of the "Great Leap Forward" were not completely corrected, and finally caused heavy losses to the country. China entered a three-year period of economic difficulties. (CHNBC7, p. 74)

In addition, the reader is told, for example, how in the fields of philosophy, economics, history, and pedagogy, people were wrongly criticized during the Anti-Rightist Campaign of the late 1950s (CHNBC3, p. 123) and how during the Cultural Revolution, woodcarving works were considered feudal superstition and were deemed for destruction (CHNB2015B9, p. 88).

The one mentioned Exercise comes from a mandatory course textbook. In this Exercise, the student is tasked with analyzing a difference of opinion. First, the textbook highlights two contrasting viewpoints on a historical issue:

In the 1950s, the slogan "running into communism" was popular in China. At the time, some leaders of the country thought that China would soon become a communist society. At the 13th National Congress of the CCP, it was asserted that Chinese socialism was still in its infancy (CHNB2015B3, p. 87).

The student is presented with the following question: "Which statement do you think corresponds with the actual situation in China?" (CHNB2015B3, p. 87).

What is of importance with these (very few) passages from modern China is the fact that they *all* (at least to a degree—the 13th National Congress of CCP, which is cited in the final quoted example, was held in 1987) address events that took place during the early decades of the People's Republic. Although very recent Chinese

history (running up to the Jiang Zemin era in the 2000s and even beyond) is covered in the textbooks, post-Mao Chinese history is ignored altogether as a talking point that addresses the concept of history politics. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989 is not covered from the viewpoint of history politics—for example, in China, a discussion about the topic has been entirely silenced, as the books do not address the event whatsoever.

4.6 History Politics Here and Now—History Politics in the Surrounding Society

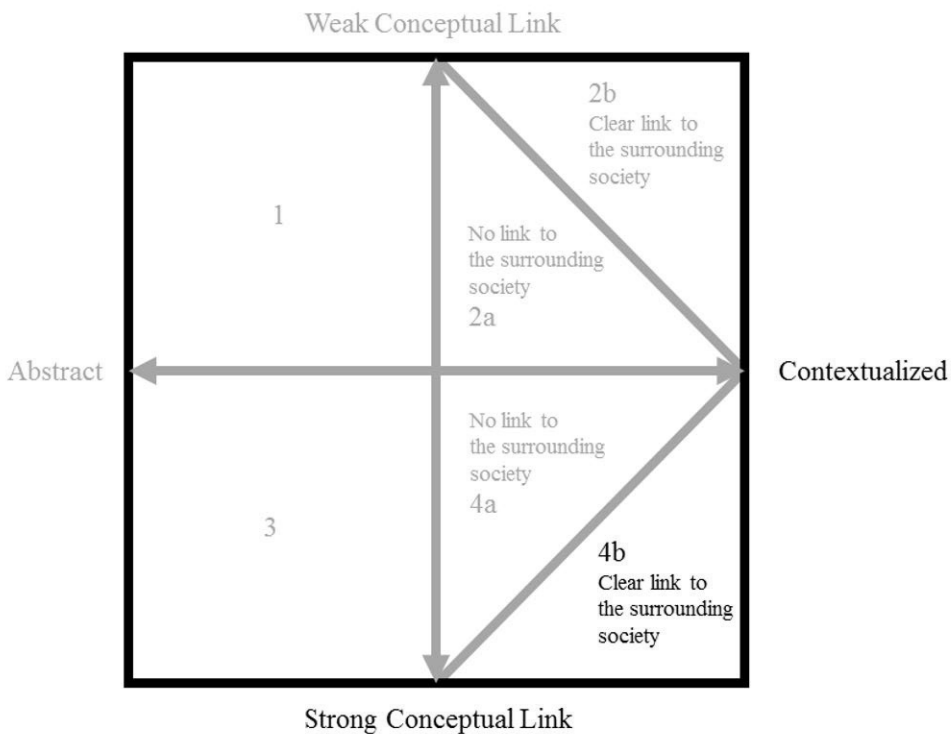


Figure 19. Field 4b of the inner layer of the HPDM—History politics in the surrounding society.

Finally, the text occasionally refers to history politics in the surrounding society explicitly (Field 4b of the HPDM). In these instances, the student is told about how history has been intentionally misrepresented to further political ambitions in the very society he or she is part of. Consider, for example, the following passage about interwar Finland from a Finnish textbook. Notice how the passage explains how past

events were exaggerated to serve nationalist ambitions and how this was done in the context of modern (that is, post-1918) Finland:

Newspapers and the radio told about sport achievements and offered a shared topic for discussion and moments of joy to the people. In the spirit of sport nationalism, Finnish journalists exaggerated the attention that their fellow Finnish sportsmen gained around the world. For example, during the first years of independence a hero story of a “Flying Finn” was created about the hero of the 1912 Olympic games in Stockholm, Hannes Kolehmainen. During the 1930s, the talk of him as the Finn who had “run Finland to the world map” began. (FINB2015C3, p. 78)

In this manner, the concept of history politics is addressed only as Content and only in (old and new) Finnish textbooks and new American textbooks, as well as by the teachers in both countries. Notably, the Chinese documents contained no such passages. In other words, no single passage in the Chinese trial curriculum or in the textbooks explicitly talked about history politics in modern China.

Finland

The 1980s Finnish textbooks contained a few Content passages that fell into this category. The students were told, for example, how during the Interwar era in Finnish history, writing and teaching the positive achievements made during the autonomous era (i.e., when Finland was a Grand Duchy of Russia between 1809 and 1917) were “forgotten” to support the official anti-Russian and anti-Soviet stance of the state (FINB85B6, p. 110). In the textbooks, even the most controversial and debated issues of Finnish history—such as the history of Finland in the Second World War—were also discussed. Notice, for example, how this passage from a *Historia* series textbook suggests that the Finnish “war cabinet” intentionally and consciously stayed silent about developments that did not suit their political ambitions:

At the beginning of the Continuation War, the small inner circle of the government, the so-called war cabinet sought to project the image outwards that the Soviet Union attacked Finland and Finland was drawn into a war against its will. At the same time, the war was branded as continuation to the Winter War, as a Continuation War. The war cabinet closely kept silent about Finland’s own war preparations and cooperative endeavors with Germany. After the peace, the Finnish historian Arvi Korhonen re-enforced the aforementioned understanding about the beginning of the Continuation War. Bit by bit, the so-called Drift Wood Theory was born, according to which Finland was drawn into the currents

of great power politics like a drift wood pulled by a strong current. The American C. Leonard Lundin was the first to question The Drift Wood Theory with his work *Finland in the Second World War* published in 1957. However, he was not taken seriously in Finland because his work was largely based on memoirs instead of primary sources. After the archives opened, the Scotsman Anthony F. Upton was able to show in 1965 that Finland had not been pulled into a war but that instead it chose its side. The American H. P. Krosby finally disproved the Drift Wood Theory in his 1967 study *Suomen valinta 1941 (Finland's Choice 1941)*. During the Interim Peace [between the Winter War and Continuation War], Finland was not an involuntary Drift Wood but more like a drift boat steered by a strong hand in a certain direction. By thoroughly examining the prewar cooperation between Finland and Germany, Mauno Jokipii was able to demonstrate in 1987 that Finland was not pulled into the Continuation War, but intentionally engaged in it. (FINB1985A6, p. 141)

In newer Finnish textbooks, no difference was identified between mandatory and elective courses, as both address the matter in this fashion. The nation's war history is again a very salient theme:

After the war [of 1918] ended in a victory for the Whites, and the acts of the Reds who had suffered a defeat were criminalized, the remembrance was entirely controlled by the Whites. The manner in which the victors remembered was saturated with vengeance and with a deep disappointment towards the Reds who had started a rebellion... The purpose of the large-scale collecting of oral history organized by the Whites was to collect as much evidence about Reds' atrocities as possible. A lid was kept on the terror that the Whites had inflicted. (FINB2015A3, p. 77)

Perhaps most importantly, even Finland's antics in the Second World War—a theme that has traditionally been sensitive in Finnish society—are also highlighted from the viewpoint of history politics. The reader is, for example, told how “[d]ue to the fear of weakening the war morale, the cruel acts of violence [committed by Soviet soldiers and partisans during the Continuation War] targeted against children and women were kept hidden in Finland” (FINB2015B3, p. 135). In particular, long passages in each book series discuss the developments leading up to the Continuation War. Under the heading “Was Finland a drift wood or a drift boat in the waves of great power politics?” *Historia ajassa* tells the reader the following:

Right after the outbreak of the Continuation War, Finland wanted to give the impression that in the Continuation War, it was not an ally of Germany but rather

a brother-in-arms or a co-belligerent fighting alongside Germany. Right after the war, the view that compared the events of the World War to fast-flowing rapids became the dominating interpretation in Finnish history research. Finland had been like a tree drifting with the water: it was pulled into a war without acting on its own. The decision to go to war had thus been a consequence of the actions of great powers. Belittling of one's own role was beneficial in the post-Second World War political situation, as Germany was a loser of the war and the Soviet Union a winner. The Drift Wood Theory was in use in Finland up till the 1960s. Since the 1960s, foreign researchers began to investigate Finland's role in the events. They contested the Drift Wood Theory and demonstrated that Finnish politicians made intentional decisions to join the war. Without its own fault, Finland was pulled into the battle between great powers, but it made the decision to fight alongside Germany in the Continuation War itself. Finland was like a boat that, in the rapids, steered itself to the German shore. The Drift Boat Theory became established in Finland in the 1970s...Finland believed it could rectify the injustices of the previous war with German help and chose its side on its own. (FINB2015B3, p. 123)

Meanwhile, *Kaikkien aikojen historia* explains to the readership that:

The leading historians of the country felt that it was their responsibility to prove the innocence of Finland and its state leaders. This marked the starting point of one of the most extensive operations in Finnish history writing. The discussion about the nature of Finland's Continuation War and Finland's war guilt has continued on to recent times. Amongst the most important points of disagreement was how Finland joined the war and the nature of the Finns' cooperation with Nazi Germany during the war. Professor Arvi Korhonen aided President Ryti in sketching out the defense speech of [his] war crimes tribunal. Already in it, the interpretation later known as driftwood theory was sketched out, in which Finland ends up in the Continuation War as a result of the pressure of great power politics and without its own active contribution. The driftwood theory acquired a position of almost official history when Korhonen published his work, *The Barbarossa plan and Finland*, in 1961. For a long time, Finnish historians did not dare to challenge the influential professor Korhonen. This was done by three foreign scholars in the 1960s, an Englishman and two Americans. They demonstrated that Finland had joined the war on the side of Nazi Germany, fully aware of what it was doing. Over the years, the driftwood theory nevertheless resurfaced with new names and in slightly modified variations. In the 1970s, the talk was about the so-called drift boat theory, in which the role of the Finnish political and military leadership in allying together with Germany

was acknowledged. At the same time, it was reminded what a difficult position Finland had been in—“between a rock and a hard place.” Choosing between Hitler and Stalin had meant more or less the same thing as having to choose between the plague and the cholera. After the breakup of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the so-called separate war theory grew stronger. The purpose was to demonstrate that in the Second World War, Finland had fought for its democracy and independence alone, without resorting to outside help. However, Finland’s and Germany’s cooperation up till 1943 was so intimate that the separate war theory cannot be seen as scientifically valid. (FINB2015A3, p. 128)

Not everything is about war history of course. Other passages mention how during decades following the Second World War, myths were constructed that emphasized, for example, how Lenin had been sympathetic toward Finland and the nation’s independence (FINBB3, p. 68) or describe the overemphasizing of the positive effects of the war reparations Finland had to pay to the Soviet Union (FINB2015B3, p. 148).

Finnish teachers also elaborated in more detail about particular events that had taken or were taking place in the surrounding society. An often cited talking point by the teachers was Finnish war history. FINT5 stated: “For example, the Civil War [of 1918] is a typical example [of an event where the concept of history politics is covered]...like how there are many different interpretations of the same events.” Again, as was the case with textbooks, the history of the Finnish participation in the Second World War is covered from the viewpoint of history politics. FINT8 said the following:

The drift wood theory, drift boat theory and what have you could be [a topic where the concept of history politics is addressed]...I like to teach the Winter War, for example, so that I unravel the myth of the Raate road [battle] so that does it matter? Does it not matter? Was its like meaning as a sort of event in the war even during the Winter War like sort of to raise the spirits? Was it in fact like a sort of political use entirely? Would it [the Russian defeat] have happened in any case, would they [the Russians] have frozen there in any case and died even if the Finns had not done like anything? And another is always whether Finland participated in St. Peterburg’s...siege. Or did it not? And like if in any case like the road of life was cut, like even though we really weren’t there, so was Finland Germany’s...belligerent...So it is easy to address.

United States

Such passages were also identified in the older American textbooks. The readers are told, for example, how at first, the U.S. denied the spying charges after the shootdown of a U-2 plane in 1960, only to later admit this was indeed the case (USAB1985C, p. 620; USAB1985B2, p. 366). *A history of the United States* covers Nixon and the Watergate scandal. The textbook tells (USAB1985C) the students the following:

He [Nixon] said that he had not learned until March 21, 1973 that there were attempts to cover up the scandal. This was a lie, for he had known ever since late June 1972...On August 5, 1974, he confessed that portions of the tape [which he had had recorded of his meetings] for June 23, 1972 were “at variance with certain of my previous statements”...This [recording] showed that Nixon had lied all along about when he knew of the cover-up and that he had, in fact, personally ordered the cover-up. (p. 691, 694)

Meanwhile, *America: Its people and values* talks (USAB1985A) about the same events as follows:

President Nixon was angry about the burglary. Later he discovered that several of his advisers were behind the affair. Nixon then became involved in a plot to cover up the crime. In a statement to the public on June 22, 1972, he declared “I can say...that no one in the White House staff...was involved in this very bizarre [strange] (sic) incident.” In the beginning most Americans tended to believe Nixon. However, as the month passed, news reporters uncovered a growing trail of evidence. It all led in the same direction—to the White House. Had the President deceived the American people?...[The recorded] tapes showed that Nixon had known about the attempted cover-up all along. (p. 765)

Even some controversial topics, such as the recent war history of the United States, are covered in such a manner. It is told, for example, how the Pentagon Papers revealed that the American public had been lied to about the actual situation during the Vietnam War (USAB1985C, p. 675). One identified example even highlights controversial minority issues from such a viewpoint. *A history of the United States* says (USAB1985C) the following:

Five years after their graduation [from Harvard College], [Charles] Warren and [Robert DeCourcy] Ward and [Prescott Farnsworth] Hall formed the Immigration Restriction League to persuade Congress to pass laws to keep out all “undesirable” immigrants. In their League they enlisted famous professors

and writers. Their real object was to keep out the “new immigrants—the Newcomers. These “new” immigrants, they argued, were the main cause of the increasing crime, the strikes, and most of the troubles of the country. (p. 371)

Although the passage seems somewhat ambiguous and even tautological (nowhere in the passage or elsewhere in the book is it explained what the difference between “undesirable” and “Newcomers” is), the passage would nevertheless certainly imply that history politics were at play: the real political intention (keeping out “new immigrants”) was hidden behind a rhetoric of keeping out “undesirable immigrants.”

When it comes to the case of the newer American textbooks, no difference between the standard and AP course books was identified, as both contained such Content passages. The reader is again told, for example, about the news coverage of the Spanish-American War of 1898. This time around, however, there is no question of whether the paragraph is explicitly about history politics: “Newspapers during that period often exaggerated stories...to boost their sales as well as to provoke American intervention in Cuba” (USAB2015A, p. 552). Even the most controversial issues in the country’s recent past, such as interracial tensions and modern American war history, are covered. *America’s history* (USAB2015C), for example, touches on the topic of interracial tensions in early 20th century America:

Blacks faced another urban danger: the so-called race riot, an attack by white mobs triggered by street altercations or rumors of crime. One of the most virulent episodes occurred in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1906. The violence was fueled by a nasty political campaign that generated sensational false charges of “negro crime.” Roaming bands of white men attacked black Atlantans, invading middle-class black neighborhoods and in one case lynching two barbers after seizing them in their shop. The rioters killed at least twenty-four blacks and wounded more than a hundred. The disease of hatred was not limited to the South. (p. 614)

Human legacy describes the so-called Gulf of Tonkin incident in the following manner:

In August 1964, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson informed Congress that two U.S. Navy ships sailing off North Vietnam’s coast had been the victims of an unprovoked attack by North Vietnamese gunboats. It was true that one U.S. ship had been fired upon by North Vietnamese who believed the ship had attacked them the previous day, but the second attack seems to have been a misunderstanding. Johnson did not mention the full facts, and Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. (USAB2015C, p. 916)

Events in the contemporary United States were also raised to the fore as possible talking points by the teachers. USAT1, for instance, had used the example of a speech given by Richard Nixon referred to earlier on:

Richard Nixon was a president...who was notoriously dishonest. And he gives this very dishonest speech when he is the vice-president and I spent about a day on this speech where really if I just gave like two bullet points, it would probably get same thing. But I want to be able to look at his rhetoric, look how he is using the speech to get himself out of hot water and get someone else in the hot water.

Controversial and tensioned issues are also addressed, at least to a degree. American war history was mentioned by many. Discussing the First World War, USAT8, for example, explained:

[O]ne of the things we gotta talk about is...you had your sides that wanted the war, sides that didn't want the war, but as the war progresses in Europe, how does public opinion change within the United States. And then you know, you speak of like [history as a] political weapon. Well, you know, we spend time talking about like the home front. And how the government uses propaganda. And, you know, famous court cases, like a famous court case in World War One was a Schenck case, where the government basically said your rights, especially speech and press can be limited during wartime. So, you know, so approaching it from that point of view I think we are hitting on some of those themes [dealing with the concept of history politics].

Meanwhile, USAT2 talked about the Second World War and the related use of history politics:

When we talk about World War Two, we watched a lot of war movies in America about like in America it's called like the greatest generation...And I mentioned this like, you know, the overwhelming proportion of soldiers who died, fought in the eastern front. And America's kind of a tertiary thing. But you would not get that sense just looking at our textbooks. (USAT2)

It is not just war history, however. Although still referring to events taking place during the Second World War, another talking point USAT2 had used also included the issue of the mistreatment of minorities:

[W]e talked about Japanese American internment camps and the Supreme Court case *Korematsu v. U.S.* And I mentioned how...it's only been really kind of taught regularly in public schools for maybe about 30 years. It was ignored for the bulk of the Cold War... 'Cause we wanted to celebrate ourselves as heroes...

Certain reservations are again in order. First, although the passages discuss matters in the surrounding societal context, there is still some ambiguity and vagueness in terms of the time frame. In Finland, the covered topics extend all the way to the discussion about Finlandization in the 1970s and 1980s, whereas in the United States, the examples extend all the way to the 1980s, 1990s, and even 2000s. *America's history*, for example, tells students that:

In a 1982 Atlantic article, [President Ronald Reagan's budget director, David] Stockman admitted that supply-side theory was based on faith, not economics. To produce optimistic projections of higher tax revenue in future years, Stockman had manipulated the figures. (USAB2015C, p. 983)

One teacher mentioned how the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development had called African slaves "immigrants," referring to an incident in 2017 (USAT2).

Second, there was again some ambiguity in the teachers' answers, as once again, they only mentioned some historical events very briefly without actually elaborating how the teaching of the concept of history politics was related to them. For example, in Finland, FINT3 noted that he/she also raised issues up for discussion if he/she felt that the (Finnish) textbooks used in class were, in fact, engaging in the use of history politics. As the textbooks are products of modern Finnish society, highlighting any history politics that they might engage in is by definition an example highlighting the use of history politics in the surrounding society. In this connection, FINT9 stated, "[b]ut there are skeletons in our closet too. And in a similar manner, we have abused past. Or we abuse it." Other specific, yet not fully elaborated, issues mentioned in passing were the politics of President Urho Kekkonen (FINT3 and FINT5), interwar right-wing radicalism (FINT9), and discussions revolving around the issue of Finlandization (FINT5). Similarly, two of the American teachers (USAT3 and USAT4) described how the contemporary American education system has engaged in history politics on a more general level. The two stated the following, respectively: "I bring up the fact that, you know, like I pointed out to you, [the state of] Oklahoma has moved to limit AP U.S. History, you know, [the state of] Kansas has instituted standards which, you know, teach a more patriotic view of America" and: "I try to let students know that there's a reason why we focus, you know [on American history] and we wanna, you know, we want you to realize like this is this superior type of government, you know?"

Additionally, the teachers talked in a somewhat ambiguous manner about the explosion of USS Maine, the Spanish-American War, Pearl Harbor, the sinking of the Lusitania, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn (USAT6 and USAT8) without actually elaborating how the concept of history politics had been brought to the attention of the student audience.

5 Discussion

What kinds of functions do the educational regimes at different levels of the curriculum and at different points in time seek and have sought to further? Do they seek to further integrative or qualificative functions, are there differences between the levels of the curriculum, and has change taken place over time, which would reveal something about possible policy convergence? Moreover, what is to be studied in the future? This concluding chapter attempts to answer the central research questions of this work based on the findings concerning the different ways in which the concept of history politics is and has been taught. In addition, future paths for research are envisioned by exploring some of the questions that were either left unanswered in this work right from the get-go or arose from the findings. To address these issues, we begin by summarizing the results of the previous two chapters.

5.1 Contrasting Approaches to Teaching the Concept of History Politics

Irrespective of whether we are talking about mandatory or elective courses, the Finnish 2015 curriculum takes a rather indifferent stance toward teaching the concept of history politics. The stated Aims and Goals in the document certainly *suggest* that the notion can or even should be taught. However, the document employs very ambiguous language, and no explicit references to history politics are made. Consequently, this means that *not* teaching the content is certainly not forbidden either, as teaching it is clearly not mandated. Even if the concept is allowed or even encouraged to be taught, it is not delineated whether this should be accomplished through Content, Exercises, or both. However, this is the case with the 2015 curriculum in its entirety, not just with how the concept of history politics should be approached. In addition, although the document addresses the notion (depending on the interpretation, as explained) both as abstract and theoretical and as something that has actually happened in real times and places in the *longue durée* of history, the actual examples of such behavior in the past are limited to passages concerning distant places and/or times. No examples are drawn from modern-day Finland, although such links are made when other matters are discussed in the document. In

short, the document merely lays Aims and Goals for Fields 1 and 2a in the HPDM. The rest are left at the discretion of the subnational units.

In the Finnish textbooks from the mid-1980s—which, as explained, can be regarded as part of the official curriculum, as they were approved by the state—the concept of history politics is taught, although not extensively. The notion is to be addressed as an Aim or Goal for the studies, as a Content to be learned, and as Exercises to be solved. The mentioned Aims and Goals are limited to certain very ambiguous, theoretical passages (Field 1 of the HPDM). When it comes to Content, the issue is addressed through similarly ambiguous statements, which can either be interpreted as references to the concept of history politics or to something else, or through statements that clearly talk about the concept explicitly. Abstract theoretical passages address matters only at a level where it is not entirely clear whether they refer to the concept of history politics (1), whereas contextualized examples of the use of history politics in real life operate at levels where the conceptual link is either weak (2a and 2b) or strong (4a and 4b). When such examples from particular times and places are showcased, connections are drawn both to cultures, places, and countries further away (2a and 4a) and explicitly to the surrounding societal and political system (2b and 4b). In other words, examples of ambiguous behavior, as well as examples of the evident use of history politics, are drawn from modern Finnish history. On the other hand, Exercises are limited to one single case, which addresses the matter at an abstract, theoretical level, in which the conceptual link remains weak (1).

The authors of the Finnish modern textbooks—which, as noted, are not part of the mandated curriculum, as their contents and structure are no longer supervised from above—have interpreted the 2015 curriculum in such a manner that the concept is to be addressed in a very versatile, all-round manner. Familiarity with history politics is addressed as an Aim or Goal of the studies, as Content to be learned, and as Exercises to be solved. In the mandatory textbooks, the mentioned Aims or Goals are limited to certain very ambiguous, theoretical passages. Again, as with the older Finnish books, when it comes to Content, the issue is addressed through similar ambiguous statements that can be interpreted as either references to the concept of history politics or to something else or through statements which clearly talk about the concept explicitly. Regardless of the strength of this conceptual link, some of these passages address matters at a very abstract, theoretical level, whereas others again talk about specific times and places in history. Furthermore, when examples from particular times and places are showcased, connections are drawn both to cultures, places, and countries further away and explicitly to the surrounding societal and political system. As for Exercises, the mandatory course books again address the matter in two different ways. Some Exercises clearly talk about history politics, whereas in many other, the use of the concept is simply one possible interpretation

of what the Exercise is in fact about. In the latter instances, the Exercises included both very abstract and contextualized examples of all sorts. However, in instances where the main point was clearly and explicitly about history politics, the Exercises made references only to places and times far away, whereas Exercises clearly dealing with modern Finland were entirely absent. In the elective course textbooks, the coverage is also quite extensive, yet notably, not as extensive as in the mandatory course textbooks. Small but noticeable differences between the two were identified. Passages that clearly discussed the concept of history politics as abstract-/theoretical-level Content or clearly as an Exercise were absent from the elective course textbooks. In terms of the HPDM's four/six fields introduced earlier, the Aims and Goals of the mandatory course books cover Field 1, whereas the elective course books set no learning Aims and Goals whatsoever. When it comes to the Content, the mandatory course textbooks cover the entire table, ranging from Field 1 to Field 4b, whereas in the elective course textbooks, Field 3 is not covered. With Exercises, the mandatory course books cover Fields 1, 2a, 2b, and 4a, whereas the elective course textbooks operate only above the horizontal line (i.e., they cover Fields 1, 2a, and 2b).

When it comes to the second line of the implemented curriculum—the Finnish teachers—there is a lot of autonomy at play in terms of how the concept is taught. As a result, some variance was identified. For some teachers, discussing the concept with students was something they did almost on a daily basis. For others, this was not the case; one teacher even suggested (albeit in a somewhat contradictory manner) that he/she ignored the topic altogether. At least among those who did teach the concept, this was accomplished through both Content and Exercises. Yet, when it came to the actual choice of what to teach, some teachers chose to address the topic at a theoretical, abstract level, as well as at a contextualized level, whereas others refrained from talking about the theory behind the phenomenon altogether. The respondents simply felt that such an approach was too much for students to handle. Regarding concrete examples of how history has been manipulated to further political ambitions, there were drawn from modern-day Finland, as well as from locations further away. It should be noted that these choices were determined both by teachers' own personal preferences and by "student quality" rather than by some sort of state guidance. Depending on the teacher, the concept of history politics can be addressed in any possible manner. Moreover, an individual teacher may even alternate between different approaches. Thus, the topic can be approached as Content or an Exercise, and the discussion can fall into any of the HPDM's four/six fields introduced earlier (1, 2a, 2b, 3, 4a, or 4b).

In the American curriculum documents—for both standard and AP courses—a rather indifferent stance toward teaching the concept is adopted. Like in Finland, the documents also *suggest* that the history politics can or even should be taught, but as

the conceptual link remains consistently weak, ignoring the topic altogether is certainly an option left open. None of the documents address the notion very comprehensively; the standard course documents mention history politics only through abstract, theoretical statements, while the AP documents cite only real-life examples (both from modern American society and from faraway places and times). In other words, teaching the concept of history politics is clearly not explicitly mandated in the American curriculum documents. In terms of the HPDM's four/six fields identified earlier then, the standard-level curriculum documents are limited to covering Field 1, whereas the AP documents cover only Fields 2a and 2b, as Content to be learned. As standard and AP-level courses are not supplementing, but rather superseding one another (AP European History being the exception), students are subjected to mandated teaching about one of these two possible alternatives.

All three American history textbooks published in the 1980s address the concept. In the books, history politics is covered as Content on the one hand and as Exercises on the other. Of these two, Content passages address the concept at various levels of conceptual proximity. Some Content passages use very ambiguous language that could be interpreted in many ways (1, 2a, and 2b). Meanwhile, others leave no room for interpretation and differences of opinion—these passages undoubtedly deal with the concept (4a and 4b). Third, these paragraphs address history politics at various levels of abstraction; some discuss the matter at a theoretical, abstract level (1), while others cite concrete examples from real life (2a, 2b, 4a, and 4b). When it comes to the latter, some showcase events in places and times far away (2a and 4a), while others events that have explicitly taken place in the surrounding societal and political system—i.e., in the modern United States (2b and 4b). However, as we can see, the concept is not addressed quite as comprehensively as the different possible approaches in the HPDM allow. Notably, Field 3 of the HPDM is not covered in these textbooks—nowhere can one identify a Content passage that explicitly addresses the concept of history politics at an abstract, theoretical level. Meanwhile, exercises broach the topic only at a level where the conceptual link remains weak (1, 2a, and 2b); nowhere is an explicit link to the concept made. A few Exercises paint it as an abstract, theoretical notion (1), whereas some make direct references to actual times and places in history (2a and 2b). Of these contextualized examples, some highlight events happening in places and times far away (2a), whereas others highlight events in the contemporary United States (2b). In terms of the HPDM's four/six dimensions of history politics in curricula, the Content passages of the 1980s textbooks cover Fields 1, 2 (2a and 2b), and 4 (4a and 4b), whereas Exercises cover Fields 1 and 2 (2a and 2b).

All five new American textbooks (the two standard and the three AP course books) approach the concept in *exactly* the same manner as the older books. To begin with, history politics is covered both as Content and Exercises. Second, when it

comes to the Content passages, the topic is addressed at various levels of conceptual proximity—i.e., some passages use very ambiguous language that could be interpreted in many ways, whereas others leave no room for interpretations. Third, the excerpts describe the concept at various levels of abstraction; some discuss the theory behind the phenomenon, while others cite concrete examples. When it comes to these concrete examples, some showcase events in places and times far away and others events that have explicitly taken place in the surrounding societal and political system—i.e., in the modern United States. In terms of the HPDM’s four/six dimensions of history politics in curricula, the Content passages of the textbooks cover the entire table, ranging from Field 1 to Field 4b apart from Field 3, whereas Exercises cover Fields 1, 2a, and 2b. Much like in Finland, the American teachers addressed—either through Content or Exercises—the concept to varying degrees. Some discussed it excessively, while others did not. Although among those who did teach the concept, it was covered both as Content and as an Exercise, there was still some variance in terms of the methods and approaches that the teachers had adopted. Some chose to teach the theory behind the phenomenon, whereas others stuck to teaching about specific events in history where history had been misinterpreted to further political goals. When it came to the actual choice of specific events to teach, examples were drawn from both the modern United States and from elsewhere. Again, these choices were determined rather by teachers’ own personal preferences and “student quality” than by state guidance, as the teachers could customize their approaches. Thus, in terms of the HPDM’s four/six fields introduced above, the manner in which teachers discussed history politics varied from covering all the fields (1, 2a, 2b, 3, 4a, and 4b) to not covering any of them.

Much like the case in Finland and the United States, the stance taken by the Chinese 2003 trial curriculum toward teaching the concept of history politics is rather indifferent. Also in this document, it is *suggested* that the topic can or even should be taught, but as the corresponding teaching objectives are very ambiguous rather than explicit, teaching the concept is certainly not mandated. Again, a clear delineation between teaching through Content and Exercises is not made (i.e., all passages fall under the Aims and Goals category), although it applies to the document as a whole. As in the other two case countries, the fact that such delineation is not made should thus not be seen as a conscious choice to avoid touching the theme in a versatile manner. When it comes to the level of abstraction, both abstract, theoretical passages and a single contextualized example (dealing with how Auschwitz is being remembered) are given. It is noteworthy that when discussing other mandated learning objectives, connections to modern-day China are indeed made, whereas none of the passages that could be interpreted as dealing with the concept of history politics do so. As a result, in terms of the HPDM’s four/six fields identified earlier, the Aims and Goals in the document cover Fields 1 and 2a.

In the older Chinese textbooks used in the mid-1980s, the concept is addressed from an extremely limited perspective. The only passages of text that arguably broach the matter are a few Content passages that bring forth vague, real-life examples of such practices from places and times far away (Field 2a of the HPDM). No theoretical passages or Exercises cover the matter in any way. Concerning the three selected series of newer Chinese textbooks, the concept of history politics is addressed much more extensively in comparison to the older books. However, even this approach does not employ all the possible alternatives allowed by the HPDM. The Content passages describe the concept either at a very abstract, theoretical level and through concrete, real-life examples or at two different levels of conceptual proximity. Perhaps surprisingly, in the contextualized examples, links are not drawn only to faraway cultures, places, and countries but also to modern China, although such passages were only identified in elective course textbooks and only at a level where it was questionable whether they indeed referred to history politics. In terms of the HPDM's four/six fields of dimension of history politics in curricula, the Content passages of the mandatory textbooks thus cover only Fields 1 and 2a, whereas the elective course textbooks also fall under Fields 1, 2b 3 and 4a. As for Exercises, the mandatory textbooks cover only Field 2a, whereas the elective course textbooks cover Fields 1 and 2a. Let us recap how different educational systems and different levels of the curriculum occupy different fields of the HPDM (for visual reference corresponding to the number of the field, please see Figure 10 on page 107):

Field 1:

Finland

- 2015 curriculum for mandatory and elective courses Aims & Goals
- 1985 textbooks' Aims & Goals, Contents, and Exercises
- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Aims & Goals
- 2015 mandatory and elective course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

The United States

- Standard and AP curricula Aims & Goals
- 1985 textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- 2015 Standard and AP course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

China

- 2003 trial curriculum mandatory and elective course Aims & Goals
- 2015 mandatory course textbook's Contents
- 2015 elective course textbooks' Aims & Goals, Contents, and Exercises

Field 2a:

Finland

- 2015 curriculum mandatory and elective courses Aims & Goals
- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 mandatory and elective course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

The United States

- AP curriculum Aims & Goals
- 1985 textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- 2015 standard and AP course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

China

- 2003 trial curriculum elective course's Aims & Goals
- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 mandatory and elective course textbooks' Contents
- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Exercises

Field 2b:

Finland

- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

The United States

- AP curriculum Aims & Goals
- 1985 textbooks' Content and Exercises
- 2015 standard and AP course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

China

- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- 2015 elective course textbooks' Contents

Field 3:

Finland

- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Content
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

The United States

- Teachers (at their own discretion)

China

- 2015 elective course textbooks' Contents

Field 4a:

Finland

- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Contents and Exercises
- 2015 elective course textbooks' Contents
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

The United States

- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 standard and AP course textbook's Contents
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

China

- 2015 elective course textbooks' Contents

Field 4b:

Finland

- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 mandatory course textbooks' Contents
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

The United States

- 1985 textbooks' Contents
- 2015 standard and AP course textbooks' Contents
- Teachers (at their own discretion)

5.2 Functions of History Education in Finland, the United States, and China

As the analysis of the research material reveals, the concept of history politics is addressed in a multitude of ways in different educational systems. Most importantly, there is great variance not only between the countries and educational systems, but also between different levels of the curriculum within a single educational system and even within the identified levels. Moreover, if we observe the textbooks under analysis, we can also point out that changes have taken place over time in the manner in which the concept was addressed. But the answer to the question of how the concept is and has been taught does not equal traveling the whole distance. We still need to seek an answer to the question of what kind of ambitions does History education seek and has sought to further in the three countries under comparison.

This study began with the theoretical notion that there is a marked difference in whether education in general and History education in particular furthers integrative or qualificative functions. On the one hand, History education may empower the

student by offering him or her the necessary skills to survive as an independent thinker and active citizen of society. On the other hand, History education may seek to integrate students into the community, which in its most extreme, repressive forms, has meant that History education has served causes such as fervent nationalism and even outright xenophobia and racism.

But what would covering the topic in an integrative or qualificative manner mean in practice when it comes to the question of teaching the concept of history politics? To begin with, my assertion is that the more comprehensively and extensively the concept is covered (in other words, the more extensively the different dimensions and fields of the HPDM are covered), the more clearly the student is provided with conceptual knowledge, which in turn means he or she is expected to possess critical thinking skills, to be historically literate, etc. Covering the concept extensively and comprehensively would mean first that the concept of history politics is to be approached as an Aim or Goal of the studies, as Content to be learned, and as an Exercise in thinking. I assert, however, that if the concept is approached as Content *and* as an Exercise, teaching it also as an explicitly stated Aim or Goal (something that the Finnish textbooks, for example, notably do) does not mean that it is addressed in an even more extensive manner. The presence of Content passages and Exercises *an sich* means that learning about history politics is an Aim or Goal of the studies. Likewise, if and when the concept is addressed only as Content and as Exercises (as is the case with American and Chinese textbooks), the absence of such learning Aims or Goals does not mean that the notion is covered less thoroughly; the presence of the two implicitly entails that the concept should be learned (i.e., it is a goal for the studies). Second, covering the topic as extensively as possible would mean teaching about it explicitly so that there is no question that a point is being made about the intentional misinterpretation of history and political motivations for such behavior. Only when the concept is covered in such a manner can we really say with absolute certainty that there is no chance that the students are *not* exposed to the concept. I also claim that if the concept is covered *only* at a level where the talk is clearly about history politics rather than about something much more ambiguous, such as “propaganda,” “using history,” or competing interpretations of historical events, the implication is not that the concept would be covered in a more limited manner. Explicitness also entails implicitness or at least the possibility of implicitness. If one is allowed or expected to understand that history was intentionally manipulated to further political ambitions, there is no reason to suspect that one would not be allowed to interpret that history has been, for example, “used” to further such goals. This notion applies especially to teachers who upon request, were talking explicitly about teaching the concept rather than employing vague language that leaves much room for interpretation. Third, an extensive approach would mean covering the topic as both a theoretical and methodological notion and

through concrete examples which cover not only distant places and times but also the surrounding society.⁴⁵ Only then is the student confronted with the notion that, on the one hand, the possibility of such behavior is part of human existence that he/she has now the ability to identify around him/her and, on the other hand, it is indeed something that has taken place throughout time regardless of the limits set by geographical and cultural boundaries and the passing of time. From this, it follows that the more extensively and comprehensively the student is provided with conceptual knowledge, the more clearly teaching serves qualificative functions. After all, as has been asserted, in the “new history” tradition, historical knowledge is constructed from the evidence, interpretations can be challenged, and the final aim is the acquisition of the skills—including conceptual knowledge—needed for problem-solving. One further question, however, should be addressed. When carrying out comparisons—either between educational systems, levels of the curriculum, or over time—it is not always clear-cut if the topic is covered more or less comprehensively than in some other instance. Especially the juxtapositions between teaching theory vs. teaching contextualized examples and teaching through Content rather than teaching through Exercises is a very salient question. For example, it is not clear if teaching abstract, theoretical Content passages should be seen as teaching the concept more comprehensively than, say, if contextualized Exercises were being taught. If, hypothetically, a book would cover only Field 1 of the HPDM and another only Field 2a, the question of which of the two addresses the concept more comprehensively would arise. In the end, in some cases, such a conclusion can only be based on contextual judgment of which matters more and why in each individual case of comparison. Perhaps luckily, as we shall see, no such difficult demarcations had to be made in my work, as there is only one exception to this lack of clear rules. I assert that when one point of comparison (in the case of my work, textbooks) covers the same fields as another one, and even more, it is easy to determine which one is covering the topic more comprehensively. Thus, for example, if a book covers Fields 1 and 2a and the other only Field 2a, the former of the two is arguably covering the topic more comprehensively. A similar logic is often applied when the process-solving principle known as Occam’s Razor is applied. The Razor suggests that the factors used to explain a phenomenon should be minimized, even though it is often not easy to determine which explanation is the simplest. The only clear exception to this dilemma is similar to the one described above: if the

⁴⁵ Perhaps the only justifiable exception would be when it would factually be the case that no such examples are to be found in the surrounding society. This is very hypothetical, however. As already asserted earlier, history politics has been and is part of society one way or another regardless of place and time.

premises of one explanation are included in the larger set of premises of another explanation, the former can safely be regarded as the simpler one.

As previously explained, the “great tradition” essentially means that historical knowledge consists of cherry-picked subject matter that meets the cultural, ideological, and political needs. In its most extreme forms, History education can even serve ambitions such as racism and xenophobia, in which the demonization of others has played a crucial part (Wistrich, 1999). Consequently, I argue that the less ground is covered, the less complete the picture provided to the student is about the concept. In turn, the less complete the picture, the more clearly the focus is not on building conceptual knowledge and skills for critical historical thinking. This means that education does not serve qualificative functions. Perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, I assert that the mere absence of teaching about the concept does not equal teaching about the matter in an integrative manner, at least in the most extreme form. Instead, I argue that when History education serves such functions, the concept of history politics *is* in fact addressed, albeit from a very *selective* standpoint. Regardless of whether we are referring to Aims and Goals, Content, or Exercises, what defines teaching to further integrative functions is history politics presented only as sort of “cautionary examples” cherry-picked to meet political needs. In other words, when history politics is presented only as real-life examples from places and times far away (when only Fields 2a and/or 4a are covered), the purpose of education is to serve the integrative functions in its most extreme form. Choosing such an approach would clearly indicate that history politics is not a concept that is intentionally and knowingly *ignored altogether*, but rather that it is intentionally and knowingly *ignored very selectively* to a degree that the chosen viewpoint would, in fact, constitute a form of history politics in itself.

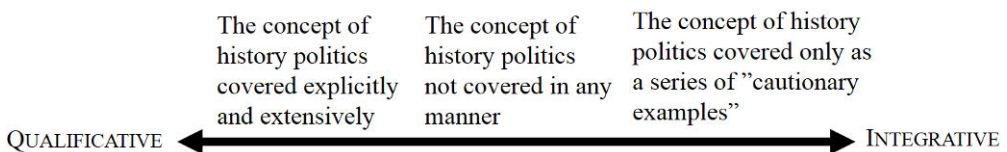


Figure 20. Qualificative vs. integrative approach to teaching the concept of history politics.

But what about the individual countries (and different levels of the curricula) this study focuses on? Where are they located on this scale?

Finland

In the case of Finland, the 2015 curriculum seemingly tilts slightly toward encouraging or enabling the furthering of the qualificative function of History

education. Yet, in modern-day Finland, subnational autonomy allows History education to also assume other types of functions. Should the subnational units choose to do so, they will be able to go to great lengths in ignoring the topic altogether and/or even possibly teach about the matter in a much integrative matter. The authors of the older Finnish textbooks have clearly aimed toward teaching critical thinking, but in the textbooks, this qualificative ambition is not taken very far. Meanwhile, utilizing the leeway they have been given, the authors of the modern Finnish textbooks have clearly attempted to cultivate critical thinkers who are not only able to *know* but also to *do* history. However, it is quite interesting that the mandatory textbooks address the concept much more comprehensively than the elective course textbooks (and both address the topic more extensively than the 2015 curriculum). In other words, *all* students are required to learn these skills. If we compare the older Finnish textbooks with the newer ones, we can identify a definite change taking place over time. Over the course of approximately 30 years, the textbooks that covered the topic moderately extensively have transformed on the one hand into mandatory course textbooks, which teach the topic much more extensively, and on the other hand to elective course textbooks that cover it less extensively. However, as it is indeed the modern mandatory and not the elective course textbooks that cover the topic more extensively, it can safely be argued that overall, the Finnish textbooks have changed from teaching the concept moderately extensively to teaching it very extensively.

The final say, however, lies with the teachers, as the new textbooks are—as mentioned—merely a part of the implemented curriculum that the teachers could, in theory, ignore. Although the interviews leave it somewhat unclear whether this is, in fact, the case in practice, they nevertheless suggest that it is possible to ignore the topic altogether or even teach about the concept in such a selective manner that teaching the concept serves, in fact, integrative functions. Yet, much like the textbooks, for the most part, the teachers clearly aimed to teach about history politics in order to cultivate the qualificative functions that History education can serve. In other words, despite the possibility of doing otherwise, they teach about the notion very thoroughly and utilize different types of approaches. However, the answers of one of the teachers suggested that he/she ignored teaching the topic. If we compare the three levels of the curriculum with each other, a certain dysfunction is identifiable (although it is questionable whether talking about dysfunctions is justified—the issue is addressed further on). The curriculum is very ambiguous about what should actually be taught. Although teaching the concept is certainly suggested, it is an almost a *tabula rasa*; history politics can be taught (or even omitted) in almost any imaginable manner to serve any imaginable goal. Both the older and the newer textbooks—although the latter even more so—clearly address the issues excessively and in a very versatile manner, thereby heavily emphasizing the qualificative

functions. With teachers on the other hand, it appears to be up to them what is actually being taught, and consequently, what kind of functions education serves.

United States

As in Finland, in the American curriculum documents, teaching the concept of history politics as content serving qualificative functions is enabled or even encouraged (albeit to a quite limited degree), but most certainly not mandated; therefore, nothing suggests that the ambition is to further extreme integrative functions. The responsibility to make the final choice has been shifted to textbook authors and teachers. Although all the textbooks, regardless of when they were published and used, tilt toward addressing the topic from a qualificative viewpoint, this function is clearly not the foremost ambition of the books, as students are not taught about the concept in the most versatile manner (for example, in none of the books is history politics addressed explicitly and unambiguously as a theoretical concept). Yet, the purpose is clearly not to emphasize extreme integrative functions, either. It should be further noted that no change can be detected in the American textbooks over time. The old American books cover *exactly* the same fields of the HPDM as the new ones. As for the American teachers, for the most part, they clearly aimed to teach about history politics in order to cultivate the qualificative functions that History education can serve. However, the interviews suggest that whereas some teachers discuss the concept in a very comprehensive and multiperspective manner (i.e., to further qualificative functions), the leeway the teachers have allows them to ignore the topic altogether or even teach about the topic very selectively so that it actually furthers integrative functions. However, as the textbooks are, in fact, part of the official, intended curriculum, the teachers' choice could not result in a situation where the students are not exposed to these ideas at all. It should be noted, however, that many teachers obviously go much further than the textbooks to address the topic in a more versatile manner. A certain dysfunction is identifiable not only between the levels but, interestingly, also within them. First, the ambiguous nature of the curriculum documents grants the teachers the flexibility to address the topic how they see fit. However, should the teachers choose to ignore the topic altogether, a certain discrepancy would certainly be identifiable vis-à-vis the textbooks (which also constitute a part of the official or intended curriculum), which are not quite as ambiguous as the curriculum documents. As shown, the books actually address the topic quite explicitly, which in turn, would mandate addressing the topic. Second, this discrepancy between the curriculum documents and the textbooks also means that there is a certain dysfunction *within* the official, intended curriculum; on the one hand, the curriculum documents certainly do not mandate that the concept of history politics must be addressed, whereas on the other hand, the textbooks certainly require it.

China

Much like was the case with the curriculum documents in the two other countries, in the Chinese 2003 trial curriculum, teaching the concept of history politics as a content serving qualificative functions is enabled or even encouraged, but most certainly not mandated, whereas nothing suggests that the ambition is to further extreme integrative functions. The final choice of how to approach the topic has again been entrusted to subnational units. In the older textbooks, as seen, history politics is addressed from a rather limited perspective. In fact, it might even be argued that the approach taken in the books tilts slightly toward the extreme integrative end of the spectrum, as the books approach the concept only by citing real-life examples from cultures and points in time far away. However, it should be noted that these examples are not highlighted while entirely ignoring similar developments in modern Chinese society. Instead, as explained, *all* developments in modern Chinese society are ignored, as covering modern Chinese history is not part of the curriculum! Under this light, it can safely be argued that the older textbooks fall somewhere between teaching the notion from a very modestly qualificative standpoint and teaching it from a modestly integrative standpoint. A conclusive answer cannot be given without first addressing the question of why modern Chinese history was entirely sidelined in the older book (and curriculum) in the first place. This question, however, is outside the scope of this study. Meanwhile, the modern textbooks clearly point in the same direction as the 2003 trial curriculum, emphasizing the qualificative functions, although they have adopted this approach more explicitly. Despite the strong authoritarian system of governance and “great tradition” History education, the concept of history politics is indeed addressed in the textbooks, and actually rather extensively. First, it is not the case that all references to the concept are absent. Second, it is also not true that the contextualized instances describing the use of history politics as part of actual historical events only include “cautionary tales” from distant places and times while references to more abstract, theoretical Content and to concrete Examples in the surrounding society are entirely absent, even if discussions about the most prominent examples of history politics in modern China (such as how the Tiananmen events of 1989 have been handled) are indeed so. Interestingly, it should be noted that in modern Chinese textbooks, the elective course textbooks do cover the topic more comprehensively than the mandatory course textbooks. In other words, it is those students who are taking elective courses in particular who are exposed to critical thinking skills (i.e., to the concept of history politics) in a more comprehensive manner, whereas completing the mandatory courses allows for a much more limited understanding of the matter. Those who are truly interested in the subject and are perhaps going to continue studying History or related subjects are exposed to these ideas more thoroughly.

If we compare the older and newer textbooks, we are again in a lucky position, as was the case with Finnish textbooks, where it was easy to determine that change has obviously taken place over time toward teaching about the matter more comprehensively (i.e., from a more qualificative perspective). The newer textbooks do not only cover the only field of the HPDM in which the older textbooks operate (Content in Field 2a of the HPDM) but also others. It should be noted, however, that the lack of interview data in the case of China makes it impossible to say whether teachers truly enjoy the same level of autonomy as their peers in Finland and the United States, who can address the concept in any way they wish. Unfortunately, in the case of China, the lack of interviews means that no comparisons between the intended and implemented curriculum could be carried out. However, I was able to compare the two parts forming the official intended curriculum, that is, the 2003 trial curriculum and the textbooks. As the analysis indicates, the two are quite in line with each other. Both operate only at a level where teaching the concept of history politics is slightly tilted toward serving qualificative functions, although the elective course textbooks especially go somewhat further into this direction. Nevertheless, no noticeable dysfunction was identifiable.

Even in China, the chosen approach, at least in modern times, clearly does not serve such extreme integrative functions. In fact, perhaps surprisingly, many of the features identified in the manner in which the concept is taught in the country actually borrow at least some elements from the more liberal democratic approach. However, this statement should not be seen as comprehensive proof. To begin with, although in China, neither the curriculum nor the textbooks seem to further extreme integrative functions, they also do not address the matters thoroughly and comprehensively. Thus, the inclination toward a more liberal democratic manner of teaching about the history politics is very subtle. Second, the absence of teacher interview data means that we are not able to even approximate the level of subnational autonomy in China. The fact that conducting such interviews proved to be impossible is certainly suggestive of the fact that teachers are not free to address the manner in any way they please. Finally, at first glance, the relative openness of the Chinese system might seem to contradict the fact that in the 2010s, China has become increasingly authoritarian under Xi Jinping. However, it should be kept in mind that education is a rather conservative enterprise. In other words, the educational system of the mid-2010s in China is arguably more reflective of the developments that took place in Chinese society at large before the 2010s. The unmistakable turn toward authoritarianism under Xi Jinping in the 2010s is likely to make its mark on the educational system only later.

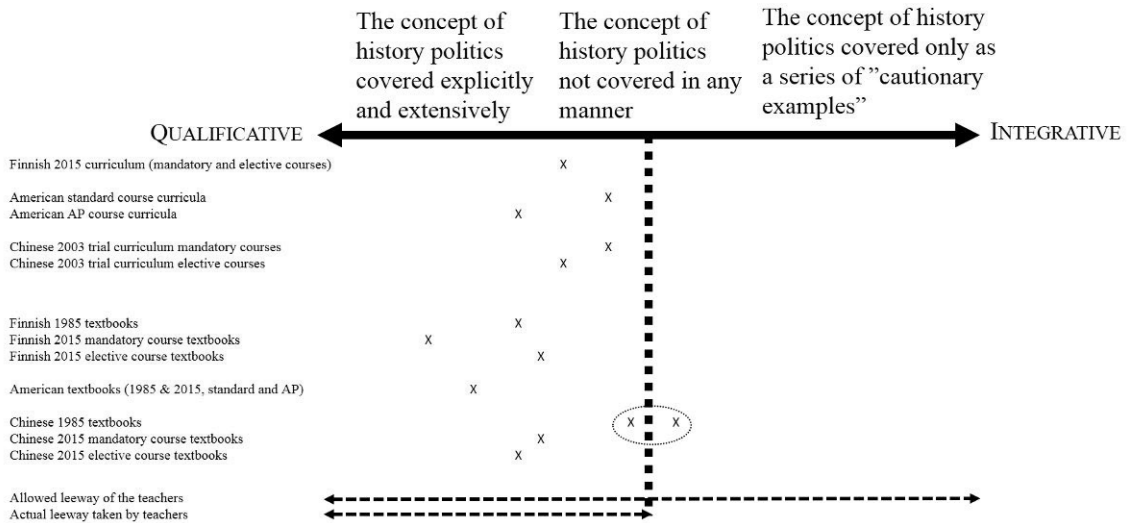


Figure 21. Functions of the History curricula in comparison. The approximate relative difference between the units of comparison is based on the number of fields these units cover in the HPDM.

In order to comprehensively decipher how the concept is addressed in different national education systems, the notion about the different levels of the curriculum and the dysfunctions between them was utilized. However, the present study gave reasons to question the usefulness of such distinctions. Despite the noted differences between different levels of the curriculum, the assertion that we should talk about dysfunction between the levels should be approached with caution. After all, if the intended curriculum is almost a *tabula rasa* that merely enables and/or encourages and does not mandate teaching certain issues or themes (such as that of the concept of history politics), is it to be seen as a dysfunction if the lower levels decide to go their own way? I argue that it is not. In such instances, the notion of dysfunction loses all meaning. In fact, to a large degree, the same goes for the idea that there is some intended, official curriculum. Indeed, although on a very general level, an intended curriculum is in fact in place, as the 2015 curriculum sets such ambiguous, yet mandated Aims and Goals for studies (such as “the use of history in politics”), when it comes to teaching about the concept of history politics specifically, it cannot be said that there is an intended curriculum in the Finnish case.

If we examine how the topic is taught from the viewpoint of policy convergence, we can safely argue that no such development is taking place. Although over the 30-year period under scrutiny, Finland and China have clearly moved in the same direction, the United States has not. Although their starting and end points differ, both Finland and China are teaching about the concept of history politics more

extensively than they were three decades ago.⁴⁶ United States meanwhile does not follow this trajectory. Instead, at least when it comes to changes in school textbooks, the United States has not changed at all during past the three decades. Teaching the concept of history politics is and has certainly been part of the textbooks but not an iota more or less than it was 30 years ago. The notion of global convergence does not hold water, at least within the limited confines of this research setting.

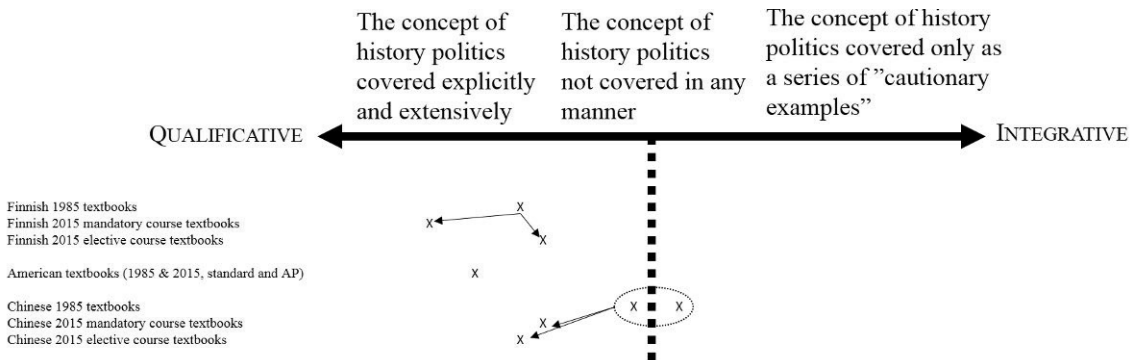


Figure 22. Trajectories of textbook evolution in comparison.

But what explains these differences? Although answering this question has not been part of this dissertation’s research *problématique*, and the data and methods utilized allow us to answer it only in a very tentative and speculative manner, we should nevertheless explore this question a bit further. I argue that it is foremost the political structure that determines how the concept is addressed. Both Finland and the United States are arguably democratic states. In the countries’ education systems—especially at the high-school level—the cultivation of critical thinking skills is something that those in charge of the official (intended) curriculum have wanted to advance. The ambition is to create future citizens who are competent in acting as active citizens. This is also true of History education, where the official ambition is and has already been for quite a while to further subject-specific thinking skills. It should, of course, be noted that especially the United States still has a very strong “great history” tradition in place, which is still visible, for example, in the rather quantitative targets of History education; even if subject-specific thinking skills are emphasized, this has not meant that the students are not still expected to master a

⁴⁶ It should be noted that, as explained, the modern textbooks for elective courses actually address the concept from a more limited standpoint than the older books. This, however, is deemed irrelevant in terms of the overall argument about the trajectory of teaching about the concept more comprehensively in Finland, as the mandatory course textbooks teach about the concept more extensively.

massive amount of historical knowledge about important figures, dates, and events. Moreover, although there are still many issues in Finnish and especially American history over which discussions are still highly loaded emotionally and politically, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has nevertheless clearly progressed to such a point where all lines of historical inquiry are open. My assertion is thus that the more clearly society represents democratic values, such as a democratic system of governance and a culture of open-ended and honest approach into the society's own past, the more extensively the ideals of "new history" are incorporated into History teaching and, as a result, the more extensively the concept of history politics is covered. Understanding the concept in this way is not something that would allow students to address and question issues that have so far been left undiscussed in society at large, and consequently, it would not pose as big a threat to those in power. On the contrary, in an autocratic one-party state, such as China, where the interpretations of modern history are still very much politicized and used as a way to inculcate nationalism and boost the legitimacy of the nation-state, an open-ended inquiry into the nation's recent past might counterbalance these ambitions, and thus, the commitment to teach about the concept in an extensive manner is not full heartedly done. In both instances, a dilemma of which came first, the chicken or the egg, arises. In other words, an infinite regress follows where it is impossible to conclusively answer whether the fact that Finland and the United States are, to a large degree, (either social or liberal) democratic states explains why the concept is taught in such a comprehensive manner or whether this is a fact proven by the manner in which the concept is taught (the same applies to China and its authoritarian system of governance). At the same time, it should be noted that the case is not quite as black and white as it might seem at first sight. Why do Finland and the United States not teach about the matter quite as much as possible? Why hold back? And why does China not ignore the topic altogether? Here, I argue, the context-specific cultural differences explain a lot. First, it is very much possible even in democratic systems that there are other values at play than the mere furthering of the integrative and/or qualificative functions of education. In Finland, for example, subnational autonomy is prioritized, as the country has a very strong tradition in educational autonomy (Uljens & Nyman, 2013). In other words, the autonomy of subnational units has been prioritized over the mandated teaching of critical thinking. Similarly, the very strong historical tradition in teaching the content, such as that of the United States, may certainly hamper the ambitions to teach the concept in a comprehensive, qualificative manner. Second, in China, the advancement of *quality education* has meant that new, innovative ideas, such as critical thinking skills, have indeed been incorporated into the curriculum within the past 30 years or so, as the country's strive for economic modernization requires fresh thinking. Indeed, as Jones (2002) asserts, "[c]urriculum developers are not necessarily Party stalwarts, some are not even Party

members, and obviously they are not immune from ‘bottom-up’ influences, just as they are not simply instruments of ‘top-down’ policy-making” (p. 563). As with curricula in general, the knowledge and perspectives of the less powerful were also included in the dominant groups’ discourse. Thus, topics and points of interest are rarely dropped from the books, but instead, the demands of disenfranchised groups are met with concessions to *mention* limited and isolated progressive items and elements in the texts (Apple, 2000; Luke, 1988). However, as the main purpose of these skills is not to serve the interests of the individual but still those of the state in its quest for national strength, these ideas are incorporated only as much as absolutely needed. Curriculum documents and textbooks address the concept of history politics only to a very limited degree, and among the student population, those who are not expected to become involved with the study of history in the future (i.e., those who do not take elective courses) learn about the matter considerably less than those who are. In other words, the average person does not need to understand what history politics is. It suffices that only future professionals do. Yet, even in authoritarian societies, where the use of history politics is prevalent, the educational system may still seek to further at least some critical thinking.

5.3 Limitations and Paths for Future Research

Much ground is, of course, yet to be covered, and this study can only serve as a starting point for a broader field of study into the teaching of the interface between politics and history. Many alternative viewpoints and approaches could have been adopted to answer the research questions in a more thorough manner. Moreover, it is simultaneously both the curse and blessing of research that answers yield only more questions. In other words, the findings of this work highlight a plethora of other questions that are left unanswered. As in life, everything is related to everything, so the possible limitations of this study and paths for future research are, of course, endless. For this reason, this section can thus serve only to point out the gaps in our knowledge, which, in my opinion, are the most salient and fruitful to investigate in the future. Moreover, the limitations and paths for future research are heavily intertwined, and therefore, they are discussed side by side, without making strict demarcations in whether we are talking about the former or the latter.

To begin with, subjective human factors have to be discussed, as they considerably affect how well this study was able to answer the proposed research questions. As already explained before, the interpretations about the meaning of text passages are in the end based on a subjective reading of the material. Even though I have done my utmost to explain and justify my thinking process and choices, I acknowledge that subjective preferences simply cannot be eliminated from the equation. This is further exacerbated by time limitations and limitations in human

endurance. The bulk of the research material consisted of over thousands of pages of textbooks, and reading them was an enormous task. In undertaking such a massive reading task, it is inevitable that one will fail to take notice of important passages of text. If time and energy reserves had permitted, I would have wanted to read all the material through a second time. Moreover, in order to uncover the phenomenon “as it is,” a broader methodological approach could be utilized, as the limitations set by human endurance and time also meant that certain viable data and methods of data gathering and analysis could not be taken into consideration. For example, although teacher interviews arguably reveal quite a lot about how the concept of history politics is taught in class, answers given in interview settings can reveal only so much. The intended or even the suggested curriculum is not to be taken unquestionably as an indicator of actual school practices because the curriculum always becomes recontextualized once it is implemented in the classroom (Cohen & Spillane, 1992; Levin, 2008; Westbury, 2008). Future studies should thus employ participatory methods (i.e., ethnography) in examining how much the answers given by the teachers correspond to what exactly takes place in the classrooms. The question is, of course, not simply or perhaps even mainly about whether one can trust the teachers’ answers. Maybe even more importantly, it is to be noted that the teachers cannot be expected to remember in fine detail all the different instances in which the concept has been addressed in class. An ethnographic approach would thus also yield answers to some of the ambiguities arising from the fact that through interviews, one cannot answer in quite as much detail as by analyzing, for example, textbooks how the concept is addressed. This study was only able to approximate the range of different approaches that the teachers implemented in introducing the topic instead of pinpointing them in quite as detailed a fashion as is the case with textbooks and curriculum documents. An ethnographic approach would allow us to identify, for example, what kind of Exercises the teachers do in their classes in more detail and to assess the level of contextual proximity of different statements made in class. For these reasons, I highly encourage other scholars to undertake a critical reading of my work in order to uncover possible weak points in the interpretations I have made or even to point out obvious mistakes. In addition, I encourage the academic community to examine the questions at hand utilizing even richer data and methodological choices.

As seen, determining how the concept is taught can only answer what the goal of teaching might be in terms of whether it is meant to further integrative or qualificative functions. Although it is necessary to assess this question before one can answer why these approaches are furthered, the latter question should also be answered more comprehensively compared to what I sought out to do in a rather speculative manner in the previous chapter. Indeed, future research should pay more attention to questions such as: Why does the History curriculum in China further

qualificative functions in a rather limited fashion and why are teachers endowed with very large autonomy to approach the topic either in an integrative or qualificative manner in Finland and in the United States? In other words, future studies should seek alternative approaches to answer why different national educational systems at different levels of the curriculum seek to further different functions.

Based on earlier conceptualizations, in this work, history politics was defined as the intentional misinterpretation of history for political purposes. However, as explained, the employed definition is a simplification of the richness of theoretical insights that have explored the intertwined nature between history and politics. In other studies, history politics has been defined, for example, as covering *all* uses of history to support politics and political arguments in the present, regardless of whether this use includes intentional misinterpretation of history or not. Additionally, scholars have, for example, examined the different motives behind the political uses of history. Future work investigating the teaching of history politics in different educational systems and at different levels of the curriculum at different points in time should take into consideration these varying conceptualizations of what history politics is. Moreover, this work has highlighted the fact that previous studies might have overlooked certain features concerning the political use of history, which ought to be examined further. For example, there is arguably a definite qualitative difference between (any) reference to the past—even the very recent past—in the speeches of politicians, for example, and references to the distant past in historical scholarship. Yet, in this work, such differences were deemed irrelevant; a politician explaining his or her own very recent actions in an intentionally untruthful manner was considered just as good an example of the use of history politics as was a work of historical scholarship intentionally “twisting and turning” events from decades or centuries ago. This approach should, however, be problematized further. Future research should thus aim to highlight and theorize these differences and include these perspectives in future studies revolving around the teaching of the concept.

Moreover, as already explained, for some researchers, historical thinking means first and foremost working with sources, which in turn means the acquisition of some sort of skill set (see, for example, Laville, 2004; Reisman, 2015; VanSledright, 2014), whereas for others, it is much more of a holistic entity rather than an assembly of separate skills and processes (see, for example, Levesque 2008; Seixas, 2004). This work employed the former definition, as I started from the notion that the skill set required for the acquisition of historical thinking includes understanding one very specific concept—that of history politics. Although I understand perfectly well why the former, rather mechanistic and narrow, definition is problematic, assigning to it was necessary so that examining the question of how critical thinking (or historical thinking, however we want to call it) is taught could be answered. Without a clear-

cut, tight—even somewhat narrow—definition, the scale and scope of the study would have quickly mushroomed out of control. Yet, if possible, future research should also problematize this approach and seek to approach the topic from a perspective that adopts alternative or complementary, and perhaps even more holistic, definitions of how historical thinking, critical thinking, etc. is defined, and then carry out an analysis of teaching practices and educational policies based on these alternative conceptualizations. Critical/historical thinking could, for example, cover the teaching of many related concepts and topics, such as historical consciousness and history culture, which are also touched upon in this study, and also examine how their interrelated nature is covered in education.

More attention should also be paid to further differentiating and conceptualizing the differences and variance *within* the identified categories. Qualitative content analysis allows us to make sense of the data, but inevitably, it also simplifies the reality in the process of creating meaningful categories. Consequently, in the future, we should, for example, pay more attention to the fact that whenever the concept is taught at an abstract level, the teaching may well consist of very different kinds of theoretical notions and methodological guidelines, which in turn may further different ambitions to different degrees. For example, teaching the student the necessary methodology to identify the use of history politics around him/her may have very different motivations from instances when he/she is encouraged to do so. However, in this study, such differences were deemed irrelevant. Likewise, we should pay more attention to the variance within the category of contextualized examples of history politics. The distinction in this study between the two identified categories (contextualized examples from the surrounding society and contextualized examples from places, times, and cultures far away) is only a crude, first attempt at conceptualizing the topic. However, a lot of variance (which is very possibly quite meaningful) is lost in the process. On the one hand, the differences within the cited examples from distant cultures, times, and places may be quite meaningful. In the Finnish case, for example, it appears that history politics is often brought to the attention of the readers citing numerous examples from the Soviet Union and/or modern-day Russia, whereas in the case of Chinese textbooks, the United States and Japan are often cited examples. In the United States, on the contrary, no particular culture, nation, or regime was as clearly brought to the fore in such a manner. However, in this study, it was not possible to meaningfully analyze and conceptualize this variance thoroughly, although it is very likely very meaningful, considering the difficult historical relationship Finland shares with the Soviet Union and Russia or China with the United States and Japan. On the other hand, the differences among the examples cited from “one’s own” culture may well be quite meaningful. For example, the post-Civil War era in China is often divided into the Mao and post-Mao eras (see, for example, ten Brink, 2013; Landry, 2008).

However, such a distinction was deemed irrelevant in this study despite the fact that all the contextualized examples identified actually belonged to the former of the two periods. A more in-depth look into the cited examples would require a specialization in the history of these countries⁴⁷ and cultures under review to examine in more detail which events are highlighted (and which not) and why. I strongly feel, however, that the HPDM, which I have introduced in this study, can be successfully used as a starting point for experts in these fields to approach such research topics.

Similarly, the chosen method leads to the textbooks and curriculum documents within a country being examined as a monolithic mass. The only distinction was made between mandatory and standard courses on the one hand and elective and AP courses on the other. However, a closer examination might reveal additional differences between different curriculum documents, book series, and individual books. In fact, even though I cannot provide empirical evidence to back up my claim, as such an analysis was not the purpose of this work, at the end of this research process, I was so familiar with the textbooks, for example, that I was able to pinpoint qualitative differences between the different textbook series in Finland. For instance, if one looks at where all the examples of passages of texts belonging to Field 3 in the HPDM came from, they actually came from only one of the three book series under scrutiny. The same applies to the distinction between individual courses in the curriculum; in the case of China, for example, almost all theoretical talk about the concept was taught as part of course number eight (Exploring the Mysteries of History) textbooks, whereas all other textbooks ignored the topic altogether. Again, categorizing the material inevitably simplifies reality at least to some degree, which then leads to the somewhat simplified conclusion that history politics is taught as a theoretical concept as part of the *elective courses*. In reality, even among the elective courses, there are different emphases, as the concept is actually taught as part of *one elective course*.

In the textbooks, there are also notable features that could not be taken into consideration. Different themes, skills, etc. are brought to the attention of the reader with the help of certain visual and/or textual aids. For example, in the Finnish and Chinese textbooks, many issues were brought to the fore as special theme boxes. In other words, certain issues were highlighted in different ways to differentiate them from the main body of text. Some of these highlighted passages of texts also dealt with the concept of history politics in one way or another. Meanwhile, when the American textbooks presented conceptual, theoretical, and/or methodological knowledge, this was not accomplished as part of the main text at all, but rather as

⁴⁷ Even though I would argue I am more qualified to speak about the history of these countries and cultures than a layperson, I willingly admit that I am by no means a fully-qualified specialist in the field.

separate sections preceding the main text—the two are even numbered differently from each other. It is well worth asking how these factors affect how the concept is brought to the attention of the students (and how they might affect the reception). Future research should thus focus more on these special details in the textbook and, to do so, even possibly employ alternative research methods, such as methods intended for image analysis to complement the analysis of picture captions, for example.

An important aspect that we should also pay more attention to in the future is the fact that this dissertation approached how (and why) the concept is addressed in three case study countries—China, Finland, and the United States. However, it should be noted that the materials chosen for this analysis represent culturally, politically, and geographically only a small part of the chosen countries. This is especially salient in the case of the United States, with its highly decentralized structure of governance, but also applies to a degree to Finland and China.

Future studies should focus on the great variance within these units of comparison. For example, school districts representing the diverse cultures within the United States should be compared with each other in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation of History education in the country as whole. Moreover, as this study does not assert that these results can readily be generalized to other contexts, comparisons should be carried out on a much broader scope. The units of comparison should include not only other countries, but comparisons should be made between and within regional clusters or cultural spheres, for example. In other words, we should abandon the so-called methodological nationalism approach so prevalent in comparative studies on politics and instead, focus on governance systems rather than states (Dale, 2005).

In addition, studies should be extended vertically to cover both primary and tertiary education to gain a more complete picture of the matter. As the interviews with the teachers suggested, teaching critical thinking is not something that is limited entirely to senior secondary education. Additional levels of the examined senior secondary curriculum should also be taken into consideration when doing comparisons. Although this study aimed to consider the layered structure of the curriculum, it was impossible to capture the entire complexity of the History curriculum. For example, as explained, individual schools in Finland write their own curricula based on the national curriculum, which is then used to structure the teaching. In addition, school districts and individual schools in the United States and schools in Finland may have their own school-specific elective courses, which was also the case in all the schools in which I conducted interviews. Moreover, the competing roles and functions of the different levels of the curriculum should be problematized. For example, textbooks are not only cultural artifacts but also economic commodities, and thus textbook publishing is not only directed by political

considerations, but also by market decisions (Apple, 2000; Foster & Crawford, 2006; Holmén, 2006). A horizontally more evasive approach would also be justifiable, as there is the very real possibility that such a multidisciplinary topic is covered outside History classes. After all, despite the fact that history politics has been mainly addressed in the academic world by historians, by its nature, it is still very much a concept related to political science. And as such, one could well imagine it being taught in classes dealing specifically with the topic (such as classes under the subject social science [*yhteiskuntaoppi*] in Finland or another class under the umbrella of social studies in the United States titled “Civics & Economics”). Furthermore, it should also be noted that it is not just schools that build up the students’ knowledge of the past. Historical knowledge is also built outside the school in public history culture (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). This might very well apply not only to historical knowledge but also to understanding history as a discipline, as public discussions about the past inevitably also involve discussion about the nature of history science. Future studies should thus focus on how life outside the school prepares students to understand the tensioned relationship between the past and the present.

Additionally, it is very hard to ascertain how much official History curriculum shapes popular sentiment and vice versa (Jones, 2002). Even though the state can arguably force its members to *know* the official hegemonic curriculum, it cannot force its members to *believe* them, and, in fact, official histories can even be actively resisted, as mastering a historical narrative is totally different from appropriation-believing and making the historical narrative as “one’s own” (Paine, 1991; Wertsch, 2000). As Cuban (1992) notes, “the gap between what is taught and what is learned—both intended and unintended—is large” (p. 223). The same could again apply not just to the *knowing* part but also to the *doing* part of History education. Such a gap is also very much possible when it comes to teaching (or not teaching) critical thinking skills. Future studies should thus focus on the matter from a reception point of view and examine how and what the students actually learn about the matter. For this purpose, studies should examine the attained curriculum through participatory research methods, for example.

Finally, my study approached how (and why) the concept of history politics is (or is not) taught from an exclusively qualificative viewpoint. While carrying out the analysis, I could not help but notice (an educated guess, if you will) that there are also quantitative differences between different countries and even different levels of the curriculum. Even though in qualitative terms, not much difference is identifiable between the Finnish and American textbooks, for example, in quantitative terms, the two are—I hypothesize—light years apart. The Finnish textbooks constantly and consistently make references to the concept, whereas the American books do so very rarely. Similarly, teachers indicated that there may well be differences between mandatory (Finland) or standard (U.S.) vs. elective (Finland) and AP (U.S.) classes.

However, in their opinions, these differences are not so much about quality as they are about quantity. When asked about whether there is a difference in terms of how the concept is addressed in standard vs. AP classes, one American teacher, for example, stated the following: “I think at each level [the concept is] addressed, it’s just the intensity and amount varies.” Research into merely qualitative differences, however, cannot properly take such disparities into account.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Interview framework

1. Could you first briefly introduce yourself and say something about your educational and professional background?
 - > If the interviewee did not provide an answer in his/her response: Which classes/courses do you teach/have you taught during your career?
 - > If the interviewee did not provide an answer in his/her response: How long have you been teaching?
2. Which textbooks are you using/have you used in your class?
3. Are you familiar with the concept of history politics or related ideas and concepts?
4. Have you addressed these ideas and concepts in your classes?
 - > If the interviewee did not provide an answer in his/her response: Why (not)?
 - > If the interviewee did not provide an answer in his/her response: How?
5. How much room for action (i.e., possibility for personal adjustments of what is being taught, how, and why) do high school teachers have and history teachers in particular?
6. How do you use this room when it comes to teaching about these concepts and ideas?

Appendix II. Research materials

	Year (era)	Course	Curriculum document(s) for the corresponding course that was/were analyzed	Textbooks for the corresponding course that were analyzed	Teacher who had taught the corresponding course
Finland					
Mandatory courses	1985	<i>Länsimaisen kulttuurin kehityksen perusta</i> (The Foundations of the Development of Western Culture)	N/A	FINB1985A1, FINB1985B1, FINB1985C1	N/A
		<i>Laajenevan vaihdannan yhteiskunta</i> (The Society of Expanding Exchange)		FINB1985A2, FINB1985B2, FINB1985C2	
		<i>Sääty-yhteiskunta Suomessa</i> (Society of Estates in Finland)		FINB1985A3, FINB1985B3, FINB1985C3	
		<i>Teollistuva yhteiskunta</i> (Industrializing Society)		FINB1985A4, FINB1985B4, FINB1985C4	
		<i>Nykyajan maailma</i> (World of Today)		FINB1985A5, FINB1985B5, FINB1985C5	
		<i>Nyky-Suomen perusta</i> (The Foundation of Modern Finland)		FINB1985A6, FINB1985B6, FINB1985C6	
	2015	Ihminen ympäristön ja yhteiskuntien muutoksessa (Human Within the Changes of the Environment and Societies)	FINC	FINB2015A1, FINB2015B1, FINB2015C1	FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT4, FINT5, FINT6, FINT7, FINT8, FINT9
		<i>Kansainväliset suhteet</i> (International Relations)		FINB2015A2, FINB2015B2, FINB2015C2	FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT4, FINT5, FINT7, FINT8, FINT9
		<i>Itsenäisen Suomen historia</i> (History of Independent Finland)		FINB2015A3, FINB2015B3, FINB2015C3	FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT4, FIN5, FINT7, FINT8, FINI9

Elective courses	2015	<i>Eurooppalaisen maailmankuvan kehitys</i> (The Development of the European Worldview)		FINB2015A4, FINB2015B4, FINB2015C4	FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT4, FINT5, FINT6, FINT7, FINT8, FINT9
		<i>Ruotsin itämaasta Suomeksi</i> (From the Eastern Land of Sweden to Finland)		FINBB20155, FINB2015C5	FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT4, FINT5, FINT7, FINT9
		<i>Maailman kulttuurit kohtaavat</i> (Cultures of the World Meet)		FINB2015A6, FINB2015B6, FINB2015C6	FINT1, FINT2, FINT3, FINT4, FINT5, FINT7, FINT8, FINT9
United States					
Standard courses	1985	American History	N/A	USAB1985A USAB1985B1 USAB1985B2 USAB1985C	N/A
	2015	American History I	USACA1	USAB2015A	USAT1, USAT3, USAT4, USAT5, USAT6, USAT7, USAT9, USAT10
		American History II	USACA2	USAB2015A	USAT1, USAT3, USAT4, USAT5, USAT6, USAT7, USAT9, USAT10
		World History	USACB	USAB2015B	USAT5, USAT7, USAT8
AP courses	2015	AP American History	USACC	USAB2015C	USAT2, USAT7, USAT9
		AP World History	USACD	USAB2015D	
		AP European History	USACE	USAB2015E	USAT1
China					
Mandatory courses	1985	World History	N/A	CHNAB1985A CHNB1985B	N/A
	2015	历史 I (<i>lishi I</i> , History I)	CHNC	CHNBA1, CHNBB1, CHNBC1	
		历史 II (<i>lishi II</i> , History II)		CHNBA2, CHNBB2, CHNBC2	
历史 III (<i>lishi III</i> , History III)		CHNBA3, CHNBB3, CHNBC3			

Elective courses	2015	历史上重大改革回眸 (<i>lishi shang zhongda gaige huimou</i> , A Retrospect on Major Reforms in History)	CHNBA4, CHNBB4, CHNBC4
		近代社会的民主思想与实践 (<i>jindai shehui de minzhu sixiang yu shijian</i> , Democratic Thought and Practice in the Modern Society)	CHNBA5, CHNBB5, CHNBC5
		20 世纪的战争与和平 (<i>20 shiji de zhanzheng yu heping</i> , 20th Century War and Peace)	CHNBA6, CHNBB6, CHNBC6
		中外历史人物评说 (<i>zhongwai lishi renwu pingshuo</i> , Evaluating Chinese and Foreign Historical Figures)	CHNBA7, CHNBB7, CHNBC7
		探索历史的奥秘 (<i>tansuo lishi de aomi</i> , Exploring the Mysteries of History)	CHNBA8, CHNBB8, CHNBC8
		世界文化遗产荟萃 (<i>shijie wenhua yichan huicui</i> , Gathering of World Cultural Heritage)	CHNBA9, CHNBB9, CHNBC9



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